THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN PEACE BUILDING IN CONFLICTING SOCIETY:
THE CASE OF WEST POKOT COUNTY, KENYA, 2000-2018

BY:

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SPRING 2019
DECLARATION

I, undersigned, declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other college, or university other than the United States International University- Africa for academic credit.

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ABSTRACT

Over the years, peace building has become a means of preventing continuing conflicts between warring factions. It is simply a shift from conflict to a peaceful future. It rests on the premise that provision of people’s needs eliminates unrest and lawlessness that arise due to conflict thus preventing a relapse of violence. In many societies, women have been left out, marginalized and discriminated against as a result of patriarchal society. Their roles in peace building are not considered important and they face many challenges in their efforts to rebuild their lives and families. Based on the above, the study focused on the role of women in peace building in West Pokot County, Kenya Between 2000-2018.

This study sought to analyze the role of women in resolving cultural sources of violence in West Pokot County, analyze the role of Women in addressing structural sources of violence in West Pokot County and to identify effective mechanisms to better enhance the role of women in peace building in West Pokot County. This study is based on feminist political theory. The theory sees women as a disadvantaged class, unjustly dominated and exploited by men. According to the proponents of this theory, women worldwide are half the population and a third of the paid labor force, meaning they can equally do what men have done. The study used purposive sampling technique to select the study sample. It focused on the role women played in the County especially in the four sub-counties namely Kapenguria, Pokot North, Pokot South and Pokot Central. Through conducting face to face interviews, focused group discussions, and consulting documents available to the public, the researcher collected information about what women played as peace builders and advocates in the County. The study came up with the following recommendations; need to review land allocation policy, enhance peace education, funding and recognition of women, adoption of African indigenous methods of peace building and enhancing security in the affected areas.
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Lastly, I would like to thank West Pokot County community for allowing and cooperating with me during research period.
DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this research to my family for their endless support especially my parents for the encouragement and my siblings for setting the standards. Special recognition goes out to my brother in law, Dr. Meshack Lomoywara for the dedication and time he put in guiding me through my research and my friend Dennis Khayumbi for according me support throughout my course work.
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<td>West Pokot County</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNSCR</td>
<td>United Nations Security Council Resolutions</td>
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<tr>
<td>GoK</td>
<td>Government of Kenya</td>
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<tr>
<td>CTSAMM</td>
<td>Commission for Truth, Reconciliation, and Healing and the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangement Monitoring Mechanism</td>
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<tr>
<td>LRA</td>
<td>Lord’s Resistance Army</td>
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<td>UPDF</td>
<td>Uganda Peoples Defense Forces</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women</td>
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<td>WIPNET</td>
<td>Women in Peacebuilding Network</td>
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<td>UNIFEM</td>
<td>United Nations Development Fund for Women</td>
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<td>UNICEF</td>
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<td>USIU</td>
<td>United States International University</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non- governmental Organizations</td>
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<td>Tegla Lorupe Peace Race Foundation</td>
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<td>KRC</td>
<td>Kenya Red Cross</td>
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<td>IOM</td>
<td>International Organization for Migration</td>
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<td>PEDP</td>
<td>Pokot Education and Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>DiPaP</td>
<td>Daima Initiative for Peace and Development</td>
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<td>SGBV</td>
<td>Sexual and Gender-based Violence</td>
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1.1 Background

In a 1992 report, former United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali introduced peace-building as “action to identify and support structures which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict.” (Barnnet, 2007). According to UN peacekeeping, this “Peace building aims to reduce the risk of lapsing or relapsing into conflict by strengthening national capacities at all levels for conflict management, and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development” (Home: UN, n.d.). Furthermore, according to the UN, “peace building measures address core issues that affect the functioning of society and the State, and seek to enhance the capacity of the State to effectively and legitimately carry out its core functions.” (Home: UN, n.d.). Peace-building thus involves implementation of a wide range of initiatives aimed at addressing the source of the conflict, prevention of a resumption of violence and strengthen state capacity.

The Northern part of Kenya has since independence been synonymous with marginalization, violence, banditry and in some cases, absolute lawlessness. West Pokot County is located in the North Rift, forms part of this region, and is a semi-arid region neighboring Baringo, Marakwet, Samburu and Turkana counties. Ruto et al state that cattle raiding is the most predominant form of the conflict in West Pokot County. They add that “Competition over the control and use of scarce natural resources (pasture, grazing land and water) between Pokot herders and other neighboring communities is the main cause of conflicts. They add that, other causes include the traditional culture of cattle rustling, poverty, marginalization by successive governments, ethnocentrism, and proliferation of illegal arms” (Ruto, Adan, & Masinde, October 2003).
According to Schilling et al., the conflict in West Pokot has led to loss of human life, displacement of people, diminished stock of livestock, poverty and limited access to the natural resources (water and pasture). These have in-turn cased food insecurity sense of insecurity, closure of schools and other public amenities and fostered a strong sense of insecurity. Unfortunately, this has created a cycle of violence where retaliatory attacks are carried out. (Schilling & et al., 2012).

Traditionally, women have been left out of peace building initiatives and activities; simply being regarded as the victims of conflicts. Their effects at rebuilding their communities and peace building have largely been ignored and invisible (Manchanda 2005). However, lately, the myth that women have no role in a conflict apart from being victims has been busted. There is a rising documentation of women involved directly in conflicts and in post-conflict activities. Coulter and Gustavsson highlight the direct involvement of women and girls in conflicts in Sierra Leone and Uganda respectively (Coulter, 2008), (Gustavsson & et al., 2007). Similarly, women around the world have taken a leading role in peace building in conflict areas. According to Accord Insight, peace conferences in Somaliland would not have taken place without the collective lobbying of elders by women who urged them to intervene to end conflicts. The women also played a key role in mobilizing funds to facilitate Women peace meetings (Accord Insight, 2013).

Accord Insight also notes that women have played key roles in peace building by: providing humanitarian relief, creating and facilitating the space for negotiations through advocacy, and exerting influence through cultural or social means. They have also spearheaded civil society and reconciliation activities.

In arguing for greater involvement in peace building, Lindborg states that ‘Evidence indicates that women participants in peace processes are usually focused less on the spoils
of the war and more on reconciliation, economic development, education and transitional justice – all critical elements of a sustained peace (Lindborg, 2017). Significantly, the United Nations Security council passed Landmark resolution on Women, Peace and Security, UNSCR 1325, in October 2000. This resolution recognizes the important role of women and stresses the importance of their equal participation and involvement in all efforts aimed at the promotion and maintenance of peace. Furthermore, UNSC resolution 1325 recognizes that women are disproportionately affected by conflict, and to address this, women should play a key role in achieving lasting peace after conflict (UNSC Resolution 1325).

It noteworthy that Kenya has made significant steps towards involving women in peace building. Importantly, the National Policy on peace building and Conflict Management in June, 2012, by the government of Kenya and other actors including the National Gender and Equality Commission of Kenya developed strategies aimed at increasing the participation of women in all peace building programs and policies. Particularly, efforts were made at actively promoting the participation and representation of women in peace building initiatives (NSC on Peacebuilding and Conflict Management, 2012).

Consequently, this research therefore seeks to highlight the role of women in peacebuilding in West Pokot. The study seeks to investigate the efforts women in the county are undertaking to address the recurrent conflict and explore measures that will enhance their roles and efforts.

1.2 Problem Statement

Throughout the world, women’s role in peace-building is under-studied. But with the implementation of the UNSCR resolution 1325, their roles have increased. There is a large gap in research showing the Pokot woman is at the core of her community. The importance of the Pokot woman in its communal structure is understood by the fact that a
man cannot join the council of elders or even run for a political seat if he is unmarried; burial rites depend on whether a man was married or not; and women are viewed as the best medicine persons (chesakttian) and seers (kapoloktin). If Pokot women are central to its communities’ social structure, it is unlikely that their role stop at that. Women’s specific concerns are shaped by their social roles as daughters, wives and mothers; by the economic positions and obligations which they have within the family and the community; and by the prevailing cultural conceptualizations of gender roles and relationships. Apart from contributing to the definition of women’s specific post-conflict concerns, these factors play a decisive role in defining the motivations as well as the constraints on women’s involvement and roles as social actors in the process toward sustainable peace.

Women represent a vital resource for peace building efforts from the grassroots level upward. They are a highly differentiated group of social actors, who possess valuable resources and capacities. Women influence the course of things, and their actions are constitutive of post-war societies. Unfortunately, most scholars have limited the role of women to targets and beneficiaries and thereby marginalizing their contributions as capable peace building actors. Puechguirbal notes that many peace building initiatives and movements employ essentialist definitions of women, confining them to their roles as mothers and caregivers, and thus denying them access to the broader agenda of peace building and conflict resolution (Puechguirbal, 2010)

This study therefore seeks to fill the gap in literature by determining the extent of women participation in peace building in West Pokot county by examining the changing roles of women in peace building and analyzing the structural and cultural practices that have been the source of conflict within the county.
1.3 Objective of the Study

The general objective of the study is to assess the role of women in peace building in West Pokot County.

Specific objectives

1. To analyze the role of women in resolving cultural sources of violence in West Pokot County.
2. To examine the role of Women in addressing structural sources of violence in West Pokot County.
3. To identify effective mechanisms to better enhance the role of women in peace building in West Pokot County.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What is the role of women in resolving the cultural sources of violence in West Pokot County?
2. What is the role of women in addressing the structural sources of violence in West Pokot County?
3. What can be done to remove the barriers to enhanced participation of women in peace building in Pokot County?

1.5 The Scope of the Study

This study will focus on the cultural and structural factors fueling conflict in West Pokot County, and the role played by women in resolving them. Additionally, the research will investigate what measures can enhance the role of women in peace building in the county. It will be limited to West Pokot County but roles played by women in peace-building in other conflict areas will be analyzed. The analysis will also focus on the evolution of
these roles, considering the implications associated with the promulgation of the new constitution in 2010 that has enhanced gender balance especially in leadership roles.

1.6 Justification and Significance of the Study

There is considerable literature on the conflict experienced in the West Pokot and the Northern part of Kenya as a whole. This literature includes comprehensive studies on the causes of unrest in this predominantly pastoralist region and suggestions of potential mitigation measures. Exhaustive research is still missing on the role of women in peace-building, especially those focusing on West Pokot County. This justifies the need for a comprehensive study that will provide an insight on the role of women in peace-building in light of the cultural and structural dynamics that are exclusive to West Pokot County. More efforts to curb conflict has been reflected in the government appointing a parliamentary Select Committee to conduct investigation on the major sources of cattle raids in northern frontier of Kenya. This led to adoption of the Committees report in 2010, November 4 (GoK, 2010). However, the measures applied have only been able to provide brief periods of peace this area, justifying the need for comprehensive policies that will enable attainment of effective and long-term outcomes. The study intends to contribute to the provision of comprehensive information to the policy formulators and other actors involved in peace-building initiatives by highlighting the important role and potential of women as resources in peace-building efforts.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

This study is based on liberal feminist theory whose arguments provided or described a polyphonic chorus of female voices (Lonsdale, 2017). The theory like most feminist approaches share a belief that gender matters are very important in understanding conflict. They also share a concern with changing masculine in both scholarship and
political peace building initiatives, where masculine is defined as an ideology justifying male domination. The theory sees women as a disadvantaged class, unjustly dominated and exploited by men. According to the proponents of this theory, women worldwide are half the population and a third of the paid labour force, meaning they can equally do what men have done (Goldstein, 2001).

Liberal feminists argue that women equal men in ability, and that the gendering of conflict and peace building reflects male discrimination against women (Cockburn 2001). Women have the right to participate in all social and political roles (including peace building roles) without facing discrimination; it affects both the quality of life of individuals and the equity and cohesion of society as a whole. The exclusion of women from peace building roles is unfair to women and prevents half the population from making its best contribution to the society. Feminists for example Thorburn and Eloe do believe women’s inclusion would fundamentally change the societal system, nor a given community’s policy, nor peace building itself.

Exclusion of individuals is done on the basis of age, sex, race, perceived disability, orientation or beliefs, among other biases. According to Appleton-dyer and Field, there are four forms of social exclusion, namely: economic, cultural, social and political. (Appleton-Dyer & Sara, 2014). Notably, the excluded group or individual is unable to effectively contribute to critical aspects affecting the community.

Liberal feminist theory succinctly suits the study of how women in West Pokot County addressed the question of peace building from 1985-2018. The theory underscores the question whether such conflict should be regarded as something rational, constructive, and socially functional or something irrational, pathological, and socially dysfunctional. The use of liberal feminist theory for the analysis of women’s participation in peace
building process thus places before this study works the immense importance of going deeper into the role of women in peace building in West Pokot County, the barriers/challenges militating against the effective participation of women in peace building and how to enhance their roles.

Liberal feminists seek to remove such barriers which include socio-economic barriers, ideological and psychological barriers and political barriers that prevent equal participation of women in conflict resolution and peace building practices (O’Neil and Domingo 2016). In addition, the liberal feminist theory helps this study to ponder on the need to achieve gender balance in conflict resolution and peace building processes and the necessity to ensure that commitment to equality is reflected in laws and national policies. Extending the scope of women’s movement at the grassroots level constitutes an important step towards confidence building and facilitates the sharing of experiences.

Although the liberal feminist theory fits this study, it will be good to note that the theory has suffered some criticism. The critics of this theory question both women’s peace movements and linkages among gender, ecology, and social oppressions. Goldstein argues that women in the societal roles can change the society making it reflect feminine values (Cohn and Ruddick, 2015).

In order to define what the role of women in peace building in West Pokot is and should be, it is important to get a deeper understanding of the roots of the conflict. This is an attempt to answer the questions of why some efforts are currently underway and what other measures can be applied to ensure long lasting solutions. This study will utilize feminist perception to violence in explaining the conflict in West Pokot as tools to limit the focus the research into the areas where women can and should play a big role.
1.7.1 Liberal Feminist Theory

According to feminist theory women and other marginalized groups are subjected to torture, marginalization, exploitation and oppression by the hierarchical and patriarchal capitalist of the world order (Cockburn 1998). Violence against women, rape and attacks are widespread, and women and children form the largest majority of refugees. For instance, during the Second World War, the Japanese army forced girls from Korea, Philippines and the rest of Asia to stay in military camps so as to provide sexual comfort to soldiers (Jeong, 2000).

Gender roles are socially constructed, whereby men are expected to demonstrate masculine behaviour, such as aggression, attacking, killing and coercion. Men serve armies, the most patriarchal and hierarchical institution in the world (Gallimore, 2015). In majority of societies, fighting in times of conflict is an activity reserved for men, jobs like working as a nurse, for example, are reserved for women. They are socially expected to demonstrate feminine behaviour; for example, care love, comfort, compassion and mercy. Feminists argue that male dominance in all spheres of life causes conflict (Jeong, 2000 and Byne, 2015).

Masculine and feminine values determine power, prestige, authority and hierarchy in families, corporations, churches, communities, societies, nations and global institutions. Masculinity is rewarded heroic values associated with leadership. As a result, women, children and other marginalized groups are subjected to the effects of the conflict which is mostly negative on them. The study calls to make women torch bearers and for them to be put at the forefront in peace building initiatives.

In Africa, the post-genocide regime in Rwanda has shown remarkable progress in promoting the participation of women in the post-genocide reconstruction process. In
establishing a Ministry dedicated to the affairs of women whose priority ensure contribution of women in the shaping the recovery of their country by establishing channels through which the Rwandese women could express their opinions and concerns (Izabiliza, 2005).

Sadly, the above are some of the few cases where the contribution of women is encouraged. In most conflict and post-conflict situations, women have been sidelined and their efforts unrecognized. In cases where they have expressed genuine interest to participate, they have been faced with barriers including: cultural attitudes against participation of women; and lack of mechanisms that will ensure implementation of a gender agenda in a post-conflict setting (Bowd & Barbara, 2003). As a result of their exclusion, they do not design the peace initiatives and restricting programs which in-turn end up ignoring their needs and aspirations. Furthermore, their exclusion leads to the loss of a unique and important resource in Peace building.

Peace, according to Cockburn (2007) and Jennifer (2004) should be defined in terms protection of people against violence. Feminists posit that since women have been subjected to both conflict and nurturing, they are more likely than men to appreciate peace and become peacemakers. The current hierarchal, patriarchal, exploitative oppressive world capitalist order hinders the achievement of global peace and equality. In order to end violence, feminists place emphasis on social inclusivity of more women in peace building agendas especially women from marginalized communities (Byne, 2015).

There have been many arguments calling for equality of women and men in all spheres of public life. A positive response occurred in Kenya, with the promulgation of the new constitution in 2010 that has been an instrumental tool in affirmative action. Increased representation for women and has been witnessed although the two-thirds gender rule has
yet to be implemented. Although these are positive steps, there is a lot more that can be done.

This study advocates for social inclusion of the Pokot woman in the participation of her community welfare especially in peace building roles, social inclusion definition according to the Word Bank is, the process of improving abilities and dignifying the marginalized and disadvantaged groups (Social-Inclusion: World Bank Web Site, 2018). This inclusion in the context of the conflict will ensure long lasting peace in the area and solutions that are comprehensive, especially in addressing fundamental issues related to women.

1.8 Chapter Outline

This study consists of five chapters:

Chapter one: It will focus on the background of the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, research question, theoretical framework, and scope of study as well as significance of the study.

Chapter two: This will present the literature review where different scholars’ analysis on the topic will be reviewed.

Chapter three: This will focus on research methodology where essential approach will be used for the paper

Chapter four: This will present the analysis of findings of the study as per objectives.

Chapter five: This chapter will present the conclusions and recommendations of the study.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This section seeks to review literature based on key areas namely; the definitions and history of peace building, peace building framework, the role of women in peace building and literature on theoretical perspective of peace building based on the different school of thoughts.

2.2 Role of Women in Resolving Cultural Sources of Violence

There is no denying that the concept of culture is replete with different conceptualizations and with ambiguous understandings. In this realm, Kluckhohn, (1951) defined culture as a structured way of conceptualizing or thinking, feeling, and responding to different phenomena, which are obtained and through symbols and made up of different groups of people’s achievements and artefacts. In addition, traditional values and beliefs conceptualized as the main pillar upon which culture rests are subsumed into the concept of culture.

In this context, culture has become gendered to the core, such that women are heavy drooling in objectification, inferiority, and other terms that aptly define their downtrodden nature. According to Philips, (1992), gender neutrality is a façade, yet masculinity has established itself as a cog that defines the terms of gender existence in society. From the premise of gender being a social construct, the cultural socializations were transmitted via peers, schools, parents, as well as the media and oriented girls into mothering and wifely roles of femininity and subservience, while on the other hand orienting boys into aggressiveness, ambitious roles that defined masculinity and dominance.
The concept of gender being socially constructed has defined the disparities between male and female roles. Culture stereotypical expectations of both men and women through the socialization where girls are imbibed with domestic experiences bent on both motherly and wifely roles and boys taught to venture outside the domestic realm are the biggest bastions of inequality (Hunt, 1990; Hansen, 1992).

Further, culture being at the core of development has become a major lacuna in the development of women in realizing their full potential. Women have been emasculated by the sharp patriarchal claws that have crippled and mutilated them to the core. Traditional information about the roles of girls and women restricts them from contributing to development in areas of economic, social, political and other crucial areas.

The patriarchal tendencies in all societal spheres has by great strides contributed to women being prisoners of their own subordination. According to Amadiume, (2000), this situation has fashioned the “daughters of imperialism”, where women’s efforts to free themselves have been met with contradictions and silence embedded in male power dominance.

The introduction of capitalism and the cash economy played a very important role in the lowering of women’s status into a new low. The wage employment precipitated a situation where men were subsumed into the labor market and subsequently in the public realm while women were confined into domesticity and subsistence farming. Women’s twin role expectations of production in peasant economies and their reproductive efforts were a panacea for a continual labor force (Roberts, 1984; Nasong’o & Ayot, (2007).

The colonial societal structures crafted a clear ideological disparity between men and women. These ideologies were bent on the public-private dichotomy where men were associated with the public sphere while women were seen to belong to the private bastion
where they tend to domestic chores. Furthermore, the colonial education was also bendy in such a way that men were trained on how to work in European industries while women were trained on motherly and wifely roles, how to become good wives to their husbands. These women were socialized to be submissive, accept male dominance as the norm, and lean never to challenge authority (Schmidt, 1991, Nasong’o & Ayot, 2007).

Consequently, the public private dichotomy dictated that women had to be home makers, juggling both domestic and farm chores. In this prospect, their social, economic, political and even sexual ends are flushed out. Since education for girls was a luxury that many parents conceptualized as sources of wealth upon marriage.

In the same vein, Nasong’o and Ayot (2007) alludes to the lack of education and training dimmed their prospects of getting employed in the wage bracket since employers preferred educated people who mostly constituted males. In cases where females were found to be educated they were apportioned work that did not match their education credentials and this permanently constrained them as home makers and stay at home mothers. This also disempowered them deeper since economically they depended on their husbands who were bread winners by default and the sole decision makers. This meant that as wives they had to pander to the whims of the husbands for everything including conjugal rights.

Their social life is grounded because they are busy with the kids, in the farms or in the kitchen. Their assumed production and reproduction roles were a big blow to their growth. Politics was assumed to be a man’s prerogative and any woman attempting to enter the murky waters was seen as a wretch. The fact that gender bias and discrimination against women is still a powerful negative force in significant percentages of our world population cannot be opposed. Many countries have made significant steps towards
gender equity but the empowerment narrative is still a pipe dream. The tides of gender violence, women inheritance, female genital mutilation, the skewed public private dichotomy, still put women in the sheltered positions in terms of progress and development. All these happen despite the fact that women’s hard work and perseverance are the bedrock of a family’s success, structure (Nasong’o & Ayot, 2007).

However, amid all these negative-gender generated clichés, women have suffered and struggled throughout. The glass ceiling is almost broken; they have embraced education and other aspects that define modernity and use them to crusade and preach peace. The little knowledge acquired through the education that has oriented them to be mothers and wives and remain obedient and subservient to their husbands has opened their eyes wider. Women have now become educators teaching young boys and girls who are mostly participants in conflicts how to inculcate peaceful coexistence with their neighbors (Nasong’o & Ayot, 2007).

Women have become important pillars in erecting peaceful mechanisms in conflict situations (MacCathy, 2015). In South Sudan, for instance, the decision to include women in peace processes has borne fruits that were otherwise not thought of. Of important mention is the inclusion of women in the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation, and Healing and the Ceasefire and Transitional Security Arrangement Monitoring Mechanism (CTSAMM) (Kelly, Huda, & Anna, 2015).

Women’s role in peace processes are driven and shaped by their societal social roles as mothers and wives. This has earned them respect such that they engage different parties with a heavy stake in their society just as the males. Women will be at the forefront of disagreements which will attract the trust of the warring factions. In October 2000 the UN passed a resolution named Security Council Resolution 1325 with the sole aim of
increasing the numbers of women in peace initiatives and decisions. This assertion has been corroborated by Marie et al. (2015) who noted that between 1989 and 2011, 182 peace agreements signed showed that women’s salience in peace mechanisms cannot be ignored (Kelly, Huda, & Anna, 2015).

Women will tend to go for the wider societal gains of peaceful coexistence while men will tend to venture towards what they will get after the peace process (Chinking, 2003). In similar vein, Anderlin, (2007) and Fortna, (2008) studied the post-cold-wars and found out that in 60 civil wars, a paucity of women participation in close to 1/3 led to escalation of conflict to unprecedented levels.

In as much as less aggressive mechanisms have been proven to have a tendency to last long, they have been found to be stable and a sure way to peace. Coupled with other traditional and cultural underpinnings, women have proven to resort to mild mechanisms of peace cultivation where they will use their influence as mothers and initiate talks with the warring parties in the conflicts and establish peaceful coexistence. Most of the people involved in the conflict are always the young thus the mothers will initiate talks with them in order to make them live like their forefathers.

In the midst of the Liberian civil war, women still were expected to meet their expectations as mothers and wives. But as the conflict escalated and they became victims in the process, they made a decision to rise from their conventional roles and became more proactive in the peacebuilding processes in their capacity as women and victims. Evidently, their interventions in conflict situations minimized conflicts by a very large margin and thus were incorporated into peace processes.

According to Schirch, (2008) peacebuilding is a holistic set of strategies that establish key responses and reactions to resolve conflict in non-violent ways, minimize direct violence,
change the relationships in the conflict situations, and add impetus on national capacity in the community. In this vein, Sullivan (2002), stated that peaceful initiatives in conflict zoned is embedded in four important concepts: security, justice and reconciliation, socio-economic well-being, and finally governance and participation. Achieving these four constituencies entails taking a bottom-up and top down approach as well as the middle (Lederach, 1997).

In the above definition, the non-violent ways in which peace building is conceptualized engenders well with an assertion by McCarthy (2011) that women have been recognized as change agents bearing the desired characteristics of resolving conflicts non-violently. In same breath, they inherently have the potential for bringing together the different actors and seduce warring parties into peaceful action. Research shows that women’s role in decision making is choked by their reduced participation in conflict mechanisms and the society perceives them as victims (Puechguirbal 2005). Thus, the statement by Women for Women International (2010) holds true,

“In times of war a woman’s burdens only get heavier, her vulnerabilities more pronounced. …despite these grim realities, she brings enormous energy, leadership and resilience to protecting families and rebuilding fractured communities. Yet, her essential voice remains absent from formal peace negotiations and her needs remain on the margins of reconstruction, development and poverty reduction programmes.”

Among the Igbo of Nigeria, passive peaceful initiatives involved offering a girl as reparation to the victim’s family. This pact sealed the disagreements inherent between two warring communities for many years including also for future generations because of the intimacy shared.
Equally, Mohammad Abdi Mohammed, (2003) share the sentiment that women would take their positions as mothers and wives and educate their children the role of peaceful coexistence in the community. Since they were regarded as belonging to the private bastions, they took advantage of their domesticity and taught their children good societal morals. This has been the practice in Somalia that has reduced significantly the potential for war.

However, he further adds that in as much as the constituency of women has a salient role in peaceful mechanisms, they established masculine structures erect an identifiable space in the process. The place and space of women in most societies has been suffocated to the core. The sexual division of labor has consigned women to private individuals within the domestic arena. The bendy sexual division of labor manufactured the stay at home mothers as producers in the farms and reproducers in the bedroom. Engels explained that “all societies have rested upon the twin pillars of production and procreation.” In explaining about societies Engels encompassed humanity as a whole. Society is made up of a man and a woman, for without a woman man cannot sustain (Brown, O'Laughlin, Remy, Williams & Young, 1974).

There is no denying that women face a lot of impediments in trying to rise above the shores of exploitation and oppression. Patriarchy has flexed its muscles deep into the society such that women are viewed as half human beings or lesser beings compared to men and capitalism, has proved to be a domesticated monster devouring them economically.

Culture being at the core of development has become a major lacuna in the development of women in realizing their full potential. Women have been emasculated by the sharp patriarchal claws that have crippled and mutilated them to the core. Traditional
information about the roles of girls and women restricts them from contributing to
development in areas of economic, social, political and other crucial areas.

The public private dichotomy dictated that women had to be home makers, juggling both
domestic and farm chores. In this prospect, their social, economic, political and even
sexual ends are flushed out. Since education for girls was a luxury that many parents
conceptualized as sources of wealth upon marriage. The tides of gender violence, women
inheritance, female genital mutilation, the skewed public private dichotomy, still put
women in the leeward positions in terms of progress and development. All these happen
despite the fact that women’s hard work and perseverance are the bedrock of a family’s
success structure.

2.2.1 Peace Building (Women and Peacebuilding)

Over the years, there have been significant contributions towards peace building
discourse offering a wide selection of literature. Most of these literatures explicitly
differentiate peace building from peacemaking by the fact the peace building gives a
sustainable solution for peace among warring communities. Lund (2002) and Kauth
(2002) give a comprehensive procedure for establishing peace and the importance of
gender based peace building.

In his 1992 report, “An Agenda for Peace,” former UN Secretary-General Boutros
Boutros-Ghali introduced the concept of peace building to the UN as “action to identify
and support structures, which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid
a relapse into conflict. His definition has largely been borrowed by various international
organizations which perceive peace building in terms of post-conflict reconstruction of
societal infrastructures and action-based approaches to peace making and structural
rebuilding of institutions where infrastructures is frequently emphasized.
In addition to the above, other scholars have come up with other definitions of peace building. McCarthy in his definition perceives peace building to be activities undertaken on the far side of conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace and provide the tools for building on those foundations, something that is more than just the absence of war (McCarthy, 2011). The position however is contradicted by Porter who defines peace building based on a post conflict reconstruction concept as activities that support the transition from conflict to peace in an affected country through the rebuilding of the socioeconomic framework of the society.

Across the world, women have played roles in peace building (Accord Insight, 2013). Notably, the initiatives implemented were strikingly similar in the regions where women took leading roles. Lindborg states that, studies have shown that women involved in peacekeeping were usually concerned less with the spoils of war and rather focused on reconciliation, economic development, transitional justice and education (Lindborg, 2017).

McCarthy adds that women are change agents and have an exceptional ability to resolve conflicts peacefully. Furthermore, they have the ability to persuade warring factions to overcome their differences in the spirit of peace (McCathy, 2011). This assertion is true of many countries where women have been key in ensuring cessation of violence and holding of peace dialogues, including Somaliland (Accord Insight, 2013), Liberia (McCathy, 2011) and Sudan (Hunt & Posa, 2001). In the context of West Pokot, is this a possibility?

Women have been instrumental in raising awareness of violence especially in cases where there is little media coverage or inaction by the Government and other local authorities. In northern Uganda, Acholi women in 1996 sought an audience with the President of
Uganda, top Government officials and army commanders to articulate their concerns over the activities of the Lord’s Resistance Army (L.R.A.). Although their efforts to meet the President were unsuccessful, positive responses from the military authorities, Local councils and the resident district commissioner for dialogue and development of joint strategies greatly enhanced the civil-military relations. Additionally, the women have been monitoring the actions of the Uganda Peoples Defense Forces (UPDF) and reported any violations (Oywa, 2002).

The literature reviewed seeks to highlight the roles women can play or have played in resolving the aforementioned issues. Additionally, the literature review aims to highlight the barriers to participation of women and in turn identify the measures that can be implemented to address them to better enhance their participation.

2.2.2 Women and Peace Building

Over the years, women have been excluded from most decision-making processes. This discriminatory tendency started to be reversed in 1949, with “The Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War…” the “first modern-day international instrument to establish protections against rape for women” (Theydon et.al, 2001). However, discrimination, rape, and lack of protection continued. Because of this, women’s groups and civil society continued to push to put an end to discrimination. As a result, the convention for Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW Convention) was created in 1976. The convention advocated for the need to end discrimination towards women. It was signed and ratified by 189 countries (Dubravka, 2010).

The CEDAW was a major legal step towards ending women’s discrimination. Discrimination tendencies persisted and women groups and civil society continued to
advocate for their rights. This led the international community to establish the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA) in 1996. The BPA identified strategic priorities and created necessary actions and strategies to move forward when it came to women’s discrimination. This did not yield any fruits as women continued to be segregated. Attempting to fill this gap, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) established Resolution 1325 in the year 2000. Resolution 1325 is very significant because it recognized the importance of including women in peace building processes and all decision-making processes (Bushra, 2012).

Literature on African women and the issue of war and peace explores various other themes. Some provide depictions of the types of war-time human rights violations committed against women. For instance Turshen, explains that conflicts and wars destroy the very patriarchal structures of society that for a long time have confined and degraded women (Turshen, 1998). Turshen further suggests that wars and conflicts bring a new beginning for women by giving them voice in the midst of turmoil that destroys morals, traditions, customs, and community- women go through during wars and conflicts have been positively converted by women into learning skills, and women have obtained social, economic, and political exposure and strength.

In addition to the above, existing literature provides examples of how women have been influential in peace making, peace building and conflict resolution, especially after the regaining of independence. For example, Codou Bop provides a classic understanding of women’s roles in post conflict reconstruction and their experiences in South Africa, Eritrea and Niger. Other studies address the role of women in settling disputes in the context of traditional African society. A good example of this is Amadiume who argues
that based on age seniority; patrilineage daughters had great power especially in matters
of peace making (Acholonu, 2003).

Looking at the Kenyan context, not only have women been absent from the histories of
decision making, but, also the existing work is insufficient both in scope and
ethnographically. The voices of less privileged and illiterate women, in particular, have
not been captured well, and call for historical inquiry. This study will attempts to do so by
using oral history interviews, supported by the work of historians, anthropologists,
sociologists, and political scientists to explore a specific example of Kenyan women in
peace building and conflict resolution.

2.3 Structural Conflicts

In his research referred to as “Violence, Peace, and Peace research”, Galtung, (1969)
refers to structural conflicts as a type of violence where some specific social structures of
social institution erect a barrier preventing people from achieving some basic end results.
Indeed, research shows that structural conflicts are conflicts that are caused by an
imbalance in political, economic, and social dimensions that qualify some areas and
belittle other areas. As a matter of fact, when these structural deficiencies are not
adequately addressed over a satisfactory time frame, they eventually mutate into
behavioral violence and conflicts (Mudida, 2009).

The conflagration of conflict is always due to incompatibility of objectives between the
concerned parties. Relatedly, the salience of the goals in question will be directly related
to the intensity of the conflict hereupon (Reuck, 1984). In this context, violence that
defines the nature of conflicts is categorized into physical or structural violence. Physical
violence is the intentional application of force to injure, dominate, or even kill other
people. Structural violence is imbued in the architecture of the interrelationships and interactions of the different parties (Mwagiru, 2000).

Galtun (1969) defined structural violence as violence present when people are persuaded such that their actual or natural mental understandings are lower than their possible understanding. Here, the degree of understanding is defined as the possible within a particular framework of resources and insights. However, if the resources are misused or abused or used for unintended purposes, the real degree of understanding or persuasion falls below the possible level which result into violence.

He further asserts that structural violence is quite indirect such that the violence is embedded in the systemic structure and props up in terms of unequal power relations that may not readily be realized. In this scenario, architecture of male dominance and the patriarchal tendrils that have captured the society and their actualization that lead to the superior man and the inferior woman are forms of structural violence that affect women.

Just as the norm in the public-private dichotomy where the man is associated with empowerment through the cash economy thus is the breadwinner and a public figure. On the other hand, woman is the private being consigned within the domestic arena to take care of the home and kids. Women also do subsistence farming. Thus, the framing of men as aggressors and women as peacekeepers strengthens the former conceptualization (Linos, 2009). Page and Shapiro, (1995) affirmed that basically women are less belligerent compared to men which mirrors the traditional gender roles of hegemonic masculinity, which is conceptualized as the gender practices that have legitimized patriarchy, permitting the dominance of women and subordination of women.

According to Melander, (2005), gender-equal societies have been found to exhibit less collective violence than otherwise. Similarly, researchers have established the existence
of a mutual relationship between the degree of gender responsiveness and equality and peaceful relations (Caprioli 2000, 2005; Caprioli and Boyer, 2001; Regan and Paskeviciute 2003; Melander 2005). According to essentialist argument, women’s essence is assumed to be universal and associated with the feminine characteristics which are framed in biological terms like peaceful, empathy, nurturance, and so on. Summarily, essentialism defines the presence of particular permanent attributes and other inherent functions that limit the potentialities of change and social re-stratification (Grosz, 1995).

In the same vein, the constructivist argument holds that the rebuff of oppression against women may be construed to be a sign of rejection of oppression against other people. These two concepts all assert that the cultivation of gender equality thus will by a significant margin lead to decreased violence in society. However, in the current dispensation, the allure for education, leadership and prominence in different fields has proved the essentialist logic for women.

Majority of women have accessed education and this has put them at a pedestal similar to men in the job and other professional spheres. The gender division of labor is slowly fading away and women are now educators in the public realm unlike before. This has made it possible to apply their motherly and wifely attributes to transform the dynamics of conflicts. In the Liberian conflict, the presence of women spearheading peaceful initiatives backed by the United Nations played a major role in reducing the vagaries of the conflicts.

In South Sudan, the place and spaces provided held by women in the peace process conundrum is unmatched. Their voice has been so loud such that peace is slowly slithering back into the country through initiatives that transcend the structural gender
hierarchy (Kinzli, 2018). In Somali, women have been found to be influential in persuading the young boys from venturing into violence and conflicts.

The fading away of the pubic-private dichotomy has engendered the place and place of women such that women now work and earn a salary at the end of the month. This has empowered them and given them a voice even over men in some circumstances. The Liberian Women Initiative (LWI) and Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace Campaign, as well as Women in Peacebuilding Network (WIPNET) steered the need for participation in peace initiatives which eventually were fruitful. Their activism eventually led to the end of the 14-year conflict that ravaged Liberia (McCarthy, 2011). Further, the Sudan historical conflict was minimized and curtailed by the presence of Sudanese Women’s Voice for Peace who regularly held meetings with the warring factions of the different parties which led to a ceasefire (Hunt & Posa, 2001).

2.3.1 Perception of Women in International Relations

Most of the literature on gender and international relations addresses the relationship between the two from a feminist perspective. More recent literature on gender in International Relations, however, raises the issue of methodological coherence and how to examine gender from a non-feminist perspective. The feminist perspective nonetheless remains predominant, and is defined by its effort to examine the relationship between gender and IR largely in terms of women’s experiences—what special insight women have on security and cooperation and how and why women have been politically marginalized by men, society, and the state. According to Tickner (1992), Men’s experience continues to shape international relations a move which not only subordinates femininity but also other masculinities.
In addition, a masculine approach to analysis in International Relations has resulted in only a partial view, and thus only a partial system of security (Christine, 2002). With a gendered approach to security, however, traditional assumptions of the content of the term are questioned. Within the orthodox International Relations militaristic conception of security, women have been left with little control over their own security. Women have been regarded as in need of protection, the receivers of security delivered to them from the protectors; the male warriors. This conventional distinction between ‘protectors’ and ‘protected’ is, however, challenged by feminists because it obscures the degree to which women are involved in war (Jill, 2008). A feminist analysis of war emphasizes the connections between war as an instance of state-sanctioned violence and other forms of violence. A gendered approach to accepted conceptions of the roles of men and women in armed conflicts and wars can reveal underlying, and taken for granted, working relationships which in reality inhabits discriminating features resulting in inequalities between men and women.

2.4 The Role of Women in Peace Building and Peace Processes

As victims or perpetrators of war, women are major stakeholders in conflict resolutions. More often than not, they are the target of attacks, sexual violence and other forms of gross human violations. During times of war, whether as combatants or victims, women have additional burdens due to their socially ascribed roles and responsibilities of maintaining their families and the larger community (UNIFEM, 2005). As seen in previous sections, a number of international and local legal frameworks outline women’s rights to full participation in governance structures, which accord them decision-making platforms on social, political and economic matters. Implementing these rights would be the first step towards integrating them into peace processes as active participants. Further,
women have invaluable resources that they can provide to peace processes leading to a positive outcome.

Women groups can play an important role in peace building efforts by broadening the range of issues on the negotiating or mediation table, such as the promotion of social justice particularly for marginalized groups. In this regard, women groups can gain legitimacy and support by appealing to a wider range of stakeholders. For example, during the conflict period in Cambodia and Sierra Leone, women’s groups reached out to all people, beyond the urban setting. In Cambodia, the women groups engaged in advocacy and promotion of peace by calling for a broad social development agenda, focusing on the neglected and socially excluded rural majority. In Sierra Leone, the women’s movement opened branches in all accessible parts of the country which strengthened its support based and helped share information and coordinate peace marches (ACORD, 2013:17). Their action helped in raising awareness on the need to stop the fighting and embrace peace for the betterment of all the citizens of Sierra Leone.

Indeed, women have the capacity to complement and provide invaluable contributions to official peace building efforts by building a formidable platform for negotiations and mediation. In Northern Ireland, for example, women’s groups spent over ten years cultivating trust between Protestants and Roman Catholics, creating the ground upon which a settlement would ultimately be reached. Women can build ties among opposing factions (UN Women, 2012:2). In Somalia, women presented themselves as the “sixth clan” at the National Reconciliation Conference in Arta, Djibouti, which helped to send the message that the need for peace transcended beyond clan divisions (Butler et al, 2010). In the case of Burundi, from the 1960s up to the year 2000, the country’s political crisis had taken a tragic toll on the lives of its citizens. The war had been characterized by deliberate rape, killing, maiming, forced displacement, abduction and torture. Risks for
the refugee and internally displaced populations were especially pronounced for women and their children (UNIFEM, 2001). From the year 1993, Burundi women became actively involved in peace movements geared towards resolving the country’s conflicts. Their initiative bore fruits in July 2000 when an All-Parties Burundi Women’s Peace Conference was held in Arusha, Tanzania, which marked the first opportunity for Burundi women to make specific recommendations regarding their country’s peace accord and its implementation (Dolgopol, 2006).

Within the Kenyan context, following the December 2007 General Elections, the country was overtaken by unprecedented levels of violence leading to the death of approximately 1300 people and displacement of over 600,000 persons (Wamai, 2013: 7). The severity of the conflict unfolded within a period of almost two months and ended when a political compromise was reached. The representation of women within the formal mediation process was high by previous standards. One in four of the members of each negotiating team were women. Women were also seconded to support the process in various capacities. At national level, women civil society activists presented a memorandum to the former UN Secretary General, the late Kofi Annan, which highlighted the gender dimension of the conflict and cited discriminatory laws that sanction marginalization and exclusion of women. Women’s participation was also felt at grass-root level, such as Kibra in Nairobi, where they organized themselves to provide humanitarian assistance to victims of violence as well as providing early warning information to their communities on impending attacks (Mcghie & Wamai, 2011).

2.4.1 Women and Peace Building in Kenya’s Arid Lands

There are various studies indicating that in many conflicting communities, women have been in the fore-front in peace building initiatives. For example, in the provision of food
and shelter to victims of violence, building bridges of reconciliation across the conflict divide, engagement in intra and inter-community dialogue, provision of psychosocial support to victims of rape and other violations and in reintegrating of returnees back to the community. Studies indicate that women have been able to do all this, although in many instances, they have operated from the grassroots level and at the peripheries of the community (Publication for the Coalition for Peace in Africa: 2014).

In Kenya’s pastoral communities, women engage in peace building efforts in a number of ways. For instance, women marry out of their clan and as such, they provide inter-clan networks that can provide crucial communication channels between warring parties. This is true also for women who have been abducted during inter-communal conflicts. Thus, abduction of girls during the raids may have the effect of retaliatory attacks and - once the girls are married – they provide important connections between warring communities who under normal circumstances would not inter-marry (Ayuko and Chopra, 2008: 27; Banerjee, 2010; UNIFEM, 2005; UNICEF and UNIFEM, 2002; Juma, 2000: 18).

According to Ayuko and Chopra (2008) and Juma (2000:21-24), in recent years, several women’s organizations have been established in pastoral communities, specifically to promote peace in the region. In Wajir County for instance, peace building initiatives have been undertaken by women groups in the area since the early 1990s. These women groups gather to tackle conflict in their community and engage different stakeholders, including community leaders, to resolve tensions. In neighboring Somalia, which is also inhabited by warring clans, women organized groups have facilitated dialogue and reconciliation. Jama (2009) observes that women in organized groups have used their traditional skills in poetry, singing and dancing in order to appeal upon community elders and negotiators to enter into a truce for the sake of peace.
Women play a significant role in inter-community dialogue, through their social roles as a result of socialization process at the local/informal levels (Bernajee et al., 2010:174). For example, among the Pokot and Marakwet, women would typically influence their men to negotiate with the enemy by tying a belt around their waists, indicating that the warring parties need to enter into a truce to allow their women folk to give birth and nurture their young ones. However, the use of these type of local conflict resolution mechanisms can be challenging in some inter-communal and inter-ethnic disputes, where more than one socio-cultural system is involved. Communities which have different methods of solving disputes may be unable to reach a compromise that leads to peaceful co-existence (IPSTC, 2015).

Although the role of women as peace-builders is “recognized” in most pastoral communities in Kenya, women still lack support from their male counterparts. According to a study carried out by Ayuko and Chopra (2008), in Isiolo County, men see the women’s peace groups as places for gossip and do not perceive them as useful. However, in other instances, the scholar point out that some women peace initiatives at the grass-root level have contributed significantly to formal peace processes. Wajir County, in the Northern frontier of Kenya, was often torn by intra and inter-ethnic conflicts. However, in the early 1990s, peace building initiative started with an outstanding action taken by a group of women in Wajir, who gathered to tackle ongoing conflict in their region. This initiative set the stage for many others to follow including the setting up of the Wajir Peace and Development Committee which serves as an excellent example of women’s transformative roles in community peace building.

2.4.2 Barriers to Participation of Women in Peace Building

This study aims to explore the measures that can be employed to enhance the role of women in peace building in West Pokot County. In as much as women have been proven
to be an important resource in this aspect, they are hindered from full participation in peace building by a variety of factors including; a likelihood that they fled the violence to protect and care for dependents; cultural attitudes against participation of women; and lack of mechanisms that will ensure implementation of a gender agenda in a post-conflict setting (Bowd & Barbara, 2003).

According to Cardona (2012) studies on the role of women in peace building in Liberia, Nepal, Sierra Leone, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, revealed that the barriers to participation of women in peace building include; patriarchal norms and attitudes; violence against women; and lack of financial stability and responsibility at home; poor education (Cardona & et.al, 2012).

This study hopes to investigate whether any of the above and others not mentioned are affecting Pokot women and at what degrees. An understanding of the barriers in the West Pokot context will in-turn enable the study propose counter measures to these barriers and contribute to enhanced roles of women in the county.
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study pursued a descriptive type of approach where the role of women in peace building process in West Pokot County was be analyzed. The description will surround depended variable which is the women engagement in peace process and independent variable being peace building mechanism. This will provide point of analysis of West Pokot county peace initiative process over the years.

3.2 Population and Population Sample

The population in the study will be composed of the West Pokot sub County population of about 512, 690 as per 2009 census report. However, the study will target a sample population of 30 respondents who will form part of the study drawn from the locals. The targeted population will be realized through participants drawn from Sekerr, Sook, and Siyoi in West Pokot County.

Figure 1: Map of west Pokot County
3.3 Data Collection

The multiple tools used will enable the study to design a triangulation approach to maximize data reliability. The data collection procedure will be divided into two phases; the secondary data gathering technique and the focus group interview questionnaire. The qualitative data will be collected through secondary data such as books, journals, scholarly articles, documentary, and institutions report on peace building in pastoral community and the role of women in the process. These secondary materials will be acquired with the help of United States International University (USIU) library and online materials. The second phase of data collection will involve primary qualitative data collection tool such as the interview questionnaires and schedules involving focus group discussion. This tool enables and individual to make deduction of the findings presented in the study.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedure

The data acquired from secondary data collection method will be subjected to content analysis where the required information will be retrieved through selective approach. This will enable using the right data retrieved from large scope of information surrounding the topic. Therefore, the qualitative aspect of content analysis presents conflicting or unresolved views surrounding a specific interpretation, concepts, or procedures. Moreover, this approach presents a flexible data analysis approach due to its ability to present elements' description within different analytical perspectives (impressionistic, intuitive, interpretive, or textual). The study will also utilize focus group interview questionnaire which will mostly be composed of open-ended questions. Moreover, interview questionnaires are verifiable sources of data. The information acquired through
interviews will be used to confirm the findings from secondary data and draw conclusions and recommendations for the study findings.

3.5 Ethical Issues

The findings of the study through focus group interview will code the response from the participant into understandable design to enable easy reporting of the data collected. Moreover, the coding process will leave out names of the respondents and replace it with codes in order to avoid participants being victimized by the society.

The research process will be accompanied with a letter of introduction which will as well outline the purpose of the study. Therefore, the information gathered and analyzed in this study will be cited as well as referenced to acknowledge the various sources where potential information will be retrieved from. The information which will be used in this study will purely be academic, as required by the program.

3.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter focused on research methodology aspects such as Research design, population and sample population, data collection procedure, and data analysis procedure, in attempt to come up with findings for the study.
CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses women and peace building particularly women’s contribution in peace endeavors in West Pokot County from 1985-2000. Throughout the world accounts of war tend to portray men as the conflict resolvers and women as passive innocent victims. In conflict situations, women are much more disadvantaged compared to men. Women tend to be the most vulnerable victims of various forms of violence, from domestic violence, rape, sexual harassment, to sexual torture and other types of sexual violence. They also suffer disproportionately from displacement and deprivation.

4.2 Causes of Conflict in West Pokot County

The causes of conflict in West Pokot County includes the following; Replenishing Depleted Resources, Traditional Pastoralists Cultural Values and Practices, Proliferation of Automatic Weapons, Weakening of Traditional Authority Structures, Commercialization of Raiding and the Monetization of Indigenous Economies

4.2.1 Replenishing Depleted Resources

One of the most serious consequences of the enormous changes that took place in Kenya, especially in West Pokot County was that pastoralists lost access to key dry season grazing areas because land was alienated for other uses and/or occupied by other people (Grey 2000:405). Over a century ago, pastoralists grazed their herds on the plateaus of the western highlands of Kenya. The majority of land on these plateaus was used for mixed farming, ranging from small plots to large commercial holdings eliminating an important safety net for pastoralists during dry seasons.
Rainfall in the border of Pokot and Karamoja is highly variable (in amount and timing) and thus totally unreliable from one year to the next. From 1979 to 1999, there were 7 years of drought and crop failure in the semi-arid areas of Kenya predominantly inhabited by Pokot (West Pokot District Plan, 1999:2). Longer-term drought to the extent that it affected the grazing lands and watering points had an impact not only on rangeland production but also on species diversity and nutritive quality of forage plants, affecting ultimately the size of the herds that could be sustained. The pastoralists witnessed a subsequent decrease in their stocks, which led to restocking through raids on their neighbors. This triggered off counter raids by the affected parties, creating a cycle of cattle rustling and violence (West Pokot District Plan, 1999:2).

4.2.2 Traditional Pastoralists Cultural Values and Practices

Cattle raiding in many areas remained a culturally accepted activity. Traditionally, livestock raiding was not considered a crime and successful raiders were respected. Killing an enemy in battle earned one respect (Grey 2000:405). The cost of getting married was another factor that promoted raiding. In some areas, the family of a young man paid a very high bride price to the family of the chosen bride. Sometimes the bride price had to be paid all at once (putting the potential bridegrooms at risk of raiding!), instead of over a period of time. This encouraged unmarried Pokot men to steal or raid from neighboring communities.

Taunting by girls and women was another factor driving the Pokot youth to raid and mount counter-raids on the Turkana, Sabiny, Marakwet and Karimojong. Females, in song and dance, sometimes encouraged young men to prove their bravery and gained wealth by raiding for livestock. Local prophets and soothsayers of the Sabiny also
encouraged the youth to raid, as they themselves received their (variable) share if the raid was successful.

4.2.3. **Proliferation of Automatic Weapons**

Several decades of regional instability adversely affected Kenya, especially, the border of Pokot and Karamoja. The regional conflicts in South Sudan, Ethiopia and Uganda contributed to flow of weapons into Kenya and the main transit points were West Pokot and Turkana counties. West Pokot County shares borders with Uganda and also Uganda shares border with South Sudan; this provided a smooth flow of arms from these countries to Pokot and Karamoja border.

Increase in the supply and availability of modern weapons in the Kenya-Uganda border since 1979 was critical in the cattle raiding equation. The Karamojong acquired guns following the lootings of the government armory in Moroto in 1979, 1985 and 1986 after the fall of the Amin, Obote II and Okello governments, respectively. These events played a key role in changing the nature of cattle raiding in Kenya because the arms found their way into the hands of pastoralists in West Pokot County. The weapons from neighboring countries entered the country and found their way to the markets in West Pokot County. (Stites and Akabwai 2007:10).

4.2.4. **Weakening of Traditional Authority Structures**

Unlike the past, raiding sometimes occurred without the formal sanction of elders, local prophets and soothsayers. When unsanctioned raids occurred, elders were often involved in trying to retrieve the cattle that young men in their group raided. The simultaneous pull of cultural tradition and the push of contemporary factors affected all groups. Male elders and opinion leaders generally played a key role in decision-making. Traditional structures and methods of conflict-resolution provided an important starting point for developing
peace and development strategies in the region albeit not as vigorously as it was in the past (Mkutu 2000:5).

4.2.5. Commercialization of Raiding and the Monetization of Indigenous Economies

During pre-colonial period cattle rustling was a social issue or mainly for the purpose of restocking depleted stock. In the Post-colonial period introduction of commercial raiding represented a major change for the worse among the conflicting parties. Powerful, wealthy individuals, including livestock traders, arms dealers and others, sponsored raids. Young men were hired to carry out raids, and the organizers provided guns on credit to the raiders. The cattle were stolen and in some cases were herded into trucks waiting by the roadside. The livestock were then transported or driven on foot. Commercial raiding was becoming a more important factor contributing to escalation of rustling than ecological pressure (Galaty 1991:2).

4.3 Peace Building Initiatives

Conflicts in West Pokot County, like in other pastoral areas, have not gone unchecked. Numerous initiatives have been put in place in order to prevent, alleviate or resolve conflicts. Peace building in the county consisted of both peace negotiations conducted by the government, political leaders, and sometimes by external parties such as the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and through grass-roots initiatives. As a result of numerous peace building initiatives, the county has experienced an overall reduction in the number of conflicts save for conflicts related to competition over natural resources. Conflicts arising from historical rivalry and socio-cultural practices had greatly reduced. On contrary, conflicts over control of and access to water and pasture in the county and in the neighboring counties still persisted and were associated with extreme climatic events.
Grass-root peace building initiative emerged out of despair and frustration caused by conflicts. The most frequently used grass-root peace building strategy was the use of council of elders (referred to as *Poy* in Pokot language). Historically council of elders was predominantly men dominated, but the trend has changed and women form part of the council of elders. Community elders, from the conflicting communities made treaties on peace keeping. This strategy involved slaughtering of a goat and the use of goat blood for cleansing. Sharing a meal among the warring communities’ elders was sign of peaceful coexistence. However, this strategy largely dealt with the situation at hand and thus served for specific warring situations. The study established that even after brokering of peace through the council of elders, sometimes conflicts flared up depending on the intensity of the socio-economic hardship the communities were undergoing. For instance, if livestock loss continued unabated due to climate vagaries, raiding persisted.

![Image of a peace meeting between the Pokot and the Samburu. An elder addressing morans in West Pokot County](image)

**Figure 2:** A peace meeting between the Pokot and the Samburu. An elder addressing *morans* in West Pokot County.

In West Pokot County grass root women organizations have organized peace building activities. Konyao women network for peace has organized forums to educate the initiates
on the effects of cattle rustling and his has been so successful. (Interview with Mary, 23rd February 2019).

Another grass root peace building initiative in West Pokot County led by a woman is Tegla Lorupe Peace Race Foundation which was founded in 2003 by the renowned world athlete Tegla Lorupe, a member of Pokot community. This peace initiative engaged in sporting activities between the rival communities and educating people on the importance of peaceful coexistence. The rival communities, through the help of the foundation, organize annual cultural fashion shows and peace races which bring together the Pokot, Turkana, Samburu, Sabaot, Sabiny and Karamajong.

The foundation holds peace races annually in West Pokot, Kapenguria, Tana River and Moroto in Uganda. Some of the recent major events include: the Kapenguria peace race (14th Nov, 2018), the Great Turkwel peace and beauty, which combined both cultural beauty show and 10 kilometre race and the Moroto peace race in Uganda (27th-28th May, 2011). These peace races were open to all members of the rival pastoral communities.

Figure 3: Peace race and cultural beauty show aimed at bringing conflicting communities together (source: Kengen website retrieved on 29th March, 2019).
Formal peace building initiatives in West Pokot County involved the government and the international NGOs. The Kenya government had in several occasions initiated peace building process through disarmament programmes in 2006, 2009-2010, establishing the Nasolot game reserves in 1979 to act as a boundary between the rival Pokot and Turkana communities and enhancing security through sending soldiers to areas affected by conflicts and establishment of more police post in remote areas. For instance, after the November 1995 raids and counter raids between the Pokot and the Turkana, the government deployed security forces, the GSU, regular Kenya Police and Administrative Police to contain the situation. In addition, the Kenya government attempted to disarm the Turkana, Pokot and Marakwet (Nangulu, 2001).

The World Vision, Kenya (WVK) and the Kenya Red Cross Society (KRCS) had established peace building initiatives in the County. For instance, the World Vision peace initiative began its operations in 1997 with an aim of educating the rival communities on the advantages of peaceful coexistence, provide formal education, providing water through drilling boreholes and water piping from highlands to lowlands and also provided drought resilient Sahiwal cattle breed. For instance, in 2010 the WVK launched a water project that provided safe water to more than 68,000 people in Chepareria, West Pokot Kenya. The major contribution of the Kenya Red Cross was the distribution of food and non-food items to the affected communities. Provision of food, led to decline in the rates and levels of conflicts. The IOM, through the Japan funded project, focused on conflict prevention, protection of victims of conflicts, building and strengthening policies that promote peaceful coexistence and promote partnerships with formal and grass root structures like peace committees in West Pokot County (IOM, 2011).
Pokot Education and Development Programme (PEDP) undertook various community development initiatives that largely dealt with conflict resolution among other issues. PEDP organized inter-community peace dialogue between the warring communities. For example, PEDP organized a Pokot – Marakwet peace dialogue on March 28th 2003 (ITDG Practical Action, 2003). Other NGOs that involved in conflict resolution were Daima Initiative for Peace and Development (DiPaP) and women peace crusader. The focus of these NGOs was basically participatory collective approach in the attainment of peace and non-violent coexistence.

4.3.1 Women and Reconciliation Efforts

Reconciliation is a process of restoration of fractured relationships. It calls for moving from strife to a more positive relationship. Reconciliation involves bringing people who have had a history of conflict into a harmonious relationship and developing the capacity of warring parties to live with one another (Cheryl, 2001). Reconciliation generally begins when a relationship of conflict between groups shifts to a new stage of lessened conflict, through an agreement of some kind (Cheryl, 2001). Reconciliation is a major reason why women think peace building is of utmost importance. The women are advocating for peace building in order to be reunited with relatives and neighbors who fled during the post-election violence. Many of the women’s sons, brothers and husbands participated in the violence and reconciliation is seen as the best way to be reunited.

Reconciliation efforts under current peace building initiatives are carried out through a variety of means, including the use of high-profile truth commissions that document the crimes of the conflict and/or assign responsibility for them, governmental apologies, local peace commissions, and grassroots workshops. Traditional reconciliation efforts also encompass the reintegration of displaced persons and refugees, peace education, and trauma support for communities. The goal is to provide mechanisms for conflict
resolution and, of course, to deter future abuses (Diana, 2002). While the goal of reconciliation to date has been to help restore moral order through psychosocial healing, for many victims reconciliation is also strongly associated with the pursuit of truth and justice. Truth, mercy, and justice are all important aspects of the reconciliation processes because reconciliation often requires confronting the violence of the past as well as the perpetrators of that violence, and addressing the needs of victims.

Reconciliation involves the participation of perpetrators and victims in a process of truth telling, apology, and forgiveness. It is not just a process of addressing problems in the government, or weaknesses in the judicial system. Rather the process of reconciliation must involve the construction of a new moral order that incorporates political, cultural, psychological, and spiritual strategies. Reconciliation efforts, like security, governance and relief and development, are also rife with challenges. For instance, women’s participation during the formal mechanisms of reconciliation during peace building has been minimal to date. Government and nongovernmental perspectives on how to address the problem of past violations of human rights have often conflicted: while most transitional regimes have broadly endorsed the view that some kind of truth telling constitutes a valuable contribution to national reconciliation, they have rejected putting those responsible for human rights violations on trial, claiming that this would prejudice the democratic transition (Jeong, 2005).

Seider argues that the traditional commissions of inquiry into past violations of human rights (otherwise known as Truth Commissions), are limited in their ability to provide justice as many of these commissions offer offenders immunity from prosecution in exchange for the truth. While uncovering the truth constitutes an important form of sanction in itself, investigations without at least some measure of legal accountability and punishment of those responsible effectively institutionalizes impunity and impedes efforts
to strengthen the rule of law. In addition, current reconciliation efforts lack long-term processes for bridging the divide between warring-factions.

4.3.2 Responses of Women to Reconciliation in West Pokot County

When it comes to the reconciliation concerns of women, many organizations were active in pursuing it in West Pokot County from 1985-2000. Their actions centered on two areas. First, women worked to bridge the divide with former adversaries and fostered long-term social transformation. Secondly, they supported the implementation of truth and reconciliation commission as well as the investigations into past events. While their efforts have had differing levels of success, the impact of their actions has been significant during peace building. Women from the sides of the conflict managed to come together to share their common experience of suffering and to foster healing and reconciliation in the County. For example, Setat Women Group educated women on peace issues regardless of their tribal background. Through this organization, women realized that each side experienced similar suffering and this consciousness of their shared pain helped them to develop an understanding of each other. This greatly helped advance reconciliation within the county.

Additionally, women’s helped them to re-humanize those who were previously viewed as enemies. Through dialogue and open communication women were able to overcome past acts of violence and draw upon their common experience of loss and suffering. This experience motivated them to reconcile and take steps towards social transformation. Women also identified and made use of their socially significant position as parents – capitalizing on their ability to influence the events of the future by encouraging interaction among their children within the camps. As Porter noted, women often exhibit the ability to “dialogue across differences”—which catalyzes reconciliation efforts and
promotes the inclusion of all sides in these discussions. In the aftermath of conflict, women are more likely to form inter-ethnic associations to deal with remaining difficulties; in doing so, they create a “shared space” for diverse women and also contribute to the healing process (Maynard, 1997).

With many women experiencing traumatic sexual violence, they are particularly sensitive to such experiences—thus organizations and individual women often provide psycho-social counseling to victims in the aftermath. By listening to testimonies, women help to relieve victims of emotional burdens that would potential lead to sustained animosity. For instance in West Pokot County small women groups played a major role for most women who had been raped as they were able to share their experience and as a result through confession and exchanging information on what they experienced, most women found a sense of healing and trust among each other.

Women’s organizations also frequently promoted an awareness of human rights and address issues of justice by assisting victims with their compensation claims; these activities are vital to creating a sense of trust by providing closure for victims rather than lingering uncertainty. In West Pokot County, women mobilized resources, and facilitated reconciliation among warring communities. For instance the use of the KALYA radio station by women through their program to promote peace and reconciliation in the county. Additionally, Tecla Lorupe a renowned athlete through her peace foundation programme formed way back in 2003, used sports in fostering peace especially in West Pokot County. The race takes place in July each year.

4.4 Role of Women in Peace Building

Focusing on women only as victims of conflicts ignores the fact that women play significant roles during and after the conflicts, and reinforces existing traditional gender
values and practices that women are only “passive” and “subservient” in peace and politics. This has negative consequences in overlooking women’s potential as key actors in conflict management processes and activities and yet women themselves are active participants in conflict situations. Women are thus caught in a vicious paradox: while they are the main civilian victims of conflicts, they are often powerless to prevent the conflict, and are excluded from decision making positions, and negotiations. When it comes to women participation in conflict resolution, they are usually confined to a marginal role in the post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation and when they contribute their effort is usually ignored (Goldstein, 2001).

Women are viewed as peaceful because they are less likely than men to initiate or participate in violence because of the maternal instincts to have a peaceful environment for the children. However, they do often fill supporting roles that prolong or shorten intractable conflict. Goldstein argues that, "masculine war roles depend on feminine roles in the war system, including mothers, wives, and sweethearts. To him, women always have a greater role in contributing to the effectiveness of men during war. This is in the sense that its women who provide food and an encouragement to them (Goldstein, 2001).

Peacebuilding is a markedly complex undertaking, which involves a multitude of diverse actors including women. Much of the existing literature on women’s involvement with attaining and maintaining peace discusses the possible roles of women in peacebuilding, such as grassroots organizing or involvement in reconciliation. However, it does not explicitly present a casual explanation for how their participation keeps war from resuming in the long run. In addition, as Shukria states “women’s peacebuilding initiatives remain invisible to policy-makers and development institutions, as well as to their own societies (Nadine, 2015).
Afshar argues that, historical constructions of nationhood and nationalism often rest on masculine foundations particularly in post-colonial societies and so these ideologies are not necessarily altered during conflict but ‘are simply suspended (Afshar, 2003). These salient norms, formed over the course of historical processes, help to explain why women are often excluded from the peace process despite the impact of the conflict on their well-being. Further, after conflict has decimated a population, women may be pressured to fulfil their role as mothers by helping to rebuild the nation through childbearing. Control over women in the domestic sphere can become regarded as necessary to ‘protect, revive and create the nation ((Afshar, 2003). In addition, many feminist critiques have demonstrated that the international community is patriarchal in its approach to post-conflict transition and peacebuilding, in both the composition of international organizations, including the United Nations, and in the community’s approach to negotiations and Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) proceedings. The legal structures constructed by the United Nations in relation to violations during intrastate conflict often do not incorporate violence against women as such; these violations are excluded from the narrative of the conflict to the detriment of the country’s women (Kaufman and Kristen, 2010).

4.5 The Role of Women in Resolving Cultural Sources of Violence in West Pokot County

During the study on the peace building activities by women in West Pokot County, a sample of 30 respondents was used as a representation of women who played an active role as peace builders in the County. As shown below, the respondents were grouped based on their different age brackets, marital status and their level of education. The criteria of dividing women to the different age brackets, marital status and level of
education was important in the study as it helped in determining which group of women were active peace builders in the County.

Figure 4: Respondents Age.

Shouldn’t the aggregation of respondents be in the beginning of this chapter?

From the above figure 1, most women peace builders are between 30-40 years of age. Only five percent of the women are under the age of 18 years. This is partly because most of the women falling in the 30–50 age brackets are married and are mothers and they are more affected during conflicts due to the loss of their husbands and children. Ruddick coined the notion of maternal thinking by arguing that care and ‘relation based thinking is the main pre-condition for a more peaceful society. Caretakers, they argue, do not have value in our societies and if men would take active roles in care taking, less abstract and aggression based decisions would be made. Biologically, it is women who give birth and nurse babies.

In most societies, women are the primary care givers responsible for the children and the family. The role of women in nurturing, building relationships and maintaining the family
is central to their identity. As Gnanadason observes, women play the role of peacemakers within their families and their communities (Gnanadason, 1996).

Table 1: Distribution of respondents based on their marital status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Separated/Divorced</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>90</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the findings of on the marital status of the respondent, the study found that majority of the respondent as shown by above table indicated that they were married. Majority also indicated that they were single while some indicated that they had separated from their marriage while few indicated they had been widowed. This is shows that the respondents were distributed in terms of their marital status

Table 2: Distribution of respondents based on levels of education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lower Primary</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Primary</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College/University</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>90</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.5.1 Use of Merry-go Round as a Peace Building Tool

Women peace builders in West Pokot County established and adopted Merry-go-round strategy to assist the victims of conflict. This was a strategy where women came together
monthly to contribute money or any other item of their choice to one of their members. It was rotational depending on who picked the first number. During the occasion, the members engaged in prayer meetings and made contributions in the form of clothes money and utensils among other things. In the process, they counseled their members and encouraged them to forget the past and focus on the future. As noted by Irene Cherop, a member of Karas women group,

“Merry-go-round in the area provided us with an opportunity of restating our businesses and reconciling with neighbours within. It also nurtured us spiritually due to prayer session that was always held in every merry-go-round meeting”

Although women in West Pokot County played many roles as peace builders, there were notable challenges they experienced as expressed by many respondents on the ground. This included; Lack of political strength and political vision: Women suffer from “political illiteracy”. They lack an ideological framework that could give teeth to a strong position adopted by a collective women’s. Peace building as a political activity and therefore requires political strategy for engagement. Secondly, lack of experience, exposure and skills in negotiation, advocacy and lobbying techniques was also another challenge to them. This is mainly because women have always been kept secluded from the political arena and sphere of decision-making; therefore, in many situations they are unable to participate. Lack of a political platform: Without a political platform, women are on the margins of action and lack confidence in participating in the peace building process.

Lack of resources (material and financial) was also another challenge to them. This is mainly because most of the time women’s groups lack the means to back up their actions. In some instances, they were unable to get across to the media network to enhance their peace campaign because they do not have a budget for multi-dimensional activities. Further, they are not part of main fund raising channels and networks. Most of them
worked on a voluntary basis at the grassroots levels, pooling their own resources together to get an office, desk, and phone line. Additionally most women used their little resources in providing medical care the SGBV victims.

In summary, from above discussions, women in West Pokot County played a significant role as security agents, peace educators, survivors and peace builders. Most of their activities took place through grassroots organizations due to their lack of access to formal participation. Drawing on shared values of security and women coming together around shared concerns in seeking peace that is rooted in social justice and freedom women engaged in confidence-building programs across communities. Additionally discussions in this chapter have shown that, despite women’s successes, particularly in grassroots mobilization and campaigning, women continue to be marginalized and ignored. The challenges they face are manifold. They seek peace for their communities and at the same time, they are struggling for gender equality against long-term structural factors, which reinforce social and gender inequalities and inhibits women’s leadership potential.

4.5.2 Mitigating Defilement and Rape

During raids women become victim of rape and defilement. When a village is attacked men are able to flee or some are killed. Women and children who are captured are raped and defiled. In West Pokot County women groups are started initiatives to create awareness on procedures to be followed by the victims. This include where to collect post rape care form, treatment and reporting to police.

4.5.3 Cross-border Women Group Initiatives

The study revealed that women groups in West Pokot County organized cross-border activities to promote peacebuilding. This included football tournament and marathons. These events were sponsored by West Pokot County Government. In 2018 two cross-
border sport activities were organized in Kainuk (targeted Pokot and Turkana) and Sebei (targeted Pokot and Sabaot).

### 4.5.4 Use of Curses to Deter Raids

During Key Informant Interview with Rosana Kashor, a peacebuilding expert from West Pokot County Peace network, use of curse is one of the emerging effective methods of deterring raids in West Pokot County. In case of raids women milk their breast milk on the ground in front of the raiders; this happened in 2018 in Kanyerus border of Pokot and Uganda.

### 4.5.5 Use of Religion

Christianity provided the foundation which inspired women peace builders as the teachings of Jesus taught them to challenge the family, community and the society to live peacefully and practice the virtue of love (Maina, 2004). Church conferences and meetings of the Catholic Peace and Justice Commission, World Vision and Mercy Corps provided a platform for women to speak for peace.

Additionally, women through the church organized peace workshops and peace visit. The peace visit involved members of different church paying another church a visit and engaging in dialogue over the causes of conflict and how peace can be achieved. For instance, engaging in peace races and participating in cultural activities. In addition holding ball games together, organizing inter-communities debates in schools and institutions facilitated peace. Intermarriages and holding interdenominational prayers were also cited as approaches used by women as way of promoting peacebuilding in the County (Adan and Pkalya, 2009).
4.5.6 **Workshops and Conferences**

Most of the grassroots women peace builders organized workshops and conferences urging communities to promote peace and support methods of conflict resolution and management. It’s through the workshops that they discussed on how best they could ensure that peace prevailed and exchanged views on how they were faring with regard to their roles as peace builders in their communities. Some of the proposed ways of promoting peace included, engaging and persuading men to more dialogue as opposed to fighting, engage each other on income generating activities such as farming and working together with the police by reporting issues that may result in fighting.

4.6 **Challenges**

During the study, it was realized that women have indeed contributed a lot in peacebuilding. However they continue to face a lot of that need to be addressed for them to tap into their full potential in order to become agents of lasting peace. The challenges identified may be grouped under different categories, which are attributed to women themselves and their environment. In broad terms, the challenges are highlighted below:

4.6.1 **Poor Coordination, Networking and Monitoring System of Women's Initiatives**

Throughout the County, women have come together or acted individually to initiate activities that are either channels of peace or they contribute directly to the process of reconciling different sections of West Pokot County. Most of these initiatives are started by women themselves who are handicapped in many areas. For these initiatives to grow and become sustainable, they need to be well nurtured, supported, coordinated and replicated. However, respondents interviewed whether at community or policy-making levels concurred that there is very little contact between such institutions and the County
Government considering most of the activities that were previously centralized have now been devolved to the County level. This problem is compounded further by the lack of a clear policy on unity and reconciliation that defines the role of different actors and priority actions required to address the needs of different interest groups. As a result, most women who were interviewed lamented that their efforts are frustrated by the inability of the leadership to recognize, encourage and give visibility to the best practices.

Furthermore, most women associations in rural areas particularly the newly established ones, lack opportunities to network with better established and more experienced associations performing similar activities. Additionally, lack of education and limited skills among women a majority of the illiterate members of the community, especially, women do not attend meetings and other gatherings within their respective cells and sectors, since they claim that they cannot follow what is communicated to them, and they lack the confidence to contribute their ideas.

4.6.2 Lack of Resources

The lack of access to and control over resources is considered to be the main source of women’s poverty. Consequently, most women lack access to loans and to other means of investment. Additionally, lack of adult males in the families to provide labour, lack of capacity to undertake and initiate income generating activities as well as the loss of productive animals such as cows, goats, and other economic assets has also contributed to the poverty levels. The situation is even made worse by having a large number of dependents to cater for and some of the basic facilities they acquired after the violence have depreciated and are in need of urgent repair.
4.7 Mechanisms to enhance the role of women in peace building in West Pokot County

4.7.1 Tapping on Women Special Talents

In an attempt to bring out some of the emerging issues and opportunities for women to participate in peace building processes, the study sought to establish whether women have special talents which can be tapped to in order to increase their participation in peace building work. There was consensus that women have special talents which can be tapped into in order for the community to realize sustainable peace. Although cultural factors exclude them from decision making on peace building matters, women can still organize themselves into groups which challenge this status quo. This was demonstrated by the various women groups which work towards sustainable peace in one way or another, including participating in peace meetings, engaging the youth (particularly warriors) on the need to refrain from engaging in raids, composing peace songs as well as advocating for the education of the girl-child. Additionally, the study found out that women in West Pokot use their gender roles to preach peace. One key informant revealed that:

“When it comes to conflict women are usually very emotive. Sometimes, lactating mothers bear bare their breast and pour milk on the ground to show that without sustainable peace, we are killing future generations. This action makes people, even men, very emotional.” (Interview with ……..)

Key informant interviews revealed that women groups are now being encouraged and officially supported by the county government and other state organs as they are a good focal point for women’s advancement by providing a forum for adult learning, vocational training, credit schemes and income generating activities. There was uniformity in the
respondents view that women must be economically empowered in order for them to make good peace builders. The Director Social Services observed that:

“The County Government of West Pokot has allocated resources for women in peace building. In collaboration with women groups the county has constructed border school for children from both Pokot and Turkana”.

4.7.2 Going Against the Grain: Challenging Patriarchy

The study found that some women groups are now challenging the patriarchal system of organization which relegates women to the periphery of decision making. These women challenge this status quo by being very vocal in calling for their inclusion in peace building processes. Although few in number, these women have now become role models for young girls and women within their communities. They often speak during community meetings or during County events on the need to embrace peaceful coexistence between communities and the promotion of gender equality. They are able to appeal to other women and the youth to support peace building initiatives for purposes of community development. One women group called Yangat which advocates for the education of the girl-child has also incorporated peace matters as part of its agenda. They regularly visit institutions of learning within the County to engage young people on the need to embrace peace.

4.7.3 Women’s Commitment to Sustainable Peace

Various interview sessions also revealed that a majority of women are very emotive about conflict having borne the brunt of it to varying degrees. Respondents interviewed felt that women are more committed to finding peace compared to their male counterparts. The respondents reported that often times; men hold age-old grudges while women are ready
to forgive for the wellbeing of their families and communities. Women have also used their roles as mothers to implore upon their husbands and sons to refrain from engaging in cattle raids and other activities that threaten peaceful coexistence of the communities.

During interviews, one respondent stated that women who have been involved in formal peace processes between Turkana and Pokot often have to appeal to their male counterparts to respect the rules of engagement during peace talks, failure to which can lead to a breakdown of talks and a resumption of hostilities between the warring parties. A key informant who is an officer of the West Pokot County Government remarked that:

“Women can be very persuasive. They have been known to persuade their sons and other male relatives to abandon plans to raid neighbouring communities.”

4.7.4 Raising Literacy Levels in Women and Girls

The study revealed that education is critical in ensuring equal and substantive contribution of women in peace building. Women were more often than not left out of formal peace processes due to their lack of capacity to engage substantively, particularly at formal levels where negotiation and mediation take place. One women’s group in the County which promotes the advancement of women economically, socially and politically, has been unequivocal in calling for increased efforts/interventions towards raising literacy rates particularly for women and girls. Respondents held the view that education was a key enabler in preparing women to play a key role in both formal and informal mechanism for peace building. In almost all cases, the respondents felt that education can help build the women’s knowledge, skills and confidence to participate more substantively in both formal and informal peace building initiatives within the County.
4.7.5 Women’s Economic Empowerment

The study found out that women who engage in economic activities are able to network widely and communicate better, due to some level of exposure. This was considered a good opportunity to integrate women into community work including peace building. It was reported during one of the key informant interviews that some women groups that engage in income generating activities such as basket weaving, are now making beaded items such as wrist-bands to spread peace messages to the youth. The study revealed that women who are actively engaged in economic activities are generally more exposed to various socio-economic issues and are more confident in articulating their views.

4.7.6 Devolved System of Governance

The respondents were asked whether the devolved system of governance had provided more opportunities for women to participate in peace building efforts in the County. There was uniformity in their response that in principle, devolution can help in reducing socio-economic inequalities amongst various groups. For instance, by creating more spaces for women to participate in governance structures, particularly within the County Assembly, women could be engaged more strategically and substantively in peace building processes, including formulating legal frameworks that ensure that the principles of equity and equality is respected and adhered to. However, there was consensus among those who answered this question that more needed to be done to ensure that women’s participation was not merely to fill the gender quota as mandated by the Constitution, but to ensure substantive participation that respects the calls for inclusion of all members of the society in peace building processes.
4.7.7 Women’s Ability to Network and Organize for Peace

It was revealed that women groups were gaining legitimacy within their geographical areas of operation through their initiatives of promoting social issues which is also seen as providing something concrete for the benefit of the entire community. Providing „something that benefits the community gives them legitimacy to also promote the peace agenda. In these groups, women assist each other to mitigate some of the problems they face as a result of conflicts, such as displacement, loss of relatives and the destruction of property. The study revealed that women can organize themselves to disseminate information on peace and some are even involved in civic education.

Women groups which operate in urban areas such as Kapenguria appear to be taken more seriously than those in areas considered rural within the County. The former are often targeted for funding and capacity building programmes by various organization. It is often through them those rural women groups are empowered through civic education and other programmes.

4.7.8 Legislative Frameworks and Policies on Gender Responsive Peace Building

Under the Constitution of Kenya, all citizens are granted equal rights and is given effect by a set of detailed laws and policies and the necessary institutional framework for implementing those laws. As such, the constitutional and legislative framework forms the basis for all exercise of public authority and is the standard for evaluating and holding to account the conduct of state officials and that of private parties whose actions impact on the citizen’s rights.

Both the national and county governments have a role in ensuring that the principles as espoused by these legislative frameworks are adopted in all peace processes. Women in Turkana County can leverage on these frameworks in demanding for the principles of
equality, equity and inclusiveness to be respected in all peace processes within the County, as part of the social contract between the state/county and all the citizens.
5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, conclusion as well as suggested recommendations for the role of women in peace building in West Pokot County 1985-2000.

5.1 Summary

This research has discussed the role of women in peace building with a focus on West Pokot County. The study has presented the different ways women can play in promoting peace both as individuals and collectively as a group. As seen in the study, women played a lot of roles in promoting peace. Although most of their initiatives were based on traditional and grassroots approach, there is significant impact on how women have and still contribute to peace building initiatives. As seen in the study, women went out of their way to forgive their enemies as part of reconciliation which is a pillar to peace building. This is a good model that can be emulated in other places and also serve as a lesson to men.

The challenge that remains is to make this known widely. Peace building works best where people share common activity or resource. It takes place through mutual support and in line with people’s common cultural realities. Women have a strong potential for educating their children and imparting on them positive cultural values that enhance peace and reconciliation. In areas where women have come together and worked towards peace building; their children have spontaneously followed their examples as they have a big role to provide basic education and up bringing for children to embrace the culture of peace. This forms the basis of women working towards and promoting sustainable peace.
In as much as women have made strides by contributing to peace building initiatives in the last seven years, there still a lot that need to be done to voice their concerns. Women still experience gender inequality when it comes to conflict situations, they are still considered as homemakers, caregivers rather than decision makers in resolving conflicts as seen in the case of West Pokot County where women faced a lot of setbacks trying to promote peace in the County.

Additionally, it has been observed that high rates of illiteracy and lack of education undermine women’s confidence and capacity to participate effectively in community and national programs. This is linked again to the historical gender-related imbalances in the colonial and post-colonial education systems. Another challenge is linked to the persistence of poverty in rural areas with women as the main victims. This is compounded by the high incidence of female-headed households; scarcity of resources and the inability to address basic needs frustrates women’s efforts to contribute towards peace. Violence against women is still a threat to women’s role contributing to peace building and reconciliation. This phenomenon affects women’s security with regards to their role in participatory justice system and their health. Since their very existence is threatened, their energy to be agents of peace is greatly undermined.

The study also discussed the post-election violence in details. It has shown how various ethnic groups attacked each other because of the disputed presidential election. It has brought out the causes of the violence as well as its devastating effects. It has been seen that the violence was not only caused by the disputed presidential election. There were other underlying causes such as the matters about land, poverty, inequality, ethnicity and unemployment especially among the youth. The violence had a lot of effects to the County. Property was destroyed, many lives were lost and thousands of people were displaced from their homes. The economy was adversely affected since businesses could
not be carried out normally. There was difficulty in transporting goods from one place to another and services could not be rendered smoothly as before.

Despite the significance of their actions, there remain areas where women could improve on their peace building efforts. First, women could expand their local experience and knowledge to neighboring communities where other women have yet to respond to their own needs and concerns. Initiatives may include sharing their experiences and speaking about the women-led programs and projects they have been involved in. These efforts could offer much needed insight and advice to those women that do not know how or where to respond to their own unique post-conflict situations.

5.2 Conclusion

Violence and conflict negatively affects women and men and results in gender-specific disadvantages, particularly for women, who are not always recognized by the mainstream, gender-blind understandings of conflict and reconstruction. Gender inequality reflects power imbalances in social structures that exist in pre-conflict periods and are exacerbated by conflict and its aftermath. The acceptance of gender stereotypes is one of the main reasons that such gender blindness persists in major areas such as peace building.

Stereotypical interpretations shape and are shaped by social, political, economic, cultural and religious contexts. Armed conflict encourages expectations that men will fight and women will support them on the home front. The popular perception is that men are soldiers or aggressors and women are wives, mothers, nurses, social workers and sex-workers. Although it is primarily men, who are engaged in conflict or in battle, but women make up the majority of the society. They undergo a lot of trauma and suffer in their role as care givers, due to a breakdown of social structures. Looking at the 2007-
2008 post-election violence that broke out in Kenya after the disputed presidential elections, above gender inequality in a conflict situation, mediation and peace building mirrors, what women went through during and after the conflict.

Eruption of violence and conflict negatively affects women and men and results in gender-specific disadvantages, particularly for women, who are not always recognized by the mainstream, gender-blind understandings of conflict and reconstruction. Gender inequality reflects power imbalances in social structures that exist in pre-conflict periods and are exacerbated by armed conflict and its aftermath. The acceptance of gender stereotypes is one of the main reasons that such gender blindness persists.

Stereotypical interpretations shape and are shaped by social, political, economic, cultural and religious contexts. Armed conflict encourages expectations that men will fight and women will support them on the home front. The popular perception is that men are soldiers or aggressors and women are wives, mothers, nurses, social workers and sex-workers. It is true that it is primarily men, who are engaged in conflict or in violence, but women make up the majority of the society. They undergo casualties and suffer in their role as care givers, due to a breakdown of social structures. This is the story that the Pokot women have to live with and yet this had not been revealed. However, the study revealed that Pokot women were also combatants, and sometimes men were also victims. These realities had consequences for gender relations, which often went unnoticed among the Pokot.

The study revealed that the impact of armed conflict on gender relations is significant. Forced displacement and gender-based violence are two examples of impacts that are inevitable outcomes of conflict and violence eruption, but rather are deliberate strategies that destabilize families and communities. Physical and sexual violence, particularly
towards women and children, occur with greater regularity during and after armed conflict. Women experience rape and forced pregnancy, forced sex work and sexual slavery, often at the hands of raiders and sometimes the security personnel that are sent to stop the conflict. Although men are the primary perpetrators of violence towards women and children, it is important to note that women are not just subject of victimization and violence, they equally take active part.

Armed conflict exacerbates inequalities in gender relations that existed in the pre-conflict period. This study explores the role of women in armed conflict. It highlights the roles played by women in armed conflict and peace building practices. The study reveals the diverse realities of women and men, who may simultaneously play the roles of activists and parents, soldiers and victims. Recognizing and addressing this diversity is vital to establishing more sustainable, peace building programmes. Women experience significant disadvantage in the course of armed conflict, but it does not necessarily follow that men are always the perpetrators and therefore the winners, and women the losers. This study shows that both women and men experience armed conflict in distinct ways that in turn may alter their participation.

This study was inspired by the inequality that women experience during and after armed conflict in all societies. A key focus of this study is to explore the role of Pokot women in West Pokot County in peace building but first had to show their roles in armed conflict. This was aimed at giving gender relations in terms of how conflict affected was concern. The study started by discussing the causes of armed conflicts among the Pokot people. The study revealed that the causes of armed conflict in West Pokot County or large Pokot country are often linked with attempts to control economic resources. In the pastoral regions as the Pokot country, for example, cattle raiding has caused and intensified the impoverishment of women and men forcing them to adapt to new roles.
The study revealed that the entire members of Pokot community have been targeted and killed, displaced and/or marginalized in the name of cattle raids by neighboring communities. The control of resources, like the exercise of power, is gendered. Those who do not have power or resources groups that are disproportionately, though by no means exclusively, made up of women do not usually start wars. Unresolved struggles over resources, combined with the severe impact of harsh environment, impoverishment and increased militarization in zones of conflict, serve to prolong existing armed conflicts. Moreover, conflict tends to cause and/or perpetuate inequalities between ethnic groups and discrimination against marginalized groups of women and men, thereby paving the way for the outbreak of future conflicts.

In these conflicts, the study revealed that the nature of warfare has dramatically changed due to the development of increasingly sophisticated weapons technology. At the same time with such increased technology, lighter weapons are made available which require less training therefore making them easier for use by women. The research revealed that women in conflict prone Pokot were mobilized in armed conflict because their support, labour and services were needed. At the same time, the construction of women as ‘mothers’ and ‘guardians of the culture’ within the Pokot national interests have been often constrained. They opted to be active in conflict and post-conflict reconstruction processes.

While investigating the role played by the Pokot women of West Pokot County in peace building, the research aimed at achieving three objectives of examining the sources of conflict among the Pokot people, the role played by women in this conflict and peace building processes and finally the role of women on peace-making processes among the Pokot community. To achieve these objectives, the research was guided by three hypotheses which included a notion that resources were the main source of conflict.
among the Pokot people. In this conflict women played some roles and finally that woman efforts in peace building impacted on peacemaking processes.

To satisfactorily achieve the above, the research was guided by the liberal feminist theory which insisted that women equal men in all societal activities, including war and peace making processes. In its mission the research found out that indeed woman played important roles in the conflict and peacemaking among the Pokot. Pokot women and girls were associated with fighting. The women kept the society running by maintaining the social networks in terms of access to shelter, land, property, food, labour exchange, family and child support, and more sustainable livelihood opportunities.

The research reveals that apart from taking part in conflict women and girls also faced insecurity due to persistent conflict, hence influencing them to take active roles in peace building. Yet, there was little known from the Pokot community on the position of women in this conflict. The research further revealed that in order for there to be real reconciliation, there was a need for forums and other woman friendly spaces in which those who violated rights come forward, acknowledges that they committed violations, renounce those violations and seek reconciliation and peace with the community. If these violations were not addressed, it was likely there will be no justice and thus no real peace. In-fact, in the absence of justice mechanisms and processes of recognizing women by sensitization of civilian populations to accept women in the Pastoral region may actually increase tensions among these populations.

The research proved that increased meaningful women participation in peace talks, mediations and other negotiation processes, including during the peace negotiations and planning processes, would ensure lasting peace in the pastoral Pokot community. The research highlighted the importance of women’s meaningful participation in peace
negotiations because the groundwork for peace and security structures is put in place. The research also proved that women were very important in influencing men in society and can help sustain the peace process.

For women leaders involved in meaningful participation in peace negotiations marks a pivotal step in setting post-conflict community and reconstruction agendas that take women’s and girls’ needs and priorities into account. This research clearly illustrated that when women are discriminated in peace negotiators and women representatives are not present at the peace talks, women’s issues, concerns and priorities were usually also absent at the peace table, hence the goals of peace were never achieved.

Apart from women position in peace the research also analyzed the history of the Pokot people in relation to the conflict that persisted in West Pokot County region. The research described the history of the Pokot people, their origin and reviewed their social and economic life in relation to the conflict that affected the entire Pokot country and in particular the Pokot of West Pokot County. The research also brought in the aspect of the British colonial administration. The colonial administration was important to the study because it was some of the structures they put in place that inform the conflict among the Pokot people.

Although the colonial administration was partly blamed for the conflict that affected the Pokot country, the research proved that conflict among the Pokot people is as old as their history. In their traditional days before Africa was colonized by the European powers, the Pokot engaged in inter-ethnic wars where they used traditional weapons and the main causes of conflict were strictly cultural. The research found out that, with the coming of the Europeans, the conflict was complicated by the flow of modern arms into the Pokot
country. The situation was even made worse by conflicts in troubled neighboring countries which ensured efficient supply of modern weapons in West Pokot County.

The research also proved that the conflict was also caused by various unpredictable factors, ranging from environmental, security, revenge, and resource considerations. These factors affected the entire Pokot community, women included. Since the government and the traditional systems that ensured security of women had been interfered with, women were also forced to take up roles in the conflict.

The research further indicated that conflict caused suffering of the people of West Pokot County, men and women. The conflict in West Pokot County imposed heavy social and economic costs to the people. It also imposed costs on neighboring communities. The resources which would have been used for development were diverted either to military operations or assisting the displaced people. The history of the conflict was disappointing. The impact and trauma of death of family members extend far beyond the attack itself. Women survivors faced emotional torment, psychological damage, physical injuries, disease, social ostracism and many other consequences that can devastate their lives. The research, therefore achieved the main objectives and proved the hypotheses right.

As seen in the study, conflict exacerbates inequalities in gender relations that existed in the pre-conflict period. This study explores the role of women in conflict. It highlights the roles played by women in conflict and peace building practices. The study reveals the diverse realities of women and men, who may simultaneously play the roles of activists and parents, soldiers and victims. Recognizing and addressing this diversity is vital to establishing more sustainable, peace building programmes. Women experience significant disadvantage in the course of conflict, but it does not necessarily follow that men are always the perpetrators and therefore the winners, and women the losers. This study
shows that both women and men experience conflict in distinct ways that in turn may alter their participation. Additionally, the study revealed that the impact of the violence on gender relations were significant. This is mainly because of the consequence it brought. For instance, gender-based violence and forced displacement revealed the two most common impacts that are always inevitable in any conflict situation.

The study revealed that a lot of women were greatly affected by the violence as most of them became victims of Sexual and Gender Based Violence, displacement, others were killed and their property destroyed and burnt to ashes. This left a lot of women vulnerable as most of them became breadwinners for the family despite lack of adequate resources to help them support their families.

To satisfactorily achieve the above, the study was guided by the liberal feminist theory which insisted that women equal men in all societal activities, including war and peace making processes. In its mission the study found out that indeed woman played important roles in the conflict and peace-making in the County. The study reveals that apart from taking part in conflict women and girls also faced insecurity due to persistent conflict especially within the Internally Displaced Camps, hence influencing them to take active roles in peace building. Yet, there was little known from the County on the position of women in this conflict. The study further revealed that in order for there to be real reconciliation, there was a need for forums and other woman friendly spaces in which those who violated rights come forward, acknowledges that they committed violations, renounce those violations and sought reconciliation and peace with the community. If these violations were not addressed, it was likely there will be no justice and thus no real peace. In-fact, in the absence of justice mechanisms and processes of recognizing women by sensitization of civilian populations to accept women roles in the society may actually increase tensions rather than peace.
The study proved that increased meaningful women participation in peace talks, mediations and other negotiation processes, including during the peace negotiations and planning processes, would ensure lasting peace in the County and Kenya at large. The study highlighted the importance of women’s meaningful participation in peace negotiations because the groundwork for peace and security structures is put in place. The study also proved that women were very important in influencing men in society and can help sustain the peace process. For women leaders involved in meaningful participation in peace negotiations marks a pivotal step in setting post-conflict community and reconstruction agendas that take women’s and girls’ needs and priorities into account. This research clearly illustrated that when women are discriminated in peace negotiations and mediation, women’s issues, concerns and priorities were usually also absent at the peace table, hence the goals of peace were never achieved.

Apart from women position in peace the study also looked at the genesis of conflict in Kenya with a focus on West Pokot County. To achieve this, the study looked at the different general election that has been conducted in the Country since independence together with conflicts associated with it. This included an aspect on British colonial administration which played a key role as most of the Country’s structure is based on the structures and system adopted by Kenya’s founding father after independence. The study also proved that the conflict was also caused by various unpredictable factors, ranging from environmental, security, revenge, and resource considerations. These factors affected the entire community, women included. Since the government and the traditional systems that ensured security of women had been interfered with, women were also forced to take up roles in the conflict.
The study further indicated that conflict caused suffering of the people of West Pokot County both men and women. This is in terms of heavy social and economic costs to the people. It also imposed costs on neighboring Counties. The resources which would have been used for development were diverted either to military operations or assisting the displaced people. The history of the conflict was disappointing. The impact and trauma of death of family members extend far beyond the attack itself. Women survivors faced emotional torment, psychological damage, physical injuries, disease, social ostracism and many other consequences that can devastate their lives. The study, therefore achieved the main objectives and proved the hypotheses right.

5.3 Recommendations

5.3.1 Increasing Sensitivity Towards Gender-issues.

The mainstreaming of gender in all processes, official or non-official, related to peace and security is essential. If gender issues are ignored by national governments, it will be difficult to facilitate women’s organizations and activists through for example proper funding mechanisms. The lack of a broader structural framework for the implementation of gender related policies and the lack of a political commitment are currently limiting initiatives in this field. Further, if gender is not treated as an integrated issue in politics in general, it may be difficult to argue for gender-sensitivity in a situation of conflict, where both human capital and finances are often marginal. More to that, the County and the government should acknowledge and promote women’s programs that fosters peace building. Acknowledging gender issues is also important in peace building. Programs that ignore gender issues leave out women and are therefore not comprehensive. More to that, they cause society to miss out on the input by women. Such programs usually do not acknowledge women’s efforts in peace building.
5.3.2 Addressing Sexual and Gender-based Violence Cases

In order to prevent the occurrence of SGBV and to provide protection and justice to victims of such violence it is recommended that national and local authorities consider: establishing reporting and protection mechanisms and mandatory investigation into the allegations of sexual exploitation and sexual violence in the camps and sites of displacement in accordance with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Gender Guidelines, creating centre’s in the camps where women can obtain health care. Free counselling and legal advice relating to SGBV during displacement, should be provided to the affected victims with perpetrators charged based on the crimes they committed. Police training on handling SGBV cases should be conducted across all the police post in the County to help them understand on the different techniques of dealing with victims of SGBV.

5.3.3 Reviewing of Land Allocation Policy

The land issues in the Kenya and especially in the Rift valley where the County lies have been contentious. This mainly has been attributed to corruption and ethnicity especially when it comes to land allocation. Additionally due to climatic changes and increased population, land has been of great demand. Thus the County through the devolved system of governance should come up with legislation on how to prosecute those who have been accused of land grabbing.

5.3.4 Peace Education

Peace education through drama, songs, poetry and other forms of message should be encouraged to help change attitudes that lean towards stereotyping, conflicts and violence witnessed in the County.
Peace education and related activities should be carried by targeting women and youths in churches, schools, villages and other institutions, therefore, creating a generation that abhors violence. This will limit the number likely to be drawn or used to violate other communities. Utilizing other avenues such as public meetings, traditional ceremonial rites and meetings is important to ensure that youths out of school are reached and encouraged to become agents of peace in West Pokot County. The county should also establish an educational/social centre where women, men from different ethnic group can always meet and exchange their cultural values.

5.3.5 Funding and Recognition

More funds need to be allocated to the process of peacebuilding but also important is the need for accountability and proper allocation in a way that even the women in the rural areas are catered for. Also, there is need for the government to tighten on officials who misallocate funds meant for peacebuilding. Investigation and punishments for culprits should serve as examples to other people.

5.3.6 Adoption of African Indigenous Methods of Peace Building

The County should work towards strengthening African indigenous methods of peacebuilding, reconciliation and justice dispensations mechanism. In so doing it recognizes the culture and social structures that define the communities living within the County. This research noted that there is urgent need for a bottom-up approach to societal needs where women makes use of existing cultural values and structures to reduce conflicts and engender peace. Inter-community and inter-religious dialogue should be facilitated. The various efforts in the County trying to build a culture of community reconciliation and peaceful existence should be recognized and encouraged. Peace meetings, exposure tours and exchange visits are some of the ways to achieve this
objective. Grassroots partnerships that are better placed to bring on board a broad and representative participation especially youths and women, whose potential in prevention of conflicts remain untapped.

5.3.7 Enhancing Security

Security reform recommendations advocate the inclusion of a gendered perspective during security reform discussions and decision-making, and defining and addressing security in light of women’s specific concerns. As suggested by most of the key informants, women especially in the County should play a key role in security issues as opposed to being sidelined like during the post-election violence. Security matters should not be determined by military agents alone but rather should be an inclusive process. In addition, women have a vested interest in ending the cycle of violence and building a safer society for their families. For these reasons, programs and pilot projects that provide further evidence of the value of women’s contribution to security reform should be encouraged, supported, and documented in the County.

5.4 Area for further Study

Future studies should look into the Role of West Pokot County government in facilitating women participation in peace building initiatives; Impacts of indigenous approaches to Peace building and the Role of youth in Peace building in West Pokot County.
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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Letter of Introduction
Dear Respondent,

My name is Loyatum C. Irene, a master’s graduate student at United States International University of Africa pursuing Masters of Arts in International Relations, integrated studies. I am undertaking a research on the role of women in peace building in conflict prone areas with a major focus on West Pokot County.

I seek your assistance in the collection of data to enable me achieve my research objectives. The acquired data will solely be used for academic purposes only. The participation is on a voluntary and all data will be confidential. I humbly request for your participation in answering the attached questionnaire. I hope you are comfortable with the process to proceed as your cooperation is will be highly appreciated.

Thank you.
Appendix II: Interview Questionnaire

1. a) Name

(Optional)______________________________________________________________

b) Sex  
- Male □  
- Female □

c) Marital  
- Single □  
- Married □  
- Widow(er) □  
- Divorced □

d) Age  
- 18-28 □  
- 29-39 □  
- 40-50 □  
- 51 or above □

e) Level of education  
- Primary □  
- Secondary □  
- Tertiary □  
- any other □  
- specify ____

f) Occupation__________________________________________________________

2. What is Culture?

______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________

3. How strongly do you adhere to your cultural values?

______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________

4. Are you aware of any cultural values that often cause an eruption of violence and conflict within the community? If yes, explain

______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________

5. Are you aware of the structural setup such as Land alienation that cause an eruption of violence and conflict within the community? If yes, explain

______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________
6. What does the word peace mean to you?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

7. Had you participated previously in any peace building activity before? If so where

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

8. Are women proactively taking part in peace building initiatives in West Pokot community? □ Yes □ No.

9. What roles are women playing in peace building within the Pokot community?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

10. During the peacebuilding process. Did you receive any assistance from the government? □ Yes □ No.
    If yes, what type of assistance were you offered by the government?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

11. What challenges did you encounter during the peace-building exercise between 2000-2010?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

12. What challenges did you encounter during the peace-building exercise between 2010-2018?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________
13. How did you solve those challenges?

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

14. Did the problems encountered affect your role as a peace builder? □ Yes □ No.
If yes, how?

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

15. How has your involvement impacted your life, that of your family, and those around you?

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

16. How did the men perceive your work as a peace builder?

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

17. Given the sensitive nature and the insecure environment nature you were exposed to, what methods did you use in peace building and what were your entry points?

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

18. In your view, do you think these peace building initiatives are helping [or not helping] communities work on differences with other communities constructively?

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

19. What are some of your suggestions/recommendations in involving women in peace building activities?

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________