Influence of Statist Inter-ethnic Political Leadership Transformation in the Management of Inter-ethnic Conflicts in Bungoma County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

The study interrogates the influence of statist inter-ethnic political leadership transformation in the management of inter-ethnic conflicts in Bungoma County. In Kenya, specifically in Bungoma, the 1963 conflict in the region acquired a political and national outlook. In 1992, despite 29 years of independence, the violence was unparalleled. The specific objective of the study was to examine the effect of statist inter-ethnic political leadership integration in the management of inter-ethnic conflict in Bungoma County. The study followed a conceptual framework that was based on Lederach's Conflict Transformation and Gultang's Conflict Triangle theories. A descriptive research design was adopted. By using the Yamane 1967 formula, a sample size of 400 participants was derived from the 1375065 population. Participants were distributed randomly, purposefully, and proportionately. Questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions (FGD), and document analysis were used to collect primary and secondary data, respectively. Microsoft Excel performed both quantitative and qualitative data analysis through thematization, corroboration, and verification. The findings were: Unlike inter-marriage (23%), culture (20%), and trade (15%), 42% of respondents concurred that elders were key in influencing inter-ethnic co-existence. However, colonisation alienated them and made them distinct in their roles. Independent statist political leadership transformation mutated from precipitating inter-ethnic inclined: corruption and greed 17%, political repression 16%, political participation in government 15%, punishment 14%, torture 13%, and demotion 12% to inter-ethnic integration of glimpses of diversity policies into political leadership. Even though peacebuilding was going on, the biggest problems that still needed to be solved were the enforcement of inter-ethnic political leadership integration policies in Bungoma County, the translation of the inter-ethnic political leadership transformation initiative into documentary and creative art, and the separation of administrative and political boundaries from ethnic boundaries.

Keywords: Inter-Ethnic Political Leadership, Management of Inter-Ethnic Conflict, Peacebuilding Strategy, Political Leadership, Political Leadership Integration, Statist, Transformation

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I. INTRODUCTION

Globally, inter-communal conflicts emerging as a result of political leadership have been witnessed in a growing number of countries. While this does not negate the fact that the emergence and perpetration of the conflicts have been attributed to various root causes, political leadership has engendered intractability. The UK, in full glare of political leadership, experienced Protestant-Catholic conflicts as early as 1534. Notwithstanding political leadership, the federal state of Yugoslavia succumbed to conflict, leading to the establishment of new nation-states as a way of enhancing conflict management (Vesna, 1996). Equally important, Canada has registered linguistic clashes between the English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians, which forced the government to enact a law to protect the French language in Quebec Province as a means of coexistence. Besides, the USA has yet to overcome racial conflicts amidst peacebuilding efforts in the communities that have embraced affirmative action (Joireman, 2003). Further, conflicts between Israel and Palestine, with a significant political dimension, have been raging on for decades, necessitating the involvement of the regional and international community in peacebuilding (Yannis, 2018).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, Mozambique, Angola, Ethiopia, including Uganda, and Rwanda have had a history of not only inter-ethnic political leadership-related conflicts but also deaths and massive displacement of the population. Notably, efforts to federate Eritrea with Ethiopia by the United Nations Organisation (UNO) as a means of settling inter-communal hostility and enhancing conflict management failed, leading to the split of the Ethiopian nation and state (Ghebrehiwet, 2009). Moreover, Ethiopia is yet again experiencing a political leadership-related wave of conflict in

Tigray (Michelle, 2021). Besides, Mozambique peacebuilding was modelled along the integration of peacebuilding and state-building goals as a way of enhancing coexistence in the country (Lisa et al., 2016, WFP, 2021). In contrast, in Rwanda, peace-building strategies necessitated the fall back to indigenous peace-building strategies such as *umuganda* (community work) and *girinka* (donating one cow to each needy family) as means of coexistence after the 1994 Genocide, which has largely muted the hostility (Joireman, 2003). As stated above, inter-ethnic political leadership-inclined conflicts and peacebuilding are global realities.

In the literature reviewed, Nietze argues that leadership can escalate or deescalate conflicts (Kriesberg, 1998). Michael and Nicholas argue that weak leadership characterised by corruption can be translated into the weakness of the nation (Michael & Nicholas, 2008). In addition, both Mweyang (2010) and Darfur Australia Network (DAN) (2010) concur that neglect of inter-ethnic political leadership integration causes inter-ethnic conflict. Equally important (Taras & Rajat, 2015), they observe that competition over the power of leadership causes conflict. Further, Pkalya et al. (2003) argue that a lack of peacebuilding policies or structures lapsed Kenya into conflict. In essence, there is a strong correlation between leadership and conflict decline, escalation, or management. As observed by Magradze, leaders have the ability to sway or hypnotise crowds to either believe in violence or peace as a means of achieving their goals (Magradze, 1996).

However, there were various knowledge gaps for the current study to fill; for example, to what extent was inter-ethnic conflict in Bungoma a product of poor, weak, or corrupt leadership? In order to identify the underlying causes and then comprehend the function of political leadership in peacebuilding, Lederach (2003) emphasized that there was a knowledge gap regarding the historical evolution of the nature of inter-ethnic conflict in Bungoma. Similarly, there was a paucity of knowledge on the nature of political leadership interventions before, during, and after the conflict in Bungoma County. Equally important was the knowledge gap on how colonialism affected the nature of inter-ethnic leadership composition, perceptions, and sharpened ethnic identities. Further, there was a knowledge gap on how informal traditional societal education worked in relation to inter-ethnic political leadership conflict and peacebuilding.

Additionally, there was a knowledge gap regarding the contestable opportunities among communities and how political leadership had addressed them through peacebuilding strategies used in Bungoma. Additionally, there was a knowledge gap on how political leadership integrated inter-ethnic peacebuilding goals with state development goals on land administration, economic development goals, political leadership goals, positive ethnicity, and majority-minority community issues, including constitutional transformation. Equally significant is the knowledge gap on how political leadership responded to inter-ethnic mounting economic rivalry, inter-ethnic economic inequalities, and disputed territories, including how political leadership addressed the inter-ethnic effect of Kenya's national trade, unplanned population growth, the young unemployed youths, and inter-ethnic conflicting myths and beliefs. Finally, there was a knowledge gap on whether inter-ethnic conflict was a question of poor planning by the government for her population and the interventions in terms of peacebuilding thereof.

In Kenya, for example, though endowed with many ethnic communities, this is coupled with many ethnic strifes and conflicts. First and foremost, despite independence in 1963, Kenya's two major political parties divided Kenyans, specifically ethnic communities in Bungoma, into two major tension-filled competitive political blocks: the majority community political party Kenya African National Union (KANU) and the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU), a minority community party (Akiwumi Report of the Judicial Commission, 1999). It was interesting that even though the Bukusu and Sabaot were both members of minority communities, the national party system didn't stop inter-ethnic hostility between them. Instead of joining forces to form a minority community party to improve inter-ethnic political integration, they joined competing parties, so the conflict had both a national and violent inter-ethnic political dimension (FGD 2:2018). As a result, the leadership competitions within the KANU and KADU political parties created divisions among communities in Bungoma (Kiliku, 1992).

Interestingly, the advent of multi-party political leadership in 1990, instead of bridging inter-ethnic hostility, widened inter-ethnic linkages in Bungoma. Besides, instead of the growth of inter-ethnic democratic structures, the county lapsed into yet another instance of unparalleled violence (Imbuye, 2016). Equally important, though, was that the disputes were about land and the breakdown of inter-ethnic fabric over time, as well as inter-communal majority-minority community contests, boundary and political disputes, politics, and socio-economic differences between different ethnic groups, but political leaders couldn't find a way to solve them. To date, inter-ethnic tension persists. This background contradicts the conventional approach, which argues that statist political leadership has a stake in inter-ethnic social, political, and economic integration and cohesion. It is from the foregoing that the study examined political leadership transformation in the management of inter-ethnic conflicts in Bungoma County. The specific objective of the study was to examine the effect of statist inter-ethnic political leadership integration in the management of inter-ethnic

conflict in Bungoma County. While the research question addressed the effect of statist inter-ethnic political leadership integration in the management of inter-ethnic conflict in Bungoma County,

The study fills the knowledge gap on statist inter-ethnic political leadership transformation in the management of inter-ethnic conflict. It enriches the Ministry of Interior and National Coordination, NGOs, FBOs, and CBOs on the role of inter-ethnic political leadership transformation in the management of inter-ethnic conflicts. Equally important, the study supports the philosophical approach to research called "interpretivism" by showing how an analysis of societal beliefs, norms, and culture helps us understand how inter-ethnic political leadership changes in Bungoma to deal with inter-ethnic conflict (Williams, 2000).

In terms of its scope, the study looked at how Lederach's (2003) ideas about statist inter-ethnic political leadership transformation were used to deal with the root causes of inter-ethnic conflict in Bungoma County. The study focused on Bukusu and Sabaot because inter-ethnic hostility and violence in Bungoma County followed first rival neighbouring communities and then inter-ethnic political contests that involved the two communities but also other communities that were seen as supporting or leaning towards one of the two communities or as indirectly suffering from the effects of the conflicts between the two communities. Most minority groups in Bungoma County, like the Teso, Tachoni, and Kikuyu, did not have long, difficult, and inter-ethnic political or leadership fights that made them dislike the Bukusu or Sabaot, who were at war during the time period under review. Tachoni, like other minority Luhya communities found in the Mt. Elgon region, were classified among the Bukusu, partly due to their similarity in language, cultural practices, and political affiliation.

The study was guided by a conceptual framework that was based on two theories that worked well together. One of these theories was Lederach's Conflict Transformation, which says that conflict can be turned into peacebuilding by bringing together different players from the grassroots, middle, and top levels of military, religious, or political leadership in the management of inter-ethnic conflict. Galtung's theory of the conflict triangle, which is made up of three parts: attitude (A), contradiction (C), and behaviour (B), shows how conflicts start, grow, and show themselves (Galtung, 1996; Lederach, 2003).

II. METHODOLOGY

The study used a descriptive research design, which helped the researcher not only find facts about the effect of political leadership transformation on inter-ethnic conflict and peacebuilding in Bungoma, but also describe the state of affairs as it was. This was done by identifying, capturing, and accounting for frequencies, trends, and patterns that came from the integration of statist inter-ethnic political leadership in the management of inter-ethnic conflict in Bungoma.

The study was conducted in Bungoma County, Kenya. The county covers 2206.9 km^2 and has a total population of 1,375,063 (KNBS, 2010). The area was chosen because, for many years, it has witnessed the recurrence of conflict and peacebuilding initiatives engaged by both the elders and state and non-state agents since pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial Kenya. Notwithstanding statist peacebuilding strategies, conflicts had not only acquired a national outlook but also a fatal political dimension affecting the length and breadth of the county, consisting of nine sub-county commissioners, nine MPs, 45 members of county assemblies, chiefs, and their assistants, including non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations (CBOs), and faith-based organisations.

The study population consisted of the population of the entire Bungoma County (1,375,065), for which the findings were to generalise (KNBS, 2009). Conflicts in Bungoma have been protracted and intractable. Having started in pre-colonial Kenya, they have multiple causal levels, strati, and dimensions, including substates, affecting various generations, regimes, and regions, including neighbouring states, particularly Uganda (Kenya Land Commission Report [KLC], 1934). The study sampled the population in order to gather data (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). The sample size, which was the finite part of the population, was calculated using the Yamane formula for sample sizes (Yamane, 1967) and distributed accordingly.

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$$

Where:

n = sample size
N = population size
(e) = significant error ($\pm$ 0.05)
n = $\dfrac{1375065}{1+ 1375065 (0.0025)}$

n= <u>1375065</u>
3437.6575
n=   400 (Sample size)

The cases were selected and distributed from a sample size of 400. The study applied a simple random sampling procedure to select respondents, which gave each respondent an equal chance of inclusion in the population (Kothari, 2004). Consequently, it enabled the researcher to apply inferential statistics where applicable and generalise the findings to the population (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). In addition, purposive sampling was carried out because the study fell back in time and established how conflicts had evolved over time, yet only a small fraction of relevant participants in the population were available (Kombo &Tromp, 2006). Elders 65 years and older were additionally purposively sampled because they had both direct first-hand eyewitness accounts and indirect information from those who had interacted with eyewitnesses because of their age bracket. Purposive sampling, therefore, adequately assisted the researcher in addressing past events using relevant, accessible cases reached through snowball (Kombo & Tromp, 2006).

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a sample size of 10–30% is the ideal representation of a target population. Consequently, using 10–30% of each targeted population category, the researcher was able to obtain the desired information from respondents, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1
Summary of Study Population Units

POPULATION CLUSTER	Population SIZE (X)	SAMPLING STRATEGY	SAMPLE SIZE DETERMINATION $^X/_{26561}$ x **400**		DATA COLLECTION
Elders	25070	SRS PURPOSIVE	377	SRS 263 PURPOSIVE 113	Questionnaire (263) FGD Interview (113)
CSo officials	690	SRS	10		Questionnaire
Clergy	600	PURPOSIVE	9		Questionnaire
IDP officials	20	PURPOSIVE	1		Interview
Senior Police	20	PURPOSIVE	1		Interview
County/ Sub-County Commissioner	9	PURPOSIVE	1		Questionnaire
Chiefs	44	PURPOSIVE	1		Interview
Assistant Chiefs	128	PURPOSIVE	2		Interview

Table 2
Proportionate Distribution of Elders Questionnaires and Population of +65 years and Questionnaire and interviews Distribution per Sub-County

SUB-COUNTY	OVER 65 YEARS	Distribution of	
		Questionnaire	Interviews
Kimilili	2944	31	13
Bungoma North	3129	33	14
Bumula	3696	39	17
Bungoma Central	2718	29	12
Bungoma South	3288	34	15
Bungoma West	2014	21	9
Webuye East	1975	21	9
Webuye West	2221	23	10
MT Elgon -Kapsokwony-Kopsiro and Cheptais	3085	32	13
TOTAL	25070	**263**	**113**

The 10 questionnaires for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) were randomly distributed, except for Bungoma North, which received 2 questionnaires because of its population; the rest had 1 each per sub-county. Nine questionnaires were filled out by the clergy, one each from the nine sub-counties. Except for the two assistant chiefs interviewed, chiefs,

senior police officers, and IDP officials, one each was interviewed. Three focus group discussions were equally included, one each at Kimilili, Kapsokwony, and Cheptais.

Both primary and secondary schools were consulted. Primary data were collected directly from respondents through the questionnaire and interviews with elders, clergy, CSOs officials, sub-county commissioners, chiefs, assistant chiefs, IDP officials, and senior police officers. Questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis were instruments used to collect data. The questionnaire was used with literate elders, CSO officials, sub-county commissioners, and assistant chiefs. Structured interviews were used to ensure that reliable, in-depth, systematic, comprehensive, and quantifiable information was acquired. The focus group discussion involved discussions of distinct homogenous groups of six elders from the Bukusu, Sabaot, Tachoni, and Teso, both men and women, including IDPs. This allowed freedom of discussion (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2005). The secondary data consisted of interrogating published records, reports, and unpublished works with a view to corroborate the interview findings. Public documents included analyses of the Carter Land Commission Report of 1934, the Constitutions of 1963 and 2010, including the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission Report, the Kiliku Report, the Akiwumi Report, the Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Report, the Kriegler Report, the Waki Report, Acts of Parliament, policy statements, census reports since 1969, reports of commissions of inquiry, and ministerial and departmental annual reports. Private documents include analyses of civil society reports and minutes of meetings, including board resolutions.

In order to ensure consistency and increase accuracy in the results, the study validated the research instruments, as underscored in both qualitative and quantitative studies (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Expert judgement significantly improved the validity of the research instruments by ensuring that the content of the questions, wording, and sequence of the interview schedule were correct (Gall et al., 1996; Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). In line with Weiner (2007), the reliability of research instruments was determined on a recommended scale of 0.7. The reliability of the research instrument was also improved by long-term field interviews, triangulation of data sources and methods, consensual validation, structural data corroboration, and referential adequacy (Whittemore, 2001; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Creswell & Poth, 2013). In turn, Lincoln and Guba (1985) noted that critical and accurate data analysis and interpretation were necessary to achieve internal and external data validation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

MS Excel's analysis of quantitative data allowed the researcher to prepare statistical abstracts with embedded clear constructs. Qualitative data analysis involved studying the collected notes, organising them by looking for cross-cutting issues and trends, checking emergent patterns, corroboration, verifying, and networking various parts of the data. The results of the data were presented in chapters in accordance with each study objective. The limitations for study were expenses, a vast region with a host of people with diverse languages, and suspicion from IDPs who lost livestock, land, and their loved ones. The researcher, engaged translator, detailed introductory procedures and observance of research ethics where respondents were assured of confidentiality and that through such studies, new findings will guarantee peace for future generations (The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioural Research, 1979; Okoth, 2012).

3 Findings and Discussions
3.1 Nature of Inter-ethnic Conflict, Peacebuilding and Leadership Transformation in Bungoma County
This study interrogates the role of leadership in inter-ethnic conflict and peacebuilding by underscoring the influence of inter-ethnic traditional, colonial, and independent statist inter-ethnic leadership integration in the management of inter-ethnic conflict in Bungoma County.

Just as is observed by Muncaster and Zinnes (1990), Thomson (1990), and Morrow (1988), for sake of ethnic unity and inter-communal co-existence, an ethnic community as well as inter-ethnic communities in Bungoma had, first its intra-ethnic structures and then inter-ethnic structures to regulate and therefore pattern relationships from the lapse of erratic inter-communal behavior. According to the FGD held at Cheptais, a respondent familiar with inter-communal co-existence, particularly between Bukusu and Sabaot, was emphatic that;

> In pre-colonial Kenya the Bukusu and Sabaot lived side by side, each community was held together as a unit by its customs, language, myths of origin, geographical location, socio-economic and political organization. ……….. The same forces which united each ethnic community worked for or against inter-ethnic conflict depending on whether they were positively or negatively reinforced for or against each other (FGD 3:2018).

Each ethnic community in Bungoma had a name, a measure of solidarity pegged on common ancestry, shared historical memories in the form of myths or legends in their oral traditions, language, religion, customs, territory, and self-awareness as an ethnic group (FGD 3:2018). In essence, ethnic groups in Bungoma were sufficiently developed or evolved collective identities of a people, with a unique common ancestry that surpassed genetic ties. However, as

observed by Barasa (2011), as communities interacted at different levels of engagement, they similarly developed their own traditional intra- and inter-communal mechanisms of enhancing co-existence in Bungoma (Barasa, 2011). Besides traditional authority, other inter-communal engagements like trade and intermarriage played a part as well. Such interaction and adjustments were not without conflicts as communities sought inter-ethnic equilibrium of coexistence.

As observed by Makila (2004), Bukusu oral tradition intimates that the Bukusu conflicted with the Sabaot over cattle and food, and it seemed to have started as early as before their migration from their common ancestral home Egypt through Sirikwa before their present settlement (Makila, 2004). In essence, therefore, though the Bukusu and Sabaot had cultural values that initially governed their co-existence, as an elder at a FGD 2 in 2018 pointed out, they broke down over time because of intergenerational disintegration of inter-ethnic cultural fabric and inter-communal cattle raids (FGD 2:2018).

Furthermore, as gathered from respondent 7 in 2018, the numerical expansion of Bukusu threatened the existence of minority communities, including the Sabaot, with cultural assimilation and disintegration, which equally increased inter-ethnic tension (Respondent 7:2018). Moreover, as the Bukusu numerical strength grew, they dominated other communities, straining inter-ethnic coexistence. As observed by respondent 3 in 2018, gradually, land and boundary disputes, including leadership contests, came to characterise the inter-ethnic nature of inter-ethnic conflict in Bungoma, particularly when the Bukusu became dominant in leadership positions as chiefs in colonial and independent Kenya (Respondent 3:2018). The Sabaot, for example, complained of not being recognised by the Bukusu (RCNECNCI, 2009). It was this background that initially informed the nature of the socio-political and economic organisation of communities in terms of inter-ethnic conflict and co-existence, particularly among the Bukusu and Sabaot in Bungoma County.

3.1.1 Organization of Ethnic Communities and the Nature of Inter-ethnic Conflict in Bungoma County
3.1.1.1 The Nature of Inter-ethnic Communal Structures and Inter-ethnic Conflict in Bungoma County
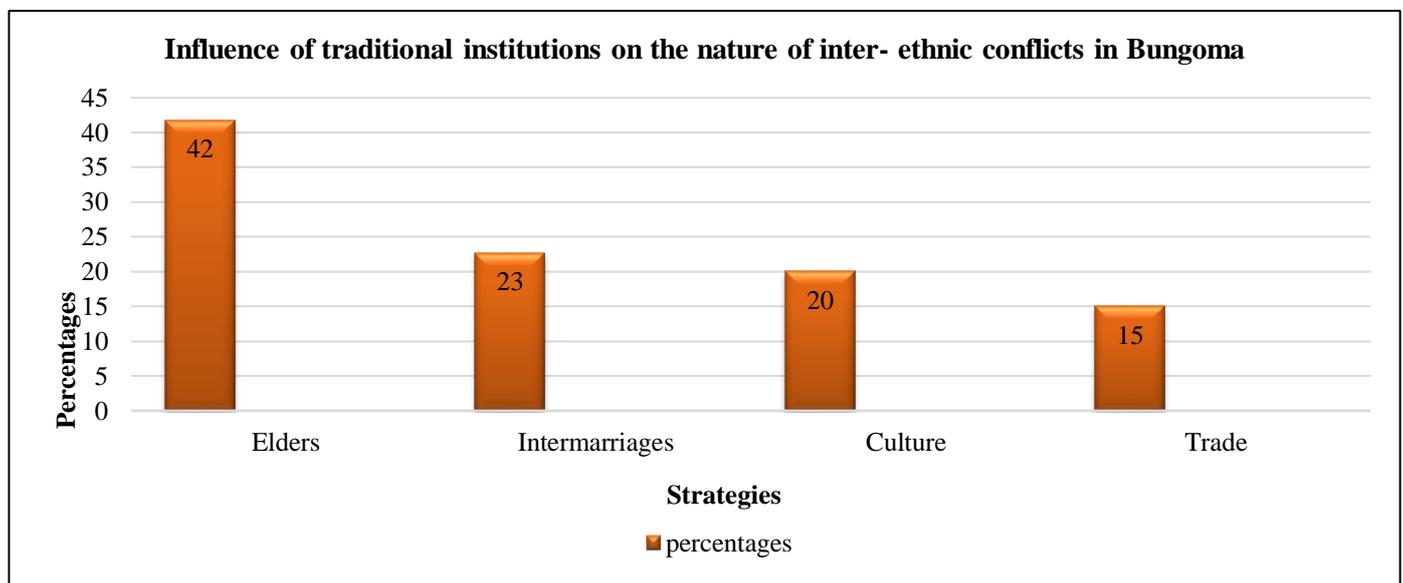

Figure 1
Influence of Traditional Institutions on the Nature of Inter-ethnic Conflict (N=283)

Figure 1 illustrates the nature of traditional peacebuilding strategies based on percentages scored by 283 respondents. Even though inter-ethnic relationships were affected by intermarriage (23%; 65), shared culture (20%; 57), and inter-communal trade (15%), 42% (119) of respondents agreed that elders played a key role in making it easier for people from different groups to live together, even though their role was taken away and changed during colonialism. Similarly, despite the fact that intermarriage scores were second to the sores of the elders, it was conflicting when, for example, respondent 67 in 2019, a former police officer who had taken part in peacekeeping in the Mt. Elgon region in 1992, recalled how a rich Luhya from Kakamega who had settled in Mt. Elgon, though married to a Sabaot, as a strategy of enhancing inter-communal relationships, was shot and killed by arsonists in 1992 clashes (Respondent 67:2019). Elders from the Sabaot (Koony), Teso, and Luhya got together in 2008 at the Elders Conference on Cohesion and Integration and again suggested inter-ethnic marriage as a way to help communities in Bungoma get along with each

other (RCNECCI, 2009). Largely, however, according to the respondents, inter-ethnic marriages between the Bukusu and Sabaot, for example, regulated inter-communal co-existence, but to a lesser extent compared to the role of elders. Equally important, though trade could bring about peaceful co-existence among communities including Bukusu and Sabaot, the oral interview received pessimism in the two communities co-existing solely because of trade, as its scores were comparatively low compared to those of the elders interviewed, as shown in Figure 1.

Moreover, though the Bukusu and Sabaot shared some traditions, like circumcision as a rite of passage, the social influences identified by the study affected peacebuilding. The FGD 1 in 2018 established that 'Sabaot had their own circumcision songs, type of dance, and unique period of circumcision (FGD 1:2018). As the Bukusu circumcised their male initiates in August of an even year, the Sabaot circumcised though in an even year but in December'. The Sabaot, unlike the Bukusu, circumcise girls as well. Thus, the rite of passage also drew inter-ethnic distinction.

Consequently, as evident from the traditional administrative structures in Figure 1, elders played an important role as agents of inter-communal conflict or positive coexistence. It was evident that eldership among the Bukusu and Sabaot included not only living people but also connections to the deceased ancestors, some of whom served a purpose for the living beyond mere memory. This was also true among the Sabaot, as two elders at an FGD at Kapsokwony concurred. (FGD 2:2018).

Ancestral spirits of the dead amongst the Bukusu and Sabaot were associated with immense power exceeding that of the living, hence the immortalised force of co-existence. Like the ancestors among the Bukusu, as the case was among the Sabaot, they had to be obeyed as well as appeased in the event of going against established societal regulations. Makila avers that the legacy of the departed ancestors was observed and protected in community laws, customs, and traditions (Makila, 2004). Bukusu elders, like the Sabaot, enjoined the living and dead, hence giving credence to the overseeing invisible power yet so consequential and protective of the tenets of society. As observed by Barasa, this linkage traditionally ensured continuity of the past into present society, as did the sustenance of the accepted inter-communal code of behavior from members of society, including elders themselves. Any disobedience, either from the members or elders, went against the lineage of the living or departed elders, hence attracting the collective wrath of the living and the dead, which by extension ensured both spiritual and secular compliance (Barasa, 2011). Obedience was enforced and achieved among the Bukusu and Sabaot because of the fear of what the ancestral spirit might do to both the offender and the entire community. Whenever a person engaged in criminal activities, it appeared as though the entire community bore the responsibility. This led to the acknowledgment of a combined spiritual and secular shared accountability for the wrongdoing, along with corresponding spiritual and secular measures for correction (Makila, 2004). This form of punishment was derived from the collective responsibility conferred on the community in terms of ensuring compliance with societal morals and, by extension, the responsible upbringing of children within the accepted code of conduct within the community and to their neighbors. For communities to raise members of the community to the high level of discipline expected of them, each ethnic community went through education and training codified in forms of taboos and beliefs whose observance by either Bukusu, Sabaot, or Tachoni was the fulfilment of not only the physical but also the spiritual goals of the community (Wafula, 2000). The Sabaot as well as the Bukusu, including the Teso and Tachoni taboos, had religious and political significance, and they held society together while maintaining spiritual as well as physical societal standards (Wafula, 2000). Taboos distinguished accepted social, political, economic, and religious behaviour from the unwanted (Wafula, 2000). Violation of taboos could cause a curse to an individual or to an entire community (Wafula, 2000).

Among the Sabaot, an elder, "boontet ab kook," was equally respected (Naibei, 2016). To the Bukusu as well as amongst the Sabaot, initiation into eldership was both a physical and spiritual process. According to respondent 55's observations from 2019, elders were men who had received training in how to find and care for wealth at the time, measured in terms of the number of cattle, build a house, and take care of others (Respondent 55:2019). As stated in responses from Respondent 7:2018, which did concur with Barasa, circumcision and being married were the primary qualifications for eldership (Barasa, 2011; Naibei, 2016). The Bukusu identified their leaders and groomed them from a very young age, largely distinguishing them from the rest of the family members by displaying generosity through sharing, tolerance for others, and being courteous. Children's upbringing and training were tailored to achieve these qualities (Makila, 2004). To the two communities, Bukusu and Sabaot, an elder was a man who understood the core values of the community. According to respondent 7 in 2018, amongst the Bukusu, an elder was not only the eldest child in the family but an adult with circumcised children and owned property (Respondent 7:2018). In essence, poverty and childlessness were disqualifications from eldership. Other qualities included one who had shown personal merit, for example, in war (Oyugi & Gitonga, 1995). The Bukusu believed that if the eldership was crowned to a toddler, it would make them impotent because of the spiritual sorcery methods taught or imbibed by the elders (Barasa, 2011). Toddlers were also seen as far removed from their spiritualized ancestors and were less informed regarding the traditional code

of conduct, which was largely acquired informally but included spiritual learning. Similarly, because the training of an elder was informal, the duration one spent under instruction was to be commensurate with the acquisition of both spiritual and physical knowledge. Such requirements, by extension, reduced succession wrangles over spiritual and physical eldership institutions.

The leading elder among the Bukusu, for example, was 'Omukasa' singular or "Bakasa" plural; they were chosen because of their age and their leadership skills displayed in careful listening, influence to others, being non-talking, tiff, gentle, wise, and an arbiter (Barasa, 2011). Bakasa were adults with experience, bestowed with the powerful political position of ancestral spirit. They were cloaked in traditional regalia, such as the copper bracelet Kumukasa, the ivory armlet Lichabe armband epokoto cowries shell hat, and dressed in a monkey or buffalo skin ekutusi (Makila, 2004). Bakasa presided over village councils, settled cases, kept the peace, and took care of the subjects. While others worked as sacrificial priests (Makila, 2004).

To the Sabaot, an elder was distinguishable just as he was among the Bukusu, that is, a man who displayed generosity and hospitality with wives, children, cattle, and land (Naibei, 2016). At the helm of Sabaot leadership was Kirwangindet, who headed several villages (Kisembe, 1978). Kirwangited was the only one among the Sabaot cloaked in monkey skin and an iron necklace, which signified authority (Imbuye, 2016). Like the Bukusu, Kirwangited was distinguishable from the general members of society through the display of tolerance, generosity, diplomacy, wisdom, and justness (Imbuye, 2016). He settled disputes between villages. The office of Kirwangited was not hereditary. At the village level, the Sabaot had a Laitirian who settled and prevented disputes from emerging. He presided over cases and shared land. At the lowest level among the Sabaot was the father, who headed smaller sub-divisions on a clan basis, solved disputes, and protected the family. Additionally, the Sabaot, like the Bukusu, had a council of elders called Kokwet for the Sabaot and Kokwa for the Bukusu. They handled matters that were beyond the laitirian (Kisembe, 1978).

Unlike the Bukusu, who were separated in terms of clans each in a fort, the Sabaot families occupied a ridge and shared a camp or caves (Kisembe, 1978; Kakai, 2000). The Sabaot warrior called Murenik lived in special houses of warriors called 'Kotap Mureen'. Like the Bukusu, a Sabaot group of families constituted a village just like the Sabaot. The Sabaot families, in contrast to the Bukusu, lived apart from one another due to bushes, hills, rivers, or escarpments, which created Pororosiek, a unifying structure (Imbuye, 2016). Like the Bukusu, where each fort had a warrior class that defended the fort from external attack, the 'Pororosiek' of the Sabaot had a territorial unit of Murenik assigned to defend it (Imbuye, 2016). Elders derived their authority from people's belief that the elders were closer to the late ancestors and that they were a link between the living and the dead, the physical and spiritual leadership (Wafula, 2000). As a result of their position in society, the elders were diviners and ritual specialists and were treated with reverence to the extent that their words were respected as physical-spiritual law and order (Wafula, 2000). In some circumstances, they were worshipped, and their pronouncements could bless or curse the people as well as appease the Supreme Being with spiritual and secular forgiveness. It was because of this background that elders were feared in equal measure as respected. They had power over inter-ethnic conflict, ornamentation, curses, and death (Wafula, 2000). According to the elders interviewed, it was within these structures that the composition of the council of elders worked for or again inter-ethnic disputes.

3.2 Colonial Chiefdom and the Mutation of the Nature of inter-ethnic Conflict in Bungoma

As observed by respondent 21 in 2018, the use of African colonial chiefs mutated the nature of inter-ethnic integration in Bungoma,

> *The role of Colonial chiefs amongst the Bukusu and Sabaot was basically to implement the policies of the Colonial state. …………the advent of Nabongo Mumia secularized erstwhile spiritualized Bukusu-Sabaot traditional leadership by both cutting off the divine link and directly subordinating it to colonial government* (Respondent 21: 2018).

In late 2008, a Sabaot elder, while making a presentation at the National Elders Conference on Cohesion and Integration, remembered how the elders, during his youth, described Nabongo Mumia as one leader who was not only imposed on the Sabaot but additionally caused cultural shock, which contributed to the disintegration of inter-ethnic traditional eldership institutions in Bungoma (Report of the Committee of the National Elders Conference on National Cohesion and Integration [RCNECNCI], 2011). Nabongo, like other colonial chiefs who came after him, was no longer a link between the people and their departed ancestors, as earlier alluded to. As gathered from the responses of respondent 21 in 2018, Nabongo could not, for example, appease the departed to ensure forgiveness or pray on behalf of the Bukusu, Sabaot, or Tachoni through the offering of sacrifice (Respondent 21:2018). Unlike the traditional leadership, which linked the people and the departed ancestors and ensured inter- and intra-ethnic compliance, Nabongo enjoined the people to the colonial government. In essence, the colonial chiefs watered down traditional authority as

was underscored in taboos and beliefs to instill discipline and obedience and replaced it with entirely secular rules applied largely by force for the benefit of the Europeans. The invisible, discerning power that accompanied traditional authority was discarded. As a result, the secular Mumia's leadership was followed by not only the reorganisation or disruption of the traditional authority and identity but also the alienation of Bukusu-Sabaot land for the economic productivity of the colonialists, further complicating inter-ethnic integration. For example, the British Colonial powers shifted the Eastern Province from the British Protectorate (Uganda) to the British East Africa Protectorate (Kenya) (Thomas & Spencer 1938). This was done in order to enhance effective administration of the Kenya-Uganda railways under Imperial British East Africa (IBEA) as a British conduit for extracting Africans' economic resources at the expense of breaking down ethnic and inter-ethnic territorial identity and authority, particularly among the Bukusu and Sabaot (Thomas & Spencer, 1938, July). The colonialists' objective was to make the railway, particularly its environs, economically viable (Nguru, 2012). To accomplish this mission, the colonial government, through their agent, the governor, Sir Charles Elliot, invited white settlers to come to Kenya with the sole economic objective of enhancing agricultural productivity and further distabilizing inter-ethnic hegemony (Ley, 1975).

White settlers antagonised inter-ethnic coexistence when they were given land in Trans Nzoia, which used to belong largely to the Sabaot, forcing them to move to Bungoma and the Mt. Elgon region (KLC, 1934). The development and success of European settler agriculture in Trans-Nzoia depended on the availability of not only land but also labour and the payment of tax by the Africans, which enhanced the dispersal of particularly the Sabaot from Trans-Nzoia (KLC, 1934). Respondent 19 said in 2018 that the colonialists set up structures to help them run the colony well. This, in turn, led to the institutionalisation of the breakdown of inter-ethnic traditional authority with built-in inter-ethnic bridges and the institutionalisation of inter-ethnic competition in Bungoma. This had started in earnest following the installation of Nabongo Mumia as king under the Native Authority Ordinance (Aseka 1989). Subsequently, the colonialists gained control over North Kavirondo District and all the councils of elders sandwiched under Mumia (Kakai, 2000; Aseka, 1989). This was also followed in 1908 by the dissolution and extension of the traditional boundaries of, for example, the Bukusu and Sabaot and paved the way for the division of Baluhya into Butsotso, Kabrasi, Marama, North Kitosh, Nabakholo, Samia, South Bukusu, and Wanga, further alienating traditional leadership without an equivalent structural substitution to ameliorate inter-ethnic unity in Bungoma (Kakai, 2000; Aseka, 1989).

The colonial Bukusu chiefs not only used force to comply with the colonialists' demands for free labor and tax payment, but the Sabaot also believed that the Bukusu chiefs used excessive force against them more because of their ethnic background, which further fueled Bukusu-Sabaot disunity and the breakdown of inter-ethnic coexistence (RCNECNCI, 2011). Meanwhile, though both the Bukusu and Sabaot were forced to relocate or escape from the colonialists and their agents, the African chiefs, to different directions, where some went to Eldoret, Kapenguria, Kitale, including Uganda, and Tanganyika, particularly the Sabaot, the two never united into a solid group against the Europeans, but subsequently each community united against the other experienced in Bungoma, largely because the colonial displacement of population in Bungoma weakened inter-ethnic linkages while sharpening and strengthening intra-ethnic unity against inter-ethnic integration (RCNECNCI, 2011; KLC, 1934; Wegner, 1949). Two issues were of consequence regarding this inter-ethnic displacement: first, as the members of the two communities moved, the inter-ethnic traditional authority that held the members of the two communities in peace continued to disintegrate because they were no longer bound by the inter-ethnic traditional cultural web. Secondly, the movement later antagonised the Bukusu and Sabaot because, as the Sabaot vacated their farms, they were taken over largely by the Bukusu (RCNECNCI, 2011; KLC, 1934; Kakai, 2000). As gathered from respondent 6 in 2018, the matter worsened due to the fact that since the farms were not registered, it was difficult to determine the real owners even at independence and beyond (Respondent 6:2018). As a result, it became a major point of contention between the Bukusu and Sabaot. Unlike in traditional society, there were no clear-cut judicial procedures for reconciling the two communities; hence, it became a systemic source for the buildup of tension at that time and later in the nature of inter-ethnic conflicts in Bungoma.

As found by respondent 66 in 2019 and confirmed by RCNECNCI (2011), the movement of the Sabaot and Bukusu was shown by the Abakhayo, Abawanga, and Teso settling with the Bukusu in lower Bungoma on the slopes of Mt. Elgon, while the Sabaot moved far away from the colonial chiefs, deep into Mt. Elgon. The disintegration of the colonial chiefs is important Respondent 19 said in 2018 that the importing and settling of foreign communities strengthened the colonial government under Mumia and his assistant Murunga. However, this also led to the breakdown of the spiritual and physical traditional inter-ethnic co-existence fabric, especially between the Bukusu and Sabaot, which led to a hostile relationship between different ethnic groups in Bungoma. In independent Bungoma, the Bukusu, Sabaot, and other smaller communities had more trouble getting along with people from other ethnic groups because there were no clear administrative rules and there was not enough land for everyone. This made it harder to keep the peace. Respondent 19:2018 also said that, even though many Wanga and Teso have become Bukusu or Sabaot,

stereotypes about the two groups, especially from the Bukusu, still exist to this day. In essence, thus, the colonialists sow the seeds of Sabaot, Teso, Wanga, and Bukusu inter-ethnic contests and subsequent hatred.

Equally significant, the colonialists imposed their appointees, particularly African chiefs, to rule over the communities in Bungoma in total disregard of the spiritual and physical cultural underpinnings in the selection of leaders, a cultural practice that had not only evolved intra-ethnic linkages but inter-ethnic bridges, as earlier alluded to, in pre-colonial Bungoma (RCNECNCI, 2011). First, since the appointed chiefs were selected under the whims of the colonial government, they were not fully accepted in their area of jurisdiction, nor did they conform to the traditional, for example, spiritual-cum-physical Bukusu-Sabaot leadership (RCNECNCI, 2011). The Bukusu and the Sabaot resisted Nabongo Mumia. Both the Bukusu and Sabaot communities resisted his assistant Murunga in 1934, and Musa Namutala Mayeku took his place (RCNECNCI, 2011, Kakai, 2000). Jeremiah Kukubo was not only resisted by the Sabaot, who accused him of using *Kibukusu,* his mother tongue, to address public gatherings while aware that the Sabaot did not understand the Bukusu language, but most importantly, it reflected the Sabaot's gradual cultural loss of their evolved linguistic unity and identity over the Bukusu (Kakai, 2000).

Also in the report (RCNECNCI), the elders said that the appointment of Bukusu chiefs over Sabaot chiefs in Bungoma by the colonial government sowed the seeds of inter-ethnic conflict because the Bukusu community was seen as favouring the Sabaot (RCNECNCI, 2011). Equally important, as gathered from respondent 8 in 2018, since the colonialists used the Bukusu Chiefs to exert and execute forced labour, alienation of land, payment of tax, flog, and uproot the dreadlocks of the Sabaot warrior class in the end, it made the Sabaot see the Bukusu as yet another imperial power over them that they had to liberate themselves from, but most importantly, it broke down chances of inter-communal unity at that time and subsequently, particularly after independence (Respondent 8:2018).

Unlike pre-colonial traditional leaders, the colonial African chiefs supervised the oppression of their fellow Africans for the welfare of the colonialists (Imbuye, 2016). Unlike the pre-colonial leaders who encouraged spiritual-physical unity, the colonial chiefs encouraged and enhanced the British divide and rule policies, which put ethnic communities on a collision course. The imposition of the Wanga chiefs over the Bukusu and the Sabaot and the appointment of the Bukusu chiefs over the Sabaot caused suspicion and hatred between the two, spanning colonial periods into independent Kenya. In the same way, respondent 21 said in 2018 that, unlike the traditional elders before colonialism, the colonial spheres of administration were large and included people from different ethnic groups. Because of this, they couldn't use the inter-communal, traditionally accepted indigenous spiritual and secular administrative and judicial procedures (Respondent 21, 2018). First, the report (KLC) and Nguru both agree that colonial areas of jurisdiction were bigger than they were before colonialism. This meant that they had different and sometimes conflicting intercultural foundations (KLC, 1934; Nguru, 2012). In the end, therefore, Chief Tendeti a Sabaot, for example, enhanced the unity of the Sabaot as the Bukusu chiefs did the same; thus, colonial chieftaincy appointed on an ethnic basis increased inter-communal competition more than spiritual cum secular traditional inter-ethnic integration. The disintegration of peace among inter-ethnic communities, particularly the Bukusu and the Sabaot, can be traced to this colonial period of alienating traditional authority while opening inter-ethnic animosity.

Largely thus, since the initial colonial chiefs came from the Bukusu than the Sabaot in Bungoma County, and since the colonial state used them as agents of change to spur the other, they became a source of differentiation between the two communities. The colonial chiefs and headmen benefited from receiving new farming techniques in addition to new seeds (Ochieng & Maxon, 1992).

3.3 Independent Inter-ethnic Transformation of Political Leadership and its Effect on Inter-Ethnic Conflict and Peacebuilding in Bungoma County

As gathered from respondent 8 in 2018, by 1963, the colonial authority had not only alienated and differentiated inter-ethnic traditional structures of inter-ethnic co-existence, particularly eldership, but also replaced them with new colonial centralised administrative structures, which were largely adopted at independence (Respondent 8:2018). According to respondent 19, in 2018, Bukusu-Sabaot inter-ethnic political consciousness was aligned to the ethnic majority and minority community interests within Bungoma and nationally through the Sabaot-led Western Kalenjin Congress of Daniel Moss and KANU of Jomo Kenyatta on the one hand and the Bukusu Masinde Muliro of KADU on the other (Respondent 19:2018). In essence, by 1963, inter-ethnic interests in Bungoma had become part of the wider Kenyan society. The inter-ethnic contest became part and parcel of the contest between KANU and KADU, the then two major ethnically inclined political parties in Kenya, which in subsequent years characterised inter-ethnic peacebuilding and conflict management, particularly because, as stated by respondent 21 in 2018, the Sabaot, unlike the Bukusu, had contributed to the success of KANU, which had made pledges to fulfil for them if they won the election in 1963 (Respondent 21:2018). This was further enhanced when the independent government failed to encourage

traditional institutions of governance like the council of elders and the government's continued intolerance of some economic activities like pastoralism, which largely slowed inter-ethnic integration in Bungoma, which had started in colonial Kenya (Constitution of Kenya Review Commission [CKRC, 2005].
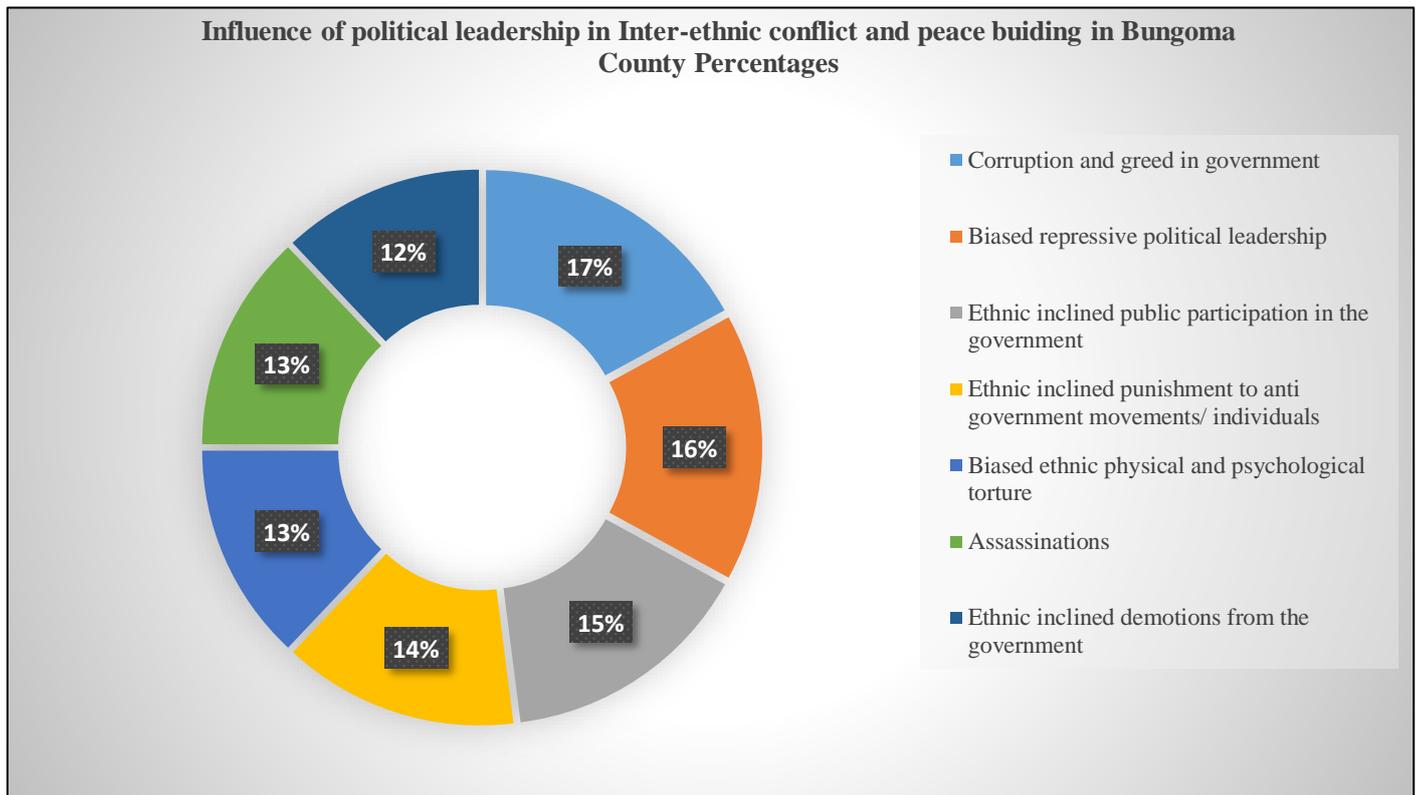

Figure 2
Influence of Political Leadership in Inter-ethnic Conflict and Peace Building

It was, therefore, not surprising that the independent political leadership, which revolved around the presidency and the executive organ of the government, was cited by the respondents as having influenced, particularly the Bukusu-Sabaot conflict and peacebuilding, as illustrated in figure 2, derived from 283 responses. That was in response to the question of whether political leadership influenced inter-ethnic conflict in Bungoma. Inter-ethnic statist political transformation mutated from fueling inter-ethnic (corruption and greed in government 17% (48), biassed repressive political leadership 16% (45), ethnic inclined public participation in government 15% (42), ethnic inclined punishment to anti-government individuals 14% (40), biassed ethnic and psychological torture 13% (37) and ethnic inclined demotion from government 12% (34) to inter-ethnic integration of diversity policies into political leadership, as quantitative and qualitative data are corroborated and addressed subsequently.

There was, for example, concurrence between quantitative scores and qualitative findings that the influence of political leadership on Bukusu and Sabaot in particular had started just before independence, but it was actualized when all executive, judicial, legislative, and discretionary powers were centralised within the office of the president, as it weakened other organs of the government, including inter-ethnic traditional authority (Korwa, 1998; The Constitution of the Republic of Kenya, 1963). The FGD at Kapsokwony established that Kenyatta's presidency, for example, instrumentalized the Sabaot against the Bukusu. Just before independence, the respondent at a FGD 2 in 2018 stated:

Kenyatta gained entry and secured political backing from the Sabaot for his political party KANU by taking advantage of the political rivalry and misunderstanding between Daniel Moss the political leader of the Sabaot and his neighbour Masinde Muliro of KADU the leader of the Bukusu (FGD 2:2018).

The Sabaot accused Masinde Muliro of encouraging the Bukusu and other Luhya communities to occupy and settle in Trans-Nzoia as the white settlers left Kenya at independence, despite the fact that the Sabaot believed they were the rightful owners of Trans-Nzoia because the colonial government had alienated their land, made it a part of the White Highlands, and given it to the White Settlers (RCNECNCI, Similarly, Kenyatta largely influenced the creation of Mt. Elgon Constituency through the electoral commission of Gakia and Chesire, as well as the creation of Elgon Division in 1969 (FGD 2:2018). Earlier, while on a campaign tour of Mt. Elgon in 1963, respondent 66 in 2019 recalled that

Kenyatta, accompanied by Tom Mboya, promised the Sabaot many things, including employment, if they supported KANU' (Respondent 66:2018).

In essence, Kenyatta initially used his position not only to embitter the two communities but also to endear himself more to the Sabaot than to the Bukusu. This was among the reasons why official corruption, which was evident in the early years of his presidency, greed, and ethnically inclined leadership were pointed out by the respondents as having compromised not only the ethics of the nation but also made the presidency lose its neutral arbitral role and its symbolism of unity, initially between the Bukusu and Sabaot in particular and later among inter-ethnic communities in Bungoma County. The two vices were rated highest for influencing inter-ethnic conflict and peacebuilding. Corruption was not only a manifestation of the weakness of the government perpetuated by discretionary and monopolistic powers of the presidency as embedded in the independence constitution but also permitted constitutional amendments that gave leeway to what Nduku and Tenamwenye refer to as 'politics of the belly' characterised by poor leadership emanating from weak institutions of governance, including questionable accountability, weak ethical values, and a weak judicial system (Nduku & Tenamwenye, 2015). At a national conference held as late as 2008, a Sabaot elder complained that though politicians had amended the Lancaster constitution, they sat back and watched corruption eat into national cohesion and integration (RCNECNCI, 2011).

From 1964 to 1988, Kenyatta and later Moi made a lot of changes to the constitution that were driven by politics. These changes limited the opposition, which was mostly led by the pro-government Bukusu under Masinde Muliro rather than the pro-government Sabaot. They also weakened the legislature and judiciary, which helped the ruling party KANU, the presidency, and their loyal followers, including the Sabaot. Subsequently, the constitution lost its contractual role of being accountable to the people, particularly in Bungoma County, and collapsed into a tool of oppression and inter-ethnic disintegration among communities in Bungoma.

Corruption and greed led to biassed, repressive leadership in Bungoma and ethnic-inclined public participation in state affairs, coupled with inter-ethnic suspicion, as demonstrated in Figure 2. Corruption was at the core of poor leadership since it involved elected leaders' sides stepping on people's given mandate to run their affairs (Nduku & Tenamwenye, 2015). Corrupt political leadership created suspicion and hatred among communities because it was driven by dishonesty and illegality and brought about both the perceived and real undue advantage of undeserving cases over the deserving cases, worse still along ethnic lines. In essence, the tension that characterised weakened political leadership in a centralised executive arm of government was concerted and explosive and negatively cut across the right functioning of the government, paving way for inter-ethnic suspicion, animosity, and conflict rather than peacebuilding among the Bukusu and Sabaot in particular, subsequently affecting inter-ethnic coexistence in Bungoma County.

biassed repressive political leadership that happened to favour the community of a person on the Presidency or cronies, like what happened between Kenyatta and Sabaot on the one hand and Bukusu on the other. According to respondent 19 in 2018, it was as a result of increased ethnic-inclined repression of opposition politicians from independence that by 1990 culminated in vigorous movements in support of the multiparty system of government largely supported by the Bukusu than the Sabaot, further compromising the already weak inter-communal unity (Respondent 19:2018).

In the third position, negative ethnicity was identified as having restricted and largely skewed public participation in government. According to respondent 66 in 2019, findings from qualitative data corroborated that patronage and nepotism were both products and causes of corruption, and their impact on the government was evident in the general public's lack of participation due to high political monopolization, wide ethnic divisions, and high levels of in-group favoritism by political leaders (Respondent 66:2019). This was not only against the constitution but also against peacebuilding and conflict management. In essence, the 1963 constitution, upon which Kenyatta and later Moi's government derived their authority, discouraged discrimination based on tribe, exemplified in affording different treatment to different persons in respect of tribe, place of origin, or race, but it was undercut, leading to the fueling of conflict rather than peacebuilding between the Bukusu and Sabaot, which more often engulfed the entire Bungoma (The Constitution of the Republic of Kenya 1963, Article 82 (3)).

Quantitative and qualitative data findings concur with the historical context in which ethnically inclined participation in government started in 1963. This was when the first independent government under President Jomo Kenyatta illegally worked closely with his kin and cronies to the exclusion of other communities. Kenyatta created an ethnically dominant group that controlled the socio-economic and political state in terms of access to education, wealth, and hence status, such that seven years into independence, ethnic entrenchment had formal and informal networks (Hornsby, 2012).

As gathered from respondent 21 in 2018, when the second president of independent Kenya, Moi, took over power in 1978, he surrounded himself with the Kalenjin, whom the Sabaot were part of, thus marginalising the other

communities, including the Bukusu (Respondent 21:2018). The perceived unequal distribution of resources served to highlight this. In essence, both Kenyatta and Moi's administrations created a systemic ethnic disequilibrium that was not only vulnerable to enhancing ethnic tension but also to the disintegration of nationhood into ethnicities, particularly in Bungoma County.

The 1963 constitution vested in the presidency discretionary powers to single-handedly make appointments of senior government officers, for example, the Vice President, Ministers, Junior Ministers, Permanent Secretaries, and Judges, including Police Commissioners, without constitutional checks and balances (The Constitution of Kenya 1963 Articles 22, 24, 61, 108, and 111). It was largely on this background that the Constitution of Kenya Review Commission later set out the process of attaining good governance by entrenching transparency, accountability, fair administration, and corruption-free public officers (CKRC, 2005). After that, the Constitution of Kenya 2010 took note of the gap and limited the president's power by setting up independent commissions and making sure that all presidential appointments or nominations had to be vetted and approved by the National Assembly. For example, Cabinet Secretaries and Principal Secretaries had to be approved by the National Assembly in order to make sure there was ethnic diversity, a clause that came to define county appointments in Bungoma (T.

Biassed ethnic physical and psychological torture, which is, harassment of members of those who appeared to oppose the government, was pointed to as yet another bottleneck that tainted the political leadership role towards influencing inter-ethnic peacebuilding in Bungoma County. According to respondent 19 in 2018, both the Kenyatta and Moi governments had shown anti-parity behavior toward Masinde Muliro, who the Bukusu looked up to as their leader, as they had won over the Sabaot through Daniel Moss. For example, unlike Sabaot leader Daniel Moss, who remained in Kenyatta's cabinet throughout his presidency, Masinde Muliro was sacked as a minister. President Moi was accused of harassing and rigging Masinde Muliro out of the parliamentary election in 1988 (Wandiba, 1996).

Though assassinations of political leaders were pointed to as a factor in political leadership that influenced Bukusu-Sabaot conflict and peacebuilding, such associations were established not directly with the Bukusu nor the Sabaot, but the fear that came along with assassinations created insecurity. Both Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel Moi's governments were associated with and blamed for the assassinations of political leaders, including the murder of Masinde Muliro's parliamentary colleague J.M. Kariuki in 1975, which was blamed on Jomo Kenyatta's administration, while the death of Foreign Affairs Minister Robert Ouko was blamed on Moi's administration (National Steering Committee on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management [NSC], 2011).

While the Constitution of the Independence Era did not specifically mention harassment, the Constitution of 2010 and subsequent parliamentary laws prohibit the infringement upon another individual's dignity by means of intimidation, antagonism, degradation, humiliation, or harassment based on ethnic considerations. This prohibition is outlined in the National Cohesion and Integration Act No. 12 of 2008. The Constitutional Review report demonstrated that there was a need to remove arbitrary restrictions on people's rights by the police and chiefs (CKRC, 2005).

The challenges that persist, as gathered by a member of the FGD held at Cheptais—inter-ethnic inter-group politics that exhibited hostility—challenged the very avenue through which the peacebuilding process could have been achieved (FGD 3:2018). Politicians interested in gaining political mileage tilt inter-ethnic perception. In essence, political leadership uses ethnicity as an instrument to gain political mileage, which compromises inter-ethnic political leadership integration by setting one community against the other, thus jeopardising the chances of the peacebuilding process and its implementation. As gathered from respondent 47 in 2019, this was particularly vicious during national electoral political cycles of five years in Bungoma (Respondent 47:2019). The opportunity provided is the integration of ethnic diversity policies into political parties in Bungoma County, including affirmative action policies (Republic of Kenya, 2014).

IV. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Conclusions

Even though the study looked at the effect of statist inter-ethnic political leadership integration on how inter-ethnic conflict is handled in Bungoma County, it also shows that leadership in either inter-ethnic integration or disintegration is a balancing act. Equally important is that the two types of competing inter-ethnic leadership in Bungoma are not unique to the political leadership in independent Kenya. Instead, they have their roots in inter-ethnic traditional leadership and colonial alienation and differentiation against inter-ethnic integration. This shows how the history of inter-ethnic tensions and ways to make peace with them is constantly changing. Also, the effect of independent statist inter-ethnic integration changed from encouraging ethnic bias (corruption and greed in government, biased repressive leadership, public participation in government, punishment, physical and psychological torture, and demotions) to inter-

ethnic integration of glimpses of inter-ethnic diversity policies into political leadership, including in administration. The pattern establishes the harmony or disharmony in the interconnectedness of statist inter-ethnic political leadership transformation to either inter-ethnic conflict or peacebuilding. Given the negative effects of colonialism's legacy on interethnic injustices in governance, politics, and development in independent Kenya, it is understandable why peacebuilding stumbled in Bungoma. So, even though affirmative action in political leadership, inter-ethnic inter-generational political leadership hybridization, and regional and national integration of inter-ethnic diversity policies in political leadership and development have been identified as important safety valves for continued inter-ethnic political leadership integration in Bungoma County, they must be legally put into place and not depend on the whims of leaders.

4.2 Recommendations

The study recommends strengthened inter-ethnic, institutionally regulated inter-ethnic political leadership transformation and the implementation of inter-ethnic diversity policies in Bungoma. Furthermore, the government surveys and registers all land in Bungoma County while inclusively and amicably dealing with disputed pieces of land. Additionally, it should detach Bukusu-Sabaot ethnic boundaries from political and administrative boundaries. The suggestion for further study is to investigate statist inter-ethnic socio-economic, political, and legal integration in the management of inter-ethnic conflicts in Bungoma County, starting in 2010.

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