

**UTILIZATION OF CULTURE IN PEACE-BUILDING AMONG THE POKOT
AND MARAKWET COMMUNITIES OF ELGEYO MARAKWET AND
BARINGO COUNTIES, KENYA**

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**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Conferment
of the degree of Master of Science in Conflict Resolution and Management of
Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology**

June, 2024

DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work prepared with no other than the indicated sources and support and has not been presented elsewhere for a degree or any other award.

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CERTIFICATION

The undersigned certify that they have read and hereby recommend for acceptance of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology a thesis entitled “**Utilization of Culture in Peace-Building among the Pokot and Marakwet Communities of Elgeyo Marakwet and Baringo Counties, Kenya**”

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to all the women in my life: Foremost, my mother, Atieno Nyar Haya; my grandmother Nyar Amari K'Ousa; my wife, Lenny WaKitung'a and very importantly, my daughter Wusiiza omwala ogwa Luzinga.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I extend my gratitude to the Almighty God for enabling me to embark on and achieve this milestone in my thesis. Additionally, I wish to sincerely acknowledge and express my appreciation to my mentors, Prof. Crispinous Iteyo and Dr Ruth Simiyu, for their unwavering support and encouragement right from the initial stages of conceptualizing the research topic to guiding me through the thesis development. I am also thankful to all the lecturers at the School of Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance (SDMHA) including Prof. Matanga, Prof. Okoth, Prof. Onkware, Dr. Kimokoti, Dr. Odhiambo, Dr. Nabiswa, Dr. Ombachi just mention a few, for their assistance throughout the entire period. It is important to mention the other staff of SDMHA, more specifically, Dr. James Omondi, for his role as the bridge between the administration of SDMHA and me during this process. He ensured that minutes were delivered in time for corrections. My appreciation also goes to the research assistants and guides during the field study, notably Mr. Kimore, Mr. Moses Chesire, the CJPC coordinator who, being a local, provided valuable connections and helped me to secure interviews where there were suspicions. Since the terrain in the study area was very complex, we managed to go through the valleys and hills with the help of Mr. Jacob Kipsiro, alias Kinyozi. I need to extend my gratitude to Mr. Japheth Ogenga for his valuable assistance in data analysis and, finally, not forgetting to mention Mr. Odek Simon, who helped proofread the work. Thank you all; your contribution is very much valued.

ABSTRACT

Sustaining peace is essential for the advancement of any nation or region, and it also fosters cohesion among individuals from various cultural and religious backgrounds. Cultural practices and festivals, while sometimes contributing to conflicts, also hold significant potential as tools for peace-building among the Pokot and Marakwet communities. The persistent conflict between these communities has resulted in loss of life, displacement, and trauma, and traditional response by security agencies alone has proven insufficient in addressing the root causes of the conflict. Therefore, there is a compelling need to explore the role of cultural practices and festivals in contributing to and managing these conflicts, with the aim of fostering lasting peace at the grassroots level. The general objective of this study was to examine the utilization of cultural practices and festivals in peace-building among the Pokot and Marakwet communities of Elgeyo Marakwet and Baringo counties in Kenya. The specific objectives were to interrogate the nature of cultural practices and festivals among the Pokot and Marakwet, Kenya; Assess the effectiveness of cultural Practices and Festivals as Peacebuilding Mechanisms among the Pokot and Marakwet; and Examine the challenges and opportunities faced in using cultural practices and Festivals as Peacebuilding strategy. Research questions complement the research objectives. The study had both policy and academic justifications. The study was anchored on a theoretical framework guided by the principles of Conflict Transformation Theory. The research employed a descriptive research design. The study was conducted in Tiaty Sub-County of Baringo County and Marakwet East Sub-County of Elgeyo Marakwet County, both found within the volatile Kerio Valley region. Senior police officers (Sub-County Police Commander), Assistant County commissioners, sub-county administrators, MCAs, Religious leaders and Chiefs. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), including Faith-Based Organizations with study specifically targeting World Vision Kenya (WVK), Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) and the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission. The population also included opinion leaders such as elders and peace committee members. Moreover, the study involved selecting a sample comprising 384 individuals who were heads of households. Data collection was conducted through questionnaires, interview schedules, and focus group discussions, supplemented by the use of secondary data sources. The quantitative data were analyzed using Statistical Package of Social Science (SPSS) version 25, producing descriptive statistics represented as percentages and frequencies. Meanwhile, the qualitative data underwent content and narrative analysis. The quantitative findings were presented through tables, charts, and graphs. The findings indicated that several prevalent cultural practices in the study area included oath-taking rituals (*muma*) 66.5% of respondents), witchcraft, also known as (*Muma/Mutaat*)(87.3%), cleansing ceremonies (*Barpara*) (77%) of respondents, and consulting traditional seers through methods like throwing shoes or viewing sheep intestines (91.1% o). Furthermore, the research revealed that these cultural activities were effective in contributing to peace-building efforts, with practices like marriage (77.94%), oath-taking (58.8%), respect for elders (69.1%), negotiations (86.8%), traditional pacts (97.1%), and the traditional role of women as mothers (73.5%) all playing a positive role in promoting peace. However, various conflicts were exacerbated by factors such as banditry (75.4%) and the ready availability of small arms and light weapons (97.1%). Despite these challenges, peace-building initiatives led by religious leaders and faith-based organizations have yielded positive results, even in the face of issues like banditry, low levels of literacy, and limited educational attainment. In conclusion, the study underscores the critical role of cultural practices and festivals in the peace-building process between the Pokot and Marakwet communities. As a recommendation, the study advocates for the formal adoption and utilization of these cultural practices and festivities as strategic tools for promoting peace in Kerio Valley.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACC:	Assistant County Commissioner
CPI:	Catholic Peace Initiative
DiPaD:	Daima Initiative Peace and Development
FGDs:	Focus Group Discussions
ISS:	Institute of Security Studies
KRCS:	Kenya Red Cross Society
MCAs:	Members of County Assembly
NGO:	Non-governmental organizations
NPR:	National Police Reservists
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OCPD:	Officer Commanding Police Division
OCS:	Officer Commanding Station
PSC:	Protracted Social Conflict
UN:	United Nations
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
WVK:	World Vision of Kenya

OPERATIONALIZATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

Cultural Festival: These are celebrations of ancient traditions or the way of life of a people that play a pivotal role in the development of societies, predominantly of African descent. They are powerful but latent agents of peace and sustainable development between the Pokot and Marakwet Communities of Baringo and Elgeyo Marakwet Counties.

Cultural Identity: In this study, it is the identity or feeling of belonging to a group such as the Pokot and Marakwet Communities. It constitutes an integral aspect of an individual's self-identity and self-awareness, influenced by factors such as their citizenship, cultural background, faith, societal standing, age group, geographical location, or any social community characterized by its unique customs and practices.

Cultural Practice: Shared perceptions and behaviours, customary activities, rituals and traditions of the Pokot and Marakwet Communities living in Baringo and Elgeyo Marakwet Counties.

Culture: Culture, as defined in this study, is a broad concept encompassing a wide array of abstract elements in social existence, such as values, beliefs, language systems, communication, and customs. They include Cultural Practices and Festivals among the Pokot and Marakwet Communities residing in Baringo and Elgeyo Marakwet Counties.

Festival: A festival is an event ordinarily celebrated by the Pokot and Marakwet Communities that is centred on some characteristic aspect of the two communities.

Kerio Valley Region: In this study, the Kerio Valley region refers to the area covering the Tiaty sub-county in Baringo County and the Marakwet East Sub-County of Elgeyo Marakwet County. The region, habited by Pokot and Marakwet communities, is one of

the most affected by ethnic conflicts in Northern Kenya, with incidences of cattle rustling, banditry and ethnic conflicts being reported frequently.

Nature: In this study, nature has been conceptualized to mean types, commonness, and how cultural practices are presented or performed when they take place.

Peace Building Strategy: This is the development of peaceful and constructive personal, group, and political relationships between the Pokot and Marakwet Communities found in Baringo and Elgeyo Marakwet Counties. These strategies are aimed at resolving and preventing conflict and bringing post-conflict reconciliation on board by addressing human rights, economy prosperity and environmental sustainability within the Kerio Valley Region.

Peace Building: Peacebuilding is a process that seeks to address conflicts through nonviolent means and to convert the cultural and structural circumstances that give rise to harmful or destructive conflicts into harmonious cohabitation between the Pokot and Marakwet communities residing in Baringo and Elgeyo Marakwet Counties.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces this study, which seeks to investigate the utilization of cultural practices and festivals in peacebuilding among the Pokot and Marakwet communities of Baringo and Elgeyo Marakwet Counties, Kenya. It contains the background of the study, the statement of the problem, and the research objectives of the study. It then follows with research questions, justification of the study and finally, the scope.

1.1 Background to the Study

Cultural practices and festivals have served as both a unifying force and a potential source of conflict within communities worldwide. They have been instrumental in fostering social consciousness and promoting cohesion, education, and understanding, regardless of whether they involve international "high art" or local community-based initiatives. According to Bergh and Sloboda (2015), the aesthetic experiences derived from these cultural activities are deeply intertwined with the everyday realities of people's lives. However, the significant contribution of cultural practices and festivals to post-conflict restoration often tends to be overlooked.

Peacebuilding is a multifaceted and intricate process that continues long after the formal cessation of hostilities (ACCORD, 2015). It encompasses a broad spectrum of interactions and involves diverse stakeholders at various levels of governance and development. This process incorporates both top-down and bottom-up approaches, as it engages all affected parties, ranging from local communities to the highest echelons of political leadership, both internally and externally. This realization is gradually gaining ground within peacebuilding efforts in Africa, underscoring the significance of adopting comprehensive, inclusive, and long-term peacebuilding strategies (ACCORD,

2015). Furthermore, peacebuilding is a gradual process that unfolds in distinct phases and cycles. It requires ample time to yield meaningful results, as post-conflict situations demand sustained efforts and activities that need time to solidify and produce tangible outcomes.

Panovkina and Riabova (2019) underline the stark disparity between peace and the presence of war, animosity, resentment, competition, massacre, secret schemes, and deceitful strategies. They underline the importance of peace in fostering harmonious relationships that are essential for meaningful and sustainable development across the globe.

In Australia, Bailey & Oetzel (2014) note that the government has primarily focused on cultural expression through public events, with multicultural festivals serving as significant platforms for public cultural celebrations. They suggest that public festivals, particularly multicultural ones, serve as spaces where ethnic communication is facilitated, and ethnic expression is encouraged.

In different settings, like Venezuela, efforts have been made to establish orchestras and choirs for underprivileged youngsters, with the goal of promoting social inclusion and enhancing self-assurance. Similarly, in the Philippines, theatre troupes travel around Mindanao, using their performances to advocate for peaceful coexistence among Muslim, Christian, and Indigenous communities. These cases emphasize the strong link between culture and endeavours to foster peace. Nevertheless, the authors note that many global peace-building organizations often overlook the cultural dimension. Government policies frequently fail to acknowledge culture as a crucial tool for managing conflicts and nurturing peace, indicating that culture remains sidelined in the domain of peace-building initiatives. This disregard may be attributed to cultural

approaches being perceived as "soft" within a field already deemed "soft" in comparison to the "hard" issues of conflict and violence. Additionally, the predominance of peace-building practitioners with backgrounds in social and political sciences rather than the arts and humanities may contribute to this neglect, as the methodologies are not readily accessible.

Cultural diplomacy and festivals have played a significant role in fostering unity and promoting development in various African nations. For example, in South Africa, the Department of Arts and Culture has increased its support for cultural initiatives, notably the National Arts Festival, which spans approximately 10 days starting in late June (Ingemar *et al*, 2011). The objective is to promote the appreciation of cultural diversity as a means to prevent internal conflicts (Georghiou, 2015).

Similarly, Nigeria has effectively utilized the National Festival for Arts and Culture (NAFEST), known as the unity festival, to enhance national unity by showcasing the nation's diverse and vibrant cultural heritage. The hosting of this festival rotates among various states in the federal government (Lorngurum and Tsevende, 2013). Despite these endeavours, Nigeria has grappled with persistent conflicts rooted in ethnicity, often triggered by the emergence of groups such as the Oodua People Congress (O.P.C), Arewa People Congress (A.P.C), The Movement for the Survival of Ogoni People (MOSOP), Egbesu boys, and the Pan Igbo youth federation, among others (Jegede, 2000).

In Kenya, the Marsabit Lake Turkana Cultural Festival (MLTCF) succeeded a series of other cultural events, including the establishment of the African Institute for Capacity Development (AICAD) in 2002, jointly managed by the governments of Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. This initiative aims to promote cultural diversity in academia

among the participating countries, emphasizing the exchange of agricultural knowledge between Kenyan and Japanese scholars for mutual benefits. Another significant effort is the Tuelewane Youth Exchange Program to Enhance Peace (TYEPEP), designed to address various obstacles hindering the achievement of the millennium development goals (MDGs) for young people (Ingemar, Hazle, Denise, Billy & Ziso, 2011).

According to Naibei (2012), Kenya has long struggled with conflicts among different communities due to factors like chronic poverty, economic disparities, and cultural differences (Gibbons, 2014). For example, the land dispute in Mount Elgon resulted in the formation of community militia groups such as the Sabaot Land Defense Force (SLDF), although the Kenyan government, with the backing of the defence forces, has managed to stabilize the situation (Waithaka, 2013). Similarly, as highlighted by Coombes et al. (2013), the Lamu Multicultural Festivals and Mombasa Carnival have played a crucial role in promoting unity among the diverse coastal communities.

The issue of conflict has deeply affected communities, particularly those residing in the North Rift area, where disputes primarily arise from cattle theft among pastoralist communities, whose livelihoods rely heavily on livestock. These conflicts often lead to loss of life, damage to property, and hindered development in the region. Festivals serve as a platform for visitors to observe how local communities celebrate their culture, facilitating intercultural communication and providing opportunities for people to engage in leisure activities. Peace, characterized by the absence of violence, is crucial for the development of a multi-cultural and multi-religious country like Kenya, where various tribes and languages coexist (Calas, 2008).

The Pokot and Marakwet groups primarily rely on herding livestock. Their lifestyle, revolving around the semi-arid terrain and nomadic existence, fosters an ongoing

struggle for limited water and grazing land, ultimately leading to armed disputes between them. These conflicts stem from various factors within these communities, including their historical background, issues related to agriculture and animal grazing, control over natural resources, and the influence of policies driven by the elite (Gate *et al.*, 2012).

According to Noonan (2018), the clashes between the Pokot and Marakwet communities have deep-rooted cultural origins that can be traced back through history. Within the regions, the enduring traditions and cultural norms have significantly compounded the negative effects of conflict and marginalization. Moreover, there exists a prevalent notion within these communities that considers gender matters as foreign and irrelevant in the context of peacebuilding.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Cultural practices and festivals can cause and sustain conflicts; in the same breath, their contribution to peace cannot be ignored. Cultural practices and festivals assume important functions for social dynamization and evoke the principle of positive associations. The ongoing conflict between the Pokot and Marakwet communities, deeply rooted in cultural practices, has led to a significant loss of life, extensive displacement, and psychological trauma within these societies. While the Kenyan government has attempted to address the issue by deploying national security forces and pursuing legal action against the perpetrators, this approach has not yielded a lasting solution to the underlying tensions between the two groups (Martin, 2012). Despite these interventions, the conflicts persist and have, in some instances, even escalated over time.

There is an argument to be made for supplementing the state's intervention with additional approaches that seek to address the root causes of the conflict by understanding the underlying dynamics at play (Mwagiru, 1997). Recent years have witnessed a notable escalation in the intensity and frequency of the conflict within the Kerio Valley region, resulting in a staggering toll in terms of human lives and property. However, the lack of comprehensive research addressing the fundamental factors contributing to this conflict remains a significant challenge.

Given the potential influence of cultural practices and festivals on peace, their role in both fuelling and managing conflicts cannot be overlooked. These cultural events offer local communities an avenue to celebrate and exchange their customs, showcasing the values and beliefs intrinsic to each community. They promote interaction and understanding among community members, fostering an appreciation for different ways of life. While these shared cultural practices and festivals are expected to serve as peacebuilding mechanisms, the persisting conflicts in the region challenge this assumption, highlighting the need for further research. Recognizing the necessity for more profound grassroots peacebuilding and reconciliation efforts, it becomes imperative to explore all possible opportunities that can contribute to this goal.

Cultural practices and festivals, while sometimes contributing to conflicts, also hold significant potential as tools for peace-building among the Pokot and Marakwet communities in the Kerio Valley region, Kenya. The persistent conflict between these communities has resulted in loss of life, displacement, and trauma, and state response alone has proven insufficient in addressing the root causes of the conflict. Therefore, there is a compelling need to explore the role of cultural practices and festivals in

contributing to and managing these conflicts, with the aim of fostering lasting peace at the grassroots level.

1.3 Research Objectives

The overall objective of this study was to examine the utilization of cultural practices and festivals in peace-building among the Pokot and Marakwet communities of Elgeyo Marakwet and Baringo counties in Kenya. The specific objectives were to

- i. Interrogate the nature of cultural practices and festivals among the Pokot and Marakwet of Elgeyo Marakwet and Baringo Counties, Kenya.
- ii. Assess the effectiveness of cultural Practices and Festivals in Peace building among the Pokot and Marakwet of Elgeyo Marakwet and Baringo Counties, Kenya.
- iii. Examine the challenges and opportunities faced in using cultural practices and Festivals in Peace building among the Pokot and Marakwet of Elgeyo Marakwet and Baringo Counties, Kenya.

1.4 Research Questions

- i. What is the nature of the cultural practices and festivals among the Pokot and Marakwet of Elgeyo Marakwet and Baringo Counties, Kenya?
- ii. How effective are the cultural practices and festivals used in peace building among the Pokot and Marakwet of Elgeyo Marakwet and Baringo Counties, Kenya?
- iii. What challenges and opportunities emerge in using cultural practices and festivals in peace building among the Pokot and Marakwet of Elgeyo Marakwet and Baringo Counties, Kenya?

1.5 Justification of the Study

Conflict between and among pastoralist communities is no doubt a vice that inflicts pain on the communities involved and slows down development to a halt. It affects almost all sectors of society, including education, transport, agriculture, and the general livelihood of the people. It has been a common phenomenon characterizing pastoralism in different parts of the Eastern African region since the pre-colonial period to date and has resulted in deaths, displacement of people, and loss of property, among other consequences. This study addresses peace from a cultural perspective and has both academic and policy justification.

1.5.1 Academic Justification

This research contributes to the growing body of literature addressing the intersection of culture and peacebuilding, particularly in the context of Kenya. The study findings offer valuable insights for the local community, scholars, international partners, and policymakers, including the Kenyan government and the county government of Elgeyo Marakwet.

Ogonor (2004) underscores the natural occurrence of disagreements among people, emphasizing that the effective management of conflict, rather than its mere existence, is crucial for fostering sustainable development in regions like the Kerio Valley. While ongoing efforts continue to focus on conflict management and resolution, culture remains a significant factor in peacebuilding initiatives. This study significantly adds to the existing literature on the role of cultural festivals in promoting peace, addressing a critical gap in understanding the integration of cultural events within conflict resolution strategies. Mulu's (2008) assertion on conflict management skills and the establishment of effective conflict resolution structures highlights the importance of

such measures in fostering peace, yet it falls short in exploring the potential role of cultural festivals in this process.

A study by Korir (2009) revealed that the Peace Committee was essential in the Amani Mashinani Model, which was used as a peace-building strategy between the Pokot and Marakwet communities. In the study, Bishop Korir revealed that the Peace Committee took part in projects like building schools and roads and destroyed homes. These grass root projects helped build the experience of communities to work together so as to reduce tension and foster solidarity across ethnic boundaries. For example, constructing cattle dips in neutral areas proved effective in promoting peace between the Pokot and Marakwet communities in the Diocese. These cattle dips brought people together, facilitating interaction and reducing cattle rustling by preventing disease-related cattle loss and aiding in the identification of stolen livestock. The current study is different from that of Korir (2009) and The Study by Kilonzo & Onkware (2021) because both studies were based on the Amani Mashinani Model, which focused on the role of grassroots development projects as a pathway for peacebuilding as opposed to the utilization of culture towards peacebuilding which is the main focus of the current study.

Additionally, the current study is also different from the study conducted by Aiyabei (2021), which focused on the nexus between socio-cultural factors and conflict dynamism in Kerio Valley. In Aiyabei's study, the focus was on socio-cultural engines that powered conflicts in the study area, with cattle rustling and ethnic identity related to cattle ownership being the major areas of discussion. Therefore, the current study is different from previous studies in Kerio valley because it focuses on the utilization of culture towards peacebuilding, which has not been explored by previous studies in the

area. Therefore, this study bridges the literature gap and seeks to generate knowledge by examining how cultural factors influence peace, social cohesion, and development in the Kerio Valley.

1.5.2 Policy Justification

This research provides empirical discoveries that hold significant importance for scholars of peace and stakeholders involved in the Multicultural and Livelihoods through Culture Festival (MLTCF), including the National Government of Kenya, the County Government of Elgeyo Marakwet, and international partners such as the German Embassy and PISP, as well as the local communities within the Kerio Valley region. The insights obtained from this study serve as a comprehensive assessment document of needs, offering a foundation for stakeholders to implement appropriate measures aimed at fostering enduring peace, social unity, and development in the Kerio Valley region, Kenya, and potentially other global regions.

Of special significance is the pertinence of this research for the government, as it can inform the development of policies in domains related to peacebuilding, conflict resolution, and overall progress, both within the studied area and in other parts of the nation. Presently, there exists a gap in the formulation of explicit and specific government policies concerning culture in the context of peacebuilding and development. The National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC), an independent commission devoted to promoting social cohesion and peacebuilding in the country, is another crucial stakeholder in this context. Considering that the Kerio Valley region presents an ongoing challenge for the NCIC due to recurrent conflicts between ethnic groups, the findings of this study will serve as a vital input to the commission's agenda in its efforts to achieve its primary objectives.

1.6 Scope of the study

Geographically, this research confined its scope to the Kerio Valley region within the North Rift area. Specifically, the study targeted two counties, namely Elgeyo Marakwet County and Baringo County. Within Baringo County, the research was conducted in Tiaty Sub- County, while in Elgeyo Marakwet County, the focus was on Marakwet East Sub- County. Both of these sub-counties are situated within the Kerio Valley region, which has grappled with conflicts over a considerable period. The study primarily emphasized the use of cultural practices and festivals in fostering peace between the conflicting communities of the two neighbouring sub-counties.

The region is characterized by a deficient road network and heightened insecurity attributed to issues such as cattle theft, banditry, and ethnic disputes, all of which posed security challenges for the researcher. Consequently, the researcher collaborated closely with the local national administration and influential community leaders to access the remote areas. The study's timeframe spanned from 1990 to 2022, encompassing a comprehensive review of the conflict history in the Kerio Valley region, the various approaches employed to resolve conflicts, an in-depth examination of the evolution of cultural practices over time, and the role of cultural festivals in fostering peace within the county. Data collection took place in the study area between September 2022 and November 2022.

1.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an introduction to this study, which aimed to evaluate the utilization of cultural practices and festivals to promote peace in the Baringo and Elgeyo Marakwet counties of Kenya. The chapter was divided into several sub-sections, which

included the study's background to the study, statement of the problem, research objectives, research questions, justification and scope of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section examines academic literature from multiple studies in which the investigator examined prior research on the subject and provides an evaluation of the existing literature. Consequently, this section specifically covers the following aspects: an examination of the characteristics of cultural practices and festivals, an evaluation of the efficiency of the cultural practices and festivals employed for peacebuilding among the Pokot and Marakwet, an analysis of the obstacles and prospects faced by the Marakwet in utilizing cultural practices and festivals for peacebuilding, the theoretical framework, and finally, it highlights the deficiencies in the existing literature.

2.1 Nature of Cultural Practices and Festivals

Cultural festivals play a vital role in the advancement of communities and nations, impacting their history, culture, economy, and social fabric significantly. Throughout history, these festivals have served to shed light on the deep origins of clans, families, and ethnic communities, serving as tools for expressing the historical traditions of these groups. Azar (2009) agrees that cultural festival events typically portray the traditional history of a particular group of people.

2.1.1 Cattle Rustling as Cultural Activity

Livestock plays diverse roles in the lives of pastoralists across various regions of Africa, serving as crucial means of sustenance and also possessing socio-cultural and religious significance while functioning as valuable assets that provide protection against risks (Guliye *et al.*, 2007). For example, livestock serves as a primary source of nourishment, offering milk and meat, and forms the foundation of traditional social bonds, such as the exchange of dowries during marriage or compensation for damages in inter-tribal

disputes. Additionally, livestock symbolizes prosperity and social status, serves as a form of wealth storage, and acts as a safeguard against drought, diseases, and other calamities. Cattle rustling, a long-standing economic practice in numerous African communities, has been a significant source of conflicts among communities residing in different parts of the continent (Kaimba *et al*, 2011). This issue has resulted in fatalities and the loss of property in various regions.

There is a far wider range of factors that contribute to conflict among Africa's pastoralists. To a large extent, pastoral migration disregards international borders. One of the difficulties pastoralists have in the modern day is the cross-border disputes that are triggered by this disdain for national boundaries and frontiers (UN-OCHA, 2008). Where there is a great demand for scarce natural resources, there is a high risk of cross-border war. Current conflicts in Africa are exacerbated by competing for scarce natural resources (UN-OCHA, 2008). Among the recognised inter-ethnic disputes in North Kenya's pastoralist groups was contention over the allocation of water and grazing land (Haro, Doyo and McPeak, 2003). Scarcity of pastoral resources due to drought, widespread land use by the state, and growth of farming in the high lands are the primary causes of the emergence and worsening of conflicts in Ethiopia's Afar region (Simpkin, 2005; Bekele, 2008).

Traditions of banding together to face common foes fuel widespread ethnic strife (Yohannes, Kassaye & Zerihun, 2005). Collective fighting and information sharing are two ways in which the Afar clan of Ethiopia expresses its strong ethos of clan loyalty and shared punishments (often in livestock) (Bekele, 2008). Pastoralists in Ethiopia's South Omo zone are deeply ashamed if they are unable to get retribution for a family attack, as reported by Yohannes, Kassaye, and Zerihun (2005). As a result, retaliatory

acts of violence and looting are often praised in this region (Yohannes, Kassaye and Zerihun, 2005). Arnold and Alden (2007) argue that in South Sudan, particularly in Nuer society, the acquisition of cattle is elevated in importance due to the dowry system. Those who are economically disadvantaged often find alternative ways to satisfy their cultural needs (Yohannes, Kassaye and Zerihun, 2005). Korir (2009) argued conflicts between Pokot and Marakwet warriors, triggered by cattle rustling, erupted in the Kerio Valley.

According to Bekele (2008), the commercialization of cattle raiding, both within and across international borders, is a major contributor to violence in pastoralist regions. Historically, cattle raiding has played a significant role in South Sudan's economic and social structures (Arnold & Alden, 2007). Cattle raiding was the root cause of the ongoing war between the Lou Nuer and the Murle in South Sudan (Africa Report, 2009). In Northern Kenya and Northern Uganda, protracted outbreaks of pastoralist warfare have been mostly caused by the easy availability of weapons among pastoralists (UN-OCHA, 2008). South Sudanese civilians armed themselves in the states of Jonglei and Upper Nile (Arnold & Alden, 2007). The improved availability of current warfare technology has led to the persistence of global war (Yohannes, Kassaye and Zerihun, 2005; Bekele, 2008). Cattle raids against neighbours were considerably assisted by gun ownership and militia involvement (the white Army in South Sudan) (Arnold and Alden, 2007).

In addition to cattle raiding, the kidnapping of children is a major cause of conflict in South Sudan, notably among the Murle ethnic group (Africa Report N°154, 2009). Conflicts across national borders were exacerbated by weak local governments. UN-OCHA (2008) found that most African local governments lacked the resources to avert

conflicts between transnational pastoralists. Conflict over limited pasture and water supplies in Africa is exacerbated by many governments' failure to take pastoralist societies into account when formulating land use plans. To make matters worse, national and state authorities in the Horn of Africa have implemented policies that either ignore or undermine traditional governance structures.

Cattle theft has remained a continuous cause of conflict in multiple African nations, including Madagascar, which has struggled with ethnic tensions for decades. On the island of Madagascar, Zebu Cattle, with their distinctive hump, are highly prized. Cattle are highly valued by the Malagasy people because of their symbolic meaning as Wealth, their culinary value in celebrations like weddings and burial rites, and their sacrifice in acts of ancestral worship (CCTV Africa, 2016).

The Dahalo people of Madagascar are known for stealing cattle both for economic and cultural reasons. In Madagascar, animal theft is a common form of displaying masculinity among young men (CCTV Africa, 2016). The government of Madagascar has banned the trading of cattle with the neighbouring island of Comoros, although it has been alleged that stolen animals are nonetheless regularly transferred to Comoros (CCTV Africa, 2016). Animal theft has been a major contributor to crime and violence on the Island for many years. In the most recent incident of Cattle Rustling, which occurred at the end of 2015, up to 161 individuals were killed, including 12 government forces, and dozens more were gravely injured in the community clashes that ensued (CCTV Africa, 2016).

Cattle rustling is a serious problem in many countries, and Kenya is one of such countries. Kaprom (2013) suggested that rustling cattle is an important part of the local culture in many pastoralist communities in Kenya. Pastoralist societies have preserved

their cultural practises and customs across several millennia. Many of these groups are still entirely dependent on pastoralism for their survival and practise a nomadic way of life. Cattle are viewed as a "valued asset, a wealth reserve, and a sacrificial gift" by many pastoralist societies, and their owners will go to great lengths to safeguard their herds and increase their herd size (Kaprom, 2013).

Large herds of livestock were traditionally viewed as a source of economic security, riches, and social status in many pastoral communities. Cattle ownership is highly prized and fundamental to the pastoralist way of life. Culture dictates that a successful member of a pastoral community must have the largest herd of cattle, putting a great deal of stress on these societies (Schilling, Opiyo, & Scheffran, 2012). Certain groups in Kenya, such as the Rendille, Samburu, Gabra, and Borana, are notorious for publicly mocking their male members through song for failing to amass fortune through livestock raiding (Kaprom, 2013). One method of perpetuating ethnic disputes is to shame the victims into going on cattle raids against neighbouring tribes.

Kaimba, *et al* (2011) state that the cultural and historical significance of cattle rustling in some regions just adds to the complexity of the issue. Livestock rustling, for example, has been a source of tension between the Pokot and her neighbours, the Samburu and the Marakwet, for decades because of the Pokot's myth of origin and the conviction that all cattle belong to the Pokot. Seers have a vested economic and political interest in promoting the cultural system that gives them their position of power; hence, they have a vested interest in maintaining the cultural belief in raiding (McSherry & Brass, 2008). Since the 1970s, there has been a rise in the availability of small arms and light weapons, which has made cattle rustling even more complicated. Warrior groups who historically utilised spears in their raids have since acquired contemporary weaponry,

which has increased the momentum for stealing cows from neighbours, which is characterised by bloodshed and the loss of lives (Kumssa, *et. al*, 2009).

2.1.2 Dowry payment and Bride wealth

Onyango (2016), argues that dowry, known as bride-wealth payment, is a prevalent custom in numerous African communities. In the context of traditional African societies, the practice of bride-wealth had both advantageous and detrimental impacts, as it served as a cornerstone for the establishment of patriarchy. In these traditional African societies, bridewealth involved the exchange of goods and services from the groom and his relatives to the bride's family. Historically, this exchange often included the suitor presenting livestock to the father or family of the bride-to-be.

Indigenous African societies view the custom of bride wealth payment or dowry as a crucial component of traditional marital practices. This custom boasts a rich history, as noted by Diala and Diala (2017). In the past, this payment often took the form of services or labour provided by the groom to the family of the bride, as discussed by Ogbu in 1978. In specific regions like South-East Nigeria, such services encompassed tasks such as tending to the prospective father-in-law's farmland, gathering firewood, and fulfilling various designated duties for a specified duration, according to Diala and Diala (2017). Bride wealth also manifested itself in symbolic material forms, including cowries, livestock, and provisions.

Southern Africa provides a clear demonstration of the symbolic importance of this practice, as elucidated by Dlamini (1985). Within the traditional Zulu society, the expectation for the groom to pay a fixed amount was not mandated. Instead, he was required to provide an initial number of cattle, typically no more than five. This facilitated a future avenue for the father-in-law to seek assistance from the groom.

Consequently, the groom was seen as a helper, aligning with the belief that "umkhwenyana isigodo sokuqhuzula" (a groom is a log for clearing the way). This perception would not have been the same if an excessive amount was initially expected. Furthermore, the groom was not obligated to surrender the entire *ilobolo*, as discussed by Rudwick and Posel (2014). The problems linked to the introduction of a monetary system contributed to the misuse of *ilobolo*, as highlighted by Nkosi (2013). As a cultural institution, bride wealth served and continues to serve various crucial functions in the context of marriage.

First, it functioned as a symbolic validation of marriage. The deliberate use of the past tense for this purpose is noteworthy. Despite the continued significance of bridewealth in affirming the validity of marriage across many African nations, its role has been weakened by legal regulations. South Africa and Zimbabwe, for instance, no longer mandate the payment of bridewealth as a prerequisite for the legal recognition of a customary marriage.

In East Africa, the colonial administrations and their successors generally aimed to dissuade individuals from entering into customary marriages that involved the exchange of bridewealth, as stated by Diala and Diala (2017). For example, section 43(2) of Kenya's 2014 Marriage Act stipulates that a token payment is sufficient evidence of a customary marriage where bridewealth is customary. As previously mentioned, the erstwhile Eastern Nigerian government made unsuccessful attempts to impose limits on the amounts payable as bridewealth.

Secondly, the bridewealth guarantees specific legal entitlements for the groom. Although there is debate regarding the precise nature of these entitlements, some argue

that they involve the transfer of the woman's reproductive capacity from her family to her husband's family. From this perspective, the payment of bridewealth transfers rights over the children born during and even after the marriage to the husband, as noted by Diala and Diala (2017). In South-East Nigeria, this right is revoked only when the bridewealth is returned due to divorce. It can be argued that the payment of bridewealth grants a man authority over the domestic and intimate services provided by his wife.

Thirdly, many consider bridewealth as a form of recompense to the bride's family for the loss of her labour. Although this role stems from the agrarian lifestyle prevalent in African families before colonization, it continues to persist, albeit to varying extents, in numerous regions, as outlined by Diala and Diala (2017). Robertson asserts that women's labour has historically formed the basis of subsistence both within and outside of the household, thus justifying the payment of bridewealth as compensation.

Fourthly, bridewealth establishes a unique social tie between families that were previously unrelated. In fact, in most precolonial African societies, marriage was viewed as an alliance between two families rather than a contract between two individuals, a dynamic that has now largely transformed. Consequently, the rights and privileges associated with marriage, particularly the negotiation of bridewealth, were occasionally determined and influenced by the families of the couple, as elucidated by Diala and Diala (2017). Within this union of families, bridewealth functioned as a guarantee of good behaviour, particularly on the part of the man, who is obligated to either return it or forfeit it in cases where he is responsible for the breakdown of the marriage.

Lastly, bridewealth functioned as an acknowledgement of a woman's maturity, fertility, and her role in the act of creation. This acknowledgement is the reason why customary marriage in many regions of Africa typically involves an almost ceremonial process that couples must undergo before commencing their lives together as husband and wife, as discussed by Rudwick and Posel (2014). A part of this ceremonial process encompasses a series of visits and the exchange of gifts, culminating in the negotiation and payment of bridewealth, according to Diala and Diala (2017). In South-East Nigeria, the amount of bridewealth often hinges on the negotiating capabilities and skills of both families. In the recent past, a bundle of broomsticks or stones was utilized to signify the agreed-upon sum to be paid. Diala and Diala (2017) argued that, according to Iroegbu, these sticks carry both "metaphoric and symbolic" meanings, generally representing the value that the bride's family places on her virtues and accomplishments. As will be discussed shortly, this quantification of women's value played a significant role in distorting the significance of bridewealth.

According to Kaimba *et al.* (2011), In Kenyan pastoralist societies, livestock constitutes the fundamental basis of customary social connections, encompassing the transfer of dowry from the groom's family to the bride's family during marriage ceremonies. Kimani and Masiga (2020) contended that, traditionally, cattle rustling served as one of the methods through which young men of marriageable age acquired bridewealth. As a traditional activity, it functioned as a form of organized sport and required the approval and blessing of the elders. Traditional values, such as high bridewealth and ceremonies like *sapana* among the Pokot, which could be likened to a ceremony for introducing oneself to the community, were identified as some of the motivations behind cattle rustling.

2.1.3 Traditional Cultural initiation

Indigenous communities perform rituals and ceremonies that signify the passage of young males into adulthood. Keen (2010) points out that in early societies, the achievement of manhood was a deliberate and collective event intended to foster a new sense of self. These rites of passage encompass various physical trials aimed at severing connections to childhood and enabling a transformation into a new identity. A global examination of cultural methods for male maturation demonstrates that males experience diverse cultural practices during their socialization. Research by Listverse Staff (2009) illuminates the initiation of boys from the Algonquin Indian Tribe of Quebec into adulthood. Similarly, a local investigation in North Africa, especially among Ethiopia's Harmar tribe, illustrates the different cultural procedures boys undergo to transition into men. Moreover, Brett and McKay (2010) explain the rigorous rite of passage known as *krypteia* for Spartan youth. They also suggest that boys from the Satere Mawe tribe in the Brazilian Amazon endure a painful process of cultivating stoicism and enduring life's challenges. In Africa, boys are not considered men until they go through specific cultural practices, ensuring a proper shift from boyhood to adulthood. These initiation ceremonies sometimes involve painful circumcision and body scarification (Wong, 2016). According to Khumalo (2009), the Xhosa, Rwandese, and Zambian boys undergo initiation into manhood through circumcision.

Across various parts of Africa, male circumcision is primarily practised as a ceremonial rite of passage into adulthood. Although specific details may vary within the region and despite certain changes in the ritual over time, this practice typically occurs in non-clinical settings under the supervision of traditional practitioners. This distinguishes it as traditional or ritual circumcision rather than medical or clinical circumcision. Within

the Xhosa community, the traditional male circumcision ceremony is regarded as highly private and sacred (Vincent, 2008). It holds significant social importance, symbolizing a young boy's integration into the community and earning him recognition and respect from fellow community members (Stinson, 2008). Consequently, this rite not only signifies the shift from childhood to manhood but also bestows the initiate with full membership in the tribal society, leading to a change in status and the development of a new identity.

Male circumcision is a customary rite of passage in the Xhosa tradition, typically performed on young boys between the ages of 15 and 25, although cases involving initiates much younger than that are not unusual. Thus, as Stinson (2008) emphasizes, male circumcision is not inherently associated with physical maturity and age. In contrast to Western legal systems, which frequently establish the age of majority as the legal age of consent, Xhosa cosmology does not exclusively attribute adulthood to chronological age, as Vincent (2008) emphasizes. Male maturation in the Xhosa culture is not signified by a particular age, but rather by the initiation journey to a location known as "the mountain."

Male circumcision is customarily observed in the West African Balante society subsequent to the age of 40, which stands in opposition to the Xhosa tradition (Niang and Boiro, 2007). On the contrary, alternative West African ethnic groups, including the Wolof and the Manding, traditionally engage in this ceremonial practice between the ages of six and thirteen (Niang and Boiro, 2007). Additionally, it is worth noting that the observance of initiation and circumcision does not invariably coincide within a singular ceremony. In some West African communities, the passage of a certain number

of years following circumcision is a prerequisite for initiation to take place. On the contrary, initiation occurs before circumcision in other ethnic groups (Niang and Boiro, 2007:26). Another significant distinction relates to the frequency at which circumcision takes place. Male circumcision is a cultural custom that is observed biannually by the Xhosa people, precisely in June for the onset of winter and December for the onset of summer. On the other hand, specific West African communities adhere to a ritual of circumcision every four to six years, with some observing them every sixteen years (Niang & Boiro, 2007).

The customary practice of circumcision in South Africa is often associated with the idioms "going to the bush" or "going to the mountain" as a result of the historical positioning of initiation schools in secluded regions, distant from the populace, and frequently in relatively untamed, uncultivated areas. In recent years, however, space constraints have necessitated the establishment of initiation schools in close proximity to the community. The deviation from the conventional method of seclusion has led to the lack of favorability of these institutions among prospective initiates, a sentiment that is especially conspicuous in the Western Cape, as corroborated by the interviews carried out for this research. As a result, the Eastern Cape continues to be the preferred site for traditional male circumcision due to its strict observance of the seclusion practice.

Rituals often provoke doubt and are erroneously perceived as devoid of purpose by individuals lacking familiarity with the cultural milieu. In support of ritual practices, Durkheim argues that a mental mechanism imbues the seemingly irrational and outwardly meaningless actions with moral significance (Durkheim, 1976). Rituals can be defined more precisely as a mechanism through which individuals of a given society

impart teachings and values via symbolic, social, and psychological exchanges (Stinson, 2008). On the contrary, rituals may also be interpreted as a method of "constructing" tradition in order to validate continuity with the past and promote the notion that tradition is immutable (Hobsbawm & Ranger, as cited in Bell, 1992). In general, rituals comprising three distinct phases comprise traditional male circumcision: separation, transition, and incorporation (Funani, 1990). Despite variations in specifics, the majority of communities that engage in circumcision adhere to this three-part categorization. Frequently, a symbolic act is performed to commence the separation phase, signifying the initiate's disconnection from their previous state. An illustration of this can be seen in the Xhosa culture, where the prospective initiate exchanges their previous garments for blankets from younger siblings and relatives as a symbolic gesture of a complete separation from the past (Vincent, 2008: 435). The separation period in the West African Balante society is marked by a profound sense of melancholy that permeates the village and results in the cessation of all recreational pursuits (Niang & Boiro, 2007).

In West Africa, individuals who are ready to be circumcised partake in spiritual readiness, which entails performing ritual purification and atoning for any transgressions, on the grounds that "only those who are pure are fit to undertake the sacrifice" (Niang and Boiro, 2007). As a result of heightened susceptibility to malevolent supernatural forces and evil spirits, noncompliance with this spiritual preparation is thought to potentially lead to fatality during the circumcision retreat (Niang and Boiro, 2007). Current regulations in South Africa require all prospective initiates to pass a medical examination prior to undergoing the traditional procedure,

which renders pre-ritual preparation substantially more pragmatic. As to whether this law is strictly enforced, however, remains unknown. A multitude of communities in Kenya display a wide array of cultural practices pertaining to the initiation of males. Male circumcision is observed by numerous communities as a rite of passage into maturity, although the specifics of the rituals may differ (Finke, 2000). Member tribes such as the Meru, Gusii, Samburu, and others observe this practice. Distinctive rituals of passage into manhood are incorporated into the Samburu and Turkana initiation ceremonies. Turkana males partake in the Atapan initiation ceremony, whereas Samburu boys are subjected to the rite of circumcision. Notwithstanding the variations in these initiation ceremonies, the underlying principle remains unchanged: every community imparts the duties and positions of masculinity to its young men through the initiation process. Particular qualities, characteristics, and responsibilities are bestowed upon those who partake in these rituals; these establish their masculine roles. Attaining a sense of physical superiority over both male and female counterparts is a mindset fostered by the Turkana's transition into adulthood.

2.1.4 Marriage

In a study, Kioko and Bolling (2015) discovered that despite differences in intermarriage patterns between the Kikuyu and Maasai populations, these unions create bonds between in-laws and their extended social networks. These connections bridge the gap between the Kikuyu kin and Maasai friends and family. Notably, relationships between in-laws not only benefit those directly involved but also have the potential to impact the broader circle of friends and neighbours. In-law relationships serve as a means to negotiate access to property, thereby benefiting the larger social group.

Typically, land is allocated to in-laws and a select group of acquaintances and family members. While the Kikuyu are considered more socially advanced in terms of providing wives, the Maasai hold a higher social status as landowners in comparison to their Kikuyu tenants. Hence, this reciprocal social connection establishes a mutual debt between the two parties, often characterized as a trade of daughters for property. Consequently, potential property disputes become a concern within the family rather than a source of conflict between ethnic groups. This dynamic facilitates the resolution of disagreements and prevents instances of large-scale competition.

In addition to securing access rights to land, intermarriage contributes to personal security, involves various significant material exchanges, and fosters economically essential linkages. Furthermore, intermarriage not only facilitates voluntary transfers and exchanges of resources but also cultivates social and economic environments that offer land-renting opportunities to both land-seeking clients and in-laws. The scholars suggest that these types of intermarriages promote cooperation, interdependence, and conflict resolution, particularly when land conflicts are settled while considering the intrinsic relationships at play. It can be suggested that intermarriage has the tendency to erode ethnic and identity barriers and mitigate the concepts of "us" and "them." The exchange of customs, beliefs, and establishments fosters dialogue and a recognition of cultural distinctions.

Tadesse, Tesfaye, and Beyene (2010) argue that the formation of marital and communal bonds discourages the use of violence as a means of resolving conflicts. In the pursuit of peace and conflict resolution, marriage serves as a conduit for bringing together opposing groups. Through marriage, clans and ethnic communities can establish familial connections (Pretty and Ward, 2001). Consequently, women play a pivotal role

in fostering social capital. Social capital encompasses the traits of social organizations, including social networks, relationships, norms, trust, and reciprocity, which facilitate coordination and collaboration, enabling individuals to act collectively for mutual advantage (Putnam, 1993). However, the mechanisms of social capital are not always effective in resolving certain types of conflicts and possess certain limitations. In such conflicts, people rely on formal institutions for mediation and adjudication (Sanginga *et al.*, 2007). For instance, the Gurgura culture discouraged intermarriage within the same family. Members of the Galwaq, a subgroup of the Gurgura, were prohibited from marrying other Galwaq members. They maintained peaceful relations with their Oromo neighbours primarily because of the prevalent practice of intermarriage within and between clans. Specifically, male Gurgura members formed unions with Oromo women, resulting in the Gurgura embodying a blend of Somali and Oromo cultures.

2.1.5 Consulting Elders and Traditional Seers as Cultural Practices and Festivals

Mbele (2004) asserts that historically, African elders have wielded significant power and authority, arguably the highest authority that can be bestowed upon individuals. They have traditionally been responsible for making decisions for the community, either independently or as part of councils of elders. This arrangement has endured for generations. In the context of pre-colonial Igbo society, Ohadike notes that each town, lineage, and community was led by a headman, known as the *onyisi*, who assumed the position based on seniority. While town meetings typically took place in the town square, the most critical lineage and household gatherings were held in the *obi*, or meeting shed, of the most senior elders (Ohadike, 2000).

Even in instances where monarchs held power, they relied on and were accountable to a council of elders. The elders also played significant roles in communal rituals, such

as overseeing the "Poro" secret society of the Mende people in Sierra Leone. However, there exists a tendency to idealize the image of the African elder, portraying them as the custodians of a society's values and wisdom, believed to have remained unaltered over the ages. This idealization motivates folklore researchers, for instance, to seek out the elders in an attempt to preserve their extensive knowledge before it is lost forever. It is worth questioning whether this simplistic perspective of elders has emerged only in recent times, possibly influenced by mere observations of social life and the tradition of recording such observations in writing.

A casual examination of social life may have generated a conventional perception of elders, potentially lacking in-depth scrutiny of the underlying reality. The notion that elders embody wisdom might have obscured or hindered a more thorough investigation of the subject. Additionally, the tradition of written records may have contributed to the reinforcement and perpetuation of this established view of elders. The pronouncements of writers, for instance, have often assumed authoritative significance, and the enduring nature of written records has solidified this perception. Notably, Amadou Hampaté Bâ famously stated: "In Africa, when an old person dies, it's a library burning down."

African folklore serves as compelling evidence of the seriousness with which Africans regard these beliefs. In various folktales, for instance, the elders are portrayed as the ultimate authority when faced with challenging problems, and their decisions are considered final. The Ashanti tale, "How Spider Obtained the Sky-god's Stories," transcends the realm of human existence, illustrating *Nyankonpon*, the sky-god, consulting with elders and other dignitaries when confronted with important matters (Radin, 1953). These folktales serve to reinforce the concept of elders possessing profound wisdom. While acknowledging the idea that experience comes with age and

that elders are repositories of wisdom, Africans were also cognizant that this was not always the case. Folklore, once again, provides abundant evidence of this awareness, with certain folktales challenging the conventional wisdom.

The Matengo folktale "Hare, Civet, and Antelope" portrays elders who do not exemplify wisdom or responsibility (Mbele, 2001). Entrusted with the task of safeguarding the village to uncover the culprit behind the theft of livestock and fowl while the community works in the fields, the elders yield to bribery and neglect their duty. The depiction of elders in this narrative is rather disconcerting, yet it serves as evidence of society's capacity and willingness to confront unpleasant realities and potentialities in life. It underscores the notion that elders do not constitute a homogeneous group of like-minded individuals; differences exist among them, and some may not live up to the idealized image often associated with elders. Therefore, folklore presents a more genuine and authentic portrayal of the elders.

In traditional African societies, elders played a crucial role in instructing and guiding the community in various aspects of everyday life (Mkenda, 2008). They were responsible for organizing and overseeing the initiation ceremonies of young boys and girls. During these rites of passage, certain elders were called upon to educate the initiates on moral principles and obligations. Elders served as the cornerstone of education, which primarily emphasized moral values (Mkenda, 2008). Even in matters of marriage, it was the elders who assumed the roles of instructors and guardians, providing guidance to couples throughout their married lives. Essentially, elders were the primary architects of moral education within the community.

African political and religious leaders are incorporating elders to establish moral order within their respective societies (Kilonzi and Beja, 2004). For instance, in Rwanda, following the devastating genocide of 1994, traditional courts known as Gacaca were instituted, where elders serve as mediators and judges in the pursuit of justice, peace, and reconciliation. Similarly, in Tanzania, *mabaraza ya usuluhishi* (reconciliation tribunals) utilize experienced, wise, and esteemed elders to facilitate reconciliation between conflicting parties. Nyenyembe (2005) notes that at the ward level, the *usuluhishi* tribunals were established in Tanzania to help resolve civil cases, particularly disputes within marriages, conflicts over land, and minor quarrels, through traditional means.

Elders played a significant role in upholding moral order within communities (Mkenda, 2005). In the Agĩkũyũ community, for example, selected elders provided guidance to the circumcised initiates (*ciumiri*), educating them on how to conduct themselves in an upright manner. Wachege (1992) observes that elderhood was deeply embedded in the entire culture of the Agĩkũyũ, starting from childhood. This indicates that to attain elder status among the Agĩkũyũ, one had to undergo all the rites of passage from birth through adulthood, including marriage and having children. This comprehensive life experience endowed the elders with extensive knowledge, making them invaluable assets within the community. Elders passed down customs and moral teachings orally in the Agĩkũyũ society.

In spite of the tensions and conflicts arising from the clash between traditional values and modernity, recent media reports indicate a resurgence in the institutions of

elderhood within Kenya's ethnic communities. Ombuor (2004) delineates the process of appointing the senior elder (Ker) of the Luo community, while Kilonzi and Beja (2004) emphasize the role of traditional Kaya elders in safeguarding sacred forests in Kilifi.

Mkenda (2008) posits that in fulfilling their roles, elders prioritized the welfare of the community over their own self-centred interests. For instance, it is noteworthy that elders within the traditional Agĩkũyũ family heeded the counsel of their *ngatha* (first wife) and *marigithathi* (first-born sons) to make informed decisions. This highlights that despite their independence and authority, elders were expected to listen to others to avoid errors. Listening was a pivotal characteristic of wise leadership, preventing elders from abusing their power.

Hence, in their roles as moral leaders, elders exercised attentive listening to safeguard their reputation and integrity, avoiding unjust judgments and decisions that could tarnish their standing. Within the Agĩkũyũ community, elders voiced the perspectives of their people rather than their personal opinions in the *kiama* (council of elders). They functioned as *athamaki* (rulers) for their respective communities, serving the collective interests rather than pursuing personal gains. Their role was one of service to others. Constantly mindful that the *muthigi* (elderhood staff) served as a support for the elderly, symbolizing strength and assistance for other community members, elders bore the responsibility of making crucial decisions for the community.

Elders commanded respect for various reasons, primarily due to their wise, astute, prudent, and careful leadership. For example, among the Ameru community, elders represented their people in the *Njuri Njeke* (the council of elders). Murungi (2003)

affirms that "delegates to the *Njuri Njeke* assembly were chosen from each house's council and were considered the wisest among the Meru people." These delegates presented the community's oral memorandum at the *Njuri Njeke* gathering. Significantly, the *Njuri Njeke*, with its representation of elders from various segments of the community, engaged in discussions regarding new bills, laws, orders, and decrees, demonstrating the inclusive nature of traditional leadership.

In northern Kenya, particularly among the Samburu, Turkana, and Pokot communities, constant conflicts arise due to disputes over cattle raids, as well as disagreements concerning pasture and water resources. In such scenarios, elders play a crucial role in resolving these conflicts and reinstating peaceful relations. For instance, in 2005, when inter-clan strife in Mandera led to numerous casualties, elders were summoned to mediate and settle the dispute (Makori, 2006). These instances serve as clear demonstrations of the continued relevance of elders in contemporary society, even if their involvement in moral guidance and the preservation of moral order within their communities may not be as comprehensive as it once was.

2.1.6 The age set system

Morton (1979) defines the term "age set" as a recognized and occasionally organized group comprising individuals of the same age, often specifically referring to males. In African societies, an age set typically includes males initiated at the same time, and once an individual becomes a part of a particular age set, either through birth or initiation, they remain a member of that same age set for their lifetime. In East Africa, where age organization is highly complex, each age set usually moves as a unified entity from one stage to another.

Based on Alan Jacobs' study of Masai political structures, a distinction is made between an age set (a collective group formed based on biological age) and a generation set (formed based on a man's father's group membership, following genealogical generation criteria). An age-set system consists of both structural and social components. Structurally, it signifies the specific mechanism through which an age set is established, progresses through different stages, and is assigned specific responsibilities as a cohesive unit within a particular age grade (Ngeiywo, 2018). Socially, the age-set system regulates interactions among members of different age sets within the same age set and between an individual member of an age set and the broader society.

The age-set system involves the classification of males of similar biological ages, guiding their advancement through distinct societal levels and assigning them specific duties and behavioural norms. Ideally, no two age-sets should occupy the same age-grade; as each senior age-set vacates its grade, the junior age-set assumes its place. The progression of age-sets through the age-grade hierarchy generally coincides with the completion of the youngest age-set's ceremonial rituals, such as the conclusion of the circumcision period. Likewise, it may align with the transition of the senior 'military' age-set to the lowest grade of elder, or sometimes both (Eckert, 2017). Notably, before formal progression, it is not uncommon for older members of an age-set to imitate the conduct of the senior age-set and to adopt some of its associated duties and privileges.

The alignment of age-sets typically corresponds with territorial divisions, and their responsibilities are expected to conform to the requirements and external policies of the specific territory. Among the Masai, which consists of multiple clans, each clan

functions as a separate territorial entity in this context (Morton, 1979). Nevertheless, the operation of the age-set system within a particular territorial unit often depends on considerations beyond the immediate territory. This leads to the coordination of the advancement of age-sets within each Masai clan's age-set system with those of other clans, ensuring synchronization within the broader Masai community.

A comparison of the age-set systems of the Masai, Nandi, and Kikuyu reveals several similarities. These include the method of recruiting age-sets, the participation of ceremonial figures during age-set activities, the consistent cycle of maturation, and the organization of the military age-sets. Moreover, all three systems emphasize egalitarian behaviour among members of the same age-set, establish norms for age-sets ranked junior and senior to each other, and regulate the behaviour of age-set members in relation to other members of society, particularly females and the wider community (Morton, 1979). Across the three systems, the recruitment of newly formed age-sets involves selecting young males of approximately the same biological age during an 'open' recruitment phase, often through a circumcision ceremony symbolizing initiation into an age-set.

Typically, the age range for the most recently recruited age-set falls within a specific range. For the Masai, this range is between 14 and 22, while for the Nandi, it spans approximately from 12 to 22. Although specific details are not provided for the Kikuyu initiates, it is mentioned that the customary age for circumcision was '18 or 20,' as indicated by Kenyatta. Therefore, the term 'approximately the same age' can be understood as a loosely defined concept, encompassing males in the stage between puberty and physical maturity during the recruitment process.

During the commencement of the circumcision period, eligible males within the specified age range are enlisted into the forming age-sets. Across all three systems, recruitment through circumcision takes place at specific intervals, with distinct periods of cessation between these events. Among the Masai, the initiation of circumcision necessitates the endorsement of the chief ritual expert, referred to as *orkoiyot*, and commences with the *kikule* ('we bleed the goat') in each *pororiet*. For the Kikuyu, the period of prohibition concludes with various ceremonial activities, including dances, sacrifices, and the administration of oaths by selected elders (Morton, 1979). The prohibition is lifted, and circumcision resumes with the 'unswearing of the oath.' Throughout the initiation, the ceremonial doctor establishes the circumcision altar and performs protective rituals to ward off witchcraft and evil. At the culmination of the ceremonies, the *mundu mugo* purifies the initiation area.

In addition to their roles in the circumcision ceremonies, ritual figures also undertake further responsibilities shared among the four age-set systems. First, they authorize military strategies or raids proposed by the military age-sets. The ritual experts are accountable for prophesying the success or failure of the impending campaign and providing guidance accordingly. Second, they oversee the elevation of senior military members to the status of elders, a practice that may not apply to the Kikuyu, where soldiers are expected to attain elder status individually and upon payment of fixed fees. Lastly, the Masai *oloiboni* and *Kisongo oloiboni* oversee the Eunoto ceremony, which promotes the junior military age-sets to the position of senior soldiers.

The Pokot community operates under an age-grade system, with group membership determined by the age at which individuals undergo initiation. Typically, young men undergo this process between the ages of fifteen and twenty, while young women

usually do so around age twelve, coinciding with the onset of menarche. After initiation, these young individuals are permitted to marry and participate in local economic activities. The bonds formed during the initiation process contribute to future political alliances (Morton, 1979). As individuals reach old age, they are revered and esteemed within the community. The responsibilities of elders include presiding over significant community decisions, festivals, and religious ceremonies. The initiation ceremony for young men occurs between the ages of 16 and 20 and involves animal sacrifices. This initiation serves as a prerequisite for later involvement in acts of violence. A warrior's status is earned upon killing their first enemy, commemorated by the marking of a scar. These scars on the arms indicate the number of victims the warrior has injured. Additionally, warriors who have claimed at least one life wear white ostrich feathers on their heads

2.2 Effectiveness of Cultural Practices and Festivals as Peace-building Strategy

In the traditional context of African society, conflict often emerges when there are conflicting events, frequently resulting in a "win-lose" situation. However, it is crucial to recognize that the resolution, transformation, and management of conflict can also lead to a "win-win" scenario (Ajayi & Buhari, 2014). Truth serves as a critical guiding principle for disputants or parties involved in a conflict. Regrettably, in modern African society, truth is frequently disregarded or sidelined. To address the challenges facing Africa and restore its unity, it is imperative to revisit its fundamental values.

Contrary to the global or universal perspective of peace, conflict is viewed as a natural element of life within African cultures. Africans have their distinctive ways of understanding conflict. In traditional African contexts, conflict is perceived as "a

struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power, and resources, with opponents aiming to neutralize, harm, or eliminate their rivals" (Moeis et al., 2022). However, conflicts can generally emerge when incompatible activities occur, potentially resulting in a "win-lose" situation. Importantly, effectively resolving, transforming, and managing conflicts can also lead to a "win-win" outcome.

In the pre-colonial era, traditional African societies operated under well-established principles that governed conflict resolution. Those seeking solutions for their disputes had to trust the designated tribunal responsible for resolving conflicts. This tribunal typically comprised esteemed individuals such as elders, chiefs, priests, priestesses, and members of secret cults (Ajayi & Buhari, 2014). It was essential for the conflicting parties to have confidence in these authorities and be willing to submit themselves to their decisions. These conflicts encompassed various types, including interpersonal disputes, conflicts between individuals and communities, and even disputes between entire nations (Poku, 1998).

The concept of truth held significant importance in the context of conflict resolution, serving as a fundamental element that ensured fairness in the resolution process. Both disputants and the mediator, arbitrator, or judge adhered to the truth, fostering trust and the assurance of impartiality. The influence of ancestral forces could also be influential, compelling individuals to reveal the truth. As a result, it was vital for the mediator, judge, and arbitrator to be adequately prepared, as the truth was not a rigid or unchanging concept (Ajayi & Buhari, 2014). Truth also functioned as a symbolic agreement that the conflicting parties should not disregard. When one party involved in the conflict approached the tribunal, it signified their willingness and consent to resolve the dispute, although this was not always the case.

In traditional African communities, the responsibility for upholding and enforcing local laws rested with law enforcement authorities, traditional police, and the courts. When disputes arose, individuals often presented their cases to elders and community mediators, who were trusted to effectively settle conflicts (Moeis et al., 2022). These elders and mediators conducted their proceedings in the local language and adhered to well-established standards of conduct, making the process more familiar and accessible to those involved.

Within the Yoruba community, their native legal system primarily derives from customs and traditions. In this context, literacy extended beyond written language to include verbal art and oral tradition (Moeis et al., 2022). Although Yoruba legal customs were predominantly unwritten, they were preserved and transmitted through live performances to keep them lively and easily understandable. The traditional society provided a favourable setting for these enduring performances.

According to Ajayi & Buhari (2014), the legal principles of the Yoruba people were primarily derived from ancestral knowledge and sagacity, often depicted through dramatic means. Olaoba confirmed that gatherings of elders under a tree were commonplace, where discussions would persist until a consensus was reached. The elders, commonly associated with advanced age and seniority, held a critical role in maintaining discipline and propriety in traditional Yoruba society, epitomizing their position as custodians of wisdom and understanding. Historically, conflicts or disputes among younger individuals were frequently resolved swiftly by passers-by, whose intervention aimed to reinstate tranquillity and unity. Various community associations and associations were entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring peace and order,

particularly in commercial dealings, addressing concerns such as theft, debt, and deception.

In certain instances, the Yoruba people invoked the spirits of gods and ancestors, including the living dead, as a means of deterrence. The threat of their retribution served as a reminder, especially to the disputants, of the potential consequences of dishonesty. Whether in markets or the court, there was a tangible spiritual presence, with spirits perceived as either malevolent or benevolent (Olaoba, 2002).

In Africa, the process of resolving conflicts was organized into specific tiers or phases, each dedicated to handling disputes within different social units. These phases encompassed the resolution at the interpersonal or family level, the extended family level, and the village or town level, which was overseen by the chief in council (Moeis et al., 2022). These levels were aligned with the political units that made up the community.

The smallest unit, referred to as *Idile* (Nuclear family), was headed by a Bale. The subsequent unit was the *Ebi*, comprising the extended family and overseen by the *Mogaji*, typically the eldest and most influential member of the *Ebi*. The extended family encompassed all individuals with blood relations. The highest unit was the quarter, consisting of several family compounds, and it was governed by a Baale, the chief of the ward or quarter. The head of the household, which included the man's immediate family, such as wives and children, also formed a part of this structure (Albert, 1995).

The Bale was responsible for resolving cases such as disputes among co-wives, siblings, truants, and street fights involving his children or dependents. Minor conflicts were swiftly resolved by admonishing the troublemakers and appeasing the offended

party. The Bale was expected to visit the offended individual, expressing gratitude for accepting a peaceful resolution. It was also the Bale's responsibility to gather his household and caution them against causing further trouble. No fines were imposed in this court, but appeals could be made to the second court, the court of the ward-chief (Ile-ejo ijoye Adugbo), which handled civil cases. While it lacked the authority to adjudicate criminal cases, it had the power to conduct preliminary investigations into such matters before transferring them to the king's court (Ile-ejo Oba) (Oguntomisin, 2004). Baale (chiefs) also managed relationships between members of their family and outsiders, as these cases could jeopardize the lineage or ward's survival. After resolving the matter, emphasis was placed on achieving and maintaining good neighbourliness (Alemie & Mandefro, 2018). Common disputes in this category included land disputes, husbands neglecting women and children, women's infidelity, and inheritance disputes.

The paramount traditional authority responsible for resolving conflicts in Yoruba communities was the Chief-in-council (Igbimo Ilu). In the pre-colonial era, this council possessed the authority to impose the death penalty on individuals brought before it. While the king's court served as the highest court and the final court of appeal, among the Egba and Ijebu, the Ogboni court appeared to serve as the ultimate court of appeal (Oguntomisin, 2004). Proceedings within these courts were governed by traditional customs, including specific protocols for greetings and behaviour, and the judgments rendered were generally acknowledged.

In the traditional Yoruba judicial system, mediators in civil cases typically do not impose monetary fines or damages. The primary objective is to restore peace by amicably resolving disputes. Essentially, the traditional judicial system prioritizes the

restoration of harmony (Ajayi & Buhari, 2014). However, occasionally, mediators may impose modest fines as a means of discouraging specific anti-social behaviour. These fines may take the form of kola nuts or local gins, both of which hold ritual significance. Some of the kola nuts are broken and shared among all parties involved, symbolizing the celebration of conflict resolution. Similarly, the drink is shared among all parties. If palm wine or gin is unavailable, ordinary drinking water can serve as a substitute. In certain traditional settings, palm wine or gin is used symbolically to offer libations to the gods and ancestors of the disputants. These rituals serve to reinforce the terms of reconciliation.

Since 1933, the conflict between the Aguleri and Umuleri people, despite their shared ancestral roots in Eri and their long history of peaceful cohabitation in Otuocha, had undergone a range of legal, political, bureaucratic, and military procedures, yet a resolution or peace remained elusive, prompting a turn to traditional methods (Nwolise, 2005). Nonetheless, the traditional approach that eventually led to the peaceful settlement of the Aguleri-Umuleri-Umuoba Annam conflict involved a series of rituals and agreements. These practices included the administration of oaths, the establishment of a "No more war" peace agreement, and the performance of a purifying ritual known as *Ikomue*.

The oath ceremony was inaugurated on January 25, 2000, with an initial participation limited to the Aguleri and Umuleri communities. Additionally, in an effort to avert additional unrest and conflict in the Omambala region, neighboring communities eventually banded together. Participants of the ceremony were accompanied by representatives from these communities and their respective local deities (oracles) (Ajayi & Buhari, 2014). All attendees sincerely pledged to support peace and desist

from any form of conflict or violence within and between the five communities during the oath-taking ceremony. In the presence of the deities, those who disregarded this oath would behold the vengeance of the ancestors and the deities themselves, who served as the origin of ethical ramifications and protectors of tranquility (Ajayi & Buhari, 2014). This preliminary oath-taking ceremony paved the way for subsequent processes that ultimately resulted in lasting peace by reducing tensions in the conflict-ridden region.

Festivals and cultural practices have the capacity to either incite cultures of violence and discord or promote reconciliation and peace. Cultural festivals and practices can indeed foster lasting peace and reconciliation when employed strategically in the pursuit of constructing a peaceful and equitable society. Throughout human history, festivals have consistently held a social charge. Artists, by reflecting the social, cultural, and political realities of their era and presenting alternative and novel future perspectives, serve as the voice of some of the most marginalized groups within societies.

In nurturing a sense of connection to a global community and communicating the plight of others regarding the situation, artistic productions play a crucial role, particularly those introduced to conflict zones by international actors, according to Fukushima (2011). Nevertheless, the author's analysis fails to consider the local festivals and cultural practices that are embedded within the impacted community. Kiki Fukushima (2011) posits that in the midst of dire circumstances and psychological distress brought about by violent conflict, engagement in artistic and cultural pursuits may furnish a momentary solace, facilitate coping mechanisms, and stimulate the imagination with regards to alternative realities beyond the conflict. Survivors of circumstances involving grave human rights violations, according to Jenny

Edkins (2003), do not have access to a language that adequately conveys the extent of their trauma. Edkins (2003) argues that the disruption of social structures brought about by violence renders common verbal language insufficient to express the profound emotions endured by survivors, and that language acquires its significance through familial and communal ties. Edkins fails to investigate, nevertheless, the potential of diverse cultural festivals and practices to promote peace.

Similar to this, John Paul Lederach (2005) notes that in order to comprehend the actuality of violence and their own experiences, individuals in post-conflict environments frequently rely on imagery and metaphors as opposed to direct language. Trauma survivors can engage with their traumatic experiences while maintaining sufficient distance to prevent re-traumatization, according to Stephanie Wise and Emily Nash (2012). Metaphors, such as ritual, drama, writing, movement, and narrative, are explored in this regard. Non-emphasizing the evaluation of cultural practices and festivals in the context of peacebuilding, this viewpoint emphasizes the significance of these processes within the affected community. Art functions as a novel means of communication and a constructive instrument for repairing the anguish and silence that plague post-conflict societies. As well as contributing to long-term peacebuilding processes, Galtung et al. (2002) underscore the importance of dialogue in nurturing intergroup relations. As opposed to requiring specific conclusions or passing judgment, dialogue enables individuals with divergent ideas and presumptions to convene and attend to one another, according to David Bohm (2015). However, Bohm's analysis of the impact of cultural festivals and practices on peacebuilding is not comprehensive.

According to Cohen (2003), creative processes such as storytelling and theatre provide non-threatening environments for confronting erstwhile adversaries and impede verbal communication in post-conflict societies where trauma has affectedors. The potential of art and culture in peacebuilding and reconciliation initiatives has been underutilized, despite the fact that these domains have historically been regarded as peripheral to these three areas of concern—identity, conflict, and culture. There is a growing interest in comprehending how to optimize the role of art in peacebuilding and reconciliation, although this may be due to peacebuilders having limited access to art methodologies or artists being reluctant to explicitly discuss the socio-political nature or function of their work (Shank and Schirch, 2009; Reichert, 2015). It has been found that the integration of traditional medicinal practices, conflict resolution, dance, painting, drama, and mythology can yield positive outcomes across different tiers of peacebuilding, according to Arcodia and Whitford (2007). The research carried out by the authors examined in detail how cultural festivals and practices were utilized to promote peace in the Kerio Valley region of Kenya, specifically among the Pokot and Marakwet communities.

In his work, Lederach (2005) emphasizes the widespread fracture that exists both within societies and among individuals during times of conflict. This is done through the portrayal of profound human emotions such as sorrow, despair, betrayal, loss, hopelessness, and agony. Engaging in artistic and cultural endeavors provides opportunities to address the trauma linked to active conflict in a creative manner, while also facilitating access to resources that can be utilized to combat structural and cultural violence, including education, awareness-raising, and dialogue. They facilitate the exchange of tears and mirth, as well as encourage introspection and critical thought, by acting as a life force that unites individuals who are in opposition. Art and the rediscovery of humanity, according to Lederach (2005), are intricately linked.

In equating cultures to underground rivers that affect our perceptions, judgments, and notions of self and others, LeBaron (2003) emphasizes the critical role of culture in conflict and conflict resolution. The influence of cultural factors on peacebuilding and conflict resolution is frequently unacknowledged.

In regard to peacekeeping during civil conflicts, Mac Ginty (2008) notes a resurgence of interest in indigenous and traditional methods, placing particular emphasis on their capacity to preserve social unity. In interstate conflicts devoid of identity concerns, Rothman and Olson (2001) recognize the efficacy of conventional conflict resolution approaches. However, their investigation into the incorporation of diverse cultural practices and festivals into peacebuilding endeavors is limited in scope.

Verbal poetry artistry utilizes ingenuity in language and personal narratives to tackle significant social and political concerns, as stated by Alfonso and Fontanilla (2014). By emphasizing the significance of personal and communal integrity, it encourages poets and their audiences to engage in candid and open dialogue. Verbal discourse leverages the inherent capacity for all individuals to exchange information, facilitating the exchange of distinct personal experiences and promoting the formation of fresh bonds and mutual comprehension among heterogeneous communities. Creatively, it facilitates the expression of viewpoints and the transmission of vital messages by

individuals hailing from diverse backgrounds, with an emphasis on the importance of honesty and genuineness. The function of cultural practices and festivals within conflict-affected communities is not, nevertheless, examined in detail in this analysis.

Promoting the reestablishment of relationships in post-conflict societies requires that diverse groups have a mutual understanding of one another's concerns and experiences. Groups are better able to find common ground and develop trust when they have a complete understanding of the opposing viewpoint (Lederach, 2005). This fosters the coexistence that is essential for the pursuit of peace. In order to attain this comprehension, one must possess a "paradoxical curiosity" that stimulates the imagination and surpasses the dichotomies that are frequently emphasized in times of discord (Lederach, 2005). Academic literature (Fortier, 2008; Preis and Stanca Mustea, 2013; Seidl-Fox and Sridhar, 2014) underscores the notion that inquiry can be fostered through engagement in artistic and cultural endeavors, which serve as venues to commemorate cultural variety and promote cross-cultural interaction. Nevertheless, these academics fail to place particular emphasis on the various cultural festivals and practices that could be adopted as means of fostering peace among belligerent territories.

2.3 Challenges and Opportunities in using cultural practices and festivals during peace building

Cultural practices are customs and traditions that are ingrained within communities and play a vital role in fostering peace among their members. According to Ikimi (2001), these practices, such as village laws, customs, and taboos, are deeply ingrained and are passed down through generations, shaping the upbringing of family members. Giadom

(2009) also emphasizes the role of cultural practices in promoting peace, unity, and love among both community members and outsiders. Similarly, Agogo (2002) highlights how cultural beliefs instil justified fears in individuals, ensuring the enforcement of social norms. These cultural beliefs manifest in various forms, including norms, customs, expectations, and shared experiences (Agogo, 2010). However, these scholars do not specifically address the challenges and opportunities associated with the use of cultural practices and festivals in peacebuilding.

Bokova (2012) argues that culture remains marginalized in the field of peacebuilding, potentially due to its perception as a "soft" approach within an already "soft" field of conflict resolution and violence. This marginalization could be attributed to the predominance of peacebuilding practitioners from social and political sciences rather than arts and humanities backgrounds or the limited availability of methodologies. However, Bokova does not explore the potential opportunities that could arise from the utilization of cultural practices and festivals in peacebuilding efforts.

Mutua (2008) contends that culture plays a crucial role in both conflict and conflict resolution, likening cultures to hidden rivers that shape our perceptions, judgments, and notions of self and others, often subconsciously influencing the way conflicts arise and are resolved. While acknowledging the central role of the cultural dimension in peacebuilding, the author does not thoroughly examine the challenges and opportunities associated with the use of cultural practices and festivals in promoting peace, thus emphasizing the need for further investigation.

Gibbons (2014) argues that it took a considerable amount of time for scholars and practitioners of international negotiation to recognize and agree upon the significant impact of culture on conflict resolution across all levels. James (2000) suggests that the incorporation of the tradition of oath-taking, which has been a common practice in various African communities, can effectively mitigate prevailing social ills and reduce crime. However, these scholars do not delve into the potential opportunities that cultural practices and festivals offer as strategies for peacebuilding.

Giadom (2009) views cultural practices as vehicles for fostering peace, unity, love, and cohesion among community members and even non-members, yet fails to address the challenges that cultural practices and festivals may encounter as pathways to peace. On the other hand, Agogo (2002) posits that cultural beliefs serve as statements that instil justifiable fears and enforce social norms without exploring the opportunities presented by cultural practices and festivals in the context of peacebuilding. These cultural beliefs are reflected in various aspects, including norms, customs, expectations, and shared experiences (Agogo, 2010).

According to Okech (2022), one of the major obstacles to peace building in Kenya originates from the country's conflict analysis, which includes cultural factors demonstrated through the prevalence of oath-taking rituals during election periods. Oath-taking practices are deeply embedded within the customs of communities, with a strong emotional attachment to cultural heritage akin to religious devotion. These cultural norms significantly influence the resolution of conflicts (Munene, 1997). The dichotomy between 'us' and 'them' evident in the country's political processes is amplified by cultural narratives passed down through generations. The rituals involve

making sacrifices to ancestors as a means of safeguarding one's family, land, and other assets during times of turmoil, leading to the indoctrination of youth into militant ideologies aligned with their cultural beliefs.

In certain societies, there exists a false belief that men from communities that do not practice male circumcision are unfit for national leadership positions (Human Rights Watch, 2008). During political campaigns, politicians from the Luo community, for example, have faced ridicule, being deemed unsuitable for national leadership solely based on being considered "culturally inferior." These leaders often bear derogatory cultural labels such as "*ihii*" (uncircumcised boys) (CIPEV 2008; KNCHR 2008).

Moreover, Okech (2022) contends that cultural factors play a significant role in the emergence of conflicts in Kenya. On one side, the argument posits that men are more prone to perpetrate physical violence due to the socialization of being "warriors" in their respective cultures. Conversely, female voters often become targets of hostility. Although women may not actively engage in violence, they tend to incite men to protect their families by providing them with provisions, weapons, and other resources. In this way, they inadvertently contribute to the fuelling of conflicts (Golicha and Elema, 2014). Consequently, the cultural underpinnings of this cycle of violence serve to deepen group divisions along ethnic lines, fostering a pervasive 'us' versus 'them' mentality.

Dosch (2012), who conducted research in Cambodia on the Role of Civil Society Organizations in peacebuilding, asserts that donors provided the majority of the funding for peacebuilding programs in Cambodia. The research emphasized the critical significance of the Civil Peace Service (CPS), which was founded in 1999 by the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany, in

promoting peacebuilding and conflict prevention through civil society in post-conflict countries. The CPS has advocated for justice and reconciliation in Cambodia since 2007. During this time, it has effectively facilitated the reconciliation process between the Khmer Rouge victims and the perpetrators of the atrocities inflicted upon them. With considerable accomplishment, the CPS has successfully coordinated peacebuilding and conflict management initiatives in Cambodia.

Issifu (2017) attributes the success of civil society organizations (CSOs) in conflict management to their embedded neutrality and impartiality in supporting peacebuilding activities. This characteristic enables CSOs to engage with all parties involved in conflicts freely, a feature especially prominent in Ghana's civil society organizations. Brukum (2001), Ahiave (2013), and Issifu (2015) have emphasized the trustworthiness of Ghana's civil society organizations due to their impartiality. CSOs in Northern Ghana have adopted a community-based approach that prioritizes active participation and inclusivity, establishing platforms that involve all stakeholders at various levels in the peacebuilding process, ranging from awareness raising and education to mediation and financial assistance.

Similarly, local civil society organizations in Ghana have made significant contributions to resolving chieftaincy-related conflicts and promoting peace through various initiatives, including dialogue, workshops, seminars, and mediation (Agyeman, 2008). By facilitating the active participation of community members, including youth, in the peace process, these organizations have garnered support and trust within the community. Watitu (2014) further emphasizes the crucial role played by civil society in the peacebuilding and conflict management process. The government's financial support to these CSOs, as well as the training programs conducted at the community level, has significantly reduced community

conflict and recurrences of conflict, ultimately strengthening communities and informing government policies on peacebuilding and conflict management

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The research was built upon the foundation of Conflict Transformation Theory. Prominent authors who have significantly influenced this theory are Johan Galtung (1996), Lederach (1997), Vayrynen (1991), and Azar (1990). These academics incorporate principles from numerous alternative philosophical traditions. As an illustration, Galtung argues that conflicts can be both beneficial and detrimental, stemming from structural contradictions in society that are evident in human attitudes and conduct. After the emergence of conflicts, they undergo a series of phases that bring about significant changes: polarization or depolarization, escalation or de-escalation, association or dissociation, and simplification or complexity (Galtung, 1996). The contribution of Azar's (1990) research on protracted social conflicts to the evolution of the conflict transformation theory is substantial. Azar's (1990) research on the formation and continuation of conflicts emphasizes that the denial of basic necessities is a fundamental element in the maintenance of such conflicts. Furthermore, theorists who have contributed to the field include Olson (1963), Thomas and Bennis (1972), and Gurr (1970), whose models concerning economic development and scarcity have enhanced the existing body of law. According to the scarcity model, conflicts emerge as a result of rivalries for a finite resource, which in turn gives birth to incompatible goals when resources become scarce. On the contrary, economic development models posit that protracted social conflicts result from the inequitable allocation of developmental benefits. Four types of changes, according to Vayrynen (1991), can facilitate conflict resolution

in the context of conflict transformation: actor transformations (the emergence or modification of actors), issue transformations (the redefinition of the parties' interests and objectives), rule transformations (the modification of norms governing interactions among actors), and structural transformations. Expanding this framework to include modifications in the language employed to comprehend the conflict and the contextual backdrop of the conflict itself is possible (Vayrynen, 1991:4). In accordance with the classification proposed by Vayrynen, Lederach (1997) outlines the key elements of this process as involving transformations at the cultural, personal, structural, and relational levels of conflict. Michelle (2002), Bush and Folger (1996), Curie (1971), Assefa (1993), and Rupesinghe (1995) all lend support to this viewpoint. Promoting personal change entails bolstering individuals' capacity to resolve conflicts, with the ultimate goal of restoring their trust in their ability to do so, and cultivating a dedication to the pursuit of enduring peace (Bush and Folger, 1996; Michelle, 2002). Regarding the relational aspect, the emphasis is on converting antagonistic relationships between opposing groups into amicable ones marked by collaboration and shared efforts to resolve differences (Curie, 1971; Assefa, 1993). The structural dimension establishes an interconnection between conflict and the community's political, economic, and social systems. Continual endeavors are focused on the reformation of these frameworks in order to foster the satisfaction of essential human necessities and promote the engagement of community members in decision-making procedures (Lederach, 1997; Rupesinghe, 1995).

Regarding the cultural aspect, transformation revolves around comprehending how culture influences conflict. This involves identifying cultural patterns that contribute to

conflict formation and those that can be leveraged to facilitate conflict resolution (Lederach, 1997).

According to the foundational tenets of the transformation theory, a comprehensive understanding of the sources of conflicts is essential for their resolution. Transformation of conflicts takes place on multiple levels, encompassing the cultural, personal, structural, and relational spheres. Extended social conflicts experience a series of transformations that require a corresponding series of interventions in order to be reversed. Conflict transformation exemplifies an all-encompassing methodology that integrates a wide range of interventions through multiple channels. Furthermore, it functions as an all-encompassing mechanism that confronts conflicts at each stage of their development, including the conflict spiral or cycle. This study argues that local communities in Elgeyo Marakwet are actively involved in initiatives that seek to effectuate transformations across various levels—individual, interpersonal, institutional, and cultural. Given the prevailing conditions, it is advisable that the Pokots and Marakwets scrutinize conflicts in order to identify their fundamental causes. These conflicts are often ascribed to societal structures that hinder fair and equal access to essential necessities. In order to address these challenges, it is recommended that communities initially focus on undergoing personal and relational transformations. The success of these endeavors is significantly influenced by the cultural practices and celebrations that the communities participate in.

2.5 Theoretical Model

In this study, the relationship between variables is examined as a conceptual model. The independent variables in the conceptual framework are identity and expression, cultural celebration, social interaction and peace-building activities.

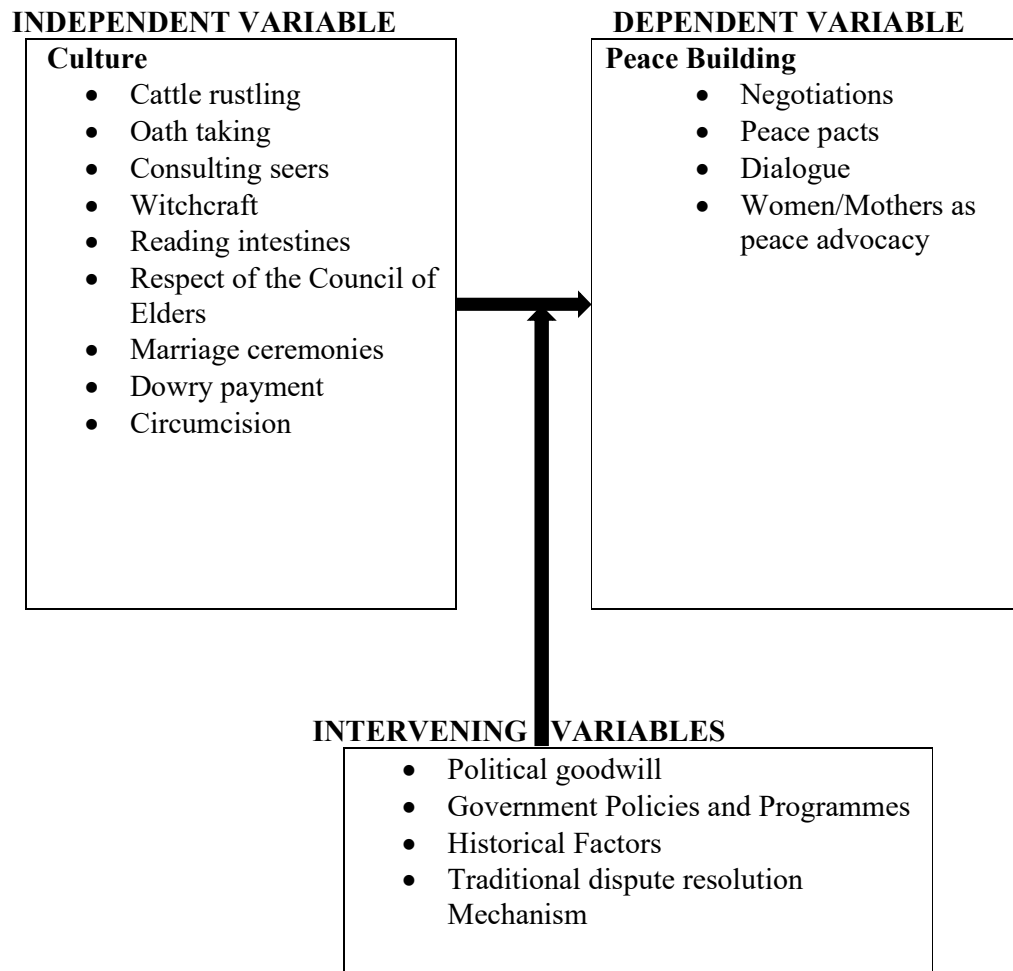


Figure 2. 1: Theoretical Model of the Interaction of Variables in cultural festivals and peace building strategies

Source: Researcher, 2021

The conceptual model shows the interaction between the Independent and the dependent variables. The Independent variable is Cultural Practices and Festivals, Which include practices such as Circumcision, cattle rustling, Marriage ceremonies, Dowry payment, Oath-taking, Consulting seers, Witchcraft, Reading intestines, and

Respect for the Council of Elders. This study explores the role these cultural practices and festivals play in the process of peacebuilding in the volatile area of the Kerio Valley region between the Pokot and Marakwet communities. In this regard, the study explores the role of these cultural practices and activities in Peace Building Strategy through practices and ceremonies such as Negotiations, Inter-Marriage, Council of elders, Peace pacts, Women/Mothers as peace advocates and Oath-taking. The study further explores how various intervening factors such as Political goodwill, Government Policies and Programmes, historical factors and traditional dispute resolution mechanisms are used in the county to ensure the transformation of conflictual relations between the Pokot and Marakwet.

2.6 Chapter Summary

The communities in the northern parts of Kenya perceive cattle raiding as a deep-rooted cultural practice, viewing it not as a criminal offence but rather as a necessary means of replenishing their herds. Several scholars have highlighted the difficulties arising from conflicts and climate pressures experienced by various African populations. This study also emphasizes the potential of cultural values and practices in fostering peace and development, particularly at the community level. It provides an opportunity to explore the broader impact of culture on the society. Notably, UNESCO stresses the essential role of culture in achieving comprehensive social and economic development, environmental sustainability, and peace and security, encompassing a range of value systems, traditions, and beliefs. Despite existing research on the role of cultural diplomacy in peacebuilding, little attention has been given to the specific cultural festivals of the Kenyan pastoral communities. Additionally, many studies have primarily focused on international relations and diplomacy, overlooking local initiatives. Hence, the findings of this research contribute to the growing body of

knowledge emphasizing the local application of cultural festivals in promoting social harmony and peaceful coexistence in the Kerio Valley region, as well as other regions globally. The next chapter discusses the Research Methodology

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the research design that was used, study area, study population, sampling strategy, sample size, reliability and validity of the study, data collection and data analysis, and methods of data analysis for the qualitative and quantitative were discussed in this section. The chapter also included the limitations and delimitation of the study as well as ethical considerations with which the study complied.

3.1 Research Design

The study took a descriptive research approach, which is a scientific technique that involves observing and depicting a subject's behavior without any active intervention. Descriptive research precedes quantitative research by providing an overall framework that guides the selection of variables for subsequent quantitative analysis. This study strategy focuses on gathering information in a methodical manner in order to describe a phenomena, circumstance, or group. It allows for a detailed examination of the history of a study topic before further investigation can begin. This method produces generally good external validity results because the research takes place in the participants' natural context with no variable manipulation. Descriptive research frequently combines quantitative and qualitative approaches, resulting in a thorough grasp of the research issue. Hence, this research design is well-suited for the current study concerning cultural customs and festivals as a means of fostering peace between the Pokot and Marakwet communities in the Kerio Valley Region of Kenya.

3.2 Study Area

The study was carried out in the Kerio Valley region along the border of Marakwet County and Baringo County. The two neighbouring counties have faced many incidences of ethnic conflicts between the Pokot community who live in Northern parts of Baringo County, especially Tiaty Sub-County and the Marakwet community living in the Eastern part of the Kerio Valley region in Marakwet East Sub- County.

Baringo, one of Kenya's 47 counties, is located in the Rift Valley region. The county is bordered by Turkana and Samburu counties to the north, Laikipia to the east, Nakuru and Kericho to the south, Uasin-Gishu to the southwest, and Elgeyo-Marakwet and West Pokot to the west. The county's population is 666,763, with 141,877 household heads according to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS, 2019). From a geographical perspective, it is situated between longitudes 35°30' and 36°30' East and latitudes 0°10' South and 1°40' South, with the Equator passing through its southern region. The county has an expanse of 11,015.3 square kilometers, encompassing 165 square kilometres of surface water derived from Lake Baringo, Lake Bogoria, and Lake Kamnarok.

An outstanding geographical characteristic is the Kerio Valley located in the western region of the county. The Lobo Plain is located in the eastern region, adjacent to Lake Baringo and Bogoria. It is predominantly characterized by the presence of salt-infused silts and deposits. The Tugen Hills are a noteworthy geographical characteristic, extending in a north-south direction and primarily composed of volcanic rocks with steep inclines, distinct ravines, and cliffs on their eastern and western flanks. The rivers

in these highlands traverse steep ravines (Baringo County CIDP, 2018-2022). The formation of the Rift Valley floor was a consequence of tectonic and volcanic processes, which led to the creation of several ridges. Lake Baringo and Lake Bogoria are situated in the depressions of the rift, with a combined area of 221 square kilometers. Lake Bogoria is notable for its status as one of the rare hot, saline lakes worldwide, characterized by hot springs and functioning as a breeding site for flamingos, whereas Lake Baringo is a freshwater lake.

Lower precipitation is observed in the sub-counties of Mogotio, Tiati East, Tiati West, and Baringo North, while countywide temperatures fluctuate between 10°C and 35°C. In addition to minimal humidity, the region has an average wind speed of 2 meters per second. There are areas within Baringo's humid highlands and arid lowlands that experience a climate transition. The county is characterized predominantly as arid and semi-arid, with the exception of Koibatek sub-county, which is situated in the highland zone. The arid and semi-arid regions are predominantly forested with vegetation and acacia trees, and precipitation ranges from 300 to 500 millimeters and decreases from south to north (Baringo County CIDP, 2018-2022).

In contrast, Elgeyo Marakwet County comprises a land area of 3,029.6 square kilometers, which accounts for 0.4 percent of the total land area of Kenya. It is situated between 0°20' and 1°30' north latitude and 35°0' and 35°45' east longitude. It is bordered to the north by West Pokot County, to the east by Baringo County, to the northwest by Trans Nzoia County, and to the west by Uasin Gishu County. Located between the Uasin Gishu Plateau to the west and the Kerio River to the east, the county has an elongated structure. The Kerio River flows into Lake Turkana from its source in the southern highlands of the county. 99,861 individuals reside in the county's 454,480 households (KNBS, 2019).

The prominent Elgeyo Escarpment divides Elgeyo Marakwet County into three distinct topographic zones: the Highlands, Kerio Valley, and Escarpment. Each of these zones has experienced a unique pattern of settlement. Highlands, which comprise 49% of the county's land area, are densely populated as a result of their consistently fertile soils and heavy precipitation. The Escarpment and the Kerio Valley each contribute 11% and 40%, correspondingly. These geographical areas receive less precipitation and are prone to natural calamities such as landslides and droughts. As a consequence of the severe climatic conditions and increased paranoia, these regions are characterized by high levels of destitution and low population density.

The County contains two distinct forest habitats, known as Kaptagat and Cherangany, which serve as important water sources. It proudly possesses the second-highest forest coverage in Kenya, amounting to 37.6 percent. These ecosystems act as the origin of multiple rivers that create the main water divide along the Escarpment. Located to the East of this partition is the Kerio catchment region, which empties into Lake Turkana. On the other hand, to the West of the partition is the Lake Victoria Basin, which drains into Lake Victoria. The Lake Victoria Basin encompasses rivers such as Moiben, Chepkaitit, and Sabor, and the Kerio catchment area comprises River Kerrer and Kerio River. Additional notable rivers in the county consist of Torok, Chesegon, Embobut, Embomon, Arror, Mong, and Kimwarer. The rivers that flow into the Kerio River possess significant capacity to facilitate irrigation and the creation of hydroelectric power. The Kerio Valley ecological zone is a rather narrow area, with an average width of 6.4 kilometers and a length of around 150 kilometers in a North-South direction (Baringo County CIDP, 2018-2022).

Elgeyo Marakwet County has a temperate climate characterized by fluctuating quantities of precipitation across the area. The variety in the area is a result of the different landforms and physical features, which may be categorized into three distinct agro-ecological zones: the highlands in the western part, the escarpment (hanging valley), and the lowlands (valley) in the eastern part (Elgeyo-Marakwet County CIDP, 2018-2022). The variations in elevation, which range from 900 meters above sea level in the Kerio Valley to nearly 3,000 meters above sea level in the highlands, lead to notable disparities in climatic conditions. The highlands see annual mean temperatures ranging from 18°C to 22°C, but in the valley, the range is between 25°C and 28°C. The

county experiences a range of annual rainfall, with 700 mm in the semi-arid Kerio Valley and 1,700 mm in the Keiyo and Marakwet highlands (Cherangany Hills).

As a result, rainfall decreases from west to east in Elgeyo-Marakwet County (CIDP, 2018-2022). The county's eastern lowlands receive lower and less dependable rainfall, leaving them especially prone to droughts and floods.

The two neighboring counties of Baringo and Elgeyo Marakwet in the Kerio Valley have encountered security issues throughout the years, including as banditry, livestock rustling, and resource conflicts. These challenges have had a severe influence on regional development, slowed economic progress, and interrupted trade and travel. Cattle rustling, in particular, has severely harmed the livelihoods of local pastoralist populations that rely significantly on their animals. Banditry and criminal activity have hampered economic progress and government service delivery in the impacted areas, causing strained community relations and hampering the development of common resources like as irrigation systems and pasture pastures. Both the national and county governments have worked to address these security concerns and encourage development by deploying security personnel, conducting development projects, and encouraging communication and dispute resolution. Nonetheless, the situation remains complicated and continuing, needing a comprehensive approach that addresses the core causes of these security challenges while also restoring peace in the Kerio Valley region.

The study purposively targeted Marakwet East Sub- County in Elgeyo Marakwet County and Tiaty Sub-County in Baringo County because these two sub-counties

neighbouring endure the most conflicts in the two counties. The two neighbouring sub-counties have been the most affected.

Figure 3.1 shows the Map of the study area.

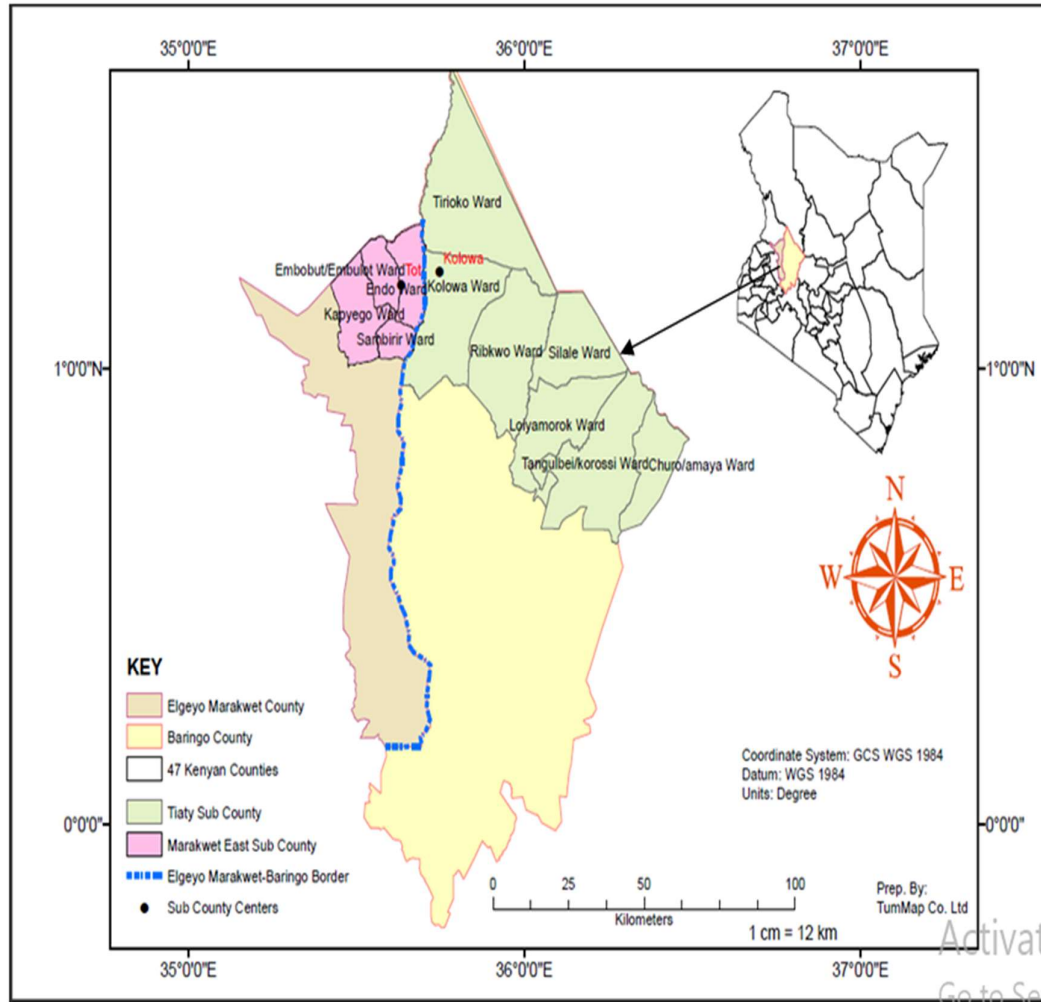


Figure 3. 1: Map showing the Study Area

Source: Researcher, 2022

The two sub-counties that fall within the Kerio valley have a total of eleven electoral wards, which have a combined area of 5325.28 square kilometres. The wards in the two sub-counties have a combined population of 39,053 household heads.

3.3 Study Population

As stated by Nachmias & Nachmias (1996), a population refers to a collection of all instances that share specific characteristics pertinent to the researcher's focus. The population under examination for this study included the subsequent groups from the two sub-counties: Household heads, Senior police officers (Sub-County Police Commander), Assistant County commissioners, sub-county administrators, MCAs, Religious leaders and Chiefs. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), including Faith-Based Organizations with study specifically targeting World Vision Kenya (WVK), Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) and the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission. The population also included opinion leaders such as Elders and Peace committee members. Table 3.1 shows a summary of the categories of the study population.

Table 3. 1: Study Population

Category of the Study Population	Target
Household heads	39,053
Senior police officers (Sub-County Police Commander)	2
Assistant county commissioners (ACC)	2
Sub-County Administrators	2
Chiefs	86
MCAs	11
Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)	3
Religious leaders from	4
Opinion Leaders (Elders and Peace Committee members)	100
Total	39, 226
Researcher, 2022	

3.4 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size Determination

Sampling refers to a statistical method of obtaining representative data or observations from a group. To realize the representation of the study population, more than one sampling approach was used. Sampling is the selection of the elements in a population for the purpose of the study. The sample for the study has all the characteristics of the entire population. Kothari (2004) opines that the final test is how the sample will be representative of the entire population. The purpose is to increase accuracy by ensuring that the main population elements are represented in the sample (Garson 2012; Saunders *et al.* 2009). Okumu (2012) observes that in the instances where the population is small, the use of a census design is advisable.

In this study, cluster sampling was used to categorize the Kerio Valley region into two sub-counties, namely, the Tiaty Sub-County and the Marakwet West Sub-County. The two were sampled due to the incidences of conflicts and tension in the area stemming from frequent incidences of cattle rustling, competition for water and pasture, and ethnic tension between the Pokot and Marakwet communities. The two sub-counties which border each other represent the frontline of the conflict between the two communities and as such, were the most appropriate for the study. Table 3.2 shows all the wards and household heads found in Tiaty Sub-County and Marakwet West Sub-County.

Table 3. 2: Distribution of household heads per Electoral Ward in the two sub-counties.

Sub-County	Area km²	Wards	Number of Household heads
Marakwet East	784.3	Kapyego	4195
		Embobut	3127
		Endo	6334
		Sambirir	7623
Tiaty	4540.48	Tirioko	1492
		Kolowa	5219
		Ribkwo	1339
		Silale	1224
		Tangulbei	4203
		Loyamorok	1054
		Churo/Amaya	3243
Total	5325.28		39,053

Source: KNBS, 2020

The researcher purposively sampled two wards from Tiaty Sub-County, which lies along the border of the two sub-counties. These two wards were Kolowa ward and Tirioko ward. These two wards were purposively sampled because most of the inhabitants were from the Pokot ethnic group. The researcher also used census sampling to sample all the four wards in Marakwet East Sub-County. This was because all the four wards were adjacent to the border and were all affected by the incessant conflicts in the study area. In this regard, the total number of sampled wards in this study was six, and these included Kolowa ward with 5219 household heads, Tirioko ward with 1492 household heads, Embobut ward with 3127 household heads, Kapyego ward with

4195 household heads, Sambirir ward with 7623 household heads and Endo ward with 6334 household heads. In this regard, the total number of household heads to be sampled in the study was 27,990.

3.4.1 Sampling of Household Heads

The sample size for the house heads was determined based on the 27,990 household heads who formed that unit of analysis in this study. Since the household heads who represented the main category of the study population was above 10,000, the sample size was determined using the Fisher formula as shown (Mugenda & Mugenda 2003).

$$n = \frac{z^2 pq}{d^2}$$

Where n=desired sample size (the target population is greater than 10,000).

z=the standard normal deviate at the confidence level of 95% is 1.96.

p=the proportion of the target population estimated to have characteristics being measured is set at 50%

q=1-p (probability of non-success)

d=level of statistical significance set at 0.05

$$n = \frac{(1.96)^2 * 0.5 * (1-0.5)}{(0.05)^2}$$

$$n=384$$

Stratified proportionate sampling was used to distribute the sample of 384 household heads across the six wards as shown in Table 3.3.

Table 3. 3: Proportionate Sample Distribution of Household heads per Ward in Marakwet East and Tiaty sub-counties

Sub-County	Wards	Number of Household heads	Sample
Marakwet East	Kapyego	4195	58
	Embobut	3127	43
	Endo	6334	87
	Sambirir	7623	104
Tiaty	Tirioko	1492	20
	Kolowa	5219	72
Total		27,990	384

Researcher, 2022

Simple random sampling and convenience sampling were used to get the household heads who participated in this study. The researcher picked a random starting point in each of the six wards and then used convenience sampling to reach specific household heads in the wards. Convenience sampling was used to reach household heads in the study area because the area had dispersed settlement patterns.

3.4.2 Sampling of Key Informants and Focus Group Discussion Participants

For the key informant interviews, the researcher primarily employed purposive sampling. This method ensures the selection of participants who possess considerable knowledge about the particular issue being investigated (Brink, 1996). Some other scholars, including Polit (1995) and Patton (1990), suggest that purposive sampling is valuable when there is a necessity to restrict the sample to cases likely to offer

substantial information pertinent to the study. Therefore, the use of purposive sampling facilitated the selection of specific respondents for inclusion in the study's schedule.

The study utilized purposive sampling to select two sub-county police commanders from Tiaty and Marakwet West Sub-County. The study also used purposive sampling to select two Assistant County Commissioners from the two sub-counties. The study also purposively sampled two sub-county administrators from each of the two sampled sub-counties in the study area. In order to select members of the County Assembly, the study used simple random sampling to select 20% of the 11 MCAs as recommended by Mugenda & Mugenda (2003), who proposed that in descriptive research, a sample size of 10-50% is acceptable. In this regard, the researcher sampled two MCAs, and then purposively sampled one from Tiaty sub-county and another from Marakwet West Sub-County. The researcher also used simple random sampling to select 10% of the chiefs, thereby selecting 9 chiefs who were purposively sampled across nine locations in the Kerio valley, with four chiefs being selected from Tiaty Sub-County and 5 chiefs coming from Marakwet East sub-county.

The researcher purposively sampled three leading Civil Society Organizations (CSO) in the Study area, namely World Vision Kenya (WVK), Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) and the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission. The sampled CSOs were involved in peace-building activities in the study area. The Researcher interviewed the officers in-charge of these CSOs or their representatives. The researcher also purposively sampled four religious leaders from the catholic church, which is the main church concerned with peacebuilding in the study area. The researcher particularly interviewed the Priest in-charge and the Catechist in-charge of the Bara Pelo Catholic

church in Tiaty Sub- County as well as the Priest in charge and the Catechist in-charge Chesongoch Catholic Church in Marakwet East Sub-County.

The researcher also organized four Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), inviting key opinion leaders, including members of the Peace Committee and Elders. Each FGD comprised 10 participants, a number recommended by Krueger & Casey (2008), who suggested that an optimal focus group should consist of 8-10 individuals, in addition to a facilitator and a note taker, roughly equivalent to the size of a dynamic seminar class. They further highlighted that a larger group might constrain the depth of certain responses due to participants feeling the need to share speaking time, while a smaller group might create discomfort, leading individuals to speak more than they would under normal circumstances to avoid silence. Hence, the total number of participants in the FGDs amounted to 32, with the researcher acting as the facilitator and one of the research assistants serving as the note-taker in each session.

3.5 Data Collection Methods and Instruments

The data was categorized into two types: primary data and secondary data. For this research, various data collection methods were employed to gather primary data, including questionnaires, interview schedules, and focus group discussions. Secondary data was acquired through the examination of documents and existing literature on security and culture, government policy documents, and publications related to cultural initiatives for promoting peace. These documents encompassed annual reports, bulletins, delivery notes, minutes of meetings, and training manuals.

3.5.1 Primary Data

Primary data was collected from household heads by use of questionnaires (APPENDIX 2), while interview schedules (APPENDIX 3) were applied to key informants. Focus group discussions (FGDs) (APPENDIX 4) were applied by opinion leaders in groups of eight (8) members. This gave the study a wider range of views during the discussion, while questionnaires were applied to both male and female household heads. The questionnaire provided information that the respondent would find rather difficult to express in an interview schedule. The survey provided insights that respondents might have difficulty expressing during an interview. The questionnaires consisted of both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The data included four homogeneous focus group discussions, each comprising eight individuals of the same ethnicity. Interview schedules were used to collect information from key informants, given their possession of critical insights. This process involved a structured interview schedule (APPENDIX 3), which was prepared in advance of the actual interviews. This approach was chosen as it allowed the researcher to attain a comprehensive and intricate understanding of the subject under investigation. Moreover, the information collected is highly reliable as all informants were presented with the same set of questions (Orodho & Kombo, 2002). The interviews employed an open-ended format to extract detailed information from the key informants.

3.5.1.1 Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a tool for research comprising a sequence of inquiries or various types of cues designed to collect data from participants. In this study, the researcher employed a closed-ended questionnaire. The researcher administered questionnaires (APPENDIX 2), which required the researcher to read out the questions to the respondent. The researcher administering questionnaires was ideal to illiterate or semi-

literate respondents but took longer to fill and required more research assistants. Leary (2005) points out the specific benefits associated with employing a questionnaire in contrast to an interview methodology. Questionnaires are more cost-effective and simpler to conduct than individual interviews, making them suitable for group administration and ensuring confidentiality. Moreover, questionnaires are typically rapid and economical, and they offer a diverse range of statistical tools accessible to the researcher. In this study, the researcher used the questionnaires to obtain data from the 384 household heads in Tiaty and Marakwet East Sub-Counties.

3.5.1.2 Key Informant Interviews (KII)

An interview is an oral administration of a questionnaire or an interview schedule. Interviews (APPENDIX 3) are face-to-face interactions between the researcher and the respondent; hence, accurate information is recorded. However, it takes the researcher longer to administer interviews; therefore, interviews are only relevant when the total number of respondents is small. The researcher used KIIs to obtain data from senior police officers (Sub-county police commanders), assistant county commissioners, sub-county administrators, MCAs, religious leaders, and chiefs. Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), including Faith-Based Organizations with study specifically targeting World Vision Kenya (WVK), Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) and the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission.

3.5.1.3 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussion involves bringing together a group of individuals to discuss an issue and eliciting a wide range of opinions on that issue. Focus group discussions (APPENDIX III) were held to get information on cultural festivals as a peace-building mechanism among the Pokot and Marakwet in the Kerio Valley region. The four FGDs

of 8 participants were guided by the researcher, who introduced the topics for discussion and assisted the groups in participating in the discussion. The groups included opinion leaders such as Elders and Peace Committee members who discussed how cultural practices and festivals were used in the Kerio Valley as a peace-building strategy between the Pokot and Marakwet Communities. Focus group discussions were also flexible in the approach to various issues related to conflicts in the area, such as cattle rustling.

Table 3. 4: Sample Size determination and sampling method of Respondents

Category of the Study Population	Population Size	Sample Determination	Sampling Techniques	Sample Size	Method of Data Collection
Household heads	39,053	Fishers Formula	Simple random and Convenience	384	Questionnaire
Senior police officers (Sub-County Police Commander)	2	Purposive	Purposive	2	KII
Assistant county commissioners (ACC)	2	Purposive	Purposive	2	KII
Sub-County Administrators	2	Purposive	Purposive	2	KII
Chiefs	86	10%	Simple random	9	KII
MCAs	11	20%	Simple random	2	KII
Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)	3	Purposive	Purposive	3	KII
Religious leaders from	4	Purposive	Purposive	4	KII
Opinion Leaders (Elders and Peace Committee members)	100	FGD (8-10 Participants)	Simple random	32	FGD
Total	39, 226			440	

Source: Researcher, 2022

3.5.2 Secondary Data

According to Joselyn (2003), secondary data refers to information that has been previously gathered and is accessible from other sources. It is more cost-effective and easily obtainable compared to primary data and can sometimes be the only available

data when primary data is not accessible. The researcher interpreted the secondary data through document analysis, providing insight and context regarding the evaluation subject. The process of document analysis involved coding the content into distinct themes. The primary documents examined included annual reports, bulletins, delivery notes, meeting minutes, policy statements, and training manuals.

3.6 Validity and Reliability of Instruments

This section was divided into validity and reliability of the instruments.

3.6.1 Validity

Ensuring the validity of a questionnaire involves confirming that its content effectively gauges the intended measurements. In essence, validity is concerned with how accurately the collected data reflects the study's variables. It also pertains to the degree to which the instrument effectively measures what it's meant to measure, as evaluated subjectively (Nachimis, 1990). Guaranteeing validity requires framing questions that are clear and leave little room for ambiguity (Best & Khan, 2003). The content validity of the questionnaires was designed to align with the research objectives. The content validity was assessed by conducting a pilot study in an area that had characteristics similar to the study area, and the results were used to ensure that the contents of the questionnaires were able to answer the research questions.

3.6.1.1 Pilot Study

The validity of the data collection instruments was determined through a pilot study. The researcher used 10% of the sample size in the pilot study, which comprised 38 households from Sondu area of Nyakach Sub-County, which faces Similar challenges as Kerio Valley. This was used to get content validity for the questionnaires. The results of the Pilot Study are shown in Table 3.5

The Content Validity Index (CVI) was computed for questionnaires as a means of establishing statistical evidence. The CVI is frequently employed due to its simplicity in calculation, comprehensibility, and emphasis on agreement regarding relevance rather than mere concurrence. Additionally, the CVI prioritizes consensus over consistency and offers insights into both individual items and the overall scale (Polit, Tatano & Owen, 2007). The suggested CVI formula outlined in this section was employed to assess the content validity of the questionnaires.

$$\text{CVI} = \frac{\text{Number of Items declared Valid}}{\text{Total Number of Items}}$$

Table 3. 5: Determination of CVI for Questionnaires

Instrument	Section	Valid Item	Invalid Item	Total
Household Questionnaire (HHQ)	A	4	3	7
	B	38	5	43
	C	11	2	13
	D	5	2	7
Total		58	12	70

Pilot Study, 2021

$$\text{CVI (HHQ)} = \frac{58}{70} = 0.83$$

Polit *et al.* (2007) suggest that data collection instruments are considered valid when the CVI exceeds 0.70. The results of the pilot study indicated that the CVI was 0.83, an indication that the questionnaires were 83% valid. Therefore, the questionnaires' validity exceeded the recommended measure of validity, indicating that the tools were valid.

For the purpose of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews, the data-gathering instruments were shared with professionals in the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, along with supervisors and instructors from the School for Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance. These experts thoroughly evaluated the tools and made essential modifications, as advocated by Fraenkel & Warren (2000) and Huck (2000), who emphasize the significance of expert assessment in validating research instruments.

3.6.2 Reliability

Kothari (2011) defines reliability as the degree to which a questionnaire, test, observation, or any measuring method yields consistent results across multiple trials.

In this research, the reliability of the research tools was evaluated using the analysis of the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient (CAC). The assessment of reliability focused on the measurable responses to the research elements within the preliminary study tools, particularly the questionnaire and interview guide. As per the reliability test carried out in SPSS, the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was found to be 0.88 for the questionnaire and 0.95 for the interview guide. According to Weiner (2007), a research instrument is considered reliable when its reliability falls within the recommended range of 0.7 to 1.0.

3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation

John Tukey (1961) defined data analysis as the collection of procedures employed to scrutinize data, interpret the results of these procedures, plan data collection for more straightforward, precise, or accurate analysis, and all the tools and findings of (mathematical) statistics applicable to data analysis. This process involves the assessment of data through analytical and logical reasoning to comprehensively

examine each element of the gathered information. For this research, primary data was collected through questionnaires, interview schedules, observations, Focus Group Discussions, and document analysis. Subsequently, this data was examined to extract the study's findings and conclusions. The data gathered from the field was analyzed using the appropriate SPSS software version 25. The results were presented through descriptive statistics, such as pie charts, bar charts, frequency tables, and percentages. Key connections and conclusions were drawn from these findings. Table 3.4 presents the summary of data analysis for each specific objective.

3.7.1 Qualitative Data

Qualitative data is data that cannot be quantified by the use of figures. Qualitative analysis of data refers to non-empirical analysis. Qualitative data analysis seeks to make general statements on how categories or themes of data are related. In this study, qualitative data, which was in the form of texts, materials, interviews, FGDs, and photographs, was analyzed qualitatively using narrative analysis, content analysis, and thematic analysis to describe events and occurrences.

3.7.2 Quantitative Data

Quantitative data was quantified and analyzed descriptively using descriptive statistics, which enabled the researcher to describe a distribution of scores or measurements using a few indices or statistics, as shown in Table 3.6.

Table 3. 6: Summary of Data Analysis per Specific Objective

Specific Objective	Data Analysis Method	Data Presentation
(i). Interrogate the nature of cultural practices and festivals among the Pokot and Marakwet in Kerio Valley region, Kenya	Quantitative Data analysed through SPSS Version 25.0 to obtain Descriptive statistics,	Pie chart, bar graph & frequency tables presented in Percentages, Frequencies

	Qualitative Data analysed thematically through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content Analysis • Narrative Analysis 	Narrative reports and Verbatim Quotations
(ii). Assess the effectiveness of cultural Practices and Festivals as Peace building Mechanisms among the Pokot and Marakwet in Kerio Valley region, Kenya	Quantitative Data analysed through SPSS Version 25.0 to obtain Descriptive statistics, Qualitative Data analysed thematically through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content Analysis • Narrative Analysis 	Pie chart, bar graph & frequency tables presented in Percentages, Frequencies Narrative reports and Verbatim Quotations
(iii). Examine the challenges and opportunities faced in using cultural practices and Festivals as Peace building strategy in Kerio Valley Region, Kenya	Quantitative Data analysed through SPSS Version 25.0 to obtain Descriptive statistics, Qualitative Data analysed thematically through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content Analysis • Narrative Analysis 	Pie charts, bar graphs & frequency tables presented in Percentages, Frequencies Narrative reports and Verbatim Quotations

(Source; Researcher, 2021)

3.8 Limitations of the study

The following may be the limitations and delimitations of the study;

Language barrier was a challenge in the study as some of the targeted respondents, especially the household heads and some FGD participants, were not able to speak or understand Swahili or English. Therefore, the researcher hired the services of an interpreter who also doubled up as a research assistant, especially during the FGD.

The study area was at the time of data collection volatile as there was a government operation to disarm and look for bandits in the area. The researcher was therefore advised not to seek the services of police officers for security but rather move around the area with respected members of the community, in this case, peace committee members who had the trust of the locals and who could not be attacked for any reason. The researcher, therefore, heeded the advice of the local administration and was able to collect data without any incident.

3.9 Ethical Considerations

The researcher first obtained approval for the proposal from the supervisors. Subsequently, a letter of introduction was acquired from the Directorate of Graduate Studies at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology to facilitate the data collection process in accordance with ethical guidelines. Additionally, a research permit from NACOSTI was secured. Participation in the study was voluntary, and the informed consent of the respondents was obtained through an introductory letter. Any concerns raised by the participants were addressed before their involvement in the study. Confidentiality was assured to the participants, and their anonymity was respected if requested. The researcher exercised sensitivity and refrained from asking questions that might be perceived as provocative. The participants were assured that the information they provided would be used solely for the study and not for any other purposes.

3.10 Chapter Summary

The chapter has given a detailed description of the research methodology, which has been broken down into the research design to be used, study area, study population, sampling strategy, sample size, reliability and validity of the study, data collection and

data analysis, methods to be used in the research, the limitations and delimitation of the study and ethical considerations with which the study complied. The Next chapter presents findings in line with the first objective of the study, which is to examine the Nature of Cultural Practices and Festivals among The Pokot and Marakwet Communities in the Kerio Valley region, Kenya

CHAPTER FOUR

NATURE OF CULTURAL PRACTICES AND FESTIVALS AMONG THE POKOT AND MARAKWET COMMUNITIES IN ELGEYO MARAKWET AND BARINGO COUNTIES KENYA

The chapter presents the findings in line with the first specific objective of the study. The researcher has discussed the Nature of Cultural Practices and Festivals among The Pokot and Marakwet Communities in the Kerio Valley region, Kenya. The chapter has been divided into the following sub-sections: Socio-Demographic Factors, which included Gender of the Respondents, Ethnic Composition and occupation of household heads. The chapter was further divided into Causes of Conflicts between the Pokot and Marakwet Communities of the Kerio Valley region, Kenya, which included Ethnicity as a Cause of Conflict, negative traditions, cattle rustling livestock pasture, Marginalization, access to water and the role of political players and finally, the chapter discusses Common Cultural Practices and Festivals among the Pokot and Marakwet communities in Kerio Valley region.

4.1 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF HOUSEHOLD HEADS

This section presents findings on the Socio-Demographic characteristics of the household heads. The section discusses a number of socio-demographic characteristics, which included Gender of the Respondents, Ethnic Composition and occupation of household heads.

4.1.1 Gender of the Respondents

The study sought to establish the gender of the respondents. The findings in Figure 4.1 revealed that 134 (35%) of household heads were female and 250 (65%) were male.

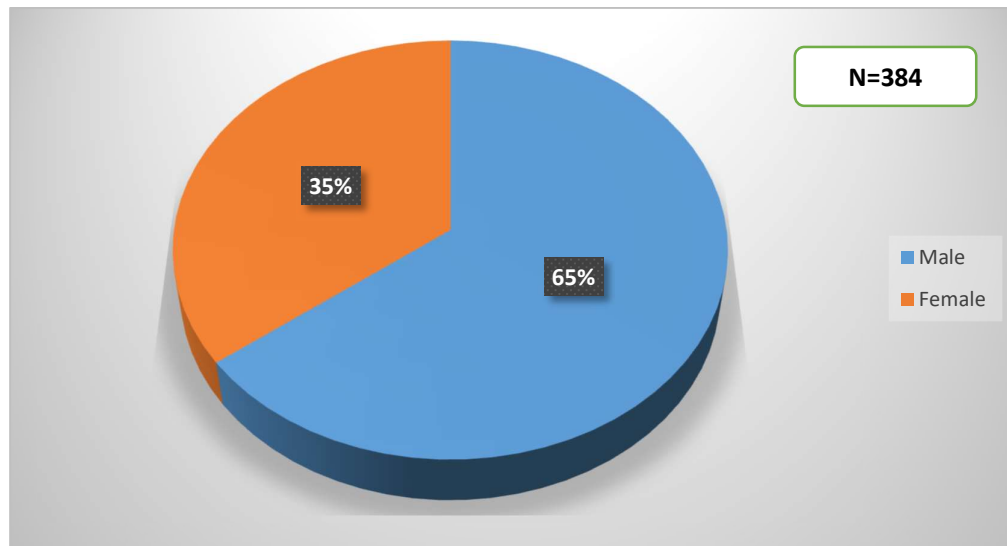


Figure 4. 1: Gender of Household heads

Source: Field Data, 2022

According to Juma & Simiyu (2019), Gender has a great influence on peace-building among communities. Both men and women have gender-specific cultural roles based on the cultural norms prescribed by the society. Women are traditionally considered to be more "gentle," "passive," "emotional," "dependent," "patient" and "communicative" than their male counterparts. Adjectives such as "tough," "independent," "powerful," "inexpressive" and "straightforward" are used to describe men. As a result of the association between these cultural identities and gender roles, cultural norms thereafter impact individuals' self-perception and interactions with one another. Positive usage of gender identifiers has the potential to mitigate or eliminate the gender bias that is

commonly associated with them. A self-fulfilling prophecy theory has the potential to render those gender adjectives the only means by which individuals define themselves, which is detrimental. Gender exerts a significant influence on perceptions that may contribute to or hinder peacebuilding efforts within a given community.

Understanding the dynamics of how conflicts are managed in communities hinges on comprehending the roles both men and women play as instigators and peacemakers. The Pokot and Marakwet communities primarily function as pastoral societies. Typically, pastoralist societies are patriarchal, with men traditionally viewed as the primary perpetrators of conflicts, while women are often perceived as the victims. However, research conducted by Kimaiyo (2016) indicated that women are actively engaged in conflicts. The study revealed that Pokot and Marakwet women actively participated in cattle rustling by providing non-military assistance to fighters or raiders, including supplying food and tending to the injured.

Furthermore, Selassie (1999) supports these findings, arguing that women in conflict scenarios have been documented as serving in roles such as carriers or transporters of looted goods, as well as gathering and relaying intelligence information. Specifically, women are known to act as arms smugglers in conflict situations.

4.1.2 Ethnic Composition

The study sought to establish the ethnic composition of the household heads in the Kerio Valley region. The findings revealed that 200 (52%) were Marakwet, 115 (30%) were Pokot, 12 (3%) Luhya and 57 (15%) were Keiyo.

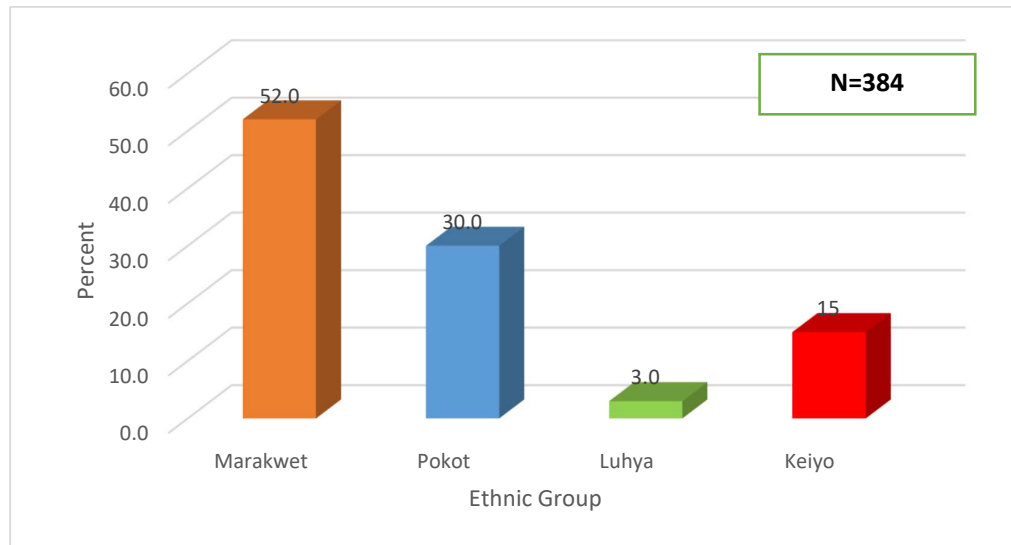


Figure 4. 2: Ethnic Composition of Household heads

Source: Field Data, 2022

Cultural affiliations and ethnic identity are particularly strong factors shaping group relations and can, in many instances, lead to inter-ethnic conflicts. These conflicts have led to tremendous human suffering. In the study area, the relationship between the Pokot and Marakwet, who are the dominant ethnic groups in the area, has proved to be delicate, with time-to-time attacks occurring within the area. The two communities share a lot in common, including the historical ethnic rivalry that has brought suffering to the area.

4.1.3 Occupation of household heads

The study sought to find out the occupation of household heads. The findings revealed that 169 (44.1%) were farmers, 90 (23.4%) were pastoralists, 34 (8.8%) were engaged in business, 11 (2.9%) were students and 80 (20.8%) had formal employment.

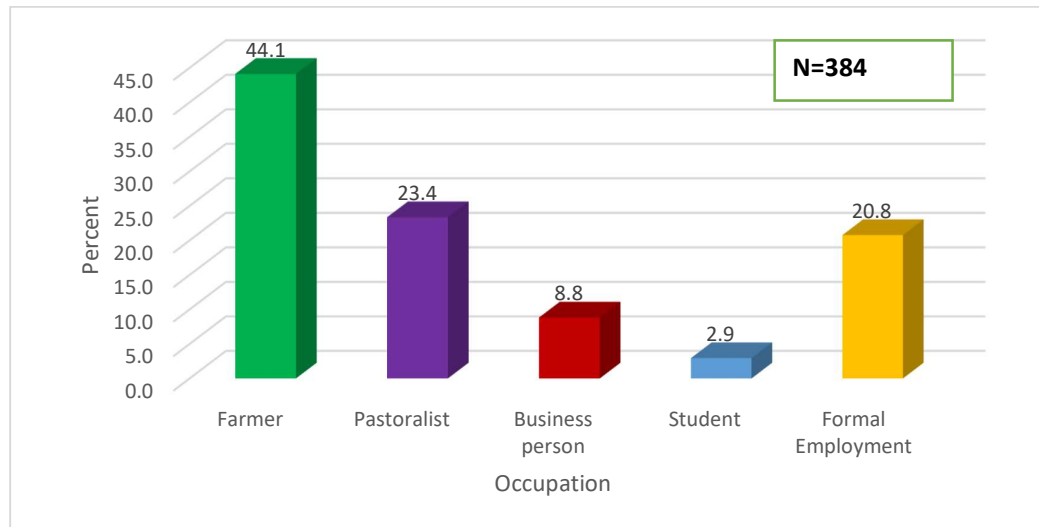


Figure 4. 3: Occupation of household heads

Source: Field Data, 2022

The two most common sources of livelihood in the study area were pastoralism and farming. The Pokot were mainly pastoralists, while the Marakwet practised both crop farming and livestock keeping. The conflicts between the two communities also bordered on their sources of livelihood.

The findings from Interviews and FGDs revealed that the Pokot were mainly pastoralists, while the Marakwet were both pastoralists and crop farmers. Owing to their social and political-economic isolation during the colonial period, the Pokot were the least developed community in the North Rift. Economically, cattle keeping is their main means of livelihood. The Marakwet, on the other hand, practices grain growing with traditional crops, including sorghum, finger millet and, more recently, maize. The Pokot and the Marakwet also engage in commercial activities. In general, cattle are more essential to subsistence in the lowlands than they are in the highlands. Pokot herds are moved seasonally, and The Marakwet grow crops through furrow irrigation as practised in the highlands.

The findings were in agreement with Pkalya *et al* (2004), who indicated that roughly 25% of the Pokot population are engaged in agriculture, known as the "corn people," while the majority are dedicated to pastoralism, known as the "cow people." Within these groups, an individual's wealth is often determined by the number of cows they possess. Cows hold significant value as they are utilized for trade and notably serve as a form of bride price. Polygamous marriages are allowed, contingent upon a man possessing an adequate number of cows to offer as a bride price. This practice serves as the primary method for the exchange of wealth and resources within Pokot society. Cows are seldom slaughtered for meat as their value is predominantly as live assets. They play a crucial role in providing milk, butter, and ghee, which are essential components of the Pokot diet.

Melil (2018) contended that the Pokot community's profound attachment to cattle, as articulated by their elders, is rooted in their myth of origin. According to this myth, the first Pokot man was created by God (Tororot) on Mt. Mtelo and entrusted with cattle. The Pokot claim exclusive ownership of all cattle, asserting that no other community was bestowed with such animals. They vehemently reject the notion that they steal livestock from neighbouring communities, asserting that these communities do not inherently possess livestock rights. Instead, they believe they are simply reclaiming what rightfully belongs to them. Consequently, the Pokot worldview, shaped by this obsession and myth, often results in cattle raids in their neighbouring communities.

Conversely, the Marakwet community participates in economic endeavors by vending excess maize to a marketing board under government regulation, in addition to other significant commodities that were introduced during the colonial and post-colonial periods, including coffee, cotton, sunflowers, and pyrethrum. Furthermore, they

participate in the local market by selling any excess fruits and vegetables (including potatoes, beans, cabbages, onions, kale, bananas, and citrus). The two communities engage in fundamental forms of exchange through matrimony and tilia, which is a stock partnership where a bovine is exchanged for an ox. In addition to local markets, bartering and trading of cereals, vegetables, cattle, and forest products (primarily honey) occur between highland and lowland neighborhoods. Households and communities coordinate productive activities, wherein women bear the majority of responsibilities, including cooking, tending to fields, and milking animals. Children contribute to a variety of tasks, including farming, livestock, and farming. Additionally, women partake in various craft activities, including leatherworking, basket weaving, and the production of unglazed cooking and storage vessels made from milk gourds.

4.2 Nature of Cultural Practices and Festivals among the Pokot and Marakwet Communities in Kerio Valley region, Kenya

The study sought to establish the common cultural practices and festivals among the Pokot and Marakwet communities in the Kerio Valley region. The findings were as indicated in Table 4.1

Table 4. 1: Cultural Practices and Festivals among the Pokot and Marakwet Communities

Cultural Practices and festivals	Common	Not Common	Rank
Cultural initiation (Male and Female Circumcision)	76.1%	23.9%	5
Marriage Ceremonies	85.6%	14.4%	3
Oath taking (<i>Muma</i>)	66.5%	33.5%	6
Witchcraft (<i>Muma/ Mutaat</i>)	87.3%	12.7%	2
Cleansing (<i>Barpara</i>)	77%	33%	4
Consulting Traditional Seers (throwing shoes (<i>Kwanyan</i>)/Viewing sheep intestines (<i>Pir Kwer</i>))	91.1%	8.9%	1

Source: Field Data, 2022

4.2.1 Cultural Initiation Ceremonies

The findings in table 4.1 revealed that Male and Female circumcision was a common cultural practice that brought the two communities together, as supported by 292 (76.1%) of the household heads who indicated that it was common. In contrast, 92 (23.9%) of the household heads stated that it was not a common activity. The Pokot cultural activities call for animals to be used every day. These cultural activities include initiation ceremonies such as circumcision and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

In the Focus Group Discussion held in Sambalat, traditional circumcision emerged as one of the most important events in the life of any Pokot or Marakwet. Among the Pokot, circumcision is done to both men and women. For men, this tradition marks the transition from childhood to adulthood. Young men were taught the ways of the community during this period, and one of them, especially for the Pokot, was the issue of wealth acquisition. For the Pokot, wealth is quantified in terms of livestock and wives. There is division of labour between men and women at the point of circumcision, which helps in separating the circumcised members of the community from the uncircumcised; this helps in defining gender roles in the society.

The primary initiation rites within the Pokot community are the circumcision (*Mutat*) and Sapana (the spearing of the bull). *Mutat* holds significant importance for both males and females and marks a crucial transition into adulthood. According to Pokot beliefs, *Mutat* severs the ties between childhood and adulthood, signifying the maturation of an individual. While *Mutat* is a vital rite for both genders, it is the sole initiation rite for girls within the Pokot community.

Ngeiywo (2018) highlights that although there are similarities in the timing and components of the initiation rituals for Pokot boys and girls, the sequences differ. For instance, Pokot girls may seek to undergo *Mutat* independently upon reaching puberty, sometimes without parental permission. The *Mutat* for girls involves the excision of the labia minora. Both genders undergo a two or three-month process, followed by a three-month seclusion period, culminating in their public presentation as adults. Despite the challenges, Pokot girls eagerly anticipate undergoing *Mutat* as it represents their transition to adulthood. The *Mutat* ceremonies for girls are overseen and performed by experienced elderly women and take place annually in various areas across the Pokot region. The *Mutat* procedure is performed swiftly and openly by seasoned female elders.

Pokot girls are obligated to undergo *Mutat* before marriage, with some pregnant girls also compelled to undergo it due to the belief that children born to uncircumcised girls are impure. Enduring *Mutat* without showing any signs of pain is expected of Pokot girls, who are then celebrated as a source of pride by their families and communities during pass-out celebrations. Throughout the period of seclusion following the circumcision, the huts where the initiated girls reside are taken over by community women. These initiated girls are referred to as *Chemerion*, and during their seclusion, their fathers are expected to vacate their compounds to avoid being seen by their daughters. Only female relatives are allowed to visit them during this period, which concludes with the *Kipuno* rite.

Similar cultural practices related to the initiation of boys are observed across various communities in Kenya. Communities such as the Meru, Gusii, Samburu, and Turkana

conduct circumcision ceremonies to mark the transition to manhood. While the Samburu boys undergo the physical act of circumcision, the Turkana boys participate in the Atapan initiation ceremony. Despite the differences in these initiation ceremonies, they all serve the common purpose of ushering boys into adulthood, endowing them with specific attributes, characteristics, and responsibilities. Among the Turkana, the initiation process instils a sense of physical superiority over both men and women.

Male circumcision is observed to occur considerably later in the West African Balante society, on average around the age of 40, in contrast to the Xhosa community in Kenya (Niang and Boiro 2007). This customary practice is typically observed by other West African ethnic groups, including the Wolof and the Manding, between the ages of six and thirteen (Niang and Boiro, 2007). Moreover, circumcision and initiation are not always incorporated into the same ceremony in certain cases. A number of West African communities impose a waiting period of several years prior to initiation for men who have undergone circumcision; conversely, initiation occurs prior to circumcision in other ethnic groups (Niang and Boiro, 2007). An additional distinction pertains to the frequency of the circumcision occurrence. In contrast to the Xhosa community in Kenya, which performs male circumcision biannually (in June/winter and December/summer), certain West African communities observe the ritual every four to six years, or even more frequently than every sixteen years (Niang and Boiro, 2007).

4.2.2 Marriage Ceremonies and Festivals

The findings in Figure 4.1 revealed that another important cultural festival that was common between the Pokot and the Marakwet communities was marriage ceremonies; this was supported by 329 (85.6%) of the household heads as compared to 55 (14.4%) of the household heads who were of the contrary opinion.

According to the findings from the FGDs, marriage ceremonies tend to be another important cultural activity with many animals. Among the Pokot, traditional cultural weddings (*Sapana*) are a common cultural practice meant to celebrate the man who is getting married. The *sapana* is an important ceremony among the Pokot because it is meant to celebrate an individual who has decided to kill his animals for the sake of other people. According to the findings from the interviews and FGD, this type of ceremony would bring people from both Marakwet and Pokot together to celebrate. Once a person is married, they become respected members of the community and are recognised with respect. An individual who has not gone through *Sapana* is viewed as non-existent and does not inspire any respect in the community.

One of the interviewees stated that women played an important role in ensuring attendees during this event. He noted that:

During the *Sapana*, women normally bring milk and put it in the *Ateger* (trough); everyone then sips the milk, holding their breath until they can no longer hold it. Once this is done, they can leave. During the *Sapana* only men are present; no woman is allowed in the area. In contrast, the Marakwet normally put the alcohol in a huge pot and sit around it, sharing a number of issues affecting society. Later, they opened a big pot called the *Korosion*. The *Korosion* is a sacrificial item used to bless families. The

only people allowed around the *Korosion* are those who have done the cultural weddings.

The occasion is sometimes used by elders to curse people who have done bad things in the community. The elders normally use a stone attached to a dry twig and face east, throw the twig, cursing these bad people and members of the community believe that such curses from the elders lead to the death of such people.

The findings of the study revealed that some of these traditional activities were very significant to conflict management since they acted as deterrence. The young men who fear the curses from the elders would then avoid activities that could cause disturbance in society. The young people who have committed atrocities and do not want evil to befall them can approach the elders and repent so that they can be cleansed.

4.2.3 Oath Taking

The study also established that oath-taking rituals (*muma*) were also common between the two communities, as revealed by 255 (66.5%) of the household heads. However, 129 (33.5%) thought otherwise.

During an Elders FGD in Marakwet, the elders averred that the Pokot were involved in oath-taking (*Muma*), which was a way of guarding community secrets. The oath of secrecy was especially administered to the young people during initiation, and this would ensure that community secrets were safely kept and that nobody revealed such secrets outside the community. One of the elders specifically stated that;

The Pokot were so secretive that even if you had a relative on the Pokot side, they would never reveal anything to you, including anything that would harm you. Even our daughters who get married on the Pokot side can never tell us anything because they have to uphold the secrets of the community. Once they get married to the other side, they call us *Punyoona* (enemy). (Elders FGD in Sambalat, 20th October 2022).

Traditionally, community members also watched specific signs that would act as indicators of conflict, including reading the direction of the smoke, reading the moon, and consulting elders. Other indicators also included the movement of certain birds in specific directions.

The use of witchcraft is another important cultural activity that has been prominently used especially by the Pokot to manage conflicts in the study area. Witchcraft among the Pokot take two forms but are related. *Muma* and *Mutaat* are normally performed by elders (*Kokwo*) to help deal with various issues affecting the society, especially among the Pokot.

According to Pkalya et al (2004), *Muma* is a practice connected with sorcery, but it is culturally sanctioned because it is performed openly during daylight hours. It specifically targets the 'satan,' and the community is informed beforehand. Typically, the procedure necessitates acquiring a government permit to validate the event. Its primary intention is to benefit the community and not to harm innocent individuals. The plaintiff is expected to provide a castrated bull (preferably of a non-white colour) and traditional beer (*pketiis*) for the ritual.

On the day of the ceremony, a final call is made to anyone who might have committed the crime. If no one accepts responsibility, a respected elder announces that the culprit (satan) who has brought fear to the community is about to be cursed for the community's well-being. Using a red-hot spear, the provided bull is pierced around the chest (heart), leading to its death. The spear, stained with blood, is then pointed towards the sun as elders utter incantations, cursing the thief (*onyot*) to death, along with their family and clan members. The meat is cooked and consumed, while the remaining bones and skin

are either incinerated, buried, or cast into a river. Anyone who tampers with the remnants of the bull is also cursed to perish. The repercussions of the Muma ritual are so grave that they can result in the extinction of the entire clan if not reversed. Consequently, fatalities begin to afflict the family accountable for the theft, predominantly affecting the male members (Pkalya *et al* 2004).

The affected family or clan members come together for a *Kokwo*, where they engage in discussions to restore the stolen item and halt any additional fatalities. The elders assemble and sacrifice a bull for consumption, using traditional beer, milk, and honey to purify the affected family members. The elders subsequently reverse the ritual, putting an end to any further deaths. Muma operates as a deterrent against theft and other transgressions within Pokot society. The procedure is formidable, and its repercussions are severe, dissuading individuals from participating in such misconduct (Pkalya *et al* 2004). In essence, it serves as an effective preventive measure for internal conflicts among the Pokot community.

4.2.4 Witchcraft

The study also revealed that witchcraft, also known as *Muma/ Mutaat* among the Pokot, was a common cultural practice that had been used by elders in times of conflict, as supported by 335 (87.3%) of the population and opposed 49 (12.7%) of the household heads.

Mutaat operates much like *muma*, representing another method of cursing and bewitching thieves within the community. Unlike *muma*, which can be applied to other offences such as adultery and property disputes, *mutaat* is specifically directed at thieves. The initial steps in the *mutaat* ritual mirror those of *muma*. Only designated

elders are responsible for conducting the *mutaat* ceremony, which now requires a government permit (sought from chiefs), thereby validating and legitimizing the process. Similar to *muma*, *mutaat* targets the 'satan' and is carried out during daylight hours, with the entire community participating.

During the ritual, certain elders collect soil and place it in a pot, combining it with meat from a steer and other undisclosed ingredients (the nature of which respondents were either unsure of or unwilling to disclose). These elders utter incantations, expressing that before the culprit's demise, they should confess to the crime. The ceremony takes place in a secluded location, with the pot and its contents subsequently buried while people await the outcome. Over time, the contents of the pot decompose, signalling the impending deaths of one or more individuals. Subsequently, the thief or thieves perish one by one, confessing to the stolen property before their demise. The family of the deceased swiftly convenes a *Kokwo* to implore the return of the stolen goods, aiming to reverse the curse and safeguard other family members. A purification ritual akin to the one performed during *muma* is carried out

4.2.5 Cleansing of community members

Additionally, Cleansing (*Barpara*) was indicated as another activity by the household heads as a cultural practice that was common in the study area, as supported by 296 (77%). However, 88 (23%) of the household heads stated that sorcery was not a common activity in the study area.

The cleansing (*Barpara*) was noted to be a significant activity between the two communities and always ensured that bad things did not happen to the community.

Among the Pokot, cleaning was specifically important when the young men were going to raid for livestock. A Pokot elder, traditionally known as *Kapolocho* plays the single most important role of cleaning and blessing young men as they raided the neighbours for animals. The Marakwet also cleanse their Youngman to protect the community and possibly retaliate against enemy attacks. The acts of cleansing in the two communities were common during initiation ceremonies where the young men were encouraged to confess, and elders would offer a goat that was used for the cleansing ceremony. Pkalya *et al* (2004) argue that oaths administered during cleansing rituals are also very scary and expensive, and so are the curses.

4.2.6 Consulting Elders and Traditional Seers

The findings of the study revealed that Consulting elders and Traditional Seers (throwing shoes/Viewing sheep intestines) was a common cultural practice in the study area, and this was supported as a common practice by 350 (91.1%) of the household heads and opposed as uncommon by 34 (8.9%) of the household heads.

During an interview, one of the Chiefs indicted that;

Among the Pokot, the roles of various age sets were culturally defined, and each age set respected the roles assigned to each group. The elders were the most respected as they decided on the direction to be taken by the community at every instance. Just like the Pokot, the Marakwet had massive respect for the elders, who were often consulted whenever there were problems in the Community. The elders were often responsible for initiations and thus effectively recruiting younger members of the community into various age sets. For example, the community warriors were decided on upon circumcision, which was considered as a rite of passage from childhood into adulthood; these young men always remained respectful to the elders as the culture demanded (Interview with A chief in Tot on 22nd October 2022).

The Pokot and Marakwet also had significant traditional activities that involved the consultation of community seers. The community seers used special powers to foresee future happenings in society. Among the activities that the seers did were throwing shoes (*Kwanyan*) and viewing sheep intestines (*Pir Kwer*). The *Kwanyan* and *Pir Kwer* were activities performed by both communities as a way of predicting future calamities that could befall the community. Among the things that the possible calamities that these cultural activities could help in predicting included possible raids from their enemies and other calamities like drought and famine. The special seers would then advise the community members to prepare for these calamities. During an FGD, one elder from Marakwet noted that;

The *Kwanyan* and *Pir Kwer* activities were significant because they helped the community prepare early for possible calamities. For example, the specialists at shoe throwing could predict a possible attack on the community and where the enemy would come from; this would help us prepare early and even know where to hide the livestock so that the enemy does not find them. It also helped the young men prepare to defend the community after being blessed by the elders (FGD held in Chesongoch Market on 10th October 2022).

Another elder added that;

The Pokot had a special type of shoe made from animal hide, which they used to check the security situation. Sometimes these shoes would predict danger, and if the community had planned to raid their neighbours, they would shelve it if the prediction showed that there would be massive bloodshed (FGD held in Kolowa on 23rd October 2022).

The findings also revealed that among the two communities, the use of black magic was common to avert calamities. One of the elders noted that;

Sometimes it was necessary to consult sorcerers to destroy the interest of the enemy in raiding us, and sometimes, it worked well. The elders within the community would make a decision to have that done to avert raids. This was common not only among the Pokot but also among the Marakwet (FGD held in Tot on 19th October 2022).

The findings were consistent with those of Pkalya et al. (2004), who uncovered that the Pokot regarded Tororot as their supreme deity. They offer prayers and sacrifices to him during communal gatherings, which often include celebrations and traditional dances. These ceremonies are typically overseen by a respected elder, while diviners and traditional healers also hold a vital role in preserving spiritual harmony within the community. According to Pkalya et al, the Pokot hold a belief in witchcraft and employ various protective measures to ward off the harmful intentions of sorcerers. Additionally, the Pokot hold reverence for a range of other deities, including those associated with the sun and the moon, as well as a spirit believed to be linked with death. Festivals and festivities are organized to express gratitude to these deities for the prosperity and abundance they bestow upon the Pokot community. All these traditional cultural activities were important to the community and influenced how decisions were made within the community. These decisions were cross-cutting on a range of issues, including security, conflict and peace initiatives.

Plate 4. 1: Researcher Conducting an FGD in Chesongoch Market with Elders with the Help of a Translator (in checked Shirt)



Source: Field Data, 2022

4.3 Chapter Summary

The chapter has presented findings on the nature of cultural practices and festivals among the Pokot and Marakwet Communities in the Kerio Valley region, Kenya. The findings revealed that conflicts were caused by several factors such as negative cultural traditions, such as those that encourage cattle rustling as a sign of heroism for the dowry payment. The study also found that several cultural practices were available between the two communities and were mainly used to ensure the safety of the community from external threats. Some of these cultural practices included Marriage Ceremonies, Oath taking (*Muma*), Cleansing (*Barpara*), Witchcraft (*Muma/ Mutaat*) and Consulting Traditional Seers (throwing shoes (*Kwanyan*)/Viewing sheep intestines (*Pir Kwer*). The next Chapter presents the findings and discussions on the Assessment of the effectiveness of Cultural Practices and Festivals as Peace Building Mechanisms among the Pokot and Marakwet in the Kerio Valley region, Kenya

CHAPTER FIVE

EFFECTIVENESS OF CULTURAL PRACTICES AND FESTIVALS AS PEACE-BUILDING MECHANISMS AMONG THE POKOT AND MARAKWET IN ELGEYO MARAKWET AND BARINGO COUNTIES, KENYA

The chapter presents the findings in line with the second specific objective of the study. The researcher analysed, presented, interpreted and discussed data on the assessment of the effectiveness of cultural practices and Festivals as Peace building Mechanisms among the Pokot and Marakwet communities in the Kerio Valley region. The chapter has been divided into the following sub-sections: Marakwet - Pokot Cultural Festival (MPCF) as peace building Strategy; Whether cultural activities Promoted Peace building; Effectiveness of Traditional Circumcision, Effectiveness of Marriages; Effectiveness of Oath Taking in Peace building between the Pokot and Marakwet Communities, Effectiveness of respect of Council of elders, Effectiveness of inter-ethnic negotiations, Effectiveness of traditional pacts (*miss*) and Effectiveness of the role of women in peacebuilding.

5.1 Marakwet - Pokot Cultural Festival (MPCF) as a peacebuilding strategy

The study sought to establish whether the Pokot-Marakwet Cultural festival (MPCF) was a mechanism for peace-building between the Pokot and Marakwet communities. The findings revealed that 273 (71%) of the respondents indicated that yes, it was one of the mechanisms of peace-building in the study area, while 111 (29%) indicated that it was not a peace-building mechanism.

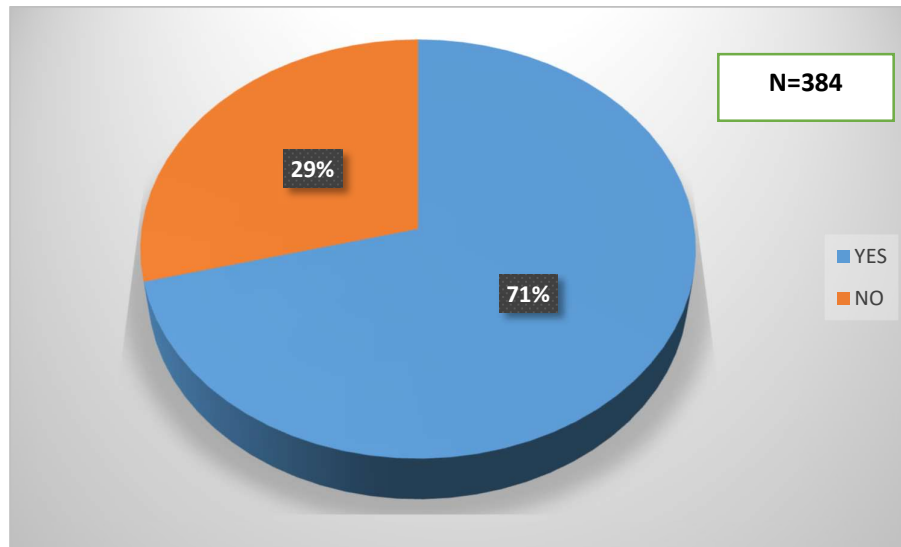


Figure 5. 1: Whether Marakwet - Pokot Cultural Festival (MPCF) was a Peace building Mechanism

Source: Field Data, 2022

As it emerged in the Focus Group Discussions, the respondents stated that they were actively involved in this activity since it was one of those once-in-a-while activities that always brought communities together. They stated that the festival was used to bring people from both communities together and as such, was a good platform to unite the respective ethnic groups. However, some of the FGD participants stated that they saw these festivals were mainly considered entertainment platforms by many people. One of the chiefs stated that;

The cultural festivals were a good platform to show case our diverse cultures through song and dance and even food, but I would not say it's a good platform for peacebuilding. We have many cultural groups in this area who earn a living by showcasing their talent but these are just for entertainment. We don't see any meaningful peacebuilding activity that could possibly come from such activities (Interview with a Chief in Chesongoch Held on 10th October 2022).

In one of the FGDs, it emerged that there had been efforts to use the cultural festival as a peace-building platform in the study area with various political and religious leaders

advocating for peace among the communities. However, this has not yielded any results since there have been several repeated episodes of violent conflicts, which have further pushed the community's part.

According to reports by Daily Nation (29th June 2014), just like the MCPF, the warring Turkana and Pokot pastoralists had turned to cultural exchange programmes and folk media to promote a harmonious existence between them. This was intended to contain armed conflict over cattle raids and banditry that had claimed over 20 lives in the past months. The pastoralists from West Pokot and Turkana Counties held cultural events on the common border in an effort to build lasting peace and promote trade. The two communities had, for a long time, been engaged in protracted armed raids that impacted negatively on their socio-economic livelihoods. The event which was sponsored by the Finish Church and the Catholic Diocese of Eldoret, Kitale and Turkana, brought together administrators, security teams, elders and reformed warriors from the two communities.

It involved the engagement of leaders from both communities in coming up with a long-lasting peace strategy that would help improve their socio-economic status as opposed to such retrogressive acts like cattle raids. The Pokots and Turkanas have been involved in recurrent attacks that have led to killings and displacement of several families. The peace event brought together Turkanas from Loyapat and Kainuk and Pokots from Sarmach and Orwa divisions. They shared meals and performed common traditional dances as a symbol of reconciliation. The event had been viewed as a home-grown solution to the raids and the issues of banditry that had rocked the area for a long time.

It is, however, important to note that the conflicts in Kerio-valley, Baringo, and around Turkana have only become worse over the years despite the attempt to find so-called home-grown solutions. The banditry menace and raids have become even more common crippling almost all aspects of life in the north rift region. The situation has become so bad that in February 2023, the government mounted an operation involving the military to help deal with the situation of insecurity in the area.

5.2. Effectiveness of Traditional Circumcision as a Peace-building Strategy

The study sought to establish whether traditional circumcision was an effective peace-building mechanism in the Kerio Valley region. The findings revealed that 62 (16.18%) agreed, 277 (72.02%) disagreed, and 45 (11.76%) said they didn't know. The findings were as indicated in Figure 5.2

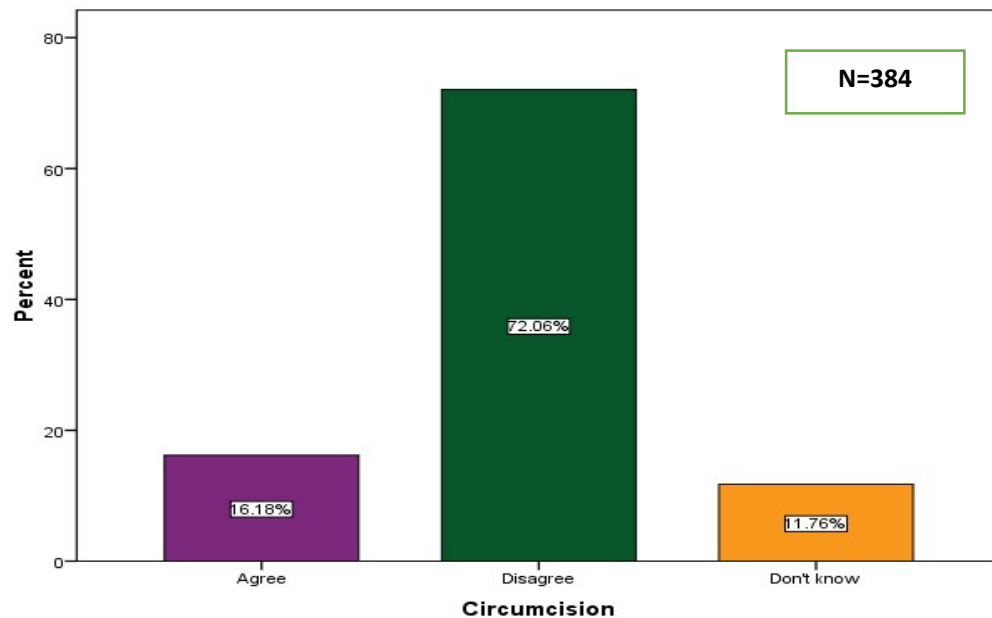


Figure 5. 2: Circumcision

Source: Field Data, 2022

The findings from the focus group discussions revealed that traditional initiation was one of the ways to reinforce traditions among the Pokot and Marakwet communities. One of the FGD participants stated that traditional circumcision is key when it comes to how the community members live. Every adult and child is trained in some basic ways of living, and the peak of this learning is at the initiation process. He added that during circumcision, the Pokot community put a lot of emphasis on cattle as a source of wealth, thus making the young people who come out of the process of initiation ceremonies more aggressive towards acquiring these livestock.

Among the Pokot and Marakwet, once a person gets circumcised, they are expected to marry. The Pokot community put emphasis on the number of livestock that one has to pay as bride price. The young men who get married must raid neighbouring communities for these livestock, and this has often been the cause of conflicts in the study area. One of the Marakwet elders, however, indicated in an FGD that for them, the issue of dowry is not such a big deal and that they don't expect young Marakwet men to raid for bride price. However, it was noted that the Pokot culture supported raids, which led to conflicts with neighbouring communities.

The allocation of tasks between genders and age groups structures the daily responsibilities associated with livestock care. Unmarried boys and girls are tasked with herding the animals. Once boys undergo circumcision, they are inducted into an age group and are responsible for local security. Upon marriage, elderly men assume authority over the family and the livestock. Girls are typically married off shortly after their circumcision. The lack of circumcision among the Turkana men is seen as a

cultural inferiority by neighbouring communities, prompting the Turkana to engage in lethal cattle raids in an attempt to disprove these notions.

In the Pokot community, the social structure is governed by a succession of age sets. Group membership is defined by the age at which an individual undergoes initiation. For young men, this occurs between the ages of fifteen and twenty, while for young women, it typically takes place around the age of twelve upon the onset of menarche (Pkalya *et al.*, 2004). Following initiation, young people are allowed to marry and participate in local economic activities. Bonds formed with other members of their initiation groups serve as future political alliances. When individuals reach old age, they are afforded a certain level of prestige and reverence. Elders are responsible for overseeing significant community decisions, festivals, and religious ceremonies.

5.3 Effectiveness of Marriages as Peace building Mechanism between the Pokot and Marakwet Communities

The study sought to establish whether traditional marriage ceremonies were effective in promoting peace in the study area. The findings in Figure 5.3 revealed that 299 (77.94%) of the household heads agreed, 73 (19.12%) disagreed, and 12 (2.94%) of the household heads stated that they did not know.

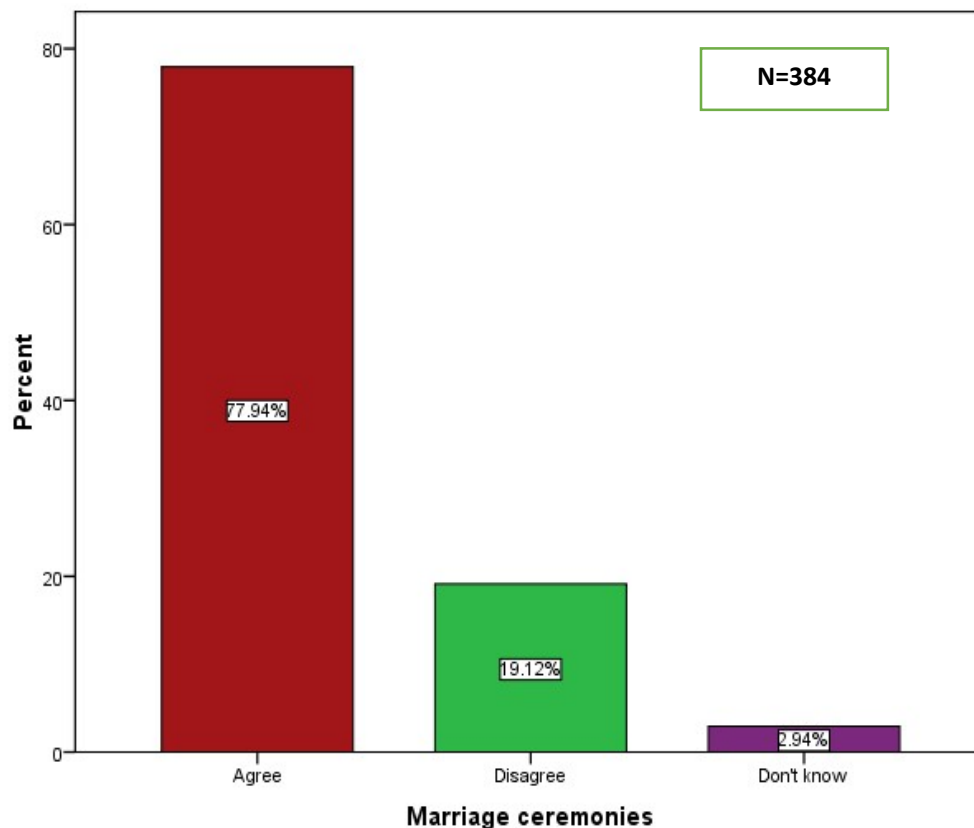


Figure 5. 3: Marriage Ceremonies

Source: Field Data, 2022

The Pokot and Marakwet consider marriage an important community event. The traditional marriage ceremonies are normally attended by both communities across the border. The ceremonies are mainly attended by elders, both men and women.

One elder from Chesongoch stated that;

The only time we can attend the ceremonies on the other side of the border is when there is peace in the area; otherwise, when there are hostilities, it becomes too risky to be there. Even the Pokot are afraid of coming to our ceremonies when there is tension (FGD held in Chesongoch Market on 10th October 2022).

The elders from both Pokot and Marakwet further revealed that whenever they meet, peace discussions are always part of the discussions. There was a consensus from both

sides that everyone needed peace. However, the study found that there was a high level of mistrust between the two communities, with each blaming the other for the conflicts that often rocked the area. The mistrust was so high that even kinship brought about through intermarriage was not considered to be a remedy for the conflict; for example, one Marakwet elder stated that;

Pokot wanaoa waschana yetu lakini akisha kwenda huko yeye pia anakua pokot tu. Hawezi mabia sisi siri za huko (The Pokot marry our daughters and once they go to the other side, they become Pokots and cannot share any secrets with us) (FGD held in Tot on 19th October 2022)

The findings were consistent with Likaka & Muia's (2015) discussion on the conflict between the Samburu and Pokot communities, underscoring the prevalence of both intra-community and inter-community marriages. Intra-community marriages involve individuals from the same community, while inter-community marriages entail individuals from different communities. As per the respondents, the primary motivation behind intra-community marriages is to preserve cultural values and unity within the community, fostering the prosperity of the community lineage. Such marriages were observed to encounter fewer marital challenges since both partners were familiar with the expectations of their community, resulting in roles and expectations that were mutually understood.

Conversely, inter-community marriages aimed to foster cultural exchange and interaction among different communities, promoting peaceful coexistence. These unions contributed to a closer bond between the two communities and were occasionally utilized to resolve conflicts. However, any disharmony between the communities could strain these marriages, as suspicions could arise between the husband and wife, potentially leading to accusations of betrayal. The respondents also highlighted that social ties and occasional inter-marriages between the Pokot and

Samburu communities occasionally led to married women fleeing and abandoning their families during times of conflict. Such actions often provoked the community the woman was running from, sometimes resulting in retaliatory violence. Additionally, during a conflict, a Pokot man who had married a Samburu woman and two of his relatives were tragically killed at the home of their in-laws during a visit to Amaiya. The Samburu community interpreted the visit as an act of mockery and betrayal by their son-in-law, leading to a violent response.

5.4 Effectiveness of Oath Taking as a Peace building mechanism between the Pokot and Marakwet Communities

The study sought to establish whether oath-taking effectively promoted peace between the Pokot and Marakwet Communities of the Kerio Valley region. The findings in Figure 5.4 revealed that 226 (58.8%) of the household heads agreed, 96 (25%), disagreed, and 62 (16.2%) of the household heads stated that they did not know.

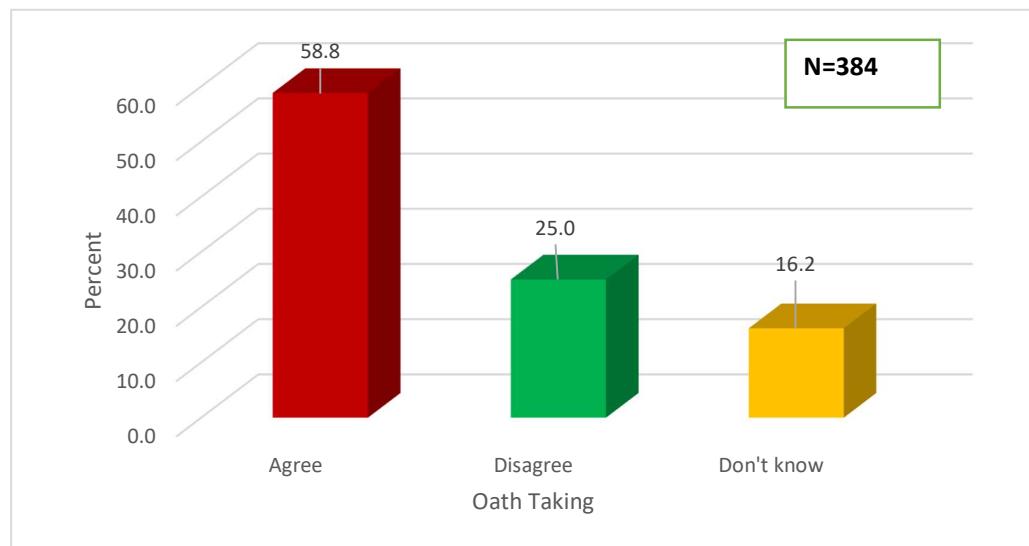


Figure 5. 4: Oath Taking

Source: Field Data, 2022

In support of the findings from household heads, elders FGD in Sambalat revealed that oaths were a major way of safeguarding community secrets. The oaths were mainly taken by young people during their initiations and during cleansing rituals. Oath-taking was also common during periods of conflict to end war or bring truce between the Pokot and Marakwet communities. In this regard, the oaths were used to temporarily restore peace but not for long. The young men who were graduating to adulthood were thus expected to protect the community and its interests with their lives. In this regard, the oaths were a covenant that they had with the community and anyone who broke such covenant would be considered an enemy of the community. Oaths administered during cleansing rituals and also very scary and expensive and so are the curses. The belief among members of the community is that anyone who goes against the oaths that they have taken would face the wrath of curses that are pronounced by elders to such “traitors”.

The Marakwet and Pokot enact peace pacts to end conflicts. These are normally done through a goat sacrifice oath. Elders from both communities participated in the oath and then ate together. Such an oath was meant to ensure peace. The Pokot gave a spear, while the Marakwet brought a goat. The goat was speared, and the blood was mixed with particular herbs, and then they drank and ate together. However, this resolved the conflict only temporarily.

There was also the use of compensation in cases of theft, manslaughter and murder. This compensation has recently been extended to the Pokot Murder suspects who have to undergo a cleansing ritual before resuming normal life. In addition, there are joint celebrations between the Marakwet and the Pokot. These are normally attended by women. There is a lot of feasting, as animals are slaughtered, and this helps to reduce the tension between the concerned parties. Participants discussed the importance of

maintaining peace. In addition, the community stresses respect for the culture and the observance of taboos, for instance, no killing of women or children during cattle raids, which are no longer observed.

The findings agreed with Melil (2018), who opined that cultural practices such as oathing in some communities increase suspicion by other communities, which often escalates to violence. Kiptoo (2010) further stated that the use of oaths is common. During oathing, a goat's ear is cut and given to all parties to eat. This is to force people to always speak the truth, thus ending the conflict. However, this is rarely done and is taken as a last resort to resolving conflicts. When the Marakwet and the Pokot fight, there is truce-cum-oath). It involves the youth, who are strongly asked to stop the conflict. *Swoger* (ritual spear) and *kuiwo* (headgear) are laid down during the meeting and no one goes against them. The arbitration of conflicts between the Marakwet and Pokot is normally done through *kokwa* (elders' meetings). Such meetings nowadays are sanctioned by the provincial administration, and they are held at a venue agreed by both parties.

Several studies support the significance of oath-taking as one of the ways to have members of a community protect deep-rooted secrets and remain loyal to the tradition of the community even when such traditions disrupt peaceful coexistence with neighbouring communities like in the case of the Pokot and Marakwet communities. Oath-taking, according to Odumakin (2009), is a distortion of value in politics to the extent that it transfers allegiance from the system to an individual who, for raw ambition or depravity, decides to take the place of God in the life of the oath taker. Okorie (2009) sees oath-taking in the traditional sense as a situation where absolute loyalty or adherence to certain agreement conditionality is prescribed and administered to the beneficiaries of the agreement. It is expected that whoever has taken such an oath will

not escape the punishment or sanction of a certain supernatural force or deity if the oath is flouted. Nwankwo (2017) sees oath-taking as a “statement or assertion made under penalty of divine retribution for intentional falsity.” This, according to Nwankwo, implies that “if the gravity of an offence committed is high and defies possible human solution, the accused is presented before the divinized spiritual forces for exoneration or punishment.”

Nwankwo (2017) outlines four primary purposes for the administration of oaths in Igbo society, namely, verifying the truth of statements made, fostering positive human relations, preserving the confidentiality of an institution, and dealing with criminal matters. The oath-taking process is regarded as a formidable ritual, often involving the use of language evoking calamity and mortality to emphasize the commitment to uphold one's end of the agreement. Within these rituals, life and well-being are invoked as assurances to ensure adherence to the terms of the agreement.

Ikeora (2016) summarized that parties resorting to oath-taking directly subjected themselves to supernatural judgment to resolve disputes presented before the deity. The process of oath-taking rituals is designed in such a way that a specific timeframe is allocated within which the accused party is anticipated to either perish at the hands of the gods or fall ill, thereby confirming their guilt (Nwakiby, 2004). An individual's "innocence or guilt is determined based on whether the accused individual dies or becomes sick within the designated time" (Oraegbunam, 2009). Oath-taking has historically served as a potent and crucial method of deterring wrongdoing, detecting crimes, and punishing offenders in various spheres of society. Whether in cases involving criminal activities such as armed robbery, kidnapping, witchcraft, cultism, murder, or child abduction, or in matters concerning deceptive behaviour, falsehood,

adultery, and fornication, the mere mention of traditional oaths instils fear and apprehension among these wrongdoers in African society. Oaths serve as a means of validation and authentication (Ekarika, 2014). It is also essential to emphasize that oaths evoke significant intimidation and fear in the minds and hearts of individuals across the African continent. There is an aura of secrecy around the oath, and not all people are conversant with its workings and regulations. All that people know about it is its effect and application and the fear of oath is the beginning of wisdom among adults and children, whether as indigenes or aliens wherever it holds away. Korir (2009) further argued that where appropriate, Peace Committees should draw upon traditional methods and rituals of conflict resolution and peace-making.

5.5 Effectiveness of Respect for the Council of Elders as a Peace building strategy

The study sought to establish whether respect for the Council of Elders as a cultural institution was effective in promoting peace-building between the Pokot and Marakwet Communities of the Kerio Valley region. The findings revealed that 265 (69.1%) of the household heads agreed, 51 (13.2%) disagreed, and 68 (17.7%) of the household heads stated that they did not know.

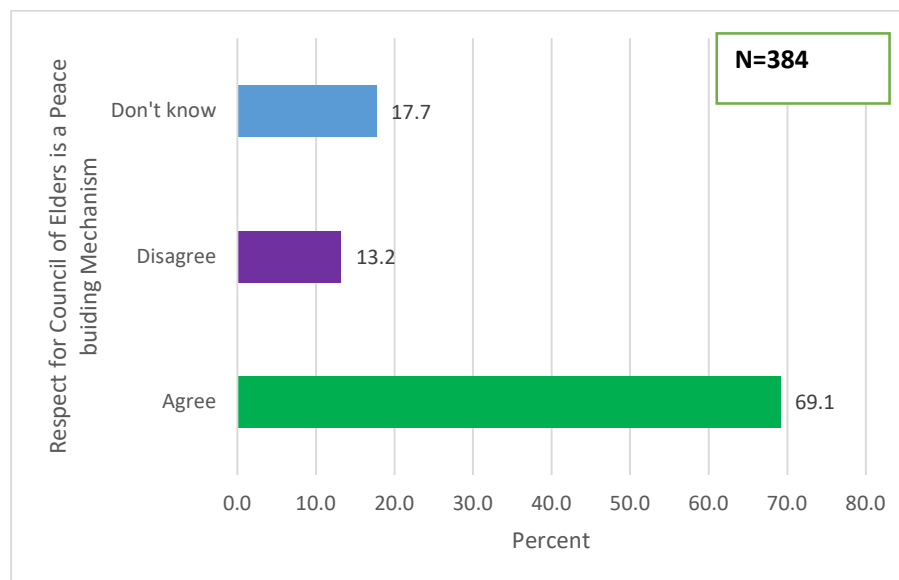


Figure 5. 5: Role of Elders in Peace Building

Source: Field Data, 2022

The Elders FGDs revealed that before warriors go for raiding expeditions, elders normally bless them. The elders can prevent conflicts by refusing to bless the warriors; hence, the elders can, in peace-building efforts, refuse to sanction attacks on the neighbouring communities. This was an indication that the elders of both Pokot and Marakwet wielded massive power on various issues that were affecting the society.

This was reiterated by the CJPC coordinator, who revealed that as early as the year 2001, when the conflicts between the two communities hit is highest, the Catholic church had recognized the power that the elders wielded with regard to peacebuilding. The CJPC involved the elders in the management of conflict between the two communities, and this brought some level of relief as the conflict started to decline.

The findings are supported by Pkalya et al (2004), who averred that the Pokot Council of elders (*Kokwo*) is the highest institution of conflict management and socio-political stratum among the Pokot community. The Council of elders is made up of respected, wise old men who are knowledgeable in community affairs and history. The elders are also good orators and eloquent public speakers who are able to use proverbs and wisdom phrases to convince the meeting or the conflicting parties to a truce. Every village is represented in the council of elders. Senior elderly women contribute to proceedings in a Council of elders while seated. Women participate in such meetings as documentalists so as to provide references for future meetings. They can advise the council on what to do and what not to do, citing prior occurrences or cultural beliefs. Before a verdict is made, women are asked to voice their views and opinions. The *Kokwo* observes the rule of natural justice. Both the accused and the accuser are allowed

to narrate their story before the panel. Traditional lawyers (eloquent members representing the plaintiff and defence) can speak on behalf of the conflicting parties. The *Kokwo* deals with major disputes and issues and is mandated to negotiate with other communities, especially for peace, cease-fire, grazing land/pastures and water resources. The *Kokwo* is the highest traditional court and its verdict is final.

The findings further agreed with Nwankwo (2017), who stated that the council of elders was traditional conflict management and peace building practice is part of a social system which has been proven over time to be efficient in reconciliation since it improves social relationships by restoring balance, settling disputes and managing conflict because it is deeply rooted in the customs and traditions of Africa. The traditional leaders have been instrumental in mitigating violence and quelling tension though positive traditional forms of peacemaking, mediation and peace interventions on behalf of the victims of the ethnic conflict.

In a study conducted by Schilling *et al.* (2012), *he reported that Turkana and Pokot elders encouraged or even assisted their raids with blessings and information* (for example, where to find the enemy's livestock). In their study, several raiders stated that the elders receive a share of the livestock, sometimes even 'the biggest bull'. However, in the same study, most elders claimed to discourage the raiding. Some acknowledged that they occasionally benefit from the raids or the raiders. It emerged in the study that during times of peace with the Pokot, the Turkana elders discourage the youth from raiding the Pokot, while during times of conflict, the elders hardly ever refuse a pre-raid blessing.

5.6 Effectiveness of Traditional Practice of Inter-community Negotiations as Peace building Mechanism

The study sought to establish whether inter-community negotiations were effective in peace-building between the Pokot and Marakwet Communities of the Kerio Valley region. The findings revealed that 333 (86.8%) of the household heads agreed, 34 (8.8%) disagreed, and 17 (4.4%) of the household heads stated that they did not know.

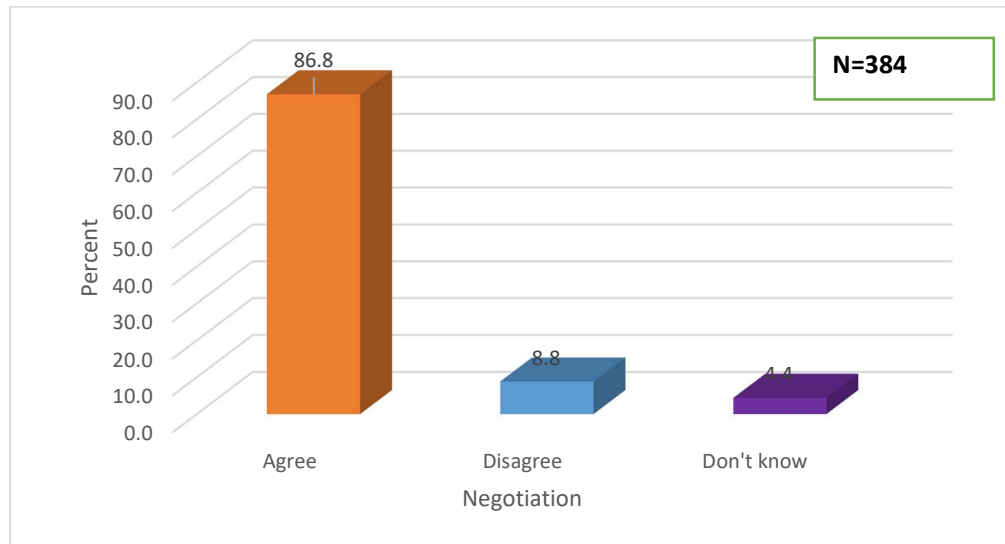


Figure 5. 6: Inter-community Negotiations as a Peace building Mechanism

Source: Field Data, 2022

The findings from the household heads were supported by those from Key informants and Focus Group discussions. During interviews with the Chiefs, they indicated that when conflicts escalated, the government agencies and Civil society Organizations would often call upon the elders to negotiate for Peace. The chiefs further indicated that due to the devastating nature of the conflicts and the losses that often occur as a result of these conflicts, elders often called for a cease-fire and gave room for negotiations, which, if successful, would lead to peace agreements or pacts.

The arguments of the Chiefs were supported by religious leaders who also stated that negotiations were a common peacebuilding mechanism in the area. The religious

leaders stated that in as much as the conflicts in the area had been rampant for many years, peace was mainly achieved majorly through negotiations spearheaded mainly by elders from both the Pokot and Marakwet communities.

During the Elders FGD in Sambalat, one of the elders indicated that;

Elders always sit down to talk in order to stop a conflict and at the end, an agreement is often reached and what needs to be done in order to stop a conflict. This agreement is always binding, and elders from both communities always respect these agreements once the negotiation is done (FGD in Sambalat on 20th October 2022).

The findings aligned with those of Pkalya *et al.* (2004), who demonstrated that, in order to shield their community from external threats, Pokot elders initiated dialogues with rival communities and appealed for the preservation of peace. These researchers also pointed out that such gatherings are of high stature and involve esteemed community elders from both sides. Throughout these negotiations, the elders present the gathered intelligence information while advocating for peace. When they are convinced that the discussions are sincere, especially in cases where there exists a traditional peace agreement (miss) between the concerned communities, the respective elders commit to returning home and advising their warriors to abandon their planned raids. In these meetings, impartial communities may be asked to serve as mediators and arbitrators, and decisions are reached through a consensus.

The findings were further supported by Sitin, (2020); among other things, the elders came up with a compensation scheme to appease affected communities. The scheme serves as a preventive measure against future conflicts. Pkalya *et al.* (2004) argue that, for instance, the elders can agree that the concerned community will pay 100 cattle to the family of the slain person as compensation. The compensation scheme is not

uniform. It differs from community to community. For example, between the Pokot and Turkana communities, the compensation is currently 100 for every killed person, while between the Pokot and Marakwet, the *Kolowa* declaration puts the figure at 40 cows.

The findings were further in agreement with Korir (2009), who argued that while sharing food can be a powerful way to unify people, timing is crucial. It should come once there is a process underway and some basic trust. Traditionally, people had a meal together once the conflict had some resolution, not at the beginning of negotiations. In other contexts and cultures, one may want to substitute this step for another simple ritual that is commonly used to symbolize reconciliation and unity.

5.7 Effectiveness of Traditional Pacts as Peace Building Mechanism

The study sought to establish whether traditional Pacts were effective in Peace Building between the Pokot and Marakwet Communities of the Kerio Valley region. The findings revealed that 372 (97.1%) of the household heads agreed, 6 (1.5%) disagreed, and 6 (1.5%) of the household heads stated that they did not know.

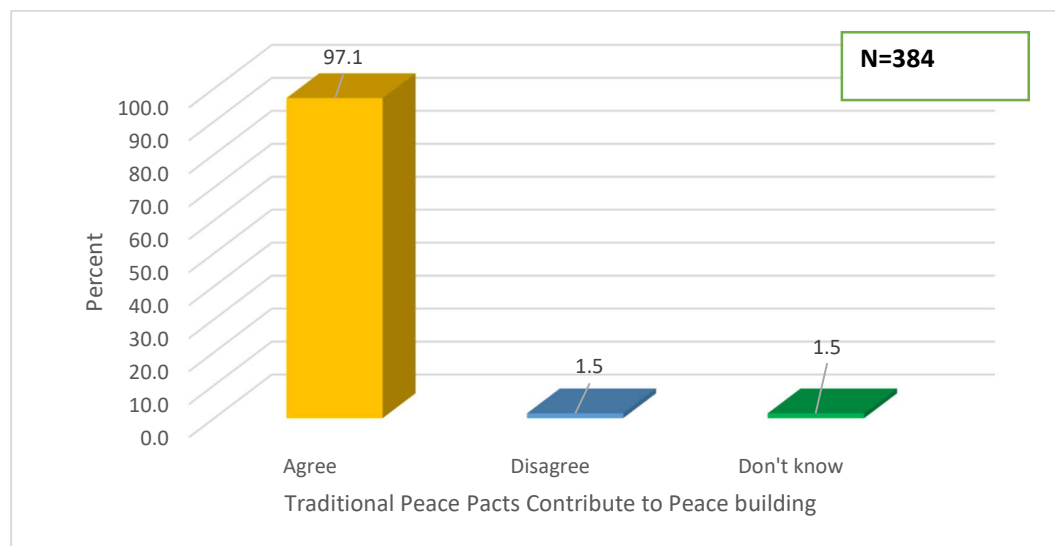


Figure 5. 7: Whether Traditional Peace Pacts are used in Peace Building

Source: Field Data, 2022

The findings from an FGD with Pokot Elders supported the findings from the household heads by revealing that peace pacts were always invoked or signed during times of distress as a way of protecting the community from further harm or perceived harm. One of the elders stated that;

When tension is high, we always reach out to our colleagues from the neighbour communities in order to strike a deal or revive an existing peace agreement (*Miss*). The Kolowa declaration of 2003 is one of those peace paths that exist between the Pokot and Marakwet and it has often been used as a way of bringing peace when there conflicts look inevitable (FGD held in Kolowa on 23rd October 2022).

The findings agreed with Pkalya *et al* (2004), who opined that *Miss* is a peace pact signed by two or more warring communities. The decision to enter into a peace pact is arrived at after lengthy inter-community negotiations. *Miss* is tricky in that the signatory communities, more often than not, enter for strategic material gains rather than for peace. The Pokot community enters into peace pacts mostly during dry seasons. The pact allows them access to pasture and water in the neighbouring communities. When the rainy season sets in, there is a high likelihood that the pact will be flouted. After the elders agree that a peace pact is to be brokered, the communities are asked to donate bulls, milk, honey and come with instruments of death. During the material day of the ritual, the donated steers are slaughtered. All the instruments of death, i.e. spears, arrows, bows, knives, swords, etc, are collected, destroyed and buried in a pit with a mixture of milk, honey, traditional beer and intestinal fluids. The mixture is then buried while elders from the concerned communities verbalise curses to whoever flouts the just-brokered pact.

The findings also agreed with Likaka & Muia (2015), who indicated that the peace between the Pokot and Samburu communities is attributed to the peace pacts ceremony

that was brokered hundreds of years ago around Mt. Elgon. The Pokot have also enjoyed a cordial relationship with the Matheniko sub-tribe of the larger Karamojang community and the Ugandan Sabiny courtesy of miss, which was brokered in 2000. However, *miss* that has been brokered between Pokot and Turkana, other Karamojang tribes and the Marakwet community have been flouted with impunity, the reason being the *miss* was brokered for convenience (access to pasture and water resources during droughts). Nevertheless, *miss* is a very reliable method of preventing inter-ethnic conflicts.

5.8 Effectiveness of the Traditional roles of Women as Mothers in Peace building

The study sought to establish whether the traditional roles of women were effective in peace-building between the Pokot and Marakwet Communities of the Kerio Valley region. The findings revealed that 282 (73.5%) of the household heads agreed, 79 (20.6%) disagreed, and 23 (5.9%) of the household heads stated that they did not know.

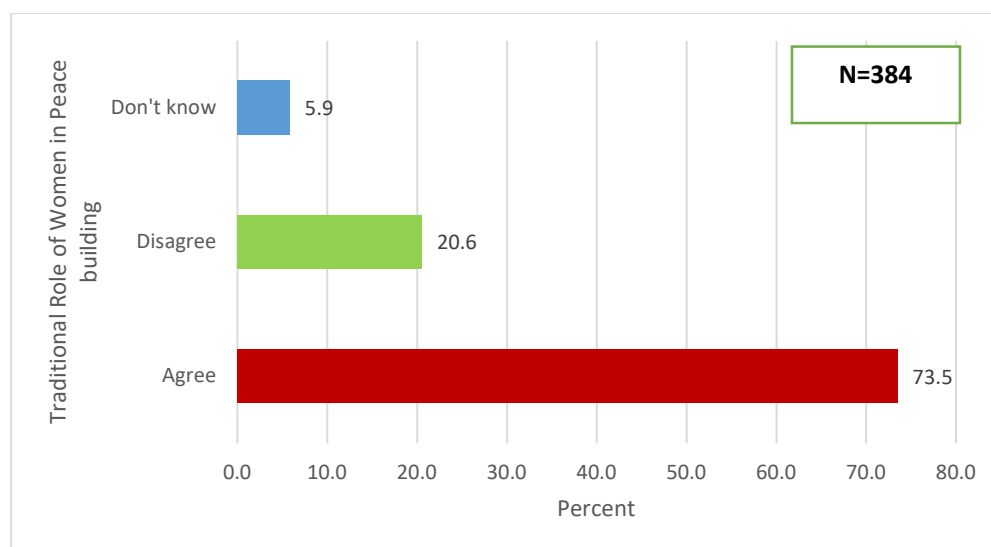


Figure 5. 8: Traditional Role of Women in Peace building

Source: Field Data. 2022

The findings from Interviews and Focus Group discussions agreed with those from household heads. During an interview with one of the peace committee members, it emerged that women in both Marakwet and Pokot communities had a massive influence on both peace building and incitement to violence. The peace committee member stated that mothers could inspire peace by telling their sons not to go to war against other communities. He stated that the mothers had a lot of influence on their sons and the respect they commanded would help the communities live in peace.

These sentiments were supported by an elders FGD in which they stated that the community relied on women to discuss peace issues. He stated that even in the council of elders, women always sat in the meetings so that information that was discussed in these meetings could reach the younger members of the community. Women would always pass information to family members much more easily and as such, they played a pivotal role in advocating for peace within the traditional conflict resolution context.

During women's FGD that was held in Kolowa, it emerged that Pokot women had more bargaining power for Peace and their actions would stop conflicts instantly. The FGD participants stated that just like elders bless young warriors before the raids, women also had to bless their sons before the raid. This meant that if the mothers did not want their sons to go and raid, they would simply refuse to give such blessings and hence, the young men would have no choice but to avoid getting involved in conflicts. One of the Women FGD participants further explained that;

Pokot women can prevent conflicts by using different mechanisms; for example, the Pokot and Marakwet believe that a woman can protect her son from harm by wearing a birth belt called *leketio* (a belt which supports pregnancy). The belt has the ability to protect young people from any dangers. Therefore, if a mother refuses to wear that belt, no

young man can risk getting involved in the conflict because the outcome can be fatal (Women's FGD in Kolowa, 24th October 2022).

The findings were in agreement with Pkalya *et al* (2004), who stated that among the Pokot, Women used *Leketio*, which is a belt which supports pregnancy and hence life, to make young people avoid going into conflicts with other communities. Schilling, *et al* (2012) added that women have an influence on the raiding activity of their men. They either encourage their men and prepare meals after a successful raid, or they play a discouraging role, for example, by expressing their fear of losing their man. In this regard, the findings by Pkalya *et al* (2004) indicated that the *Leketio* belt is studded with cowry shells, *Leketio* is considered a powerful charm that protects children from harm. Before the warriors set out for a raid, each of them informs his mother so that she can wear the belt while he is away. To prevent conflicts, women refuse to wear the belts, prompting the warrior to abandon the mission. Women could also lay their belts in front of warriors who are about to go for a raid. Crossing a *leketio* is considered a curse. For instance, when fighting is raging, a woman may remove her *leketio* and lay it between the fighting men. The fight ceases immediately. The concept of using a pregnancy belt to halt or prevent conflicts is the same in all 18 Kalenjin sub-tribes.

The findings further agree with Ibok and Ogar (2018), whose study evaluates the traditional Roles of African Women in Peace Making and Peace Building. They compare cultures from various African states. In their findings, they highlight that Tanzanian women have consistently played a crucial role in maintaining balance within their society by nurturing their children to become responsible members of the community. They have been instrumental in imparting proper conduct, ethical values, and the significance of virtues such as honesty, integrity, and the willingness to compromise. Consequently, women have consistently acted as proactive promoters of

harmony within their communities, contributing to what can be described as a culture of peace. They further compare this to the Igbo culture in Nigeria, where the term "Nneka" signifies that "mother is supreme," symbolizing the vital role women play as sustainers and healers of human relationships.

Ibok and Ogar (2018) further argue that in Somalia, there exists a saying that "the mother is the first and most valuable school in life,". This sentiment holds true not only in Somalia but also in various African societies. A common thread among the values instilled by mothers in African traditions includes patience, tolerance, honesty, reverence for elders, communal spirit, mutual respect, compassion, discretion, gentleness, modesty, self-discipline, moderation, adaptability, and open-mindedness. They further observe that these values have been integrated into customary laws in Somali society and other African communities, as they serve as the foundational principles underpinning the culture of peace.

5.9 Chapter Summary

The chapter has presented findings on the role of cultural practices and festivals in peacebuilding among The Pokot and Marakwet communities of the Kerio Valley region, Kenya. The findings from this chapter have revealed that activities such as the Marakwet-Pokot Cultural Festival (MPCF) were possible peace-building platforms but they were mainly seen by the local communities as places to get together for entertainment and not for peace-building. The chapter further revealed that traditional activities like traditional circumcision were more of platforms for cultural activities that promoted conflicts than peace and were isolated activities for each community as opposed to joint cultural activities that could foster peace. However, marriages and marriage ceremonies could help in the process of peace-building. Oath-taking activities

also had an impact on the peace process, especially in the cases where it was done by both communities to bring peace. However, oath-taking was also done by the youths during initiation for the purpose of keeping community secrets. Peace building was also done through the role of the Council of elders, inter-ethnic negotiations, traditional peace pacts (*miss*) and the role of women as mothers in peacebuilding. The next chapter presents findings and discussions on challenges and opportunities Pokots and Marakwets face in using cultural practices and festivals in peacebuilding.

CHAPTER SIX

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES POKOT AND MARAKWET FACE IN USING CULTURAL PRACTICES AND FESTIVALS IN PEACE-BUILDING

This chapter presents the findings in line with the third specific objective of the study. The researcher analysed, presented, interpreted and discussed data on the challenges and opportunities Pokots and Marakwets face in using cultural practices and festivals in peacebuilding. The chapter has been divided into the following sub-sections: The Challenges faced by the Peace Building efforts between the Pokot and Marakwet Communities, which have further been discussed based on the following sections: Low Educational Attainment, Banditry Menace, Proliferation of Small arms and Light Weapons, Lack of Political goodwill. The study further discussed opportunities that Emerge from Peacebuilding efforts by Various Actors. The findings in this chapter further focused on the role played by religious leaders and civil society organizations in peacebuilding in the study areas and chapter summary.

6.1 Challenges faced by the Peace Building efforts between the Pokot and Marakwet Communities

The study sought to establish the challenges that were faced by the Pokot and Marakwet communities in their peacebuilding efforts. The findings in Figure 6.1 revealed that the communities faced a myriad of challenges in the process of peacebuilding.

Table 6. 1: Challenges faced by the Peace Building efforts between the Pokot and Marakwet Communities

Challenges	Yes	No	Total	Rank
Low Educational Attainment	65%	35%	100%	6
Banditry Menace	75.4%	24.6%	100%	4
Proliferation of Small arms and Light Weapons	97.1%	2.9%	100%	1
Lack of Political goodwill	88.7%	11.3%	100%	2
Competition for Livestock Pasture	75%	25%	100%	5
Marginalization	57.3%	42.7%	100%	8
Competition for Water	64.4%	35.6%	100%	7
Negative Ethnicity as a Hindrance to Peace building	51.5%	48.5%	100%	9
Cattle Rustling	86.76%	13.24%	100%	3

Table 6.1: Challenges to Peacebuilding between Pokot and Marakwet and Pokot
Source: Field Data, 2022

6.1.1 Low Educational Attainment of the Pokot and Marakwet Communities

The findings in Figure 6.1 revealed that low educational attainments had immensely hampered peace-building efforts between the two communities as supported by 250 (65%) of the household heads who said yes, this was in contrast to the 134 (35%) of household heads who were of the contrary opinion.

During the interviews and the focus group discussions, it emerged that conflicts between the Pokot and Marakwet communities had immensely interfered with levels of

educational attainments in the area, especially among the Pokot. There were fewer schools on the Pokot side of the border and as such, many of the young men from the Pokot community living in Baringo and Elgeyo-Marakwet counties did not value education. This was evidenced by a series of attacks on schools by Pokot raiders in the Kerio Valley region. The findings from Interviews by key informants revealed that the Pokot are mainly nomadic in nature since they move with their animals from time to time looking for pasture and as such, do not have a lifestyle that allows them to go to school. The Pokot Culture also view livestock ownership as the source of wealth, and therefore, any young man in the community believes that once they get initiated, all they need to do is raid their neighbours for livestock and that's how they get wealth. School is not one of those things that the community gives young people as an option to get wealth.

The majority of the raiders are those with low educational attainments. During an interview with the CJPC coordinator, he stated that most of the bandits who were involved in raids were not educated. He stated that these people had either dropped out of lower primary school and the only language they understood was violence. He further stated that these raiders were trained on how to use guns at a tender age, and they knew that in an encounter with an enemy, it was either kill or be killed. There was no middle ground.

During an FGD in Tot, one of the reformed bandits indicated that he dropped out of school when he was in Standard Three and was immediately drawn into life. At the time, there was a devastating drought and herders had to drive their livestock further afield, even as far away as Kainuk in neighbouring Turkana County, in search of pasture

and water. That is when he had to learn to use a gun—an essential skill for a herder in the volatile region where cattle theft is common.

In support of the findings, a special report in the Daily Nation Paper on February 19, 2023, described how low educational attainment among bandits contributed to persistent conflicts in the study area. The report revealed that the life of a bandit in Kenya's insecurity-prone North Rift is one of sworn secrecy, military-like ranks, uneducated young men dangerously suspicious of their educated peers, and top-notch intelligence gathering that would rival that of any organised force. For most armed cattle rustlers, the 'training' starts at a tender age; young boys get no formal schooling and start ingraining life in the bush—living by the gun. Here, boys, sometimes as young as eight or nine, are separated from their mothers and taught “the way of men”, starting with how to hold and shoot a gun, coupled with lessons on how to survive the hardship of the terrain. These young boys grow to become the uneducated hardcore bandits who have kept on terrorising the region.

The findings agreed with Marete (2018), who opined that the motive of the conflicts in pastoral communities is instigated through cattle raids to restock after drought and for dowry payment. These conflicts from cattle raids have serious implications on educational attainments. The social pressure on the students makes them lack the zeal and motivation to be in school and acquire an education. The regions are often sparsely populated due to low productivity. This is because weather conditions cannot support crop farming. Therefore, livestock keeping is not only a lifestyle for the pastoral communities but also a source of their survival. Most of the communities practising pastoralism attach it to their culture, which they are not prepared to abandon for anything else. This attachment to their culture has made the pastoral communities not

take education with the seriousness that it deserves. Marete further argues that in East Pokot sub-county, the politicians have failed to engage their local communities adequately in a bid to restore peace and advocate for the education of the children who mainly drop out at the secondary school level to engage in cattle rustling, which is the major cause of conflicts in the County. The pastoralism aspect of moving with the animals to different places while looking for grazing land and water has forced many children to abandon schools and get integrated into the cattle herding socio-economic activity. The occurrence of raids causes deaths, loss of animals and destruction of property and consequently forces migration of pastoralists into safer places. The rising incidents of insecurity often invite the urge for retaliation. Through the proliferation of arms, the pastoral communities find themselves in constant conflicts with the neighbouring communities. The confrontational conflicts caused the closure of the schools in these regions, further exacerbating the low educational attainment and making the conflict a vicious one due to the large number of people without education.

6.1.2 Banditry Menace

The findings in Figure 6.1 revealed that banditry had immensely hampered peace-building efforts between the two communities as supported by 290 (75.4%) of the household heads who said yes, which was in contrast to the 94 (24.6%) of household heads who were of the contrary opinion.

The findings from the household heads were in tandem with those from FGDs. One of the elders indicated that the security problem in the areas was mainly due to the organized nature of the criminal acts committed by the raiders. He stated that the way the raids were conducted was akin to a military operation. The elder, who was a former soldier, stated that it was like the raiders had an intelligence wing because they knew

exactly when and where to strike. He added that they came in large groups who were sub-divided into attackers whose aim was to fire at the community that was being attacked. There were also those who were meant to drive the animals away. These sentiments from the FGD were supported by a senior police officer who stated that the bandits operated like highly trained people and had sophisticated weapons for these operations. One of the peace committee members stated that Peacebuilding between the Pokot and Marakwet communities has become elusive due to the feeling of the Marakwet community that the Pokot glorify violence and encourages bandit activities which are meant to terrorize them. This was validated by one of the elders who stated that the rustlers have ranks and those who kill have some visible markings on their bodies depending on the people he has killed. For instance, when a rustler kills a man, four cuttings are done on his body and you may find one having several of the marks on his body, an indication that he has killed so many people. Such Rustlers are also rewarded by the community and elders if they prove their prowess in defending their community and are given more cattle. The more cuttings you have, the more you are glorified. They are called generals, and these are some of the indications that sustain the age-old practice. These practices that make killers heroes are seen as a threat to peace by the Marakwet.

The banditry issue has been in existence in the area for several years. Osamba (2000) argues that the weakening of state control over north-western Kenya has resulted in Banditry, which was characterised by the emergence of cattle warlords with armed militia to protect their interests. Consequently, violence, chaos, and insecurity have become the dominant feature of the region. Cattle warlordism emerged among the Pokot and Turkana in the 1980s. Available evidence shows that the first warlord

emerged in West Pokot in 1980. He mobilised a group of about 500 youths by promising them security and livestock. Most of the youth were recruited from the nearby trading centres where they were earning a living as night watchmen, farmhands, or by performing odd jobs.

These young men underwent some vigorous military training under the supervision of ex-military men. After undergoing the training, the warriors were sent on raiding missions against the Tugen, Marakwet and Keiyo. Through several similar raids, the warlord and his retainers managed to replenish their stocks. Later, more raids were organised further afield against the Turkana, Karamajong of Uganda, and Toposa of Ethiopia. Most of these raids yielded good results, although there were also some casualties during combat. Since then, more cattle warlords have emerged and warlordism has turned into a profitable venture for both the warlords and their retainers. Influential and wealthy people have risen, promising them good tidings, security, and prosperity. Due to the people's disillusionment and anger over the government's mistreatment in the past, the warlords have managed to win strong support from the people for their own personal gains. The 1980s were characterised by natural calamities and compounded by a serious state of permanent insecurity created by bandits and, to some extent, by government security forces. Many families fled their homes and became refugees in the nearby trading centres.

The warlords created strong and heavily armed private armies that, apart from providing local security, also went on cattle raids near and far. The warlords, therefore, have very many retainers whom they can send on raids while they maintain and supervise the raiding party. The warlords have become the final authority on cattle relations, overriding the traditional powers of the elders. Available evidence shows that there are

links between warlords and livestock traders from Kenya and neighbouring countries. They have maintained a strong trade network reminiscent of the old East African caravan trade (Morogo interview 1998). The youth play a very crucial role in the system of warlordism. Since they are impoverished and marginalised by economic realities, the youths are structurally available and ready for mobilisation and for offering service to the highest bidder. In general, the youth are the group most excluded from the social, economic and political order of the society. They are amenable and can easily be manipulated. The large number of destitute youths is due to the breakdown of social and economic order in north-western Kenya. Indeed, the appropriation of violence by the youth has had a serious effect on the traditional hierarchy in society, where the elders were expected to have some moderating influence over the activities of the abrasive youth. In order to understand the politics of warlordism, it is necessary to trace the political factors behind this new phenomenon.

6.1.3 Proliferation of Small arms and Light Weapons

The findings in Figure 6.1 revealed that the proliferation of small arms and Light weapons had immensely hampered peace-building efforts between the two communities, as supported by 373 (97.1%) of the household heads who said yes, as compared to 11 (2.9%) of household heads who were of the contrary opinion.

The availability of guns emerged as one of the biggest challenges to the process of peace-building. Both the Marakwet and Pokot communities kept arms for their own protection, which made peace elusive in the areas. In the interviews and FGDs conducted in the study area, it emerged that the feelings of vulnerability to attacks from either side of the border made the communities keep guns.

One elder from the Pokot side stated that;

As the Pokot, we are marginalized and endangered; we are always seen and the enemy, even by the government and therefore, we must protect ourselves. (FGD held at Kolowa on 27th October 2022)

The feelings about the availability of weapons had proven to be a major threat to peacebuilding because many of the young men who had weapons sometimes engaged in cattle raids without the express permission of the elders. One of the chiefs stated that;

Even our elders, who have been the biggest players in the traditional conflict resolution processes, have become relatively weak in terms of being able to conflict with the activities of some of the rogue youths. The elders were mainly left to perform rituals as a way of trying to assert their authority, but this may not be as effective as it was in the past because these weapons have made some raiders feel invincible and hence conduct their raids with total disregard for the elders (Interview with one of the Chief, 27th October 2022)

One of the senior police officers who was interviewed indicated that he had served in the area, and he narrated how daring the young bandits were. He stated that the raiders are well conversant with the porous and rugged terrain and, which gives them an upper hand and easily takes advantage to ambush police officers. Sometimes, the attackers destroy communication masts to disable communication of security officers deployed in the area and prevent locals from making distress calls in case of an attack. For local administrators, efforts here often come to nought as it often means hunting for people armed to the teeth and ready to use their firearms. One chief stated that most of the criminals flee when they get wind of a looming disarmament exercise, negating efforts to track them. They flee the villages and go far away to the neighbouring counties and countries such as Uganda; hence, the efforts of disarmament always prove futile.

The findings further agree with Marete (2018), whose study indicated that the spread

of small arms and light weapons has had an adverse impact on the authority of elders, thereby undermining their control over processes associated with the management of conflict. Traditional authority over the organization of cattle raids was always vested in the elders, who directed how and when this would be done, taking into account the advice of seers, diviners and prophets. However, the easy availability of small arms and light weapons has changed all this, with warriors organizing cattle raids without reference to elders, leading to a situation where such raids have become commercialized and no longer undertaken on the basis of traditional values (Aiyabei, 2021). However, the authority of traditional institutions has also been adversely affected by the introduction of administrative boundaries and borders, which have split up communities, in some cases placing different portions in different countries, as in the case of the Pokot. Within countries, administrative boundaries bring with them new institutional arrangements controlled by the state and backed by its police powers.

These new state institutions render traditional institutions redundant as they take over most of their roles and are deemed more effective since they have the backing of national laws. The Pokot elders are tasked with mediating the emergence of conflict and ensuring unity is attained in the long run. The pastoral communities have great respect and trust on the traditional way of pastoral conflict resolution rather than the modern state-led conflict resolution. As a result, almost all cases of inter- and intra-clan conflicts in the pastoral areas of the Pokot community are resolved in a traditional way. The genesis of the recent conflicts on land resources is said to be the setting up of demarcations that took away the ancestral land of the Pokot during the recent setting up of counties. Pokot elders claim that the government did not involve the community in drawing up new maps and as such, vast tracts of land traditionally belonging to the Pokot have been hived off.

6.1.4 Lack of Political goodwill

The findings in Table 6.1 revealed that lack of political goodwill had immensely hampered peace-building efforts between the two communities as supported by 341 (88.7%) of the household heads who said yes; this was in contrast to the 43 (11.3 %) of household heads who were of the contrary opinion.

The political leaders are the other group of individuals from the conflicting communities who can be invited to help settle disputes. Since the politicians occupy elective positions, they stand at a better place to call for unity and promote development within the rural areas. Some of the essential services that need to be addressed effectively include security, education, health, and road networks, which are to be provided by the administration of political leaders. However, the politics have been ethnicized, which might aggravate the conflict rather than solve it. This, therefore, makes the politicians neutral, leaving the traditional system as the most preferred method of intervention.

Political leaders from the region have also been accused of being part of the problem as part of cattle rustling warlords who have been seen to fund cattle theft and even provide arms to the perpetrators of the conflicts.

According to the Daily Nation, on 17th February 2023, Pokot South MP David Pkosing was arrested by detectives from the Serious Crimes Unit on claims of funding banditry in the region. Former Rift Valley regional coordinator George Ntembeya, who in his tenure worked to try and restore peace in the region, private helicopters were used to ferry arms and weapons to bandits in the troubled Rift Valley region. The helicopter has been mentioned in numerous security meetings, with residents and police reservists claiming it usually lands in the bandits' hideout in Baringo South. Residents claim that

whenever the helicopter is sighted, bandit attacks follow soon after. The arguments further indicated that the Korkoron Hills are where hundreds of armed bandits graze livestock as they spy on other areas and plan their attacks. There have been questions on where the bandits get their firearms and why they never run out of ammunition, which they use in attacks on villages and in gunfire exchanges with security officers.

The Pokot have always felt politically marginalized by the political leadership of the country for a long time. For example, during Moi Era, the Pokot were a part of the KAMATUSA group. However, at the time, the born of contention was the feeling by the Pokot that the government had taken them for granted for too long (Osamba, 2000). This continued into the subsequent regimes, with the current government being perceived by the Pokot political leadership as protecting the Marakwets. For example, in an interview with the VoA News on February 17, 2023, Pokot South Member of Parliament, stated that some politicians from rival communities closer to the government were inciting authorities against him and his community. This is an indication that the Pokot were being witch-hunted by the Government and rival communities. Therefore, with such feelings, no meaningful can be realised in such a volatile area. In this regard, therefore, there are both political and economic dimensions to the new phenomenon of cattle rustling and banditry. According to this argument, the government has a tendency to favour the Tugen-Keiyo axis in the distribution of political and economic resources. Economically, the areas inhabited by the Pokot are underdeveloped in terms of infrastructure, resource allocations, and the availability of economic and social services. The Pokot, therefore, feel that they have been pushed to the wall and must react in one form or another to reassert themselves, safeguard their interests, and make the government accede to their various demands.

From the foregoing, presently, the warlords appear to be the wealthiest among the the Pokot; hence, they control all aspects of social and economic life and even the political orientation of the people. Osamba (2000) argued that they seem to have some hypnotising powers over the people. Thus, poverty, hunger, and destitution have been accompanied by aggressive and predatory behaviour in pursuit of political goals. In such a scenario, the state is reduced to an arena of competing interests and political objectives inconsistent either with its role as the main monopoliser of the use of force or the sole arbiter of divergent ethnic and regional interests". At present, the political landscape of the pastoral communities is characterized by the supremacy of warlords. These individuals exert authority over various facets of social, economic, and political existence within these communities. They appear to hold a mesmerizing influence over the populace, essentially functioning as entities beyond the reach of the law. The pervasive state of insecurity and absence of law enforcement in the northwestern regions of Kenya, coupled with the breakdown of social and economic frameworks, has given rise to a subgroup referred to as the "lumpen-proletariats." This group frequently resorts to engaging in acts of banditry and cattle rustling.

Kareithi (2015) argues that violence can develop as a result of politicised discontent arising out of unmet "value expectations" in a society. In Kenya, the political environment has affected the "value expectations" of societies without increasing the economic capabilities to achieve the goals and, therefore, has heightened the intensity of discontent. In addition, in the use of ethnicity as an informal interest group in political and economic competition, the issue of the neglect of pastoral societies and districts and the marginalization of this population has been politicised. Politicians have made a lot of political capital in their claims to champion the "rights and interests" of their

communities but, unfortunately, at the expense of national integration. Osamba (2001), Muchai (2003), and Weiss (2004) additionally highlight the emergence of warlords during the 1980s, wherein affluent and politically influential members of pastoralist communities enlisted young men to instigate violence with the goal of displacing individuals from other communities from one region to another during electoral periods. Additionally, Osamba (2000) proposes that local political figures manipulate ethnic tensions, instigating communities to partake in ethnic conflicts to secure their own political power. The Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) (2001) establishes a correlation between political influence and the Murkutwo Massacre, where 56 Marakwet individuals were slain by Pokot warriors in March 2001, coinciding with the 2002 General Elections. This event transpired during a period when the KANU government aimed to maintain its political dominance over the Marakwet community, which was leaning towards the opposition.

6.1.5 Competition for Livestock Pasture

The study sought to establish whether livestock pasture was a challenge to peace-building between the Pokot and Marakwet ethnic groups of Elgeyo-Marakwet County. The findings revealed that 288 (75%), whereas 96 (25%) disagreed.

During the Interview with the CJPC coordinator, it emerged that pasture was the major cause of conflicts in the areas he stated;

For the Pokot, cattle was everything and they had to get grass for the animals by whatever means necessary. Whether it's through the use of force or through making requests, the Pokot must get grass for their animals by whatever means necessary, even if they have to graze their animals on the farmlands. (Interview with CJPC Official 25th October 2022).

The rivalry between the Pokot and Marakwet communities is closely linked to environmental concerns, particularly those related to grazing land. Competing over

scarce water and pasture resources, efforts to recover herds following losses due to drought, retaliatory attacks in response to raids or the killing of community members, the cultural valorisation of celebrated cattle raiders, and the central role of accumulating cattle to fulfil social obligations, including marriage and sustenance, are significant drivers of this conflict (Bollig & Österle, 2007). Bollig & Österle (2007) emphasize the admiration and social advancement associated with successful raiders, as well as the scorn experienced by those perceived as cowardly members of the community who fail to acquire raided cattle.

Leff (2009) argues that water and pasture scarcity have amplified violent confrontations among competing pastoralist communities in East Africa. Drought forces herders to venture far from their home territories, leading to competition with herders from other communities, thereby fuelling conflicts. Moreover, the availability of small arms and light weapons has enabled unscrupulous business elites, both within and outside the pastoral sector, to recruit unemployed youth from these communities as mercenaries, with political leaders or candidates sponsoring raids for fundraising purposes. In my own research in this area, I also observed that common grazing areas like Kurkur, Lonyek, and Amaya, which herders from various communities rely on during droughts, have become major conflict hotspots, often declared as "no man's land" due to the high incidence of violence. Leff further suggests that population growth and climate change have diminished the effectiveness of traditional coping mechanisms once utilized by pastoralists to contend with drought and cattle losses.

Wario *et al.* (2012) put forth the idea that droughts do not typically lead to violent conflicts among pastoralists. They argue that pastoralists prefer peace during drought periods to facilitate the equitable sharing of limited resources. However, they suggest

that violent conflicts, often involving cattle raids, are more prevalent during the wet seasons, particularly in the months of March-April and November-December. Reciprocal attacks between various pastoralist groups have been a persistent occurrence. The Kenya Human Rights Commission (2010) emphasizes that retaliatory attacks, originating from previous raids or killings, have been a significant factor in recent violence among the Samburu, Turkana, and Pokot communities. The KHRC points out that such retaliatory attacks are common among pastoral communities in Kenya, largely due to the perceived lack of government action in response to cattle raids in Northern Kenya. Krätli & Swift (1999) underscore the destructive ramifications of retaliatory attacks incited by commercial raids, stating that "As the raided herds need to be restocked, professional raids - well equipped, organized, highly effective - may instigate a series of clan raids - smaller, less equipped, spontaneous - easily sparking a chain reaction of violence."

6.1.6 Marginalization

The study sought to establish whether marginalization was a challenge to peace-building between the Pokot and Marakwet ethnic groups of Elgeyo-Marakwet County. The findings revealed that 220 (57.3%) strongly agreed, while 164 (42.7%) disagreed with this assertion.

The findings from household heads were in agreement with those from key informants who indicated that one of the reasons why conflicts were rampant in the study area was due to the fact that many of the communities living in the area were far behind in terms of development. One of the chiefs stated that in some areas, schools and health facilities were several kilometres apart and the residents of the area had a lot of great difficulties accessing such essential services. During one of the FGDs, one elder stated that;

The Pokot children were not going to school because there were schools in the areas they lived. This means that the only way for the to survive was to learn what culture dictates, and to the Pokot, wealth was all about having large herds of cattle, so once they went through the initiation, all they had to do was steal livestock from neighbouring communities (FGD held in Tot on, 21st October 2022).

Another elder stated that;

If the Pokot who live in West Pokot County and those who live in Baringo county had the same level of exposure in terms of education and development as the Pokot who live in West Pokot County, I am sure our story would be different. The daily conflict with the Turkana, Samburu and Marakwet would not be there (FGD held in Chesongoch, 10th October 2022).

The study's results align with Kareithi's (2015) assertion that ethnic violence is occasionally incited by the political elite who, for political expediency, deprive the general public of development. Pastoral and previously pastoral communities in the North Rift have employed the characterization of themselves as "minor" ethnic groups as a tactic for political mobilization. This strategy is employed to counter what is perceived as political and economic subjugation in post-colonial Kenya, which is attributed to the dominance of predominantly agricultural societies.

Khaemba (2014) further affirms that Herder-farmer clashes over land are often witnessed at the Kanyarkwat (West Pokot) and Kwanza (Trans-Nzoia) border, particularly during the dry season. According to the Pokot, they have a right to graze in the area because historically, the land belonged to them before it was alienated by the colonialists and later, the Luhya were settled by the postcolonial government as a settlement scheme (Khaemba 2014). These feelings of historical marginalization by some ethnic groups in the North Rift are used by politicians to ignite inter-ethnic violence.

6.1.7 Competition to Access to Water

The study sought to establish whether competition in access to water was a challenge to peace-building between the Pokot and Marakwet ethnic groups of Elgeyo-Marakwet County. The findings revealed that 247 (64.4%) agreed, while 137 (35.6%) disagreed. Melil (2018) explains that livestock plays an essential role in the lifestyle of pastoralist communities such as the Pokot and Marakwet. It serves as a vital source of livelihood, fulfils socio-cultural and religious functions, and acts as an asset providing security against risks. Additionally, livestock is a primary source of food, offering milk, blood, and meat. It forms the foundation of traditional social relations, including the payment of bride wealth during marriages and compensation for losses in tribal conflicts. Furthermore, it symbolizes prosperity and prestige and serves as a store of wealth, providing a buffer against environmental adversities. Livestock also constitutes the main source of income, often functioning as a modern form of currency. For instance, cows are used as payment in marriage negotiations and can be exchanged for grain during times of scarcity. Consequently, cattle are highly esteemed assets, with each community believing that all the cattle in the world belong to them as a divine entitlement. They further maintain the belief that they have the divine right to reclaim, through stealth or armed force, any cattle possessed by neighbouring communities or claimed by other ethnic groups. Responses to raids by neighbouring groups frequently lead to conflicts.

Due to the predominantly harsh arid and semi-arid physical environment, the Pokot primarily relied on livestock and mobility for their sustenance, in contrast to the Marakwet, who engaged in both crop and livestock farming. The necessity for mobility was rooted in the socio-structural setup rather than ecological factors. However, both

the social structure and the ecological aspects were connected to subsistence needs, which consequently contributed to competition and animosity between the two communities. The Pokot engaged in seasonal migrations to find adequate pasture and water for their herds, which often led to conflicts with the Marakwet, whose farmlands were raided for these resources.

6.1.8 Negative Ethnicity as a Hindrance to Peace building

The study sought to establish whether Negative Ethnicity had been a hindrance to Peace building between the Pokot and Marakwet ethnic groups of the Kerio Valley region. The findings revealed that 198 (51.5%) agreed with ethnicity as a cause of conflicts, while 186 (48.5%) were of the contrary opinion.

The data collected from interviews and focus group discussions unveiled that the ethnic conflict between the two communities can be divided into two distinct categories of behaviour: unprovoked intentional group violent aggression, which is demonstrated through raiding against the other community, and provoked intentional group violent aggression, which serves as a response to the initial unprovoked violent aggression. The consequences of unprovoked violent aggression were detrimental to both the Pokot and Marakwet communities, and the provoked violent aggression in reaction to the initial violence had adverse effects on both groups as well. Both sets of behaviour were primarily driven by the assertion of power. Considering that power serves as the remedy to power, it is reasonable to deduce, in accordance with realism, that the solution to the power exhibited through raiding was reactive raiding power.

The research findings align with Melil's (2018) assertion that ethnic animosity serves as a root cause of conflicts in the northern regions of Kenya. Melil's study focused on the Ilchamus, Turgen, and Pokot communities in Baringo County, noting that conflicts arise from a strong allegiance to ethnic groups, clans, or tribal identities rather than a

national identity. In this context, acts of revenge are a prevalent driving force, with a lack of retaliation perceived as a sign of weakness, leading to subsequent counter-revenge and eventual conflict. This cycle is further reinforced by the cultural belief that the spirit of a deceased kinsman cannot rest until vengeance is sought. Various cultural practices and influences, such as rites of passage, societal pressure on youths, and disputes over water and land use, also contribute to the conflict and insecurity in the region. Despite government intervention efforts, deeply ingrained cultural attachments limit its effectiveness in resolving these conflicts.

Examining the conflicts between the Pokot and Marakwet communities, it becomes apparent that the historical roots of these conflicts can be traced back to pre-colonial Kenya. Central to these conflicts have been the recurring raids between the two communities. While some instances of conflict were not directly related to livestock, the motivations behind the raiding episodes were multi-faceted. These motivations included enhancing economic status and socio-economic welfare, asserting control over grazing areas, fortifying the stronger group's position, and replenishing herds after calamities such as prolonged drought or livestock diseases.

Eaton's argument (2008) further highlights that raids were conducted to acquire livestock for the purpose of dowries or bride prices, to exert territorial intimidation, to recover losses from enemy raids, and as retaliatory actions for killings or casualties resulting from previous conflicts.

6.1.9 Cattle Rustling

The study sought to establish whether cattle rustling had a hindrance to peace between the Pokot and Marakwet ethnic groups of Elgeyo-Marakwet County. The findings revealed that 299 (77.94%) strongly agreed, 34 (8.82%) agreed with ethnicity as a cause of conflicts, 6 (1.47%) were undecided, 6 (1.47%) disagreed, and 39 (10.29%) strongly disagreed.

During an FGD in Sambalat, the Elders noted that cattle rustling was one of the most organised cultural activities in the area, with the Pokot always being the aggressor. The Pokot raiders demonstrated a high level of organization and utilized sophisticated weaponry in their raids. According to one elder, there were specific categories of rustlers tasked with intelligence operations who were responsible for scouting distant communities to be targeted. Such roles were reserved for individuals who had undergone rigorous testing and had proven their capabilities. These individuals were held in high regard within the community due to the difficulty and skill involved in their tasks. The elder further explained that cattle rustlers typically spent their nights outdoors, often near riverbeds or cowsheds, from a young age. This allowed them to gather information about their surroundings and pre-emptively neutralize perceived threats before executing their ambushes. Drawing from his extensive knowledge of their methods, the retired soldier emphasized that the bandits would rise early in the morning to monitor various routes, analyse footprints to discern the type of shoes worn, and gather other pertinent details.

Cattle rustling has been a longstanding practice within the Pokot and Marakwet communities. According to Mkutu (2008), the 1990s marked an unprecedented surge in cattle rustling between the two groups, largely influenced by external factors such as

political developments and events in neighbouring countries like Somalia, Uganda, and Sudan that spilt over into these communities. Some of these events include the Ugandan regime change following Idi Amin's overthrow in 1979, the disintegration of the Somali government in 1991, and the escalation of civil conflict in Sudan.

The escalation of conflicts can be traced back to a heated altercation in 1991, when a Marakwet fatally shot a Pokot in the Tot Division of the Kerio Valley region, intensifying the frequency of cattle raids. With a superior firepower advantage favouring the Pokot, the Marakwet accused the government of biased support for the Pokot, allegedly prompting the Marakwet to procure modern firearms. In one incident, a Pokot arms dealer was reportedly killed by the Marakwet after delivering guns, further fuelling Pokot raids. Notably, a significant clash in 1999 occurred in Tot during a polio immunization campaign, resulting in a massacre of numerous Marakwet individuals, spanning from children to adults (KHRC, 2001).

The conflict between the Pokot and Marakwet communities since 2000 has been punctuated by specific incidents centred around cattle, showcasing a violent relationship between the two groups (Kamenju, *et al.*, 2003). Following a severe drought in 2000, the Pokot sent their malnourished cattle to the Marakwet's territory in Kerio Valley for grazing. However, the Marakwet warriors seized the cattle and indiscriminately slaughtered them, claiming they didn't want to be associated with cattle that the Pokot might reclaim. Retaliatory actions ensued, including the killing of a Marakwet policeman by the Pokot in 2001 and the subsequent Marakwet retaliation by stealing over 500 cattle from the Pokot in Cheptulel and Kibaimwa regions. In March 2001, Pokot warriors launched a raid known as the Murkutwo Massacre, seizing thousands of cattle from the Marakwet (KHRC, 2001).

During the conflicts of the 1990s and early 2000s, there was a noticeable shift from pure cattle rustling to acts of murder employing sophisticated weaponry, causing widespread destruction of livelihoods and mass casualties, including women and children (Mohammed & Pkalya, 2005; NCKK, 2002).

The research findings reflect the assertion made by Bollig & Österle (2008), which highlights the emergence of a fresh pattern of predatory exploitation of economic resources through banditry and cattle raids in Kenya. This issue is taking on various forms and is becoming deeply ingrained in the northwestern regions of the country. Traditionally, cattle rustling within pastoral communities was viewed as a cultural norm and was regulated and overseen by community elders. However, presently, the phenomenon of cattle rustling is causing significant alarm. In the past, scholars tended to downplay the significance of cattle rustling, dismissing it as a mere cultural tradition. Nevertheless, over time, new trends, inclinations, and dynamics have surfaced, leading to the commercialization and globalization of this practice.

From the findings, it is evident that the Pokot and Marakwet communities share several traditions that are the pride of the communities. However, some of the cultures that have been seen as negative due to the fact that they exacerbate conflicts between the two communities include the culture of cattle theft, which stems from the belief that once a person gets to adulthood and wants to marry, then they must get livestock for dowry payment. The findings of the study revealed that this tradition was particularly prominent among the Pokot. During an FGD, one elder noted that;

The Pokot young men are often told that their livestock are in the neighbouring communities. They grow up knowing this to be true and that's why after circumcision they find it easy to raid their neighbours

like the Turkana, Samburu and even us the Marakwet. They normally refer to their neighbours as *Punyon* (Enemy) (FGD in Sambalat on 20th October 2022).

Another tradition that emerged during the study was the way the people who died in the cattle raids were treated by the Pokot. Discouragement surrounds funerals for individuals who perish during raids within the Pokot community. Surviving men from these raids garner greater respect than those who lose their lives. If a rustler dies during a raid, his companions confiscate his rifle and abandon his body in the wilderness, leaving it for wild animals to consume. This action signifies their primary objective, not only to steal livestock but also to emerge unharmed.

Corroborating these findings, a report by the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) indicated that cattle rustling has been an ingrained aspect of Kenyan pastoralist society for generations. However, in recent times, the theft of livestock has become increasingly aggressive, involving more advanced weaponry (Kenya Human Rights Commission, 2010). Perhaps the most striking testament to the escalating brutality of conflicts over livestock is the incident that transpired in Suguta Valley, Samburu District, in November 2012, during which forty-two Kenyan police officers lost their lives in confrontations with suspected rustlers (Greiner, 2013).

6.2 Opportunities that Emerge from Peace building efforts by Various Actors

6.2.1 Religious leaders

The study sought to establish the level of involvement of religious leaders in peace building. The Findings revealed that 265 (69.1%) of the household heads stated that

religious leaders were very involved in peacebuilding, while 119 (30.9%) stated that religious leaders were only involved to some extent in peacebuilding. The findings are shown in Figure 6.2

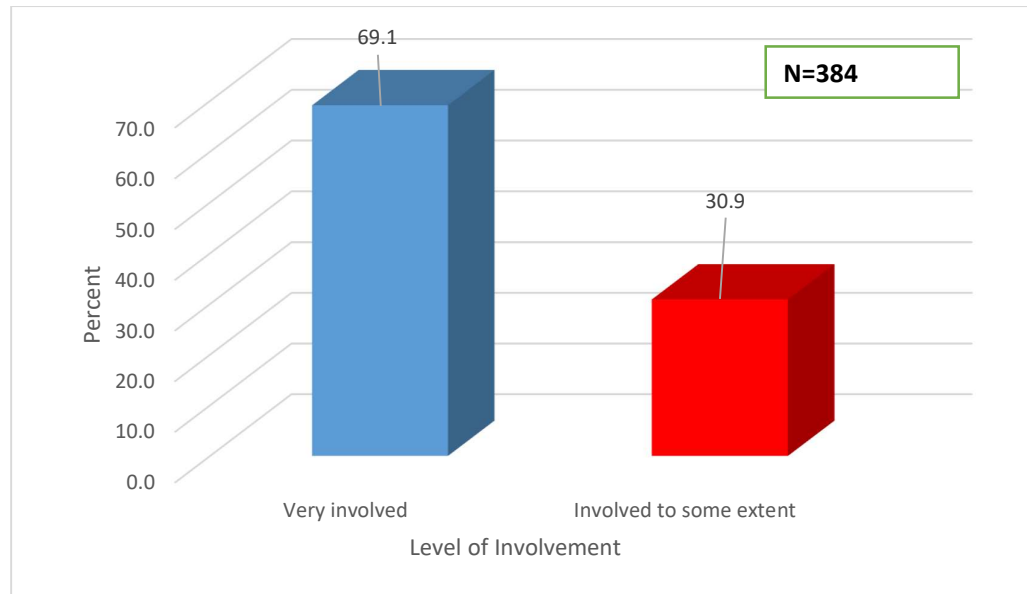


Figure 6. 1 Involvement of Religious Leaders

Source: Field Data, 2022

In an interview, the Chief of Chesongoch revealed that the church had played an important role in the process. The Pokot and Marakwet have a lot of respect for the church and especially the Catholic church; hence, any form of conflict management activity by the church leaders is treated with a lot of respect.

During the FGDs, peace committee members from both Marakwet and Pokot were in agreement that the church had been the largest unifying factor between the two communities, and there was a lot of respect for the work that the church was doing for peace in the area. One District peace committee member stated that in times when

tension is too high and a lot of attacks are happening, even the government sometimes seek the help of the church to seek calm between the two communities.

One Pokot elder stated that for many years, the Catholic church had been the neutral mediator in the conflict and for that reason, both sides respected the opinion of the church because the church had treated both communities fairly and even sought to do the kind of development that the government has been unable to do. He reiterated thus by stating that the Pokot were so much behind in terms of development. He said that they lacked schools, roads, hospitals and other important infrastructure. He, however, acknowledged that the Catholic church had built schools and hospitals in the area and this was helping them despite the government failing to employ teachers to teach the children. During an interview, one of the chiefs stated that the church had been pivotal in preaching peace in the area and mediating between the elders from both communities to call their youth to order so that sanity could be restored in the community.

The study's findings were consistent with Elfversson's (2016) observations regarding the peace negotiations between the Pokot and Marakwet communities. According to Elfversson, these talks had been ongoing since 2001, with the church playing a pivotal role as a mediator. Initially, the peace elders from each community campaigned for peace within their respective communities and garnered support for a dialogue process before establishing contact with their counterparts. The Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJPC) was engaged to facilitate meetings between the two sides.

The church's effectiveness as a mediator stemmed from several key factors. Foremost, it was perceived as a neutral entity, unlike local politicians, elders, and businessmen who may have been involved in instigating or enabling raids. The church also

maintained autonomy from national-level politics, providing a space for open political discussions. Its involvement in local development, education, and other services bolstered its power and legitimacy. Over time, the CJPC and other church actors built trust among the involved parties through their peace-building efforts in the Kerio Valley.

The new dialogue process represented a departure from the CJPC's prior activities, which primarily focused on peace education and organizing workshops for Marakwet and Pokot representatives in Eldoret. In July 2002, direct peace negotiations commenced at the Chief's camp in Kolowa, focusing on allowing the parties to express their grievances. Subsequently, a series of meetings involving 15 elders from each side followed. The church officials served as mediators, facilitating the meetings and occasionally engaging in 'shuttle diplomacy.

The findings aligned with the perspective put forth by Okech (2022), emphasizing the significant role of religious leaders in the peace-building process. Additionally, Carney (2010) highlighted the role of faith in fostering reconciliation, as demonstrated by Bishop John Rucyahana's efforts in Rwanda, where Hutu and Tutsi community members attended church together and engaged in various activities as a unified community. This example illustrates how faith can serve as a powerful tool for promoting peace and reconciliation in conflict-affected regions.

The influential statements made by prominent church leaders, such as Desmond Tutu in South Africa and John Rucyahana in Rwanda, underscore the potential impact of religious figures in fostering peace and reconciliation efforts. While religious leaders possess a unique opportunity to promote peace within their communities, they may encounter various challenges in fulfilling this role.

6.2.2 Civil society organizations

The study sought to establish the level of involvement of Civil society organizations in peace building. The Findings revealed that 186 (48.5%) of the household heads stated that CSOs were very involved in peacebuilding, while 158 (41.2%) stated that CSOs were only involved to some extent in peacebuilding, and 40 (10.3%) indicated that there was no CSO involvement in conflict management in the area.

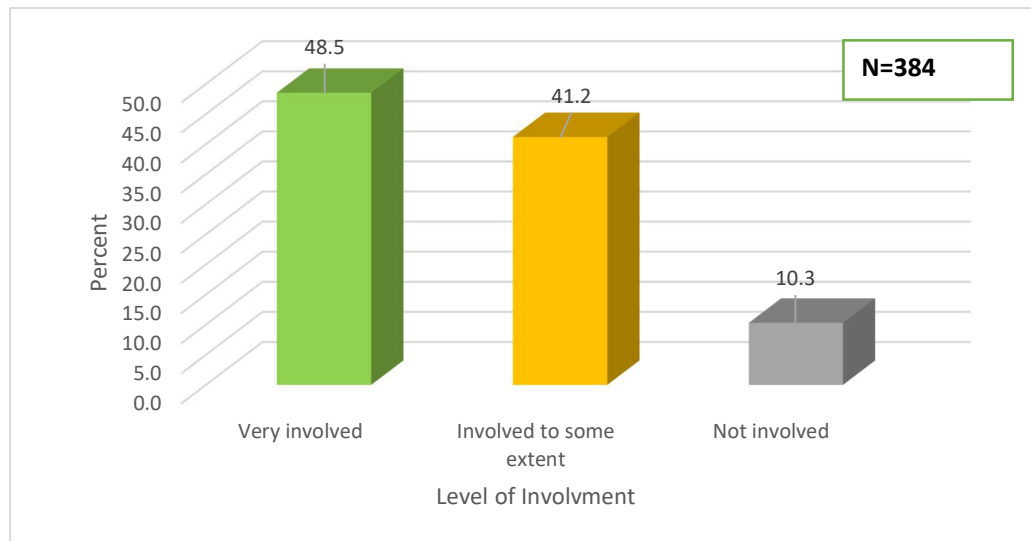


Figure 6. 2: Civil Society involvement in Conflict management

Source: Field Data, 2022

The findings obtained from both the focus group discussions and interviews corroborated those from the household heads. They revealed that the primary civil society organizations (CSOs) operating in the study areas were faith-based organizations, with particular prominence given to the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission and the National Council of Churches of Kenya. The Catholic Justice and Peace Commission actively collaborated with elders from both the Pokot and Marakwet communities in initiatives aimed at restoring peace in the region. In addition to their peace-building efforts, they facilitated the establishment of schools and hospitals

through partnerships with development partners and the Catholic Church, thereby contributing to community welfare.

However, the study also highlighted challenges faced by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) operating in the region. The heightened insecurity resulting from indiscriminate attacks by bandits led several NGOs to withdraw from the area, citing concerns for the safety of their staff. This finding is in line with Elfversson's (2016) assertion that faith-based organizations (FBOs) significantly engaged in mediating between the warring communities as the conflict escalated. The faith based organizations were actively involved in peace-promoting activities, including the organization of barazas, support for local development committees, workshops, and seminars, starting from the early 1990s.

Despite their contributions to peace-building, the efforts of religious actors and NGOs were hindered by the prevailing insecurity in the region. Tragic incidents, such as the killing of a Catholic minister in 1999 while attempting to facilitate dialogue, underscored the risks associated with operating in the conflict-affected area. As a result, numerous organizations eventually withdrew, leaving only a few entities, particularly the Catholic and Anglican churches, to maintain a presence and provide essential services in the region.

6.3 Chapter Summary

The chapter has presented findings on challenges and opportunities Pokots and Marakwet face in using cultural practices and festivals in peacebuilding. The findings revealed that low educational attainments had a major implication on peacebuilding because many of the people involved in raiding for livestock were not educated, which made them easy targets for recruitment into banditry by cattle rustling warlords in the

area. The study further revealed that the presence of guns in the area had made cultural systems of conflict management because many of the young people who were involved in cattle theft felt invincible with their guns. The findings also revealed that peace-building efforts by religious leaders and civil society organizations provided an opportunity that could be exploited for long-lasting peace in the area. The next chapter presents Summary Conclusions and Recommendations.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SUMMARY CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The general objective of this study is to examine the utilization of cultural practices and festivals in peace-building among the Pokot and Marakwet in Kerio Valley, Kenya. The specific objectives were to: Interrogate the nature of cultural practices and festivals among the Pokot and Marakwet in the Kerio Valley region, Kenya, Assess the effectiveness of cultural Practices and Festivals in Peace building among the Pokot and Marakwet in Kerio Valley region, Kenya and Examine the challenges and opportunities faced in using cultural practices and Festivals in Peace building.

7.1 Summary of the Findings

In line with the first objective of the study, the study sought to Interrogate the nature of cultural practices and festivals among the Pokot and Marakwet of Elgeyo Marakwet and Baringo Counties, Kenya.

First, the study sought to establish the demographic characteristics of the study population. The findings for the demographic characteristics were revealed as follows with regard to gender: 134 (35%) of household heads were female and 250 (65%) were male. The ethnic composition of the household heads in Elgeyo Marakwet was 200 (52%) Marakwets, 115 (30%) were Pokot, 12 (3%) Luhya and 57 (15%) were Keiyo. The study sought to find out the occupation of household heads. The findings revealed that 169 (44.1%) were farmers, 90 (23.4%) were pastoralists, 34 (8.8%) were engaged in business, 11 (2.9%) were students and 80 (20.8%) had formal employment. The findings in table 4.1 revealed that Male and Female circumcision was a common cultural practice that brought the two communities together, as supported by 292 (76.1%) of the household heads who indicated that it was common. In contrast, 92 (23.9%) of the household heads stated that it was not a common activity. The study

sought to establish whether cattle rustling had been a cause of conflicts between the Pokot and Marakwet ethnic groups of Elgeyo-Marakwet County. The findings revealed that 299 (77.94%) strongly agreed, 34 (8.82%) agreed with ethnicity as a cause of conflicts, 6 (1.47%) were undecided, 6 (1.47%) disagreed and 39 (10.29%) strongly disagreed.

Additionally, the findings in Figure 4.1 revealed that another important cultural festival that was common between the Pokot and the Marakwet communities was marriage ceremonies; this was supported by 329 (85.6%) of the household heads as compared to 55 (14.4%) of the household heads who were of the contrary opinion. The study also found out that oath-taking rituals (*muma*) were also common between the two communities, as revealed by 255 (66.5%) of the household heads. However, 129 (33.5%) thought otherwise. The study also revealed that witchcraft, also known as *Muma/ Mutaat* among the Pokot, was a common cultural practice that had been used by elders in times of conflict, as supported by 335 (87.3%) of the population and opposed 49 (12.7%) of the household heads. Cleansing (*Barpara*) was indicated as another activity by the household heads as a cultural practice that was common in the study area, as supported by 296 (77%). However, 88 (23%) of the household heads stated that sorcery was not a common activity in the study area. The findings of the study revealed that Consulting elders and Traditional Seers (throwing shoes/Viewing sheep intestines) was a common cultural practice in the study area and this was supported as a common practice by 350 (91.1%) of the household heads and opposed as uncommon by 34 (8.9%) of the household heads.

In line with the second specific objective of the study, the research aimed to determine whether the Marakwet-Pokot Cultural Festival (MPCF) served as a peace-building

mechanism between the Pokot and Marakwet communities. The results indicated that 71% of the respondents viewed it as a peace-building tool, while 29% disagreed with its effectiveness. Additionally, the study investigated whether traditional circumcision was an effective peace-building mechanism in the Kerio Valley region. The findings showed that 16.18% of the participants agreed, 72.02% disagreed, and 11.76% were unsure about its efficacy.

Moreover, the research sought to assess whether oath-taking effectively promoted peace between the Pokot and Marakwet communities in the Kerio Valley region. The data from Figure 5.4 displayed that 58.8% of the household heads agreed, 25% disagreed, and 16.2% were uncertain about its impact. Furthermore, the study examined whether respect for the Council of Elders as a cultural institution contributed to peace-building efforts between the two communities. The findings indicated that 69.1% of the household heads agreed, 13.2% disagreed, and 17.7% were uncertain about its effectiveness.

The study also investigated whether inter-community negotiations were effective in peace-building between the Pokot and Marakwet communities. The results suggested that 86.8% of the household heads agreed, 8.8% disagreed, and 4.4% were unsure about its efficacy. Additionally, the research analysed whether traditional pacts were effective in peace-building between the two communities. The findings showed that 97.1% of the household heads agreed, 1.5% disagreed, and 1.5% were unsure about their effectiveness.

Furthermore, the study assessed whether the traditional roles of women contributed to peace-building efforts between the Pokot and Marakwet communities. The results

revealed that 73.5% of the household heads agreed, 20.6% disagreed, and 5.9% were uncertain about the impact of women's roles in peace-building.

In line with the third specific objective, the study sought to examine the challenges and opportunities Pokots and Marakwets face in using cultural practices in peacebuilding. The findings in Figure 6.1 revealed that low educational attainments had immensely hampered peace-building efforts between the two communities, as supported by 250 (65%) of the household heads who said yes. This was in contrast to the 134 (35%) of household heads who were of the contrary opinion. The findings in Figure 6.1 revealed that banditry had immensely hampered peace-building efforts between the two communities as supported by 290 (75.4%) of the household heads who said yes, which was in contrast to the 94 (24.6%) of household heads who were of the contrary opinion.

The findings in Figure 6.1 revealed that the proliferation of small arms and Light weapons had immensely hampered peace-building efforts between the two communities, as supported by 373 (97.1%) of the household heads who said yes, as compared to 11 (2.9%) of household heads who were of the contrary opinion.

The study sought to examine whether livestock pasture was a challenge to peace-building between the Pokot and Marakwet ethnic groups of Elgeyo-Marakwet County. The findings revealed that 288 (75%), whereas 96 (25%) disagreed. The study sought to examine whether marginalization was a challenge to peace-building between the Pokot and Marakwet ethnic groups of Elgeyo-Marakwet County. The findings revealed that 220 (57.3%) strongly agreed, while 164 (42.7%) disagreed with this assertion.

The study sought to examine whether competition in access to water was a challenge to peace-building between the Pokot and Marakwet ethnic groups of Elgeyo-Marakwet County. The findings revealed that 247 (64.4%) agreed, while 137 (35.6%) disagreed.

The study sought to examine whether Negative Ethnicity had been a hindrance to Peace building between the Pokot and Marakwet ethnic groups of the Kerio Valley region. The findings revealed that 198 (51.5%) agreed with ethnicity as a cause of conflicts, while 186 (48.5%) were of the contrary opinion.

Furthermore, the research explored the opportunities that arise from conflict management interventions by various actors. It delved into the extent of involvement of religious leaders in peace-building efforts. The results indicated that 69.1% of the household heads acknowledged that religious leaders were significantly engaged in peace-building activities, while 30.9% mentioned that their involvement was only partial. In an interview, the Chief of Chesongoch emphasized the pivotal role played by the church in this process. The Pokot and Marakwet communities hold the church, especially the Catholic church, in high regard, thus, any conflict management initiative by church leaders is treated with immense respect.

Moreover, the study evaluated the level of engagement of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in peace-building activities. The findings indicated that 48.5% of the household heads believed that CSOs were deeply involved in peace-building, while 41.2% stated that their involvement was moderate. Additionally, 10.3% of respondents noted the absence of CSO involvement in conflict management in the area. The research highlighted that the prominent CSOs in the study region were faith-based organizations, with the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission and the National Council of Churches of Kenya being the most active ones. The Catholic Justice and Peace Commission collaborated with elders from both the Pokot and Marakwet communities to facilitate peace restoration in the area. It also worked with development partners with the help of the Catholic Church to establish schools and hospitals in the area to help residents.

7.2 Conclusions of the study

Based on the findings, the overall conclusion of the study is that cultural practices and festivals are utilized in peace-building among the Pokot and Marakwet communities of Elgeyo-Marakwet and Baringo counties in Kenya. The communities have a variety of practices that are used in averting conflicts and to encourage peace between the two communities. The two communities have been inter-marrying; thus, people have relatives across the borders, which means that such relations were important in the process of peace building. Oath-taking was an activity carried out between the two communities to seal pacts between the communities. The elders would speak words to curse anyone who would dare violate inter-community pacts and hence enhance peace between the two communities. The elders and women in the community were thus involved and largely utilised in peace-building between the communities.

In line with the first specific objective, the study concludes that there are several cultural activities that are common between the two communities. Some of the common cultural activities included Marriage Ceremonies, Oath-taking (*Muma*), Cleansing (*Barpara*), Witchcraft (*Muma/ Mutaat*) and Consulting Traditional Seers (throwing shoes (*Kwanyan*)/Viewing sheep intestines (*Pir Kwer*). However, most of these cultural activities were mainly used by each community to manage internal issues as opposed to inter-ethnic conflicts. Therefore, the activities could not be used for peace-building purposes. However, activities like oath-taking and cleaning were to be effective in calling for a truce and realization of short-term peace in the area.

In line with the second specific objective, the study concludes that cultural practices and festivals were effective in peacebuilding in the study area. Cultural practices such as oath-taking, activities of the council of elders, and negotiations between various

ethnic groups have often led to peace pacts, and the traditional roles of women as mothers have been key to the realization of peace in the study area. It is important to note that most of these activities have not been effective in stopping the recurrence of conflicts. However, some of these practices have been important in preventing conflicts in the area. It is also important to note that intermarriage, which is a common practice in the area, has not been helpful in bringing peace except for a few cases of truce between the communities.

In line with the third objective, the study concludes that the Pokot and Marakwet faced several challenges in using cultural practices for peacebuilding. Low levels of education attainment have been one of the biggest challenges. This has been made worse by the availability of small arms and light weapons, which has made the illiterate raiders feel invincible. Additionally, the traditional conflict management mechanism which was based on cultural activities, has faced modern-day threats such as cattle warlordism and commercialization of cattle rustling and has almost rendered the efforts of the elders futile in conflict management. The elders who used to bless young men before cattle raids have been left at the periphery with the use of modern weapons and banditry fuelling the conflicts beyond the reach of the traditional systems. Despite the challenges, there were opportunities that had been created specifically by faith-based organizations such as the catholic justice and peace commission through mediation among elders from the two communities and such opportunities could be exploited further through development activities and expanding education to make the communities co-exist in peace.

7.3 Recommendations of the study

Based on the findings and conclusions, the study makes the following recommendations;

First, the study recommends that there is a need to engage the two communities in a constructive way in order to formally recognize the cultural practices that are positive with the intention of creating a culture of inter-communal respect. This could be done by introducing cultural education so that positive cultural practices could be adopted among various communities.

Secondly, the study recommends that there is need to formally adopt and use cultural peace-building strategies in Kerio Valley. In this regard, the role of elders should be given prominence and the heavy-handedness that has been used by the government to disarm should be shelved. Activities like rituals and oath-taking could be made more effective and be used not only in the interests of one community protecting itself against the other but also by the two communities protecting themselves against criminals.

Finally, the study recommends that more effort should be put towards development in the study area, especially targeting the Pokot community, which lacks schools, and where schools are, there are no teachers. Having such development would help improve literacy levels and deal with all the other challenges that have been caused by low educational attainment, such as banditry. Additionally, halting the smuggling of arms should be a priority for the government in order to avoid more weapons falling into the wrong hands.

7.4 Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the conclusions and recommendations, the study makes the following suggestions for further research.

- i. A study be conducted on the Efficacy of cultural exchange as an avenue of Conflict management between the Pokot and Marakwet of the Kerio Valley region.
- ii. A study be conducted on the role of devolution in Peace building between Pokot and Marakwet of the Kerio Valley region.
- iii. A study should be conducted on the role of Community Elders in Championing Education and Peacebuilding between Pokot and Marakwet of the Kerio Valley region.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Letter of Introduction

Dear Respondent:

I am a postgraduate student undertaking a Master's of Science Degree in Conflict Resolution and Management at Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology. I am carrying out a study **Efficacy of Cultural Practices and Festivals as a Peace Building strategy among the Pokot and Marakwet of Elgeyo Marakwet, Kenya**. I am using the attached questionnaire and interview schedule to collect information for the study. It is my kind request that you fill the questionnaire and provide the relevant information to facilitate the study. The information provided will be treated with strict confidentiality and not for other purposes.

Thank you for your willingness to participate.

Michael Odhiambo Pundo

Appendix 2: Questionnaire for Household Head

SECTION A

1. General information

Questionnaire ID		Date of Interview	
Name of Sub Location		Name of Village	

2. Personal Information (Bio-data)

(a). Please indicate your gender. Please indicate using (√)

Male [] Female []

(b). Please indicate your age bracket and highest level of education. Please indicate using (√)

Age bracket in years		Level of education	
18 – 27		Non formal	
28 – 37		Primary	
38 – 47		Secondary	
48 – 57		Tertiary College	
Above 57		University	

3. Which ethnic community to you belong? Please indicate using (√)

	Community	Indication (√)
1	Marakwet	
2	Pokot	
3	Sengwer	
4	Keiyo	
5	Turkana	

Any other (Give the name)

.....

SECTION B: The nature of cultural practices and Festivals

1. In the scale given below, how would you rate the following the use of the following cultural practices and festivals in this area? Please indicate using (√)

Cultural Practices and festivals	Common	Not Common
Cultural initiation (Male and Female Circumcision)		
Cattle Rustling		

Marriage Ceremonies		
Oath taking		
Witchcraft		
Cleansing		
Consulting Traditional Seers		

Others

.....

Others specify

.....

SECTION C: Effectiveness of Cultural practices and Festival on peace building in Marakwet East Sub-County

(i) Have you ever been involved or participated in Marakwet - Pokot Cultural Festival (MPCF)?

YES [] NO []

(ii) If YES what was your role:

.....

(iii) Do you believe Marakwet - Pokot Cultural practices and Festival plays an important role on peace and social-cohesion ?

YES [] NO [] Not sure []

If 'YES' How:

.....

(iv). Do you believe the cultural practices and festival plays any role in the development of Marakwet East?

YES [] NO [] Not sure []

If YES How:

.....

(v). How effective are the following cultural practices and festivals with reference to peace building?

Cultural Practices and festivals	Effective	Not Effective	Don't Know
Cultural initiation (Male and Female Circumcision)			
Cattle Rustling			
Marriage Ceremonies			
Oath taking			
Role of Elders			
Negotiations			
Traditional Pacts			
Role of women/Mothers			

SECTION D: Challenges and Opportunities

9. Do you believe the following issues pose challenges to peace building in the study area:

Challenges	Yes	No
Low Educational Attainment		
Banditry Menace		
Proliferation of Small arms and Light Weapons		
Lack of Political goodwill		
Competition for Livestock Pasture		
Marginalization		
Competition for Water		
Negative Ethnicity as a Hindrance to Peace building		

Kindly explain how?

.....

10. What are the opportunities of cultural practices and festivals as peacebuilding strategies?

In the scale given below, how would you rate the factors given as the deterrent of peace in Marakwet East sub – county? **Please indicate using (√)**

Using the scale given below, how would you rate the following as factors that promote peace in Marakwet East? **Please indicate using (√)**

S. No	Factors that promote peace	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	National government services					
2	County Government Services					
3	Positive cultural traditions					
4	NGOs Services					
5	Festival					
6	Sports					

7	cultural festivals					
---	-----------------------	--	--	--	--	--

.....

.....

.....

.....

In your own opinion, how can you integrate cultural practices and festivals in peacebuilding in Kerio Valley region?

.....

.....

.....

.....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

Appendix 3: Interview schedule

1. Do you think the Marakwet-Pokot Cultural Festival (MPCF) has functioned as a catalyst for peace-building in Marakwet East Sub-County?
2. In your view, what role do cultural customs and traditional practices play in facilitating peace-building within Marakwet East Sub-County, and how?
3. According to your perspective, does the annual cultural festival contribute to social cohesion and the promotion of peace-building within the Sub-County?
Please elaborate on your response.
4. Do you believe that the festival fosters and bolsters development within Marakwet East Sub-County?
5. If your response is affirmative, kindly elucidate how the festival has facilitated development in Marakwet East Sub-County.
6. Can you highlight some of the cultural and traditional practices that, in your opinion, foster peace in the Marakwet East area?
7. Can you highlight some of the cultural and traditional practices that, according to your perspective, contribute to the development of Marakwet East Sub-County?
8. What do you see as the challenges and opportunities associated with cultural practices and festivals as strategies for peace-building?
9. From your perspective, how can cultural practices and festivals be integrated into peace-building efforts in the Kerio Valley region?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

Appendix 4: Focus Group Discussion Guide

1. What characterizes the historical conflicts between the Pokot and Marakwet communities in the Kerio Valley region, Kenya?
2. What peace-building approaches have been implemented by the Pokot and Marakwet communities in the Kerio Valley region, Kenya?
3. Discuss the significance of cultural practices and festivals as strategies for peace-building among the Pokot and Marakwet communities in the Kerio Valley region, Kenya?
4. Does the annual cultural festival contribute to social cohesion and peace-building in the Sub-County?
5. How do cultural and traditional practices contribute to peace-building within Marakwet East Sub-County, and in what ways?
6. What are some of the cultural and traditional practices that you believe foster peace in the Marakwet East area?
7. Do you think that cultural practices and festivals promote and facilitate development within Marakwet East Sub-County?
8. What are some of the cultural and traditional practices that, in your view, contribute to the development of Marakwet East sub-county?
9. What are the key challenges and opportunities associated with utilizing cultural practices and festivals as strategies for peace-building?
10. From your perspective, how can cultural practices and festivals be effectively integrated into peace-building initiatives in the Kerio Valley region?

Appendix 5: Proposal Approval Letter from the University



MASINDE MULIRO UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (MMUST)

Tel: 056-30870
Fax: 056-30153
E-mail: directordps@mmust.ac.ke
Website: www.mmust.ac.ke

P.O Box 190
Kakamega – 50100
Kenya

Directorate of Postgraduate Studies

Ref: MMU/COR: 509099

20th September, 2022

Michael Odhiambo Pundo
CDC/G/05/11
P.O. Box 190-50100
KAKAMEGA

Dear Mr. Pundo,

RE: APPROVAL OF PROPOSAL

I am pleased to inform you that the Directorate of Postgraduate Studies has considered and approved your Master's proposal entitled: *"Efficacy of Cultural Practices and Festivals as a Peace Building Strategy Among the Pokot and Marakwet Communities of Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya"* and appointed the following as supervisors:

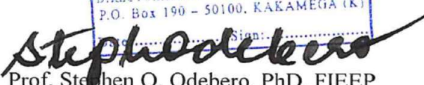
- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Prof. Crispinous Iteyo | - SDMHA - MMUST |
| 2. Dr. Ruth Simiyu | - SDMHA - MMUST |

You are required to submit through your supervisor(s) progress reports every three months to the Director of Postgraduate Studies. Such reports should be copied to the following: Chairman, School of Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance Graduate Studies Committee and Chairman, Department of Peace and Conflict studies. Kindly adhere to research ethics consideration in conducting research.

It is the policy and regulations of the University that you observe a deadline of two years from the date of registration to complete your Master's thesis. Do not hesitate to consult this office in case of any problem encountered in the course of your work.





We wish you the best in your research and hope the study will make original contribution to knowledge.

Yours Sincerely,


Prof. Stephen O. Odebero, PhD, FIEEP

DIRECTOR, DIRECTORATE OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

Appendix 6: Research Licence from National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation

 <p>REPUBLIC OF KENYA</p>	 <p>NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION</p>
Ref No: 287431	Date of Issue: 04/October/2022
RESEARCH LICENSE	
	
<p>This is to Certify that Mr.. Michael Odhiambo Pundo of Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, has been licensed to conduct research in Elgeyo-Marakwet on the topic: EFFICACY OF CULTURAL PRACTICES AND FESTIVALS AS A PEACE BUILDING STRATEGY AMONG THE POKOT AND MARAKWET COMMUNITIES OF ELGEYO MARAKWET COUNTY, KENYA for the period ending : 04/October/2023.</p>	
License No: NACOSTI/P/22/20644	
<p>287431</p> <p>Applicant Identification Number</p>	<p><i>W. Odhiambo</i></p> <p>Director General</p> <p>NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION</p>
<p>Verification QR Code</p> 	
<p>NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.</p>	

Appendix 7: Research Authorization from Elgeyo- Marakwet County Director of Education



**REPUBLIC OF KENYA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
STATE DEPARTMENT OF EARLY LEARNING AND BASIC EDUCATION**

TELEGRAM:.....
TELEPHONE NO: 0534142207
WHEN REPLYING PLEASE QUOTE OUR REFERENCE
EMAIL: cdeelgeyomarakwet@gmail.com

COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
ELGEYO MARAKWET COUNTY
P.O. BOX 214-30700
ITEN

DATE: 11th October, 2022

REF No: *CDE/EMC/R/26/VOL.IV(72)*

MICHAEL ODHIAMBO PUNDO
Musinde Muliro University
P.O. Box 190-50100
KAKAMEGA

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following the authorization by the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) to carry out research in **Elgeyo-Marakwet County** Vide Authority letter **Ref. No. NACOSTI/P/22/20644** dated **4th October, 2022** you are hereby formally granted authority by this office to proceed with your study on **"Efficacy of cultural practices and festivals as a peace bulding strategy among the Pokot and Marakwet communities of ElgeyoMarakwet County ,Kenya** for a period ending; **4th October, 2023.**


CHERUIYOT KIPROP
For: County Director of Education
ELGEYO MARAKWET

Copy to:
All Sub-County Directors of Education
ELGEYOMARAKWET



Appendix 8: Research Authorization from Elgeyo- Marakwet County Commissioner



**THE PRESIDENCY
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR & COORDINATION OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT**

**COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE,
ELGEYO-MARAKWET COUNTY,
P.O. BOX 200-30700**

ITEN

Telephone: (053) 42007

Fax : (053) 42289

E-mail: cceelgeyomarakwet@yahoo.com

cceelgeyomarakwet@gmail.com

When replying please quote

PUB.CC.24/2 VOL.III/135

12th October, 2022

Ref.....

Date.....

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

MR. MICHAEL ODHIAMBO PUNDO

This is to confirm that the above named has been authorized to carry out a research on
"EFFICACY OF CULTURAL PRACTICES AND FESTIVALS AS A PEACE BUILDING
STRATEGY AMONG THE POKOT AND MARAKWET COMMUNITIES OF ELGEYO
MARAKWET COUNTY, KENYA" for a period ending 4th October 2023.

Please accord him the necessary assistance.

**COUNTY COMMISSIONER
ELGEYO-MARAKWET COUNTY**

Julius K. Maiyo, HSC

**For: COUNTY COMMISSIONER
ELGEYO MARAKWET COUNTY**

c.c. All Deputy County Commissioners
Elgeyo Marakwet.

JKM/bjc