INTER-CHURCH COMMITTEE AND INTER-CLAN CONFLICTS IN RUMBEK EAST COUNTY, LAKE STATE, SOUTH SUDAN

THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES IN THE FACULTY OF SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SCIENCES, ST PAUL'S UNIVERSITY, LIMURU, KENYA

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DECLARATION AND APPROVAL

Declaration

This thesis is my own original work and has not been submitted for a degree in this or any other university.

Signature:  Date: 14th November 2024

ABRAHAM YEL NHIAL

MDS/LMR/5351/13

Approval

I confirm that the work in this thesis was done by the candidate under my/our supervision.

…… …….

Signature:  Date: 14th November 2024

Name: Dr. Wamũyũ Teresia Wachira

Department of Development Studies

..... ……

Signature:  Date: 14th November 2024

Name: Dr. Anthony Odek

Department of Development Studies

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to all those who were victims of the conflict in South Sudan whether alive or have passed on.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study is a result of the collective effort of several people, I was not alone. I wish to acknowledge and appreciate the support from Dr. Ellen Davis and friends in the United States who funded my study. My churches, clergymen and laypeople in the Diocese of Aweil, supported my study by ensuring that the Diocese of Aweil ran smoothly in my absence. This enabled me to concentrate fully on my studies knowing that everything was working well. My wife Daruka played a crucial role of taking care of my family in my absence. She sacrificed her time and resources to ensure that I succeeded. My 7 children, Naomi, Mary, David, Emmanuel, Martha, Anna and Moses gavelend me a lot of moral support and encouragement. My long absence from home was always greeted with hugs, smiles and knowing understanding. Let me also acknowledge the support and guidance of my supervisors, Dr. Wamũyũ Teresia Wachira and Dr. Antony Odek, whose advice and insightful comments constitute an important component of this proposal.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION AND APPROVAL ..... **i**
DEDICATION ..... **ii**
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ..... **iii**
ABSTRACT ..... **viii**
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS ..... **ix**
CHAPTER ONE **1**
INTRODUCTION **1**
1.2 Background of the Study 1
1.3 Statement of the Problem 6
1.4 Research Objectives 7
1.4.1 Main Objective 7
1.4.2 Specific Objective 7
1.5 Research Questions 8
1.6 Justification of the Study 8
1.7 Significance of the Study 9
1.8 Scope of the Study 10
1.9 Limitations of the Study 10
1.10 Assumptions of the Study 11
1.11 Operational Definition of Terms 12
1.12 Conclusion 13
CHAPTER TWO **14**
LITERATURE REVIEW **14**
2.1 Introduction 14
2.2 Theoretical Review 14
2.2.1 Protracted Social Conflict Theory 14
2.2.2 Galtung's "A Mini Theory of Peace" 16
2.3 Empirical Review 18
2.3.1 Clan Conflicts 18
2.3.2 Effects of Inter-Clan Conflicts 22
2.3.3 The Role of the Church in Peace Building and Conflict Resolution 23
2.3.4 Strategies employed by the Church in Peace 25
2.3.5 Challenges faced by the Church in Peace Building 29
2.4 Research Gap 31
2.5 Conceptual Framework 32
CHAPTER THREE **35**
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY **35**
3.1 Introduction 35
3.2 Research Design 35
3.1 The Study Area 36
3.2 Target Population 36
3.3 Sampling Size and Sampling Technique 37
3.5.1 Determination of Sample Size 37
3.5.2 Sampling Techniques 38
3.4 Data Collection Instruments 38
3.5 Pilot Study 39
3.6 Validity and Reliability 40
3.6.1 Validity of the Research Instruments 40

3.6.2 Reliability of the Research Instruments 40
3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation 41
3.8 Ethical Considerations 43
CHAPTER FOUR 44
RESEARCH FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION 44
4.1 Introduction 44
4.2 44
Response Rate 44
4.3 Demographic Data 45
4.3.1 Gender 45
4.3.2 Respondents' Age 47
4.3.3 Level of Education 48
4.3.4 Length of Stay in the Area 50
4.3.5 Occupation 51
4.4 Nature of Inter-Clan Conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan 52
4.4.1 Types of Conflicts 52
4.4.2 Duration of Conflicts 54
4.4.3 Whether Involved in the Conflicts 55
4.4.4 Who is mainly Affected? 56
4.4.5 How affected by the conflicts 59
4.5 Peacebuilding Strategies the Church Employs in Resolving Inter-Clan Conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan 60
4.5.1 Peacebuilding Strategies 60
4.5.2 Who are is mainly involved in these peacebuilding activities? 63
4.5.3 To what extent did these activities address the inter-clan conflicts? 65
4.6 Challenges Experienced by the Church in Addressing the Inter-Clan Conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan 67
4.7 Regression Analysis 69
CHAPTER FIVE 71
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS 71
5.1 Introduction 71
5.2.1 The Nature of Inter-Clan Conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan 71
5.2.2 The Peacebuilding Strategies the Church employs in resolving Inter-Clan Conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan 72
5.2.3 The Challenges experienced by the Church in addressing the Inter-Clan Conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan 73
5.2 Conclusions 74
5.3 Recommendations 75
REFERENCES 77
APPENDICES 84
Appendix I Recommendation Letter 84
Appendix II 87
Authorization Letter from Republic of South Sudan 87
Appendix III Questionnaire 89
Appendix IV Interview guide for Church leaders and community leaders 96
Appendix V Work Plan 97
Appendix VI Budget 98

LIST OF FIGURE

Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework 33
Figure 4.1Gender of Respondents 45
Figure 4.2Length of stay in the area 50
Figure 4.3Distribution of Respondents according to their Occupation 52
Figure 4.4Duration of the Conflicts 54
Figure 4.5Have you ever been involved in conflicts? 55
Figure 4.6Impact of Conflicts as Perceived by Respondents 59
Figure 4.7Who are mainly involved in these peacebuilding activities 64

LIST OF TABLE

Table 3.1Sample Size..... 37
Table 4.1Response Rate..... 44
Table 4.2Distribution of Respondents according to their Age Groups..... 47
Table 4.3Level of Education..... 49
Table 4.4Nature of Inter-clan Conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan 52
Table 4.5 Those mainly affected by the Conflicts 56
Table 4.7Extent to which Peacebuilding Activities Address Inter-Clan Conflicts..... 65
Table 4.8 Challenges Faced by the Church in Addressing Inter-Clan Conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan 67
Table 4.9 Regression Analysis Table..... 69

ABSTRACT

The study assessed the Inter-Church Committee and inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan. It aimed to understand the nature of these conflicts, evaluate the Church's peacebuilding strategies, identify challenges, and explore ways to enhance sustainable peacebuilding efforts. Grounded in Protracted Social Conflict Theory and Galtung's "A Mini Theory of Peace," the research utilised a mixed-methods research design, targeting church members, clergy, leaders, elders, and opinion leaders in crisis zones like Cuei Kok and Malengagook. A sample of 346 primary respondents was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's formula, complemented by 12 key respondents selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through structured questionnaires for primary respondents and semi-structured interviews for key respondents, providing both quantitative and qualitative insights for a comprehensive analysis. The findings reveal that the primary drivers of inter-communal conflicts in Rumbek East County include historical animosities, cattle raiding (25%), and resource disputes (12.5%), disproportionately affecting vulnerable groups. The Church employs peace meetings (28.6%) and preaching forgiveness (22.9%) as its main strategies for mediating these conflicts, with elders playing a pivotal role. However, financial constraints (42.9%) emerged as the most significant challenge to the Church's peacebuilding efforts, along with community mistrust, Church closures, and insufficient government support, all of which hindered effective conflict resolution and reconciliation initiatives. The study concludes that while the Church demonstrates considerable potential as a peacebuilding actor, it faces substantial challenges. It recommends enhancing the Church's conflict resolution capabilities, securing funding, involving all stakeholders in peacebuilding processes, and implementing robust evaluation systems. This study provides a framework for refining peacebuilding strategies and establishes a foundation for future research and practice in conflict-affected areas.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AACC	All-Africa Conference of Churches
AU	African Union
CPA	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CRS	Catholic Relief Services
DARD	Diocese of Aweil Relief and Development
ECSS	Episcopal Church of South Sudan
FBO'S	Faith Based Organizations
GCPEA	Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack
GOSS	Government of South Sudan
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IGAD	Inter-Government Authority on Development
IRF	Inter-Religious Forum
NSCC	New Sudan Council of Churches
PSC	Protracted social conflict
PTP	People to People Peace Process
RSS	Republic of South Sudan
SPLA	Sudan People Liberation Army
SPLM	Sudan People Liberation Movement.
SSCC	South Sudan Council of Churches
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission (South Africa)
UNAMISS	United Nation Mission in South Sudan
WCC	World Council of

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter provides an introduction to the study. Specifically, it covers the following areas: background to the study, statement of the study, objectives, research questions, significance and justification, limitations and delimitations as well as operational definition of terms.

1.2 Background of the Study

The widespread presence of inter-clan conflicts underscores the critical role of religion, particularly through the efforts of Inter-Church Committees, in fostering peace and harmony (United Nations, 2022÷). These committees serve as vital sources of hope and unity by leveraging the profound impact of the church on contemporary social dynamics, often transcending traditional diplomatic channels to promote peaceful cooperation (Martin & Schliesser, 2018). Former U.S. Ambassador Richard Holbrooke notably emphasised the Church's critical role in conflict resolution, acknowledging its unique ability to influence attitudes and actions that lead to the peaceful settlement of disputes (Upreti, Ghale & Sony, 2016). Recognised for fostering social cohesion, Inter-Church Committees play a pivotal role in enabling non-violent collaboration and offer invaluable support to international efforts aimed at resolving conflicts (Desmidt, 2019; Inter-Religious Council of Ethiopia, 2020). The significance of the Church in conflict resolution stems from several factors: its moral authority, ability to mobilise communities, historical presence and trust within local contexts, and commitment to social justice and reconciliation (Ijirshar & Andohol, 2022)

Globally, religious organisations have demonstrated their effectiveness in facilitating dialogue and fostering understanding between conflicting parties. The Catholic Church's role in Colombia exemplifies how Inter-Church Committees can significantly contribute to peace and reconciliation. Grounded in the principles of truth and the prophetic voice of the Gospel, these committees have facilitated dialogue between opposing factions and advocated for peaceful resolutions to internal conflicts (Kenduiywa & Nyandiwa, 2023). Through pastoral talks and

mediation efforts led by the Conference of Bishops, the Church has effectively bridged divides between the government and rebel groups, making a substantial impact on Colombia's peacebuilding initiatives (Thomas, 2019). Despite facing challenges, including the tragic loss of Church workers to violence, these committees have remained dedicated to promoting harmony and healing amidst ongoing conflict (Martin & Schliesser, 2018).

The underlying causes of Colombia's conflict are deeply rooted in social and economic inequalities, with land and wealth concentrated in the hands of a small elite, which has left rural populations marginalised. This economic disparity, combined with political exclusion, fueled the rise of insurgent movements advocating for land reform and social justice. Over time, the situation escalated as paramilitary groups and criminal organisations, exacerbated by the narcotics trade, intensified the violence (Schliesser, 2020). Although the 2016 peace agreement marked a significant step toward reconciliation, challenges remain, such as the slow reintegration of ex-combatants and ongoing violence in various regions. In response, the Catholic Church, through its Inter-Church Committees, continues to champion dialogue and reconciliation, reinforcing its vital role in fostering long-term peace (Thomas, 2019).

Similar to the situation in Colombia, inter-clan conflict often arises from underlying social, economic, and political tensions, and religious organisations have played critical roles in mitigating these conflicts. For instance, in Nepal, Caritas Nepal, a branch of the Roman Catholic Church, has been instrumental in supporting communities affected by civil unrest. During displacement, Caritas Nepal provided essential relief supplies and initiated projects aimed at fostering inter-religious harmony. One notable initiative involved constructing 275 homes for Muslims and Christians, a project that, not only offered shelter but also promoted understanding and cooperation between these communities through collaborative home-building efforts (Subedi, 2012). Furthermore, Caritas Nepal brought critical attention to societal issues like the sexual abuse and trafficking of women, demonstrating its commitment to addressing deep-rooted problems that contribute to conflict (Subedi, 2012).

In Latin America, the Catholic Church has similarly been pivotal in peace building efforts across regions affected by conflict and social injustice. In Colombia, the Church played a crucial role in

facilitating peace negotiations between the government and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), culminating in a historic peace agreement in 2016 aimed at ending decades of conflict (Báez, 2020). Likewise, during the Salvadoran Civil War (1980-1992), leaders such as Archbishop Óscar Romero advocated for human rights and mediated dialogues between opposing factions, ultimately contributing to the Chapultepec Peace Accords in 1992 (Eisenberg, 2019). These examples highlight the Catholic Church's significant commitment to promoting peace and reconciliation, echoing the Unification Church's efforts in Nepal through dialogue and community engagement.

Religious organisations in Africa have played a vital role in mediating inter-clan conflicts, with the Catholic community Sant'Egidio standing out as a significant example. Their involvement was pivotal in bringing an end to the Mozambican civil war (1977-1992), a conflict deeply rooted in inter-clan and inter-group rivalries (Ludovic, 2021). The foundation for Sant'Egidio's successful mediation was laid in the mid-1970s through the efforts of Mozambican priest Don Jaime Conclaves, who established strong ties with the community. These relationships enabled Sant'Egidio to engage in quiet and persistent diplomacy, leading to a series of negotiations that ultimately secured a peace agreement in October 1992 in Mozambique (Schliesser, 2020~~).~~
This example underscores the profound impact that religious organizations can have in resolving complex conflicts, demonstrating their unique ability to foster reconciliation and lasting peace in even the most challenging circumstances.

In post-Apartheid South Africa, religious leaders played a crucial role in the nation’s healing process, with Archbishop Desmond Tutu leading the country's first Truth and Reconciliation Commission. According to Kumordzie (2019), Tutu's leadership was instrumental in addressing past atrocities and fostering forgiveness and national unity. His success set a significant precedent, resulting in the appointment of other clerics to lead similar commissions across Africa. These commissions have become vital for confronting historical injustices, promoting dialogue, and establishing a foundation for lasting peace. This involvement of religious leaders underscores their unique ability to bridge divides and contribute to national reconciliation and stability (Smith, 2018).

In Kenya, the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK) played a vital role in mitigating inter-clan tensions during the post-election violence following the disputed 2007 Presidential elections, particularly in the Rift Valley region. The NCCK facilitated dialogue among conflicting communities through targeted social media campaigns and radio broadcasts, organised peace-building workshops, and provided crucial relief assistance to displaced populations. Their efforts included rebuilding homes, schools, and churches, as well as fostering reconciliation through exchange visits and joint development initiatives, such as livestock donations, which promoted cooperation between communities (Naibei, 2019; Mohamud & Ruto, 2018). The formation of the Thabiti Taskforce, in collaboration with the Inter-Religious Forum (IRF), demonstrated a commitment to understanding the underlying causes of the 2007/2008 post-election violence by conducting a research on its implications on national stability. This research enabled the Council for Churches to engage with government officials and other stakeholders in devising effective strategies to prevent future conflicts (Inter-Religious Forum Report, 2009). Furthermore, the Catholic Church's justice and peace departments maintained a strong presence in conflict hotspots, actively advocating for peace and reconciliation (Gathogo, 2014), while the National Commission on Integration and Cohesion (NCIC) played a critical role in fostering national integration and monitoring ethnic tensions to mitigate conflicts (NCIC, 2012). Together, these efforts illustrate a comprehensive and collaborative approach to promoting lasting peace in Kenya.

Similarly, in other regions of Africa, religious organisations have demonstrated their ability to mediate and resolve conflicts. For instance, in the early 1990s, religious leaders were called upon to oversee sovereign national conferences in countries like Benin, the Republic of Congo, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. These leaders were instrumental in guiding peaceful transitions from single-party rule to political pluralism, significantly contributing to peace and stability in these regions (Ludovic, 2021). Together, these examples underscore the significant role that faith-based organisations can play in fostering political and social stability, demonstrating their potential to bring peaceful resolutions in conflict situations across the continent.

In South Sudan, the Church has emerged as one of the most trusted and respected institutions, particularly for its pivotal role in peacebuilding efforts. Through the Action Plan for Peace, which emphasises advocacy and the creation of neutral platforms for dialogue and reconciliation, the Church has significant peace initiatives, earning widespread credibility (Schliesser, 2020). This reputation is bolstered by the Church's historical involvement in key conflicts, most notably the 1972 peace process, where its neutrality and commitment to peace were firmly established (Thomas, 2019).

A cornerstone of the Church's efforts in South Sudan is the People-to-People Peace Process (PTP), a grassroots program initiated by the New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC). This initiative focuses on community-driven reconciliation, bringing together warring factions to foster dialogue and understanding (Thomas, 2019). The NSCC has successfully organised pivotal peace conferences, such as those held in Liliir and Wunlit, which have resulted in significant agreements that promoted harmony and cooperation among different groups (Thomas, 2019). The legacy of Bishop Paride, a figure deeply committed to dialogue and development, continues to influence and inspire ongoing peacebuilding efforts in South Sudan. His work underscores the enduring importance of the Church in fostering reconciliation and peace in a region marked by long-standing conflict (Torres, 2022).

Rumbek East County, located in Lake State, is one of the areas hardest hit by clan clashes in South Sudan, with some conflicts dating back decades. The ongoing strife between two sub-clans is deeply rooted in historical grievances, cyclical revenge, cattle raiding, and negative coping mechanisms stemming from multigenerational trauma (CEPO, 2019). Despite efforts by authorities, community leaders, and youth to halt the violence, through initiatives such as special courts and peace conferences, the clashes persist. For instance, although a peace agreement was reached in December 2015, it was soon undermined by renewed fighting in April 2016 (Eye Radio, 2015). The New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) has played a vital role in promoting peace, reconciliation, and mediation for over 20 years through grassroots programs, including people-to-people peace initiatives,–yet–disputes continue unabated (Bedigen, 2022). These persistent challenges highlight the urgent need for a transformative approach that can effectively break the cycles of violence and foster a shared national identity, which is essential for stability

in Rumbek East County. According to Craze (2020), achieving this goal requires a credible and transformative strategy capable of nurturing a collective identity vital for the region's stability.

However, there remains a significant gap in understanding how faith-based organisations, particularly churches, can be more effectively leveraged in resolving inter-clan conflicts in South Sudan. While existing literature addresses the roles of various religious organisations in conflict resolution, there is a notable lack of focus on the specific dynamics within South Sudan and the unique challenges it faces. Additionally, insufficient analysis has been conducted on how historical developments in conflict resolution through religious channels can inform contemporary practices. It is within this context that the current study sought to explore the role of the Church in resolving clan conflicts specifically in Rumbek East County, Lake State, and South Sudan,

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Conflicts persist in South Sudan's Rumbek East County, underscoring the urgent need for a comprehensive evaluation of the Church's peacebuilding strategies. Since gaining Independence, South Sudan has not known peace, enduring a cycle of violence that has resulted in an estimated 400,000 deaths and displaced over 4 million people (United Nations, 2023). Ethnic rivalries, particularly between the Dinka, led by President Salva Kiir, and the Nuer, associated with opposition leader Riek Machar, exacerbate these conflicts and undermine national stability and development. The Church has emerged as a pivotal institution, actively contributing to peacebuilding, mediation, reconciliation, and social welfare, with extensive outreach to remote areas that often lack government presence (Saferworld, 2023).

Despite the Church’s significant efforts, including establishing a robust network of local and international volunteers and influencing government responses to humanitarian crises, notable gaps remain. Recurring inter-communal violence in Rumbek East County, illustrated by incidents such as cattle raiding and revenge attacks, highlight the inadequacy of current interventions. Clashes in 2021 resulted in at least 13 fatalities, while a tragic event in February 2023 claimed 151 lives (Saferworld, 2023). These persistent conflicts erode social cohesion, disrupt economic growth, and hinder the delivery of essential services, placing immense strain

on community resilience (Thomas, 2019). The absence of effective conflict resolution mechanisms further exacerbates poverty and impedes progress in critical areas like healthcare and education.

Existing research on the Church's role in peacebuilding primarily focuses on contexts outside South Sudan. For example, Obondi (2018) examined religious organisations in Africa, highlighting Christianity's broader impact, while Mwamba (2019) studied the peacebuilding strategies of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa in Kenya, emphasising inter-ethnic harmony. In contrast, research specific to South Sudan is less comprehensive. Ashworth and Ryan (2015) offered insights into the Church's role in Sudan, but their reliance on secondary data limited their understanding of inter-clan conflict resolution strategies. Similarly, Apugi (2017) analysed faith-based organisations in Juba, focusing on mechanisms and challenges but did not detail specific peacebuilding strategies and relied solely on qualitative data. This omission may overlook the unique context of Inter-Church Committees in Rumbek East County.

This study sought to fill these significant gaps by focusing on the Church's efforts to resolve clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lakes State. It aimed to identify effective peacebuilding strategies while considering the specific nature of these conflicts and their broader implications for national stability and development. Understanding the Church's role in addressing inter-clan conflicts is crucial, as it may provide insights into effective interventions that can mitigate localiszed issues and contribute to the overall peace and development of South Sudan.

1.4 Research Objectives

1.4.1 Main Objective

The main objective of this study was to examine the role of the Church in resolving Inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lakes State, South Sudan.

1.4.2 Specific Objective

The specific objectives were to:

i. Examine the nature of inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan

ii. Evaluate the peacebuilding strategies the Church employs in resolving inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan
iii. Assess the challenges experienced by the Church in addressing the inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan

1.5 Research Questions

i. What is the nature of inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan?
ii. How does the nature of inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan influence the peacebuilding strategies employed by the Church?
iii. To what extent do the challenges experienced by the Church in addressing inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan impact its peacebuilding efforts?

1.6 Justification of the Study

The persistent inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan, pose a significant threat to peace and development. Despite ongoing interventions, sustainable peace remains elusive, underscoring the critical need to evaluate the effectiveness of current peacebuilding strategies, particularly those led by the Church. Without this study, opportunities to refine and improve these interventions could be missed, potentially prolonging conflicts and hindering progress toward lasting peace in the region.

This study aims to address this gap by examining the Church's role in resolving these conflicts, assessing its peacebuilding strategies, and identifying areas for adjustment. The findings will provide valuable insights for practitioners and scholars, offering practical guidance for refining interventions in conflict zones. For practitioners, the outcomes will enhance peacebuilding initiatives, ensuring they align more closely with ground realities. For scholars, the research will contribute to the broader discourse on conflict resolution and peacebuilding, providing a case study that can inform similar efforts globally. The study also presents a distinctive opportunity to bridge existing knowledge gaps concerning peacebuilding dynamics.

The purpose of this study is to explore the Church's peacebuilding efforts, evaluate their impact in reducing inter-clan conflicts, and identify challenges and opportunities for improvement. By focusing on conflict zones such as Cuei Kok and Malengagook, the research will offer a detailed

analysis of the peace dynamics in these areas. The scope includes understanding the nature of conflicts, assessing the effectiveness of interventions, and proposing recommendations for enhancing peacebuilding efforts.

This study is timely and relevant, offering contemporary insights that can inform local and global peacebuilding strategies. By documenting the successes and challenges of the Church's role in South Sudan, the research not only addresses immediate conflicts but also provides lessons applicable to other conflict-ridden regions, contributing to the global effort to achieve sustainable peace.

1.7 Significance of the Study

The study offers critical insights into the role of religious institutions in peacebuilding efforts. By focusing on the Church's peacebuilding capacity, the research emphasises the necessity of integrating religious organisations into broader conflict resolution initiatives. Policymakers can leverage these insights to craft tailored strategies that utilise the Church's established networks and local influence, ultimately leading to more effective approaches to conflict prevention and resolution. Such collaborations between governmental bodies and religious organisations promote a holistic framework for peacebuilding, fostering stability in the region by aligning policy frameworks with community needs.

Government security services also stand to benefit significantly from the findings of this study. Recognising the Church's involvement in organizing peace meetings, advocating for forgiveness, and mediating disputes allows security forces to enhance their operational strategies to be more culturally sensitive and effective. This understanding facilitates the incorporation of the Church's contributions into broader security frameworks, improving communication and building trust within local communities. Additionally, collaborating with key local leaders and opinion makers enables security services to address the root causes of conflicts more effectively, thereby contributing to sustainable peace and long-term stability in Rumbek East County.

Furthermore, this study empowers the general public and serves as a foundation for scholars and researchers. Equally, by increasing awareness of the Church's contributions to peacebuilding, local communities may feel motivated to engage actively in peace initiatives, fostering a sense of

communal responsibility. This heightened awareness can catalyse grassroots efforts, encouraging individuals to collaborate on peace initiatives and contribute to a more cohesive and peaceful environment. Additionally, scholars and researchers can utilise empirical data and insights from this study as a basis for further investigation into the intersection of religion and peacebuilding. This expanded research can uncover varied roles and strategies that religious institutions employ in conflict resolution, enriching academic discourse and informing practical peace initiatives globally.

1.8 Scope of the Study

This study undertook a focused examination of the Church's pivotal role in addressing the persistent inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lakes State, South Sudan. The research was confined to this specific geographical area and centered on four core variables: the nature of prevalent conflicts, the Church's mediation efforts, the challenges faced in peacebuilding, and prospective strategies for sustainable peace in the region.

The target population for the study include church members, clergy, community leaders, elders, and opinion influencers, which allowed for comprehensive insights into the conflict dynamics and the effectiveness of the Church's interventions. In order to ensure a robust and representative sample, the study was limited to 358 participants, comprising 346 main respondents and 12 key informants recognized for their expertise in conflict resolution.

Additionally, the research employed structured interviews, surveys, and qualitative data collection methods to capture diverse perspectives. However, it is important to note that the study did not address other potential influences on inter-clan conflicts outside the scope of the Church's involvement or broader socio-political factors that may also contribute to these dynamics. By focusing specifically on the Church's role, this research aimed to develop context-specific peacebuilding strategies that directly responded to the unique challenges and opportunities faced by Rumbek East County, South Sudan.

1.9 Limitations of the Study

During the study, it was evident that the security situation in most parts of South Sudan remained fluid, posing a potential impediment to data collection activities. To circumvent this challenge, the researcher sought assistance from security officers on the ground and closely monitored media and other news outlets to stay updated on the prevailing security situation and avoid being caught off-guard.

Another challenge identified was the low literacy level in South Sudan, which necessitated the translation of the questionnaire into a language understandable to the local people. This consumed significant time and resources. To mitigate this challenge, competent research assistants were trained to assist respondents in understanding the questionnaire effectively.

Furthermore, the researcher's role as an Episcopal Church Bishop was recognised as a potential source of bias, particularly concerning perceived favouritism towards Anglican perspectives or interests. To address this, proactive engagement with leaders of other denominational churches was undertaken, seeking reassurance and emphasising the benefits of the research for all Churches. Rigorous research methodologies, such as triangulation and peer review, were implemented to enhance credibility and address potential biases. Transparency, open communication, and a commitment to impartiality were prioritised to ensure the integrity of the research findings.

1.10 Assumptions of the Study

Based on the findings of the study, several assumptions were identified:

The proposition that inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lakes State, South Sudan operate at different levels was substantiated. These conflicts were observed to occur across various tiers within the community, influencing both local dynamics and broader societal structures.

It was also confirmed that in Rumbek East County, Lakes State, South Sudan, conflict resolution was greatly aided by the Inter-Church Committee. Using its connections and influence within the community, the committee actively participated in peacebuilding initiatives.

The proposition that the Inter-Church Committee encountered challenges in its peacebuilding roles was validated through the study. Various impediments, including resource constraints, logistical hurdles, and contextual complexities, were identified, impeding the committee's effectiveness in addressing conflicts.

Lastly, the assumption that there are alternative approaches the Inter-Church Committee can employ to ensure sustainable peace in Rumbek East County, Lakes State, South Sudan was also affirmed. Alternative strategies, such as community empowerment initiatives, grassroots reconciliation efforts, and collaboration with local authorities, were identified as potential

avenues to enhance the Committee's peacebuilding impact and foster long-term stability in the region.

1.11 Operational Definition of Terms

'Rido'- Refers to a state of recurring hostilities between families and kinship groups characterised by a series of retaliatory acts of violence carried out to avenge a perceived affront or injustice.

'Spaces'– These are not only physical places or moments, but also environments in which relationships that allow people to live with human dignity can be created and re-created.

Church: As used in this study includes the Christian religious community as a whole, but also organization of Christian believers.

Clan conflict: This refers to a lack of peace and harmony or disputes between two or more clans and that can affect societal activities.

Conflict resolution- This implies the removal as much as possible of the inequalities between disputants by means of mediation, negotiation, advocacy and testimony on behalf of one or more of the parties to the conflicts.

Conflict- Struggle or contest between people with opposite needs, ideas, beliefs or goals. **Inter-Church Committee**: In this study this refers to all the Churches that operate in Rumbek under South Sudan Council of Churches (SSCC) that came together to collaborate in peace building among different warring Clans.

Peace building– It involves bringing parties together and fostering mutual respect by listening, recognizing need, avoiding discrimination and working creatively together to solve problems.

Peace: This as used in this study means free from disturbance; quiet and calmness.

Religious Peace Building-Coward and Smith define religious peace building as "the range of activities performed by religious actors and institutions for the purpose of resolving and transforming deadly conflict, with the goal of building social relations and political institutions characterized by an ethos of tolerance and nonviolence.

Sustainable Peace building: This as used in this study relates to the commitment to create and maintain durable peace through economic, social, or political agreements between states or warring parties.

1.12 Conclusion

This chapter provides an insight into the role of the Church in peace building in South Sudan and beyond. It also captures the problem statement, which is the cornerstone of the research. The study objectives and research questions provided in this chapter will assist the researcher in carrying out a literature review as well as in formulating the questionnaire. The limitations and delimitations of the study will help the researcher anticipate potential challenges and come up with contingency measures to deal them.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter covers literature review dealing with the role of the Church in peace building in South Sudan, clan conflicts, the effects of clan conflicts, the strategies and approaches employed by the Church in peace building in Rumbek East County, Lakes State, South Sudan as well as the challenges facing the Church in its quest to achieve lasting peace for the people. The Chapter will also deal with the empirical and theoretical framework guiding the study. The chapter concludes by giving a conceptual framework on the relationship of the variables.

2.2 Theoretical Review

2.2.1 Protracted Social Conflict Theory

The protracted social conflict (PSC) theory seeks to elucidate why ethnic conflicts persist over extended periods, despite numerous efforts aimed at resolution. Originating from Azar's model, the PSC theory, often referred to as social conflict theory, emphasizes the intricate dynamics of intractable conflicts that are characterized by their intensity, persistence, and resistance to resolution (Bakare, 2021). These conflicts are typically deadlocked and present significant challenges to resolution efforts, affecting not only the immediate parties involved but also the broader societal fabric. Intractable conflicts are marked by their pervasive nature, impacting various aspects of personal and communal–life, including social, political, and–economic dimensions. The complexity and intensity of such conflicts often render them resistant to peaceful and conclusive resolutions, leading to feelings of apathy and hopelessness within the affected communities (Scheff, 2019). The theory posits that these conflicts arise from deep-seated grievances related to deprivation, which are often perceived and experienced collectively by marginalized groups.

Azar argues that the failure to address both perceived and actual deprivations contribute to the emergence of a conflict habit and behaviour, as grievances stemming from unmet needs are typically expressed in a collective manner. When authorities neglect these grievances, a conducive environment for protracted social conflict is created (Langevang & Namatovu, 2019).

Azar further identifies these grievances as being linked to the deprivation of fundamental rights and needs, including security, development, political access, and identity. He categorises these needs as ontological and non-negotiable, suggesting that an individual or group's sensitivity to these needs is crucial for achieving sustainable development. Azar concludes that protracted conflicts often highlight the interconnectedness of peace and development in the broadest sense (Azar, 1986).

These assumptions are particularly relevant to the current study, which investigates the role of the inter-church committee in mediating inter-clan disputes in Rumbek East County, Lakes State, South Sudan. Understanding the dynamics of protracted social conflict in this context will shed light on the challenges faced by religious institutions in addressing long-standing grievances and facilitating effective conflict resolution.

The relevance of the theory to the Study

Despite its limitations, Protracted Social Conflict (PSC) theory proves to be highly relevant to this study. Azar's framework, which emphasizes the failure to address deprivation as a fundamental cause of conflict, aligns closely with the study's objectives. For instance, when analyzing the nature of inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, the framework illuminates how unaddressed grievances, such as those related to security, development, and identity, contribute to collective discontent. Previous studies have shown that unmet needs can exacerbate tensions within communities, leading to cycles of violence (Langevang & Namatovu, 2019). This perspective provided valuable insights into the complex dynamics driving conflicts in the region.

Azar's focus on addressing both perceived and actual deprivation informs a more comprehensive approach to developing peacebuilding strategies that cater for the diverse needs of conflict-affected communities. Furthermore, research indicates that successful peacebuilding initiatives must go beyond immediate conflict resolution and proactively address the fundamental needs of affected populations (Scheff, 2019). By incorporating this understanding, the study sought ensure that peacebuilding efforts are not merely reactive but also anticipate and mitigate the root causes of conflict. Moreover, , when assessing the challenges faced by the Church in its

peacebuilding efforts, Azar's theory underscores the necessity of tackling the root causes of conflict, particularly essential needs deprivation. This perspective aligns with findings from Mwagiru (2018), which highlight that religious leaders often encounter difficulties in addressing the grievances that fuel conflicts, ultimately hindering their effectiveness as mediators. Recognizing these obstacles was crucial for understanding how the Church can enhance its role in mitigating inter-clan disputes in Rumbek East County, South Sudan.

Finally, Azar's assertion that peace is intrinsically linked to development reinforces the study's focus on addressing underlying grievances. Previous research has shown that integrating development initiatives with conflict resolution efforts is essential for achieving lasting peace (Martin & Schliesser, 2018). This holistic approach is particularly pertinent in Rumbek East County, where addressing socio-economic inequalities and fostering community resilience can contribute to sustainable peacebuilding.

While the Protracted Social Conflict Theory provides valuable insights into understanding post-colonial conflicts, it also has limitations in addressing the specific nature of inter-clan disputes in Rumbek East County. Kaldor (2001) argues that the theory's emphasis on state-society interaction may overlook the deep-seated social, cultural, and historical factors driving these conflicts. Moreover, Bar-Tal (2013) notes that focusing primarily on structural variables may neglect the role of individual agency and personal motivations, such as longstanding rivalries and grievances, which can significantly influence conflict dynamics. Therefore, while the PSC Theory offers a useful framework, integrating perspectives from other theories, such as Galtung's "A Mini Theory of Peace", may provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan.

2.2.2 Galtung's "A Mini Theory of Peace"

The notion, posited by Galtung, stresses that peace is a dynamic interaction between parties, individuals, nations, or communities, rather than just the absence of violence (1996). Whether or if this relationship is detrimental, neutral, or harmonious for all persons involved determines its negative, indifferent, or positive nature. According to this theory, studies of peace should concentrate on both positive and negative peace, or the existence of harmony and the absence of

violence, as well as the knowledge of the elements that lead to violence, such as structural and cultural violence.

When considering the role of the Inter-Church Committee in resolving inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lakes State, South Sudan, Galtung's theory provides valuable insights. The committee's efforts can be viewed through the lens of positive peace studies, aiming to build harmonious relations among clans and promote reconciliation. By addressing underlying conflicts and fostering empathy and creativity among conflicting parties, the Committee works towards transforming negative relations into positive ones. Additionally, the Committee's role aligns with the notion of conflict transformation, seeking to resolve or manage conflicts in non-violent ways.

Galtung's "A Mini Theory of Peace" provides a framework for comprehending how social institutions, violence, and peace are interrelated, although it could have drawbacks in the particular circumstances of this investigation. This theory may not have the specificity needed to handle the complex socio-political dynamics of inter-clan disputes such as in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan, due to its broad and abstract character.

Application of the theory to the Study

Galtung's theory of peace remains highly relevant to the analysis of conflict dynamics, especially in the context of inter-clan disputes in South Sudan. Central to his framework is the distinction between "negative peace," defined as the absence of direct violence, and "positive peace," which encompasses social justice and equitable structures (Galtung, 1969). This distinction is particularly pertinent in examining the Church's role in fostering peace in Rumbek East County, as it emphasises not only the cessation of hostilities, but also the establishment of social conditions conducive to lasting peace. The concept of systemic violence, which Galtung identifies as the root cause of many conflicts, underscores the necessity of addressing underlying grievances and structural injustices (Galtung, 1990). This principle is supported by research highlighting the role of historical animosities, socio-economic disparities, and systemic inequalities in fueling inter-clan violence in South Sudan (Mols & Soreide, 2020). The Church’s

peacebuilding strategies, therefore, must not only aim to mediate conflicts but also engage with these deeper issues to foster genuine reconciliation and social cohesion (Deng, 2018).

Notwithstanding, Galtung's notion of "constructive peace" advocates for a holistic approach to peacebuilding, involving mediation, forgiveness, and community engagement (Galtung, 1990). This comprehensive strategy is echoed in studies demonstrating the efficacy of faith-based organisations in conflict resolution, which often leverage their moral authority and community ties to promote dialogue and healing (Garrison, 2017). By applying Galtung's principles, the study contextualises the Church's peacebuilding efforts within a framework that addresses both the symptoms and root causes of conflict, thereby enhancing the potential for sustainable peace in the region (Nyerere, 2020).

Overall, while Galtung's theory is not without limitations, its emphasis on positive peace systemic violence provides a valuable lens through which to understand the Church's role in addressing the complexities of inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan. This perspective is essential for informing effective peacebuilding interventions that not only resolve immediate disputes but also contribute to social justice and stability in South Sudan.

2.3 Empirical Review

The empirical review discusses the causes of inter-clan conflict in Rumbek East County, its effects, the initiatives taken by the church to resolve the conflict as well as the challenges faced by the church as it seeks to resolve inter-clan conflict in Rumbek East County.

2.3.1 Clan Conflicts

In conceptualising conflict, Madueke (2019) highlights unresolved individual and family conflicts as underlying causes of clan disputes. However, this perspective can be overly simplistic, as some scholars argue that focusing solely on family grievances fails to capture the complex dynamics at play. Parsons (2009) expands on this notion, emphasising that differences over ethnic and clan identities also significantly contribute to conflicts worldwide. By recognising the multifaceted nature of clan conflicts, we understand that they are shaped not just by interpersonal disputes but also by a combination of historical, socio-cultural, and political

factors. This broader framework allows for a more nuanced exploration of the origins and persistence of these conflicts.

Historical examples of clan conflicts illustrate their complexity and highlight the influence of broader socio-political factors beyond individual grievances. Rice (1982) analyses the Hamilton-Burr feud in the United States, demonstrating how political differences rather than personal disputes shaped this conflict. This perspective is particularly relevant for contemporary clan conflicts in areas such as South Sudan, where ideological divisions and political affiliations impact community relations. Similarly, Parsons (2009) examines post-civil war conflicts between the Early and Harsly families, showing how historical traumas can perpetuate inter-generational feuds. Additionally, Park (2014) discusses the Brooks-McFarland families in the old Indian Territory, emphasising how significant historical events can exacerbate clan rivalries. Collectively, these examples underscore the necessity for a holistic understanding of clan conflicts, considering historical legacies, socio-political contexts, and systemic inequalities. Recognising these enduring impacts allows scholars and practitioners to devise more effective conflict resolution strategies, ultimately fostering sustainable peace and social cohesion in regions affected by inter-clan disputes.

The phenomenon of violent Rido conflicts within the Philippines mirrors this complexity, reflecting a multifaceted interplay of factors that extend beyond simple inter-clan disputes. Craze (2020) underscores the role of family honour and clan interests in driving these conflicts, often exacerbated by competing land disputes. The notion of honour intertwines with the local socio-cultural context, influencing how conflicts unfold. Additionally, Busalire (2019) attributes the persistence of violence in Muslim Mindanao to resource conflicts, particularly over land, while Galeriana and Ragandang (2018) highlight electoral disputes and issues related to the illegal economy as further sources of community-level violence. By examining these intertwined factors, we gain a clearer understanding of the complexity surrounding clan conflicts and the broader implications they hold for social stability.

Furthermore, the power dynamics within the clan system have significant ramifications for political stability and security in the Philippines. Azimov (2019) and Galsim (2022) reveal how

the clan system intersects with rebel forces like the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) and Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), shaping the trajectory of the protracted civil war. This involvement ranges from material and intelligence support to active participation in armed conflict, further entrenching clan control over politics. The manipulation of electoral processes by clan members for personal gains, including selling votes and influencing outcomes, exacerbates tensions and contributes to the perpetuation of violence, particularly during election cycles. Moreover, Rido conflicts not only exacerbate local tensions but also interact with broader separatist conflicts and armed violence in Mindanao. Galsim (2022) highlights numerous instances where Rido conflicts have triggered armed confrontations involving insurgent groups and the military, underscoring the interconnectedness of various forms of violence. This underscores the urgent need for holistic approaches to conflict resolution in the Philippines, addressing not only inter-clan disputes but also underlying socio-political grievances and power dynamics.

Similarly, the conflict in Somalia is deeply rooted in the competition for political and economic power among its diverse clans. Despite sharing a common language, culture, and religion, Somalia is starkly divided along clan lines, with the Darod, Dir, Hawiye, and Isaaq clans being the most prominent among over a hundred sub-clans (Atalay, 2019). Faction leaders have weaponised clans, using genealogy as a tool to consolidate their political control and marginalize competing identities. This manipulation of clan affiliations has perpetuated a cycle of violence, with clashes over resources such as water, livestock, and grazing land dating back long before Somalia's independence (Nnabuihe & Onwuzuruigbo, 2020).

The rise of opposition clans against Siad Barre's regime, particularly led by General Mohammed Farah Aideed and the Somali National Movement, exemplifies how clan dynamics have fueled political upheaval in Somalia (Nnabuihe & Onwuzuruigbo, 2020). Moreover, external factors such as international aid, while intended to alleviate humanitarian crises, have inadvertently exacerbated clan conflicts by providing warlords with resources to sustain their power and influence (World Bank, 2005). Control over strategic resources and territories, including key cities, ports, and aid distribution channels, has become central to the power struggles between militia groups and various clans (Busalire, 2019).

In general, the persistent competition for resources and power remains the primary driver of conflict in Somalia, perpetuating cycles of violence and instability. Addressing the root causes of clan-based conflicts requires comprehensive approaches that tackle socio-economic disparities, political marginalization, and governance deficiencies. Sustainable peace in Somalia hinges on fostering inclusive governance structures that accommodate diverse identities and prioritize equitable resource distribution, thereby mitigating the underlying grievances fueling clan-based violence.

In Ghana, clan conflicts have traditionally revolved around issues of chieftaincy titles, which command enormous respect and access to considerable resources such as labour, land, and minerals. Bartusevičius and Gleditsch (2019) argue that these factors explain the high desire to attain chieftaincy positions among the rural and urban elites. In many parts of rural Ghana, the contest for chieftaincy titles, especially at the divisional and kingship level, is highly competitive (Brierley & Ofosu, 2021). The struggle to become chief is not merely a contest among individual royal family members; it also involves the contestant's families, clans, and supporters (Blanco-González et al., 2021). The Dagban conflict illustrates this complexity, involving members of the Abudu and Andani clans, both of whom lay claims to select the Ya Na, the king of the Dagomba people, while contesting the procedure and authority responsible for the selection (Brierley & Ofosu, 2021).

Fridy and Myers (2019) note that the politicization of clan leadership positions has negative effects on Ghanaian society, as the struggle for these positions often results in violent conflicts, such as the one that erupted between the Upopuvete and Aniku sub-clans of the Adavi local government. A panel established by the Kogi state government in 1997 to investigate this conflict revealed that politicians from the three major sub-clans contested the vacant chieftaincy position of the Asema of Upopuvete, engaging in manipulation as each sought to install their preferred candidate (Blanco-González et al., 2021).

The Dinka of South Sudan, comprising numerous sub-clans, often find themselves embroiled in conflicts, particularly over political power, access to natural resources, and incidents of cattle

theft (Pendle, 2018). Within the state of Jonglei, the Ayual and Dachuek sub-clans of the Dinka have a history of the conflict centered around Wanglei. Despite sharing a common language and history, tensions between these clans have escalated over time, fueled by disputes over the ownership of Wanglei town and exacerbated by various grievances (Young, 2017).

The root causes of the conflict between the Ayual and Dachuek clans are multifaceted, encompassing a range of issues highlighted by Naomi (2020). These include competition for political power, disputes over control of natural resources such as water and pasture, dissatisfaction with the judicial process, historical grievances stemming from previous loss of lives and property, and even competition between Anglican and Episcopal Churches for congregants. These drivers underscore the complex interplay of political, economic, social, and religious factors that contribute to inter-clan conflicts among the Dinka.

In conclusion, the conflict between the Ayual and Dachuek clans reflects broader dynamics within Dinka society, where historical grievances, competition for resources, and socio-political factors intertwine to fuel inter-clan tensions. Addressing these underlying issues requires a holistic approach that targets the root causes of conflict while fostering reconciliation, resource-sharing mechanisms, and inclusive governance structures. Achieving sustainable peace among Dinka sub-clans necessitates concerted efforts to promote dialogue, cooperation, and mutual understanding, thereby mitigating the drivers of inter-clan conflicts and fostering long-term stability. By acknowledging and addressing these multifaceted dynamics within Dinka society, this study can contribute to the development of strategies aimed at reducing inter-clan tensions and promoting sustainable peace in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan, and beyond.

2.3.2 Effects of Inter-Clan Conflicts

The chieftaincy title in Ghana is highly valued and treasured as it confers on the incumbent access to resources such as land, minerals, water, trees, livestock and labour of the subjects (Blanco-González et al., 2021). This makes the chieftaincy title highly competitive, at times resulting in conflicts and loss of lives. The most poignant example was the March 2002 conflict between rival clans which was ignited by the unprovoked attack on the envoy of the

Ya Na by a group of Abudu youth and the destruction of his bicycle. The attack ignited two days of fighting among the supporters of the two factions resulting in the death of Ya Na, Yakubu Andani II and 30 of his supporters as well as the destruction of 36 houses stool (Pendle, 2018).

The Kuria District in Kenya has been faced with conflicts among rival clans, most of which are caused by the struggle for scarce resources such as land, pasture and water. These conflicts have occasioned negative effects on the affected clans. According to a report by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), the inter-clan conflicts of 2009 resulted in massive displacement of the population particularly women, children and the elderly. Furthermore, in this report, over 6290 people were displaced from their home in Kegonga and Ntimaru divisions while others crossed into neighbouring Tanzania. The lack of basic amenities in the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps such as clean water and sanitation exposed the displaced persons to waterborne diseases such as cholera, dysentery, typhoid and amoeba. The report also cited acute malnutrition among the elderly and young children who were faced with an acute lack of adequate and balanced diet, this resulted in stunted growth among children which may eventually affect their prospects in life as malnutrition affects the intellectual development of young children. The inter-clan clashes also led to the closure of businesses and schools. The schools were closed as pupils and teachers fled, some of the schools were also turned into IDP camps thus disrupting learning activities. The closure of school led to high school drop-outs and poor academic performance which may take years to recover (OCHA, 2009).

2.3.3 The Role of the Church in Peace Building and Conflict Resolution

The involvement of the Church in peacebuilding and conflict resolution has deep historical roots, as evidenced by studies conducted by Bercovitch and Orellana (2019). In contemporary contexts, this engagement is particularly crucial, as many modern conflicts have escalated beyond the reach of traditional diplomatic measures. Johnston (2018) suggests that the Church's intention to engage in peace processes often complements both official and unofficial diplomatic efforts. This dual approach resonates with communities seeking alternatives to conventional political strategies, particularly in addressing complex identity and clan conflicts. Unlike the political

paradigms that dominated the Cold War Eera, the Church offers a more community-oriented perspective that emphasises dialogue and understanding.

Faith plays a fundamental role in peacebuilding by providing not only spiritual and moral support but also a framework for community mobilization and reconciliation. Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) and religious leaders, including figures such as the Pope, Imams, Rabbis, and historical icons like Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr., have made significant contributions to conflict resolution efforts (Craze, 2020). Their influence extends to changing behaviours, challenging harmful stereotypes, and educating the public about tolerance and respect. Moreover, they advocate for democracy and human rights, recognizing that sustainable peace requires addressing underlying social injustices (Martin & Schliesser, 2018). Through their diverse initiatives, these leaders and organizations not only mediate conflicts but also shape public policy and promote disarmament and reintegration, thereby facilitating sustained inter-faith dialogue and collaborative peacebuilding efforts (Schliesser, 2020).

In ethnic conflicts, the Church often takes on the role of mediator, striving to bring opposing groups to the negotiating table. Drawing from its biblical foundations, the church invokes teachings of peace, particularly those attributed to Jesus Christ, who is known as the "Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:1-6). The New Testament further emphasizes the importance of peacemaking through Jesus's declaration that “blessed are the peacemakers” (Matthew 5:9). This spiritual framework underpins the Church's efforts to mediate conflicts and foster dialogue among warring factions. In Africa, many church-based organizations, including the Lutheran World Federation (LWF), Caritas International, World Vision, the Swedish Mission Council, Diakonia, and Catholic Relief Services, have been pivotal in mediating ethnic conflicts, demonstrating the Church's capacity to engage meaningfully in peacebuilding initiatives (Martin & Schliesser, 2018).

During South Sudan's civil war, the Church emerged as a crucial actor in development and humanitarian relief, gaining international recognition for its efforts. The Church played a significant role in pressuring the Khartoum government to engage in negotiations with the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA) (Leonardi, 2020). The New Sudan Council of

Churches (NSCC) was particularly active in mediating intra-ethnic conflicts, exemplified by its facilitation of the Jikany Nuer Peace Conference in July 2001. This conference addressed critical issues such as inter-sectoral fighting and resource sharing, leading to a notable reduction in hostilities among conflicting clans (Leonardi, 2020). Such initiatives underscore the Church's effectiveness as a mediator, leveraging its moral authority to foster understanding and cooperation.

The NSCC continued its peacebuilding efforts in subsequent years by organizing workshops and conferences aimed at promoting human rights and community development. The Nyal Peace education Workshop and the Fangak Peace Conference in 2002 exemplified this commitment, focusing on building infrastructure and enhancing social cohesion among communities (Ukelo, 2019; Martin & Schliesser, 2018). These initiatives reflect the Church's understanding that sustainable peace extends beyond immediate conflict resolution; it also requires addressing the socio-economic conditions that contribute to instability. By fostering community development and supporting educational initiatives, the church plays a vital role in laying the groundwork for long-term peace and stability in conflict-affected regions.

In summary, the church's involvement in peacebuilding and conflict resolution is multifaceted, encompassing mediation, advocacy, and community mobilization. By leveraging its moral authority and spiritual teachings, the church addresses immediate conflicts while fostering an environment conducive for long-term peace. This study aims to further explore the Church's role in mediating conflicts, examining its methods and strategies across various contexts. Thus, analysing the impact of faith-based interventions on peacebuilding efforts provides valuable insights into the potential of religious institutions to contribute meaningfully to conflict resolution and social cohesion in a rapidly changing world.

2.3.4 Strategies employed by the Church in Peace

Ajayi and Buhari (2015) and Ademowo (2017) highlight the significance of cross-examination in peacebuilding strategies across cultures in Africa, stressing that engaging disputants' awareness and consent is crucial for addressing communal conflicts. Ademowo's study suggests that cross-

examination complements community dialogue, with historical context enhancing its effectiveness. Despite these insights, a research gap remains regarding the application of such strategies by the church in resolving inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan. The current study aims to explore how these peacebuilding strategies can be adapted to South Sudan's unique socio-cultural and political context, including historical grievances and ethnic dynamics.

Ekpenyong and Okoi (2018) investigated the church's role in conflict management, peacebuilding, and development in Nigeria, emphasising that reconciliation and love are crucial for effective peacebuilding. They argued that dialogue, seminars, and workshops are essential tools for achieving peace. While their study offers valuable insights into the Church's peace-promoting approaches, it relies solely on secondary data. The current study aimed to address this gap by collecting primary data from selected areas in South Sudan to provide a more direct examination of the church's role in peacebuilding.

Lamidi (2021) explored peacebuilding strategies in South Western Nigeria, identifying quick intervention, cross-examination, negotiation, mediation, and additional tactics such as community sensitisation and gospel teaching as key approaches. However, these strategies, which are tailored to Nigeria's context, may differ from those effective in South Sudan. The current study aimed to compare these strategies' applicability in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan, to understand their relevance to the South Sudanese context.

In Northern Uganda, the study by Mwaka and (Obol (2023) investigates the *Mato Oput* reconciliation process, emphasising the conditions and events that lead to its implementation. Using qualitative methods, the researchers conducted in-depth interviews with 8 elders aged 60 to 101, purposefully selected for their expertise in reconciliation practices within the Acholi community. The findings highlight that *Mato Oput* is a critical step for addressing interpersonal conflicts, requiring both the perpetrator and victim to be known and intentional harm to be established. Nevertheless, the study indicates that *Mato Oput* is mainly applicable to intra-communal disputes and may not adequately address more severe inter-ethnic conflicts, such as those involving mass violence, where the *Gomo Tong* ceremony is utilised

instead. This suggests that traditional reconciliation practices may struggle to adapt to contemporary societal dynamics characterised by complex and large-scale conflicts.

The relevance of Mwaka and Obol's findings extends to the current investigation of the church's peacebuilding strategies in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan. The emphasis on individual accountability and community involvement in *Mato Oput* resonates with the church's potential role in mediating inter-clan disputes. However, the study's limitations warrant attention; its exclusive focus on Acholi indigenous practices may restrict the applicability of its findings to other ethnic groups in South Sudan. Additionally, the lack of exploration into the interplay between traditional practices and contemporary peacebuilding initiatives, including those undertaken by religious institutions, suggest a need for broader contextual analysis. Overall, integrating these insights can inform more culturally sensitive and effective reconciliation mechanisms in conflict-affected regions, underscoring the importance of addressing communal needs and the complexities of modern conflicts.

On the other hand, in Rwanda, the Gacaca courts system serves as a significant model for conflict resolution, as critically examined in the study conducted by Ugorji (2019). Utilising secondary data, the study draws valuable lessons from the implementation and effectiveness of the Gacaca courts. Two key insights emerge: first, the necessity of adapting conflict resolution practices to align with local cultural contexts rather than imposing Western models that may not resonate with the socio-cultural realities of non-Western societies. Second, the identification and empowerment of local peace agents, or "peace constituencies," are essential. These individuals, exemplified by the ordinary judges (*Inyangamugayo*) within the Gacaca courts, possess the capacity to foster peace and bridge divides within their communities. Ugorji advocates for support from local governments, civil society, and donor agencies for these grassroots peacemakers, emphasizing a community-driven approach to conflict resolution over reliance on external experts.

The insights from Ugorji's study are particularly relevant to the current investigation of peacebuilding strategies employed by the church in resolving inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan. By underscoring the importance of contextualizing peacebuilding efforts within local cultures and leveraging community-based actors, the study highlights

parallels with the church's role as a community institution capable of mobilizing resources and facilitating dialogue among conflicting clans. However, the study's reliance on secondary data suggests a limitation, as it may overlook the nuanced perspectives of primary stakeholders involved in the conflict resolution process. This indicates a need for the current study to incorporate primary data, allowing for a richer understanding of how the church's strategies align with or differ from indigenous methods such as the Gacaca courts. Ultimately, Ugorji's findings reinforce the necessity of culturally sensitive approaches in peacebuilding, providing a framework for analyzing how the church can effectively contribute to resolving inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan.

Additionally, a study conducted in Burundi by Muchiri et al. (2019) investigated the role of the Bashingantahe Institution in nurturing good governance and socio-economic development, focusing on its historical context and contemporary challenges. Data collection utilized various methods, including survey questionnaires, interview guides, observations, and focus group discussions. The findings revealed that the Bashingantahe Institution plays a significant role in maintaining social cohesion and restoring peace within communities. Also in their judicial functions, they facilitate reconciliation, authenticate contracts, ensure security, provide political guidance, and promote human rights. The relevance of this study lies in its emphasis on indigenous governance structures and conflict resolution methods. Thus, both the Bashingantahe and the Church serve as vital community institutions capable of fostering reconciliation and social cohesion.

The findings, therefore, underscore the importance of local cultural practices in peacebuilding, suggesting that similar traditional approaches could enhance the church's effectiveness in conflict resolution. However, the study does have some shortcomings, particularly its geographical constraints, which may not fully capture the broader dynamics of peacebuilding in Rumbek County, South Sudan. Furthermore, the reliance on self-reported data may introduce a bias, especially regarding perceptions of corruption and the effectiveness of the Bashingantahe Institution.

In Kenya, Chepkorir (2019) emphasised the importance of religious methods, including workshops, negotiations, mediations, and confessions, in peacebuilding efforts; however, she

noted that these approaches were not consistently applied across communities. The-inconsistency could hinder the effectiveness of such interventions in fostering lasting peace. Similarly, the research conducted by Korir, Koech, and Ayanga (2022) highlighted the role of dialogue, seminars, and cultural events based on the Humanitarian Response Model in mitigating violence in Kenya. While these findings provide valuable insights into effective peacebuilding strategies, they may not directly translate to the South Sudan context due to differing cultural, social, and political dynamics. The relevance of these studies lies in their demonstration of the potential for religious and community-based interventions to facilitate peace. However, both studies share limitations in their applicability beyond the Kenya context, as they primarily focus on local practices without considering how these strategies might be adapted to fit the unique circumstances of South Sudan. Thus, while these studies offer a foundation for understanding peacebuilding methods, they also highlight the necessity of contextualising interventions to address the specific needs and realities of conflict-affected communities in South Sudan.

Lastly, Apugi (2017) examined faith-based organisations (FBOs) in Juba, South Sudan, revealing their involvement in mediation and peace dialogues but highlighting challenges like inadequate funding and political interference. This study, based on qualitative data from three FBOs, suggested that increased resources and training could enhance peacebuilding efforts. The present study builds on this by employing a mixed-methods approach with a larger sample size of 346 respondents, offering a more comprehensive analysis of the Church's peacebuilding strategies and their impact in Rumbek East County.

2.3.5 Challenges faced by the Church in Peace Building

The church encounters numerous challenges in its peacebuilding efforts, which can significantly impede its effectiveness. Mwagiru (2018) identifies critical issues such as the limited ability of religious leaders to apply peacebuilding theories effectively, a lack of trust from groups resistant to the integration of religion with peacebuilding initiatives, and perceptions of proselytizing that hinder collaboration. These challenges illustrate the complexity of implementing peacebuilding strategies within religious contexts, highlighting the need for greater clarity and sensitivity in approach. For instance, the historical mistrust between certain

communities and religious organisations may lead to skepticism regarding the church's intentions, particularly in areas where inter-religious tensions are prevalent.

Research by Netanyahu and Susanto (2022) on rising intolerance in Indonesia reveals how exclusivist sentiments among specific Muslim groups create divisions and hinder societal cohesion. The study highlights how intolerance undermines peacebuilding initiatives and exacerbates religious tensions, as seen during the Jakarta Governor's election in 2017, which was marked by significant religious and ethnic polarization. While these findings are crucial, they are specific to Indonesia's Islamic environment and may not fully capture the experiences of other religious groups or broader global contexts. This indicates a pressing need for research into how such challenges manifest in different settings, particularly in regions with distinct historical and cultural backgrounds.

Similarly, Oyedele (2019) examines obstacles faced by local governance institutions in Southwestern Nigeria, including a lack of shared vision, financial constraints, and poor communication networks. These insights are valuable but may not directly apply to South Sudan, where differing contextual factors, such as historical grievances stemming from decades of conflict and ethnic dynamics, play a significant role. For instance, the South Sudanese Civil War, marked by ethnic rivalries, has complicated the peacebuilding landscape, making it imperative to conduct more targeted research that addresses the unique challenges faced by churches in the region. Moreover, Oyedele's focus on local governance rather than church-specific issues suggests that further investigation is needed to explore how churches can navigate these challenges effectively.

Angom and Angom (2018) discuss the abductions and forced recruitment by Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in Northern Uganda, noting how religious indoctrination was employed to separate recruits from their communities. Although the conflict itself was not motivated by religion, the use of religious rhetoric illustrates the complex interplay between religion and violence. This dynamic presents additional challenges for the Church, as it may be perceived as complicit in or ineffective against the manipulation of religious ideology by violent groups. Furthermore, Korir et al. (2022) highlight that inadequate and short-term funding hampers peacebuilding efforts in Kenya. This issue may resonate with churches in South Sudan,

where limited resources significantly impact their capacity to implement sustainable peace initiatives.

Overall, these studies underscore the importance of context-specific research to address the challenges faced by churches in peacebuilding, particularly in conflict-affected regions like South Sudan. Recognising and understanding these challenges can inform more effective strategies for collaboration between religious organisations and communities, ultimately contributing to a more stable and peaceful society.

2.4 Research Gap

The existing research on peacebuilding, particularly within the context of clan conflicts and the role of the church in conflict resolution, reveals several notable gaps. Firstly, there is a geographical gap in the current body of research. Studies such as Lamidi (2021) and Ajayi and Buhari (2015) primarily focus on peacebuilding efforts within specific regions, such as Southwestern Nigeria. However, these findings may not fully capture the complexities and dynamics of conflict resolution in other regions, such as Rumbek East County, Lakes State, and South Sudan. Thus, there is need for research that examines peacebuilding strategies within diverse geographical contexts to provide a comprehensive understanding of effective approaches across different regions.

A methodological gap in peacebuilding research is evident, characterised by a prevalence of qualitative studies and a scarcity of quantitative approaches. While qualitative methodologies excel in capturing intricate social and contextual dynamics, they often lack the statistical rigour needed for broader generalisations and quantitative analysis. Similarly, the limited use of quantitative studies restrict the ability to systematically measure and evaluate the effectiveness of peacebuilding strategies. This gap impedes a comprehensive understanding of peacebuilding efforts, leaving key questions unanswered regarding their impact on conflict resolution outcomes. Closing this methodological gap is vital for advancing peacebuilding research and providing evidence-based guidance for policymaking and practice.

Moreover, there exists a contextual gap in the current research landscape. Netanyahu and Susanto (2022) investigate peacebuilding challenges in Indonesia, emphasizing the role of

cultural identity in shaping conflict dynamics. Their findings reveal that cultural practices can either facilitate or hinder peace efforts, underlining the necessity of local community involvement in peace processes. Successful initiatives often stem from grassroots participation, ensuring that the perspectives and needs of local populations are adequately represented. The study also stresses the importance of government engagement, identifying challenges related to bureaucratic processes and the political will of local authorities.

Similarly, Oyedele (2019) examines peacebuilding in Southwestern Nigeria, where ethnic diversity complicates the peace process and inequitable resource allocation fosters mistrust among communities. This study highlights the effectiveness of community-led initiatives and the role of education in promoting conflict resolution. However, both studies ultimately underscore the need for further research into specific contexts such as South Sudan, where unique local dynamics significantly impact peacebuilding efforts. Understanding these challenges is crucial in informing targeted interventions and enhancing the effectiveness of the Church's peacebuilding initiatives.

In summary, the existing research lack comprehensive exploration of peacebuilding strategies across diverse geographical contexts, rigorous mixed-methods approaches, understanding of contextual factors influencing peacebuilding efforts, and examination of challenges faced by the Church in conflict resolution. Addressing these gaps would contribute to the development of more effective and contextually relevant peacebuilding strategies, particularly within regions affected by inter-clan conflicts like Rumbek East County, Lakes State, South Sudan.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

This study is grounded in a conceptual framework displayed in Figure 2.1, highlighting independent variables such as the nature of inter-clan conflicts, peacebuilding strategies, challenges encountered by the Church, and the Church's peacebuilding approaches. These variables are pivotal in exploring the dependent variable, which represents the status of inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lakes State, South Sudan.

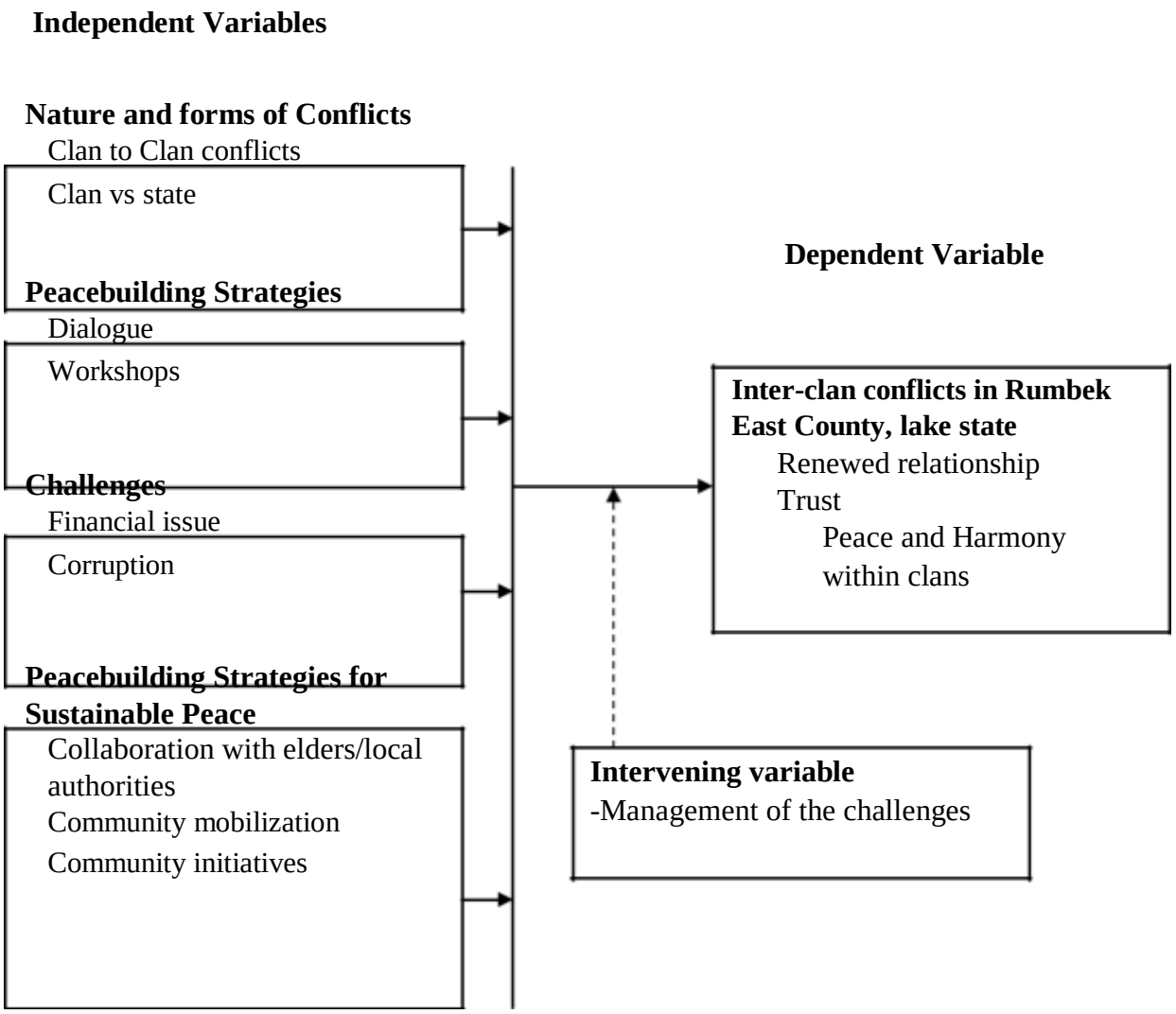


Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

The detailed categorization of conflicts into clan-to-clan and state versus clans provides a nuanced understanding of the inter-clan conflict landscape. The Church's peacebuilding strategies, including dialogues, workshops, seminars, and sports events, are central to the evaluation of conflict resolution efforts. Challenges, ranging from financial issues to corruption, act as influential factors impacting the efficacy of the Church's peacebuilding initiatives. The Church's collaborative efforts with elders, local authorities, and community mobilization are scrutinized for their contribution to conflict mitigation.

Intervening variables, focusing on the management of challenges, enriches the comprehension of these dynamic interactions. The dependent variable gauges the status of inter-clan conflicts, encompassing renewed relationships, trust, peace and harmony levels within clans, sustainability of peace, and conflict resolution.

The specific research objectives, aligned with these variables, aim to examine the nature of conflict, evaluate the Church's peacebuilding strategies, assess challenges faced by the Church, and establish ways for the Church to contribute to sustainable peacebuilding. As a result, the research objectives are intertwined in the conceptual framework, providing a holistic perspective to unravel the complex interplay among the independent, dependent, and intervening variables in the context of inter-clan conflicts and the Church's role in fostering peace in Rumbek East County, Lakes State, and South Sudan.

The anticipated outcome was to provide findings that would shape policy initiatives aimed at promoting peace and stability in the region. These findings would serve as guidance for policymakers, Church leaders, and community members in supporting and sustaining effective peacebuilding efforts. Ultimately, the study highlights the pivotal role of the Church in achieving sustainable peace within the context of Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan. It offers actionable recommendations to enhance the Church's impact and address the challenges hindering its peacebuilding initiatives, thereby contributing to long-term peace and stability in the region.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a detailed overview of the research design, data collection methods, sampling strategies, and instruments used in the study. It outlines the use of both primary and secondary data sources, including survey questionnaires and interview guides. The chapter also describes the sampling methods employed to select participants, and the data analysis techniques applied to interpret the findings. Furthermore, it discusses the rigorous ethical considerations and procedures implemented to ensure the validity and reliability of the research. Overall, this chapter sets the foundation for a credible and methodologically sound research process.

3.2 Research Design

The study employed a mixed-methods research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive analysis of the role of the church in resolving clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan. A mixed-methods design, as defined by Creswell and Creswell (2017), combines the strengths of both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of the research problem. The quantitative component involved the use of survey questionnaires to gather measurable data on conflict frequency, Church interventions, and community perceptions, enabling the study to identify patterns and relationships within the data. The qualitative component, utilizing semi-structured interviews, provided in-depth insights into the lived experiences of community members and church leaders, allowing for the exploration of subjective perspectives and complex dynamics that could not be captured by the quantitative methods alone.

The choice of this design was driven by the need to comprehensively examine the complexity of clan conflicts and the multifaceted role of the church in peacebuilding efforts. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods enabled the study to triangulate its findings, enhancing the validity and reliability of the results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). By capturing both statistical trends and personal narratives, the study offered a more holistic and balanced view of the phenomenon under investigation.

The selection of Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan as the study location was informed by its historical context, characterized by protracted conflicts, particularly between South Sudan and Sudan. This region's history of inter-clan tensions, driven by resource competition and socio-political factors, provided a compelling setting to explore how the church peacebuilding initiatives address these deeply rooted conflicts. The area's ongoing struggles with violence and instability made it an ideal case for examining the effectiveness of religious institutions in conflict resolution and community reconciliation.

3.1 The Study Area

The study was undertaken in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan, which was one of the areas significantly affected by the protracted conflict between South Sudan and Sudan. Rumbek East County's influential role of the church, cultural diversity, and broader relevance to South Sudan made it an ideal and significant location for studying the role of the Church in resolving clan conflicts.

The selection of Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan as the study location was based on its historical context shaped by conflicts between South Sudan and Sudan. The impact of the intractable conflicts in this county offered valuable insights into the complexities of clan conflicts and peacebuilding challenges. Additionally, the influential role of the Church in Rumbek East County, coupled with its cultural diversity, presented an ideal setting to explore the Church's interventions in resolving clan conflicts.

The findings of this study were expected to have broader implications for South Sudan's peacebuilding strategies, making Rumbek East County a significant location for this research.

3.2 Target Population

The study specifically targeted church members or congregants (both men and women), clergy (pastors, priests), church leaders, elders, and opinion leaders in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan.

Members of the Church or congregants (both men and women) were considered as the main respondents in the study by virtue of their membership to the selected churches. On the other hand, the clergy and Church leaders were selected for key informant interviews. According to

Johnson (2017), clergy members can provide vital information about the church and background to form the basis of the study. In particular, the clergy and church leaders provided insight into how the Church has been intervening in clan conflicts. Elders and opinion leaders were also recruited into the study as key informants because they have in-depth knowledge of the community's history.

3.3 Sampling Size and Sampling Technique

3.5.1 Determination of Sample Size

The total population of Rumbek East County is 122,832 (South Sudan Central Bureau of Statistics). The County is further sub-divided into 8 Payams (Divisions). The focus narrowed to Cuei Cok and Malengagook, 2 of the 7 Payams, representing 13,000 individuals and around 3,500 households. The research confined itself to these two Payams, where the problem was most prevalent. Aligned with Krejci and Morgan's (1970) formula, the recommended sample size was 346, evenly distributed among church members in the specified Payams, ensuring a well-rounded view of community dynamics.

Key respondents, forming a targeted group, included 2 clergy members, 4 church leaders, 4 elders, and 2 opinion leaders, distributed across Cuei Cok and Malengagook. Following Braun and Clarke's (2021) qualitative inquiry guidelines, this intentional sample size of 12 ensured data saturation and depth in the qualitative analysis. In summary, the study relied on a sample size of 358, including main and key respondents as summarized in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1Sample Size

Sample Group	Respondent type	Cuei Kok	Malengakok	Total
Church Members	Main	173	173	346
Clergy	Key	1	1	2
Church leaders	Key	2	2	4
Elders	Key	2	2	4
Opinion leaders	Key	1	1	2
Total		**179**	**179**	**358**

3.5.2 Sampling Techniques

The study employed mainly stratified and purposive sampling techniques. Stratified sampling, a probability-based method, was used to select respondents from two distinct areas: Cuiei Cok and Malengagook.

Stratified sampling was preferred because of its ability to split the population into homogeneous sub-groups, such as Cuiei Cok and Malengagook, based on pertinent characteristics such as geographical location. This strategy guaranteed that each sub-group was adequately represented, improving the accuracy and dependability of findings while reducing bias by assuring proportionate representation regardless of population size. Furthermore, it enabled the independent study of data from various places, allowing for a more nuanced understanding of variances and assisting in the formulation of targeted interventions or policy suggestions for specific groups or regions.

The second sampling technique, purposive sampling, was used as the preferred method for selecting key respondents, aligning with the research objectives. As emphasized by Johnson (2017), clergy members provided foundational information about the Church's influence in mediating clan conflicts, while church leaders, elders, and opinion leaders offered valuable insights into broader church-community engagement, historical and cultural dynamics, and traditional conflict resolution practices. This approach enhanced the study's depth, ensuring a nuanced exploration of the multifaceted role of the Church in addressing clan conflicts within the community.

3.4 Data Collection Instruments

Data for the study was collected from both primary and secondary sources. Secondary data was sourced from documented materials such as academic journals, books, government reports, internet sources, and conference papers. These provided a background and theoretical framework, offering insights into the broader socio-political context of inter-clan conflicts and the role of the Church in peacebuilding in Rumbek East County, Lakes State, South Sudan.

For primary data collection, the study employed survey questionnaires and interview schedule; both selected based on their relevance and effectiveness in collecting comprehensive data. The survey questionnaire served as the primary tool for collecting quantitative data and was structured to capture information on respondents' demographic characteristics, causes of inter-clan conflicts, and the church involvement in conflict resolution efforts. Survey questionnaires are widely recognized for their ability to gather large amounts of data efficiently and systematically (Kothari, 2019).

In addition, semi-structured interview schedules were used to collect qualitative data from key informants such as community leaders, church officials, and local government representatives. The interview schedule was chosen for its flexibility, allowing respondents to express their views in more depth, which is essential for exploring complex social issues such as conflict resolution (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). This mixed-methods approach, combining both survey questionnaires and interviews, ensured a rich and nuanced understanding of the research topic. The integration of these instruments allowed for triangulation, enhancing the validity and reliability of the findings.

3.5 Pilot Study

The pilot study for this research aimed to evaluate and refine the questionnaire's effectiveness prior to the actual research. Conducted with a sample of 10 primary respondents from communities adjacent to the target population in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan, this phase was critical in ensuring the questionnaire's clarity, relevance, and overall functionality. These communities were strategically chosen for their similar demographic characteristics, allowing the feedback gathered to accurately reflect the broader context of the research area.

During the pilot phase, participants were encouraged to share their insights regarding various aspects of the survey questionnaire, including the clarity of questions, the appropriateness of response options, and the overall flow of the survey. This feedback was essential for identifying ambiguities, biases, and areas of confusion within the instrument. For instance, certain questions were rephrased to enhance clarity, adjust the structure of the survey questionnaire and response options were modified based on participant input to better capture their experiences.

The insights gained from the pilot study played a vital role in refining the research instruments. Specific modifications included rephrasing questions for better comprehension, ensuring that response options were exhaustive and relevant. The aim of the pilot study was to ensure best practices in research methodology, which advocate for preliminary testing of instruments to enhance reliability and validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). By implementing these adjustments based on pilot study findings, the research team aimed to improve the overall quality of data collection, ultimately leading to more accurate and meaningful results in the full-scale study.

3.6 Validity and Reliability

3.6.1 Validity of the Research Instruments

The validity of the research instrument was rigorously assessed using a comprehensive set of methodologies to ensure its precision and effectiveness. In the quantitative phase, content validity was established through expert review, which involved a meticulous evaluation of the instrument's items to verify that they adequately addressed the constructs of interest and aligned with the study's objectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Feedback from academic mentors and supervisors was also incorporated to refine the instrument, addressing potential biases and gaps.

In the qualitative phase, validity was further enhanced through member checking and expert validation. Member checking entailed presenting preliminary findings to participants to confirm the accuracy and relevance of the data, ensuring their perspectives were accurately represented (Motulsky, 2021). Expert validation involved consulting specialists in qualitative research to evaluate the instrument's alignment with the conceptual framework and research questions. This methodological rigour and contextual relevance ensured that the research instrument effectively captured the necessary data and fulfilled the study's objectives.

3.6.2 Reliability of the Research Instruments

To assess the reliability of the questionnaire used in the study on the Inter-Church Committee's role in resolving inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan, a test-retest method was employed. This involved administering the questionnaire to 10 respondents from key communities during a pilot phase. The responses were recorded, and after a one-week

interval, the same questionnaire was re-administered to the same respondents, with the second set of responses also recorded. The reliability of the instrument was then evaluated by calculating the correlation coefficients between the initial and retest scores. A reliability coefficient of above 0.7 was targeted to ensure a high level of consistency in responses across the two administrations (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Achieving this threshold confirmed that the questionnaires reliably measured the constructs related to the Inter-Church Committee's role in conflict resolution. This rigorous assessment of reliability enhanced the validity and robustness of the data collected, thereby improving the overall quality and credibility of the study's findings and conclusions.

In the qualitative phase of the study on the Inter-Church Committee's role in resolving inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan, several rigorous methods were used to ensure data reliability. The prolonged engagement involved spending extensive time in the field to deeply understand both the inter-clan conflicts and the committee's role, allowing for a comprehensive grasp of the situation (Motulsky, 2021). Reflexivity was practised to address potential researcher biases, ensuring that the data collection and analysis remained objective and impartial (Boudah, 2019). Additionally, triangulation was employed by integrating multiple data sources and methods, including interviews, focus groups, and observations. This approach helped to validate and corroborate the findings, enhancing their credibility (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Together, these methods ensured that the qualitative data accurately reflected participants' perspectives and strengthened the overall credibility of the research findings.

3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative analyses to thoroughly examine the role of the Inter-Church Committee in resolving inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS (version 26), applying descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and standard deviations to effectively summarize the data. These statistical measures provided a detailed overview of respondents' demographic characteristics, level of church involvement, and the outcomes of the conflict resolution initiatives. The results were presented visually, using

graphs to illustrate trends and relationships within the data, such as the frequency of Church-mediated interventions and their perceived effectiveness (Kothari, 2019).

In addition to descriptive statistics, regression analysis was performed to investigate the relationship between key variables, including the extent of church involvement and the success of conflict resolution efforts. This analysis identified the strength and direction of associations between variables such as education levels, economic conditions, and peacebuilding outcomes, enabling the study to quantify the impact of increased church participation on conflict resolution success. The use of regression analysis provided a deeper understanding of potential causal relationships, offering predictive insights into how factors such as community engagement and resource allocation might influence future peacebuilding efforts. This analytical approach reinforced the church's significant role in fostering reconciliation and sustainable peace (Kothari, 2019; Creswell, 2014).

On the qualitative side, data from interviews and focus group discussions were thematically analysed to explore the Church's role in resolving inter-clan conflicts. The process began with familiarization, where the researcher reviewed transcripts and noted key ideas. Systematic coding followed, labelling significant concepts within the data. These codes were organised into broader themes, including "Mediation and Dialogue Facilitation" and "Spiritual Guidance in Peacebuilding." These themes were refined to ensure coherence and accurately reflect participants' insights. Findings were presented through these well-defined themes, supported by direct narratives from the respondents. The study linked these themes to broader conflict resolution frameworks, highlighting the Church's role in fostering reconciliation and social cohesion.

By integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches, the findings were triangulated, offering both statistical data and in-depth insights. This combination provided a holistic understanding of the research objectives, enhancing the validity and reliability of the conclusions drawn about the church’s involvement in managing inter-clan conflicts. Furthermore, quantitative analysis offered measurable data on conflict frequency and intervention effectiveness, while qualitative analysis illuminated the dynamics of church engagement and its challenges in peacebuilding efforts.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

In this study, the researcher adhered to a rigorous ethical framework designed to ensure respectful and fair treatment of all participants. Initially, ethical clearance was sought from St. Paul's Institutional Scientific & Ethics Review Committee (SPU-ISERC), which involved a comprehensive review of the research proposal to evaluate potential risks and ethical considerations. Following this, approvals were obtained from the Republic of South Sudan, Northern Bahr El-Ghazal State-Aweil, Ministry of General Education and Instruction for Research and the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). The researcher also sought endorsement from the Inter-Church Committee to foster collaboration with relevant religious institutions, ensuring that the research aligned with community values and gained local support. This thorough process underscores a commitment to ethical cooperation and highlights the importance of transparency and accountability in the research undertaking.

To protect the rights and confidentiality of the participants, several key measures were rigorously implemented. Pseudonyms were assigned to all respondents to ensure their anonymity throughout the research process, thereby safeguarding their identities. Sensitive information was managed and stored securely, accessible only to the research team, which further reinforced participant confidentiality. Participation in the study was explicitly voluntary, with informed consent obtained from each participant before data collection commenced. Participants received detailed information regarding the study's purpose, procedures, and their right to withdraw at any time without any victimization. The guiding principle of "do no harm" was prioritised, ensuring the safety and well-being of participants. Continuous monitoring of participants' comfort levels allowed for immediate intervention if any concerns arose, reinforcing the researcher’s commitment to ethical integrity and the welfare of all individuals involved in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH FINDINGS, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This study delves into the Inter-Church Committee's pivotal role in addressing inter-clan conflicts within Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan. This chapter analyses the research findings, focusing on the committee's mediation impact, identifying encountered challenges, and proposing strategies for enhancing its peacebuilding efforts. Also presented in this chapter is the response rate and demographic characteristics of the respondents.

4.2 Response Rate

Table 4.1Response Rate

Questionnaires	**Number**	**Percentage**
Returned	332	96.0
Not Returned	14	4.0
Issued	**346**	100.0

Source: Researcher (2024).

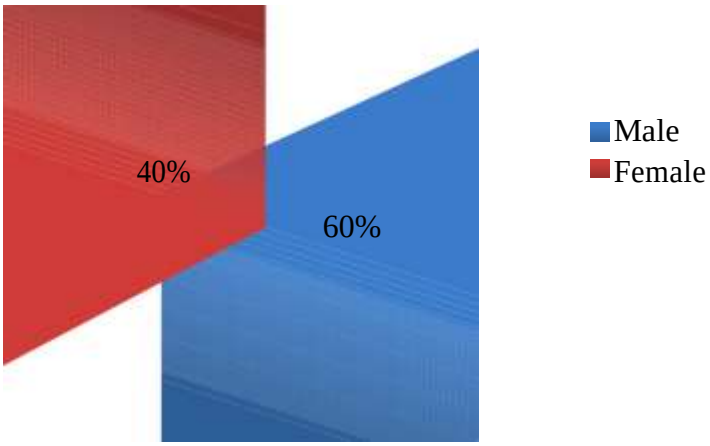
The findings presented in Table 4 reveal an impressive overall response rate of 96%. Out of 346 questionnaires issued, 332 were successfully returned. This response rate notably exceeds the benchmarks established by Adams and McGuire (2022), who categorise response rates of 50% as adequate, 60% as good, and rates above 70% as excellent. The high participation rate underscores the significance of survey response dynamics, where individuals are more likely to engage when they perceive the benefits of participation outweigh the costs. Although achieving a perfect 100% response rate is uncommon, striving for higher rates is crucial, especially with large sample sizes. In this study, the 96% response rate highlights exceptional cooperation from respondents, likely facilitated by factors such as clear communication, confidentiality assurances, incentives, and personalised engagement. These elements significantly contributed to the robustness and generalizability of the study.

4.3 Demographic Data

The primary participants in this study were individuals affiliated with various churches, comprising both men and women, selected based on their membership within these religious congregations. These participants were categorized according to several demographic factors, including gender, age, educational background, duration of residence in the area, and occupation

4.3.1 Gender

Figure 4.1 provides a summary of respondents distribution by gender, reflecting the multifaceted rationale for considering gender in this study. Firstly, acknowledging gender stratification recognizes potential variations in perspectives and experiences within religious contexts between men and women. Moreover, gender consideration is crucial for identifying which gender, male or female church members, might be more impacted by inter-ethnic conflicts in the study area. The intertwining dynamics of gender, conflict, and peacebuilding underscore the significance of examining these variables in tandem, enhancing the study's depth and contextual understanding.



Source: Researcher (2024)

Figure 4.1Gender of Respondents

Figure 4.1 illustrates a gender distribution within the sample population, revealing a significant imbalance with 60% male and 40% female respondents. This disparity suggests that cultural and social norms heavily influence participation dynamics, where traditional gender roles position

men as primary decision-makers in households and community affairs. The method of surveying respondents at their homes likely contributed to this gender distribution, as entrenched societal expectations shape who is more likely to engage in such interactions. As noted by Eckhardt et al. (2021), traditional gender roles often render men more available and inclined to participate in external inquiries, further skewing representation toward male voices.

In order to address this gender imbalance, the candidate employed targeted recruitment strategies aimed at fostering female participation. These strategies included outreach to women's groups and community leaders, alongside organising separate in-depth interviews to create a safe space for women to share their perspectives. While these efforts sought to capture a more diverse range of experiences, the higher representation of male participants still posed a challenge to fully understand the complexities of women's experiences related to church participation and conflict resolution.

Previous studies have similarly highlighted gender disparities in participation rates, underscoring the necessity for more equitable representation to accurately reflect the multifaceted nature of community dynamics. The marginalization of women within ecclesial matters, as discussed by Kariuki (2016), further illuminating this imbalance as indicative of pervasive patriarchal structures that perpetuate male dominance in social institutions. Consequently, recognising these dynamics is vital for a nuanced interpretation of the findings, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of how both men and women can contribute to conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts in such settings as Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan.

Overall, the observed gender distribution underscores the complex interplay between cultural norms, gender roles, and survey methodology in shaping patterns of participation. The observed gender distribution reflected the significant influence of cultural norms and gender roles. Traditional practices often place men in more visible leadership and conflict resolution roles, leading to higher representation in the study. Women, while crucial in community support and informal conflict resolution, may have been underrepresented due to their less prominent roles in formal settings and potential barriers to participation. The survey methodology also influenced gender distribution. Methods such as public meetings and interviews may have

inadvertently favoured male participation, affecting the gender balance of the sample. Recognising these factors was crucial for accurately interpreting the gender representation within the study. Understanding how these dynamics impact the roles and effectiveness of both men and women in conflict resolution was essential for drawing meaningful conclusions and ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the study's findings.

4.3.2 Respondents' Age

The study highlights the significance of age in shaping conflict experiences and resolution strategies, as older individuals may approach conflicts differently, due to their life experiences and problem-solving skills. The age distribution of participants is detailed in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2Distribution of Respondents according to their Age Groups

Age group	Frequency	Percentage
20-29	105	31.6
30-40	132	39.8
Above 40	95	28.6
Total	**332**	**100.0**

Source: Researcher (2024).

The distribution of respondents by age group in this study reveals a rich demographic composition that reflects the diverse perspectives within the community. Individuals aged between 30-40 years constitute the largest proportion, accounting for nearly 39.8% of the total respondents. This age segment typically encompasses individuals in their prime working and family-building years, combining energy and experience that significantly influence their engagement in conflict resolution efforts. The strong representation of respondents aged between 20-29 years, comprising 31.6% of the sample, indicates a vital presence of younger adults who can infuse fresh ideas and innovative approaches into addressing inter-clan conflicts. This finding aligns with previous studies by Ajayi and Buhari (2015) and Ademowo (2017), which emphasise the importance of youth involvement in peacebuilding processes, as they often challenge traditional norms with adaptive strategies that reflect contemporary challenges.

Meanwhile, the representation of individuals over 40 years, though slightly smaller at nearly 29%, adds considerable value to the study. Older respondents bring a wealth of life experiences and well-established social networks that inform their perspectives on conflict management and peacebuilding. Their insights can provide seasoned approaches to navigating complex community dynamics. This observation resonates with Ademowo's (2017) findings, which underscore the critical role of older generations in mediating conflicts and sustaining social cohesion, often stemming from their institutional memory and legitimacy within their communities. Various factors may contribute to this age distribution, including demographic trends, accessibility challenges for older age groups in survey participation, and the distinct impacts of inter-clan conflicts across different life stages.

The findings highlight the significance of incorporating diverse generational perspectives into conflict resolution initiatives. Younger adults bring innovative approaches to tackle contemporary challenges, while older individuals offer deep insights rooted in their extensive life experiences and historical knowledge, which provide a comprehensive understanding of traditional practices and long-term community dynamics. In this study, the integration of youthful innovation and seasoned wisdom emerged as essential for developing effective conflict resolution strategies. By emphasizing age-related dynamics, the study underscores the importance of an inclusive approach that addresses the needs and contributions of all age groups. This not only enhances the effectiveness of conflict resolution and peacebuilding initiatives but also ensures that these efforts are both forward-thinking and grounded in historical contexts, fostering sustainable peace in the community.

4.3.3 Level of Education

The study sought to assess the level of education of respondents, recognizing its importance in understanding their perspectives and capabilities in conflict management and peacebuilding. Educational attainment can significantly influence an individual's approach to conflict resolution, critical thinking skills, and the ability to engage in effective communication and strategic planning. Table 4.3 summarises the findings.

Table 4.3Level of Education

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage
Primary	66	20
Secondary	66	20
Tertiary	199	60
Total	**332**	**100**

Source: Researcher (2024).

The study's assessment of educational attainment among respondents revealed a noteworthy distribution, with 60% holding tertiary education, while 20% had primary and secondary education, respectively. This education profile can be partially attributed to the significant presence of international NGOs and aid organisations in South Sudan, which focus on providing educational opportunities and scholarships to mitigate the impact of inadequate national educational policies. Additionally, the role of the church and community-based organisations in promoting education is crucial, as these institutions often prioritise higher education for their members. However, it is important to consider that the over-representation of individuals with higher education may introduce sample bias, as those with greater educational attainment are likely to be more available and willing to participate in surveys.

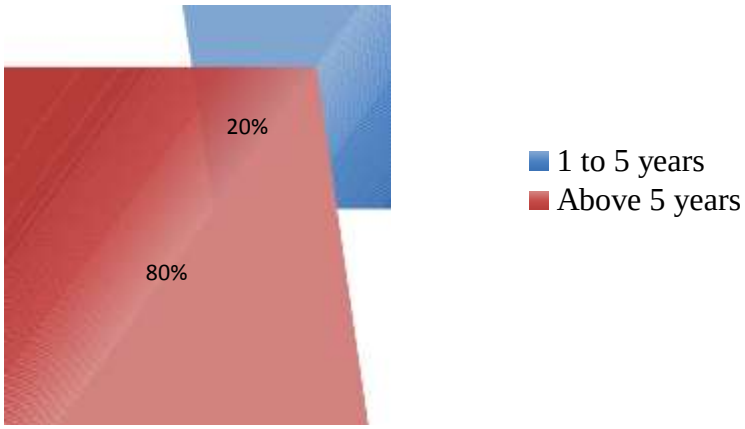
The educational distribution of participants in the present study carries significant implications for the Inter-Church Committee's efforts to address inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan. The presence of a well-educated respondent pool suggests that the community possesses advanced problem-solving capabilities and a nuanced understanding of conflict dynamics. This finding aligns with previous research by Ekpenyong and Okoi (2018) and Lamidi (2021) which noted that educational initiatives supported by community organisations lead to improved conflict resolution outcomes. In these studies, higher educational attainment was associated with enhanced community engagement and the development of effective peacebuilding strategies. This blend of educational backgrounds

underscores the necessity for an inclusive approach that values diverse perspectives, ensuring that conflict resolution strategies are both analytically robust and culturally relevant.

Overall, the findings underscore the importance of leveraging the educational strengths within the community to foster effective conflict management and peacebuilding strategies. By incorporating diverse perspectives and knowledge bases, the Inter-Church Committee can enhance its ability to navigate the complexities of inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan. This inclusive approach not only facilitates a deeper understanding of the local context but also empowers the community to take ownership of conflict resolution processes. As the study demonstrates, a well-educated populace can play a vital role in fostering sustainable peace, reinforcing the necessity for ongoing educational initiatives and community engagement in addressing the multifaceted challenges posed by inter-clan conflicts in South Sudan.

4.3.4 Length of Stay in the Area

The study also delved into an examination of the respondents' length of stay in the area. This aspect offered crucial insights into the level of familiarity and connection respondents have with the local context, particularly concerning inter-clan conflicts and peacebuilding efforts. The findings are summarised in figure 4.2 below:



Source: Researcher (2024)

Figure 4.2Length of stay in the area

Figure 4.2 reveals that 20% of respondents have resided in the area for 1 to 5 years, while the majority, comprising 80%, have lived there for more than 5 years. This distribution suggests a significant level of long-term residency among respondents, indicating a deep-rooted connection to the area. Possible interpretations of these findings could include stability within the community, with a residents having established roots and enduring ties to the locality. Additionally, the higher percentage of individuals residing for over 5 years may signify a greater familiarity with local dynamics, including inter-clan conflicts, which could influence their perspectives and experiences regarding conflict resolution efforts. Understanding this distribution aided in contextualising the responses and viewpoints gathered in the study, enriching the depth and validity of the findings regarding the Inter-Church Committee's role in resolving inter-clan conflicts.

The present findings confirmed that long-term residency plays a crucial role in enriching the depth and validity of insights related to conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Residents who have lived in Rumbek East County for extended periods possess a profound understanding of local dynamics, including historical inter-clan conflicts and evolving community relationships. Their extensive experience provides a more nuanced perspective on the effectiveness of the Inter-Church Committee's efforts, as they are well-acquainted with the underlying issues and long-standing tensions. This deep-rooted connection to the area allows these individuals to offer informed and relevant feedback, enhancing the accuracy and reliability of the study's findings.

4.3.5 Occupation

The findings on respondents' occupations reveal a varied distribution within the sample population. Among the respondents, 30% of the individuals reported being employed, 20% were self-employed, and 50% were not employed. This distribution suggests a diverse range of occupational statuses among the surveyed population.



Source: Researcher (2024)

Figure 4.3Distribution of Respondents according to their Occupation

From the table 4.3 above, a majority of the employees (50%) were unemployed suggesting a high unemployment rate. Only 30% were employed and the remaining 20% stated that they were self- employed.

4.4 Nature of Inter-Clan Conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan

The presentation of findings on the nature of inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan, delves into the intricate dynamics of these disputes, shedding light on their types, patterns, duration, and the parties involved.

4.4.1 Types of Conflicts

This study sought to explore and analyse the specific types of inter-clan conflicts prevalent in Rumbek East County, South Sudan. The findings are summarised in Table 4.4

Table 4.4Nature of Inter-clan Conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan

Types of conflicts	Frequency	Percentage
Inter-communal/	97	29.2
Cattle Raiding	83	25.0
Resource Based	42	12.5
Gender-Based/Elopement	83	25.0
Others	28	8.3
Total	332	100.0

The findings revealed that inter-communal conflicts are the most frequent, representing 29.2% of the total conflicts (97 instances). These conflicts often stem from historical grievances and rivalries between clans, exacerbated by competition for political power and influence. Cattle raiding, which constitutes 25.0% of the conflicts (83 instances), is another significant issue. In a region where cattle symbolise wealth and social status, raids and counter-raids frequently result in violence and loss of life, perpetuating the cycle of conflict.

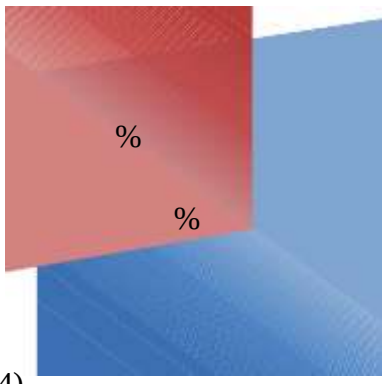
Resource-based conflicts, accounting for 12.5% of the conflicts (42 instances), highlight the critical importance of natural resources such as water, grazing land, and agricultural areas. Scarcity and competition for these resources can quickly escalate into violent disputes. Gender-based conflicts, also comprising 25.0% of the conflicts (83 instances), involve issues related to marriage practices, including elopement and disputes over bride prices, as well as broader societal issues of gender inequality. Lastly, other conflicts, which make up 8.3% of the total (28 instances), include a variety of localised disputes such as land ownership and political disagreements.

The study's findings align with existing research on inter-clan conflicts among the Dinka in South Sudan, particularly regarding disputes over political power, natural resources, and cattle theft. Similar patterns are observed in Rumbek East County, where historical grievances and resource-based conflicts are prevalent. Pendle (2018) and Young (2017) have documented these issues within the Dinka community and Jonglei State, respectively, highlighting how territorial disputes and resource competition drive ongoing conflicts.

The Protracted Social Conflict (PSC) theory by Azar provides a framework for understanding the persistent nature of these conflicts. The theory suggests that conflicts arise from imbalances between state structures and societal needs, leading to power struggles and deprivation. This is evident in Rumbek East County, where historical and resource-related grievances contribute to ongoing strife. The study supports and extends previous research, emphasising the need for comprehensive strategies that address historical, sociocultural, and resource-based issues to achieve lasting peace and stability in South Sudan.

4.4.2 Duration of Conflicts

The study examined how long household heads had lived in the area to determine if residents had sufficient information about inter-clan conflicts over the years. Additionally, it inquired about the duration of these conflicts to provide crucial insights into their longevity, effects, intervention possibilities, resolution effectiveness, and early warning capabilities, as summarised in figure 4.4.



Source: Researcher(2024)

Figure 4.4Duration of the Conflicts

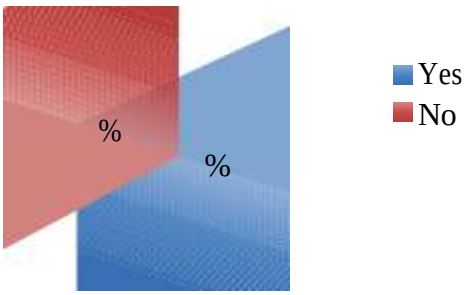
The findings reveal a significant proportion of conflicts in Rumbek East County lasting between 10-14 years (70%) and a smaller fraction extending up to 15 years (30%). This suggests a concerning trend of protracted conflicts in the region. One possible explanation for this prolonged duration could be the entrenched nature of underlying grievances, including historical animosities between clans, competition for resources, and political power struggles. These deep-seated issues may resist quick resolution and require sustained efforts to be addressed comprehensively. Additionally, the absence of effective conflict resolution mechanisms, coupled with limited access to resources and opportunities for dialogue, might contribute to the persistence of conflicts over extended periods.

Applying the Protracted Social Conflict theory to the situation in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan, suggests that the combination of structural inequalities, deep-seated identity

issues, unresolved relational dynamics, and possibly detrimental external influences has likely contributed to the conflict persisting for 10-14 years as reported by the majority of respondents. These factors create a complex web of causes that prevent swift resolution and perpetuate instability and violence over an extended period. Comparing these findings to previous studies, the prevalence of protracted conflicts aligns with broader trends observed in conflicts in other regions (Busalire et al.,2020). However, it is essential to note that the specific dynamics of conflicts, including their causes, duration, and resolution, can vary significantly based on contextual factors such as socio-political dynamics, cultural norms, and historical legacies. Therefore, while the findings in Rumbek East County echo broader patterns of protracted conflicts, nuanced local dynamics must be considered in developing tailored interventions aimed at sustainable peacebuilding.

4.4.3 Whether Involved in the Conflicts

The study also explored whether respondents were directly involved in the conflicts within Rumbek East County, South Sudan. This sought to unravel the extent of personal participation in these disputes, offering insights into the lived experiences of community members amidst turbulent times. The findings are presented in Figure 4.5.



Source: Researcher (2024)

Figure 4.5Have you ever been involved in conflicts?

The study highlights a nuanced landscape of personal involvement in conflicts within Rumbek East County, South Sudan, revealing that 60% of respondents affirm their participation while 40% report no direct engagement. This division reflects the complex nature of conflict dynamics in the region. The majority's acknowledgment of involvement may be attributed to factors such

as proximity to conflict zones, familial ties, and cultural norms that emphasise communal participation. As one respondent noted,

> *"I am involved because my family lives close to the conflict areas and has been directly affected."* (R017, Field Data, 2024)

This statement illustrates how personal and social connections to the conflict zones drive participation.

The findings from the present study mirror findings from Galsim (2022), who observed a similar reluctance to disclose affiliations or involvement in conflicts among participants in the Moro National Liberation Front and Moro Islamic Liberation Front due to fear and stigma. The parallels between these findings highlight how individuals in conflict settings may strategically withhold information or choose not to disclose their involvement due to potential repercussions and socio-political factors, underscoring the complexity of navigating conflict dynamics.

4.4.4 Who is mainly Affected?

Here, the focus is on the demographics of those primarily affected by the conflicts within Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan. This section provides insight into the individuals and groups bearing the brunt of conflict-related hardships, shedding light on the disproportionate impact on certain segments of the population. Through this analysis, the study elucidates the socio-economic, cultural, and gender dimensions of conflict effects, highlighting vulnerable populations and their unique challenges in navigating conflict environments. The findings are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Those mainly affected by the Conflicts

Involved	Frequency	Percentages
Women	83	25.0
Men	18	5.6
Children	55	16.7
Elderly	74	22.2
Youths	55	16.7
Others	46	13.9
Total	332	100.0

The findings from Table 4.5 indicate that various demographic groups are affected by conflicts within Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan. Women constitute the largest proportion of those affected accounting for 25.0% of the total respondents. This suggests that women bear a significant burden of the conflict's impact, potentially experiencing heightened vulnerabilities and challenges in conflict-affected environments. Similarly, the elderly and children represent substantial proportions of those affected, comprising 22.2% and 16.7% of respondents, respectively. This highlights the broader societal impact of conflicts, affecting individuals across different age groups and life stages. Surprisingly, men constitute only a small fraction of those affected, representing 5.6% of respondents. Additionally, youths and other demographic categories each account for 16.7% and 13.9% of those affected, respectively.

Possible explanations for these observed findings could stem from the differential roles and vulnerabilities experienced by various demographic groups in conflict settings. Women and children often face increased risks of violence, displacement, and loss of livelihoods during conflicts, given their roles as caregivers and their limited access to resources and decision-making power. Women are particularly vulnerable as highlighted by the finding close to a third of the respondents, (25%) said they were mostly affected. Common reasons revolved around emotional Distress from Loss of Children as exemplified by the following quotes.

> *"Women as the mothers are very unhappy to see their children dying daily and the same to the elderly."* (R011, Field Data, 2024)

> *"For youths are the ones fighting themselves while their parents are also affected because they lost their children."* (R012, Field Data, 2024)

Additionally, young girls are particularly vulnerable due to the high incidence of pregnancies during times of conflict. This vulnerability is poignantly captured in the following statement:

> *"Pregnancies were most happening to girls and this would make them victims at that point."* (R017, Field Data, 2024)

The above quote illustrates how the conflict exacerbates the already precarious situation for young girls, thrusting them into motherhood amidst chaos and instability.

Additionally, the widespread disruption of community life impacts the elderly significantly. The pervasive nature of conflict affects all aspects of social, political, and economic life, exacerbating the suffering of older community members. This is reflected in the quotes:

> *"It is crystal clear that when elephants fight, the grass suffers so the whole community members are affected in one way or another"* (R011, Field Data, 2024)

Moreover, the feeling of helplessness and hopelessness further affects the elderly. The inability to protect their clans and the preaching of hatred and holding of grudges contribute to a sense of despair. This is illustrated by one of the respondents

> *"If your clan is intimidated, they will not watch but fight. Besides, they preached hatred and holding of grudges," and "It is because they were involved in the inter-clan conflict by killing themselves, the fighting, and cattle raiding."* (R013, Field Data, 2024)

Findings from qualitative data illustrate that youths are primarily affected by inter-clan conflicts due to their direct involvement in the fighting and cattle raiding. This direct engagement in violent activities makes them both perpetrators and victims of the ongoing conflicts. As one of the respondents puts it:

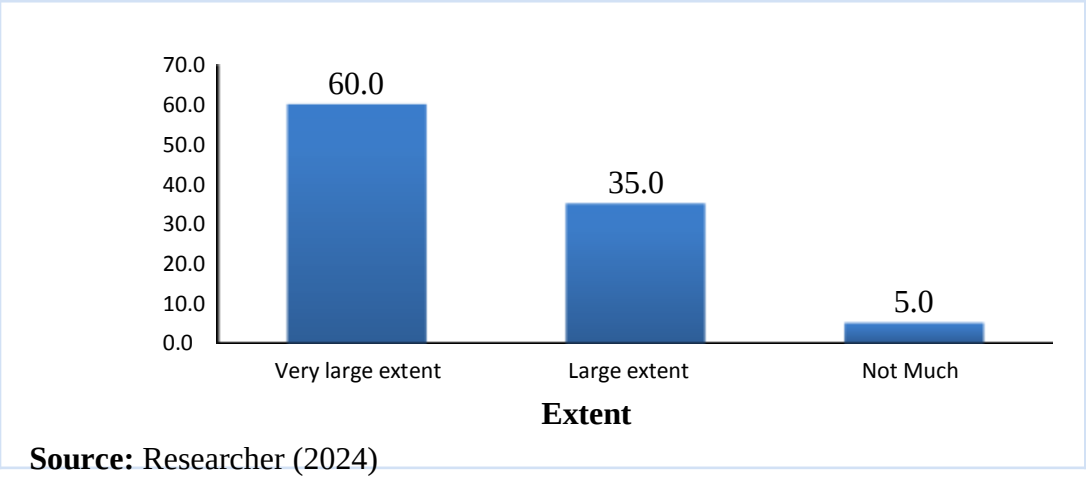
> *"Youths are mainly involved through fighting and cattle raiding."* (R009, Field Data, 2024)

It is also important to acknowledge that the intense nature of inter-clan conflicts, which often involves youths killing each other, leads to significant loss and trauma among young individuals, further exacerbated by the overall impact on their families and communities. In conflict-affected regions, demographic groups such as women and children often experience disproportionate hardships. Hussein's (2022) study on inter-clan conflicts in Ethiopia highlights how women face increased risks of sexual violence and displacement while shouldering greater caregiving responsibilities due to disrupted social structures. Children similarly suffer severe consequences, including recruitment as child soldiers, family separation, and denial of essential services like education and healthcare. This pattern is consistent with global observations, as seen in Syria, where women and children are predominant victims of violence and displacement, facing heightened risks of gender-based violence and malnutrition (Tokmajyan, 2023). While the specifics of these impacts can vary depending on conflict nature, sociocultural

norms, and available support, understanding these variations is essential for crafting targeted interventions to address the unique needs and vulnerabilities of different demographic groups affected by conflicts.

4.4.5 How affected by the conflicts

Enquiring about the extent to which respondents have been affected by the conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan, was aimed at giving insights into the scale and severity of the conflict's impact on the local population. The findings are as displayed in figure 4.6



Source: Researcher (2024)

Figure 4.6Impact of Conflicts as Perceived by Respondents

The findings reveal that a significant portion of the local population in Rumbek East County, South Sudan, has been profoundly affected by the conflicts. A staggering 60.0% of respondents reported being affected to a very large extent, indicating the widespread and severe impact of the conflicts on their lives. Additionally, 35.0% of respondents indicated being affected to a large extent, further emphasising the substantial reach of the conflicts' repercussions. Only a small proportion, 5.0% of respondents, reported being affected to a lesser extent, suggesting that even those minimally impacted still feel the effects of the conflicts.

Possible explanations for these findings could include the pervasive nature of violence and insecurity resulting from the conflicts, leading to widespread displacement, loss of livelihoods, and trauma among the local population. The destruction of infrastructure and disruption of essential services may exacerbate the hardships faced by affected individuals and communities.

Moreover, the protracted nature of the conflicts, as highlighted in previous sections, likely contributes to the cumulative and long-lasting impact experienced by the population.

4.5 Peacebuilding Strategies the Church Employs in Resolving Inter-Clan Conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan

4.5.1 Peacebuilding Strategies

In addressing inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan, it was essential to understand the specific interventions implemented by the Church. Respondents were queried about the types of interventions the church employed to resolve these conflicts, with their responses detailed in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6Types of Intervention the church Adopted in Resolving the Linter-Clan Conflict

Intervention	Frequency	Percentages
Peace meetings	95	28.6
Public gatherings	47	14.3
Appeals to leaders	57	17.1
Preaching forgiveness	76	22.9
Any other	57	17.1
Total	332	100.0

The findings reveal the diverse interventions employed by the church to address inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan. Peace meetings emerged as the most prevalent strategy, constituting 28.6% of responses. These gatherings likely served as pivotal forums for fostering dialogue, negotiation, and reconciliation among conflicting clans under the guidance and facilitation of religious leaders. By providing structured platforms for community engagement, peace meetings enable the resolution of grievances and the establishment of mutual understanding crucial for sustainable peace (Table 4.6).

It can also be observed from the table above, that preaching forgiveness accounts for 22.9% of responses, highlighting the significant role of moral and spiritual guidance in conflict resolution.

The emphasis on forgiveness not only seeks to heal wounds and rebuild relationships but also promotes a culture of reconciliation essential for long-term peacebuilding. This approach resonates with studies emphasizing the transformative impact of moral teachings and communal forgiveness in post-conflict societies, where healing divisions ~~is~~ are essential to prevent recurring cycles of violence.

Appeals to leaders (17.1%) underscore the Church's strategy of engaging traditional and community leaders as mediators. By leveraging local authority figures, the church aims to strengthen peacebuilding efforts from within communities, ensuring that agreements are upheld and conflicts are managed effectively at the grassroots level. This collaborative approach aligns with broader research highlighting the critical role of local leadership in conflict resolution and peace consolidation.

The quotes from key respondents highlight several consistent themes regarding the Church's approach to resolving inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan.

> *"The church engages in peace meeting, dialogue and mediations in the conflicts"*
> *"Dialogue between the conflicting communities, peace meeting and appeal to the authority for something to be done"* (R017, Field Data, 2024)

The insights from key respondents underscore several consistent themes regarding the Church's approach to resolving inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan. According to respondents, "*dialogue is the main peacebuilding activity applied*," highlighting its pivotal role in fostering understanding and reconciliation among conflicting communities. This emphasis on dialogue is complemented by the organization of "*peace meetings*" and "*community peace conferences*," where representatives from different clans convene to negotiate grievances and seek collaborative resolutions.

Moreover, the Church's proactive role includes "*engaging in peace meetings, dialogue, and mediations in the conflicts*," indicating a multifaceted approach that spans facilitation of discussions and direct mediation efforts. Respondents also noted instances where the church initiates "*dialogue between the conflicting communities*" and makes "*appeals to the authority for*

something to be done," demonstrating its commitment to leveraging influence and advocating for peaceful resolutions through formal channels. Additionally, the practice of "paying cows for compensations" emerged as a significant gesture towards reconciliation, symbolizing efforts to address material grievances and rebuild trust among parties affected by conflict.

These qualitative insights align with the quantitative data presented earlier, which highlight the frequencies of peace meetings, appeals to leaders, and other interventions. Together, they underscore the comprehensive and community-focused approach taken by the Church in addressing inter-clan conflicts.

The present study shares significant similarities and differences with previous studies. For instance, like Ekpenyong and Okoi (2018), the current study underscores the pivotal role of structured dialogue platforms such as peace meetings and public gatherings (28.6% and 14.3% respectively). These forums facilitate constructive engagement, negotiation, and reconciliation among conflicting parties. Similarly, Korir et al. (2022) emphasize the use of religious teachings and moral guidance in promoting forgiveness and peaceful coexistence, paralleling the emphasis in this study on preaching forgiveness (22.9%). These shared approaches reflect a universal recognition of the importance of dialogue and moral values in mitigating conflicts and fostering lasting peace. Conversely, while Lamidi (2021) focuses on community sensitization and dialogue specific to Southwestern Nigeria, the present study in South Sudan includes appeals to leaders (17.1%) and a variety of community-oriented activities (17.1%). These differences underscore the contextual adaptation of peacebuilding strategies to local socio-political dynamics and cultural norms. Horjen (2014) views dialogue as a vital aspect of peacebuilding, as it fosters an understanding of the other party and acceptance of differences, which can eventually lead to a shared understanding of a complex reality. The parties aim to find common ground to progress, not necessarily through mutual agreement on all events, but through a shared experience of the pain and trauma each has endured. As Horjen (2014, p. 90) articulates: “A South Sudanese peace meeting is a forum where all viewpoints are expressed. The conversational format is not a debate; participants share and listen, and over time, a shared perspective emerges.”

The current findings also align with Wilson (2019), who contends that the church has played a significant role in peacebuilding by successfully organizing dialogue forums at the grassroots

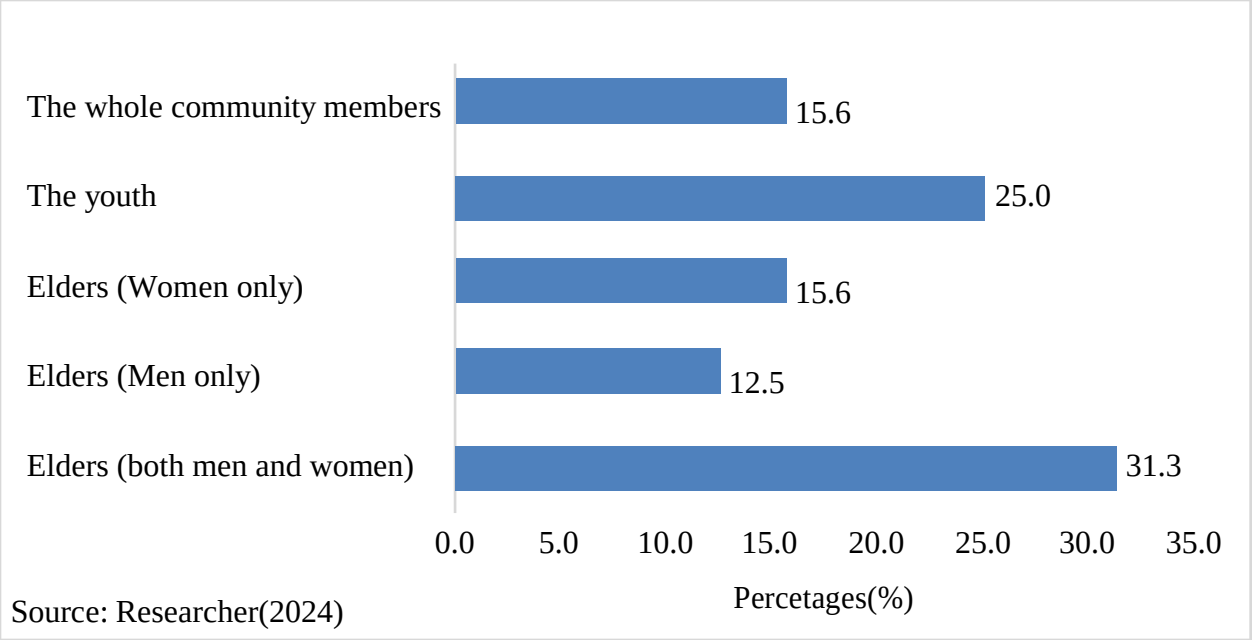
level. However, he emphasizes that these forums alone are not sufficient to secure lasting peace in the country. Although the neutral forums have not yet been fully realized, several informants remain optimistic about their potential to effectively organize and implement these forums. This optimism highlights the church's ongoing commitment ~~to~~ fostering dialogue and reconciliation among conflicting clans in Rumbek East County. One of the key informants accentuates that:

> *"Several government officials and representatives of different factions we spoke with early on showed support for the church providing impartial platforms for discussion. Seeing the importance of conversation in attempts to promote peace, they expressed a desire to participate."* (R017, Field Data, 2024)

Overall, the present study reveals that the Church in Rumbek East County, South Sudan, utilizes a range of peacebuilding strategies to address inter-clan conflicts. The primary approach involves organizing peace meetings, promoting forgiveness, and engaging local leaders, which helps in dialogue and reconciliation while leveraging local authority for grassroots peace. Qualitative insights from key respondents support the quantitative data, highlighting the Church's extensive efforts in mediation and community engagement. The findings align with previous research that underscores the importance of dialogue and moral guidance in conflict resolution. Despite some challenges in fully realizing neutral forums, the Church's proactive role in peacebuilding suggests that ongoing support for structured dialogue and community-based initiatives is crucial for achieving sustainable peace and harmony in post-conflict settings.

4.5.2 Who are is mainly involved in these peacebuilding activities?

The respondents were asked to indicate who ~~were~~ was mostly involved in the peacebuilding activities to understand the key actors driving reconciliation efforts, which is crucial for identifying effective strategies and ensuring inclusive community participation in conflict resolution processes. Figure 4.7 below gives the distribution of the findings.



Source: Researcher(2024)

Figure 4.7Who are mainly involved in these peacebuilding activities

The findings reveal a nuanced distribution of involvement in peacebuilding activities among different groups within Rumbek East County, South Sudan. Notably, elders, both men and women, emerge as the most prominently engaged group, comprising 31.3% of respondents. This highlights the significant role elders play in leveraging their experience, wisdom, and community standing to mediate conflicts and guide reconciliation efforts. Their involvement underscores the cultural respect and authority vested in elders, making them pivotal in upholding traditional conflict resolution mechanisms.

In addition to elders, the youth are actively involved in peacebuilding, constituting 25.0% of responses. This reflects efforts to harness ~~the~~ energy, innovation, and perspectives of the younger generations in promoting peace and addressing contemporary challenges facing communities. Engaging youth not only ensures their inclusion in decision-making processes but also fosters a sense of ownership and commitment to long-term peace initiatives.

Furthermore, the data distinguishes between male-only and female-only elder involvement, with men at 12.5% and women at 15.6%. This breakdown recognizes gender-specific roles and contributions within peacebuilding efforts. Women elders, in particular, bring unique

perspectives and strategies that contribute to comprehensive and gender-sensitive approaches to conflict resolution.

The involvement of the entire community, representing 15.6% of respondents, underscores the collective responsibility and collaborative nature of peacebuilding. Inclusive participation ensures that diverse voices are heard, grievances are addressed comprehensively, and solutions are collectively endorsed and implemented. This community-wide approach not only strengthens social cohesion but also enhances the sustainability of peace efforts by fostering unity and shared commitment towards peaceful coexistence.

These findings underscore the importance of multi-dimensional engagement in peacebuilding efforts in Rumbek East County. By leveraging the expertise of elders, harnessing the potential of youth, recognizing gender-specific contributions, and promoting community-wide involvement, stakeholders can effectively address inter-clan conflicts and pave the way for enduring peace and development in the region.

4.5.3 To what extent did these activities address the inter-clan conflicts?

In addressing the effectiveness of peacebuilding activities in Rumbek East County, South Sudan, the respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which the various interventions successfully mitigated inter-clan conflicts. The findings are summarized in Table 4.7

Table 4.7Extent to which Peacebuilding Activities Address Inter-Clan Conflicts

Extent	Frequency	Percentage
Very large extent	100	30.0
Average extent	166	50.0
Low extent	33	10.0
No extent	33	10.0
Total	**332**	**100.0**

The findings from ~~the~~ table 4.7 above present the extent of effectiveness of peacebuilding activities in Rumbek East County, South Sudan, in addressing inter-clan conflicts. 30 %Thirty percent of respondents perceived these activities to have a very large extent of the impact,

indicating significant success in mitigating conflicts and fostering reconciliation within communities. This suggests that specific interventions, likely well-planned and community-driven, effectively addressed underlying tensions and contributed positively to peacebuilding efforts.

Conversely, a majority of respondents (50.0%) reported an average extent of effectiveness, signifying noticeable progress in conflict resolution but also revealing ongoing challenges in achieving deeper reconciliation and sustaining peace over time. Factors such as the complex nature of inter-clan conflicts, deeply rooted historical grievances, and resource limitations likely influence these perceptions, highlighting the need for continuous support and adaptive strategies.

However, the 10.0% of respondents who viewed the activities as having a low extent of effectiveness, along with another 10.0% perceiving no impact on conflict resolution, underscore significant gaps or shortcomings in the strategies implemented. These findings point to critical areas for improvement, such as enhancing the inclusivity of peacebuilding processes, addressing specific community needs, and ensuring that interventions are responsive to dynamic conflict dynamics.

The varying perceptions of effectiveness in peacebuilding activities in Rumbek East County, South Sudan, as revealed by the study's findings, resonate with Galtung's theory of positive and negative peace. Galtung argues that true peace entails more than the absence of violence; it involves the establishment of justice, harmony, and societal well-being. The study shows that 30.0% of respondents perceived these activities to have a very large extent of impact, indicating successful efforts in fostering reconciliation and reducing tensions. These findings align with Galtung's concept of positive peace, where effective interventions address underlying grievances and promote empathy among conflicting parties. In contrast, the 10.0% of respondents who viewed the activities as having a low or no extent of effectiveness suggest persistent challenges in addressing structural issues or historical grievances that sustain conflicts. Galtung's framework underscores the importance of comprehensive peacebuilding approaches that not only mitigate immediate conflict but also transform societal conditions to prevent future violence, highlighting the need for nuanced strategies tailored to the specific dynamics of inter-clan disputes in Rumbek East County.

Comparatively, similar patterns in peacebuilding effectiveness have been observed in previous studies. For instance, Ekpenyong and Okoi (2018) highlighted the nuanced outcomes of dialogue and mediation in conflict contexts, echoing the varied perceptions of effectiveness found in this study. Lamidi (2021) emphasized the importance of community dialogue and sensitization in conflict resolution in Southwestern Nigeria, paralleling the significance of dialogue and community engagement in Rumbek East County. Similarly, Korir et al. (2022) underscored the role of religious institutions in promoting peace through evangelism, aligning with the emphasis on the Church's involvement in peacebuilding activities observed in this study.

These comparative insights underscore the complexities of conflict resolution efforts across different contexts and highlight the importance of context-specific approaches. They also emphasize the need for continuous evaluation, learning from both successes and challenges, and adapting strategies to effectively address local realities and foster sustainable peace. By understanding these nuances, stakeholders can enhance their capacity to implement more impactful and inclusive peacebuilding initiatives tailored to the specific needs of communities affected by inter-clan conflicts in South Sudan and similar settings globally.

4.6 Challenges Experienced by the Church in Addressing the Inter-Clan Conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan

Table 4.8 Challenges Faced by the Church in Addressing Inter-Clan Conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan

Challenges	Frequency	Percentages
Financial/resources challenges	142	42.9
Lack of cooperation within the community	63	19.0
Lack of government support	32	9.5
Closer of Churches/Security issues	95	28.6
Total	**332**	**100.0**

The primary challenges hindering the effectiveness of peacebuilding activities in resolving inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan, are multifaceted, as revealed by the study. Financial and resource constraints were cited by 42.9% of respondents, highlighting insufficient funding and limited resources as significant barriers. This issue impedes the implementation of essential peacebuilding efforts such as mediation, capacity-building, and community engagement programs. Additionally, 19.0% of respondents identified the lack of cooperation within the community itself as a critical challenge. Internal divisions, historical grievances, and mistrust among community members undermine collective efforts towards reconciliation and sustainable peace.

Moreover, 9.5% of respondents noted the lack of government support as a hurdle. Effective peacebuilding requires governmental backing for policy alignment, infrastructure support, and institutional stability. Without robust government involvement, initiatives may struggle to gain legitimacy and face challenges in achieving long-term impact. Another notable challenge, identified by 28.6% of respondents, was the closure of Churches due to security concerns or other disruptions. Churches serve as vital neutral spaces for dialogue, mediation, and community gatherings essential for fostering reconciliation. Their closure or limited operation due to security issues disrupts critical peacebuilding activities.

The present findings align closely with Oyedele's (2019) study on challenges faced by local governance institutions in peacebuilding efforts in Southwestern Nigeria. Both studies highlight comparable obstacles encountered in conflict resolution contexts. These include the absence of a shared vision among stakeholders, financial constraints limiting operational capabilities, deficiencies in institutional arrangements, and logistical disruptions affecting peacebuilding initiatives. Korir et al. (2022) in Kenya, identified community mistrust and inadequate institutional support as significant barriers. These parallels underscore the universal challenges in peacebuilding across different regions and highlight the need for tailored strategies that integrate local dynamics and resources to promote sustainable peace.

4.7 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis was performed to evaluate how different aspects of the Inter-Church Committee's role affect peacebuilding effectiveness in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan. The independent variables in the study included the types of inter-clan conflicts (such as land disputes, resource conflicts, and political disagreements), the peacebuilding strategies employed by the church (including peace meetings, public gatherings, and appeals to leaders), and the challenges encountered by the church (like resource limitations, political interference, and community resistance). The dependent variable was the effectiveness of peacebuilding strategies, assessed through the perceived success of these initiatives in resolving conflicts.

The analysis assessed how well these independent variables explained the variability in peacebuilding effectiveness using the R-squared (R^2) value, which indicated the proportion of variance in effectiveness explained by the independent variables. The model's predictions were then tested for statistical significance using the P-value. Lastly, Beta coefficients were examined to determine the strength and direction of the relationships between the independent variables and the effectiveness of peacebuilding strategies. The findings of this analysis ~~were~~ are detailed in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9 Regression Analysis Table

Variables	Coefficient (B)	Standard Error (SE)	t-value	p-value
Constant	2.5	0.45	5.56	0
Types of Inter-Clan Conflicts	0.35	0.08	4.38	0.001
Peacebuilding Strategies	0.4	0.1	4.00	0.002
Challenges Experienced by Church	-0.25	0.12	-2.08	0.045

Model Summary: R^2: 0.65; **Adjusted R^2:** 0.62 **F-value:** 22.13; **p-value (F-test):** < 0.0001

The results of the regression analysis, as shown in Table 4.6, indicates a strong explanatory power of the model with an R^2 value of 0.65 and an adjusted R^2 of 0.62. This means that 65% of the variability in the effectiveness of peacebuilding strategies can be accounted for by the independent variables included in the model. The model's F-value of 22.13 with a p-value of <

0.0001 confirms that the predictors are statistically significant and that the model provides a good fit for the data.

Specifically, the analysis reveals that the types of inter-clan conflicts have a significant positive impact on peacebuilding effectiveness, with a coefficient of 0.35 and a p-value of 0.001. This finding suggests that a diverse range of conflicts tends to enhance the perceived effectiveness of peacebuilding strategies, indicating that addressing multiple conflict types is crucial for successful conflict resolution. Similarly, peacebuilding strategies themselves show a strong positive effect on effectiveness, with a coefficient of 0.4 and a p-value of 0.002. This underscores the importance of employing varied and well-coordinated strategies to improve conflict resolution outcomes.

Conversely, the challenges experienced by the cChurch have a negative effect on peacebuilding effectiveness, as indicated by a coefficient of -0.25 and a p-value of 0.045. This suggests that increased challenges, such as resource constraints or political obstacles, are associated with lower effectiveness in peacebuilding efforts. The results highlight the need for addressing these challenges to enhance the overall impact of peacebuilding initiatives.

Overall, the regression analysis confirms that the effectiveness of the Inter-Church Committee's peacebuilding efforts is significantly influenced by the types of conflicts addressed, the strategies employed, and the challenges encountered, emphasizing the importance of a comprehensive and adaptive approach to conflict resolution.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter synthesizes the key findings and conclusions of the study, alongside actionable recommendations and suggestions for future research. It delves into the critical role that public institutions play in addressing governance and societal challenges, offering practical insights that bridge both theoretical frameworks and real-world applications. The chapter outlines the study's major conclusions, identifying specific strengths and areas in need of improvement within the institutional landscape. These insights culminate in targeted recommendations aimed at enhancing institutional performance and fostering greater effectiveness in governance. Additionally, the chapter proposes potential directions for future research, aiming to further advance the field of development studies by exploring unexplored areas and addressing existing gaps in knowledge.

Summary of the Findings

The study investigated the Inter-Church Committee's role in resolving inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan, focusing on conflict nature, peacebuilding strategies, and challenges. It found a predominantly male respondent sample, reflecting cultural norms and survey methodology. The diverse age range provided various perspectives on conflict resolution. High tertiary education levels among respondents highlighted the impact of NGOs and community organizations. Long-term residency among 80% of respondents indicated familiarity with local conflicts, while high unemployment rates underscored economic challenges amidst ongoing instability. Findings are organized by specific objectives for clarity.

5.2.1 The Nature of Inter-Clan Conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan

The study revealed that inter-communal conflicts in Rumbek East County are significantly driven by historical animosities, power struggles among clans, cattle raiding, resource-based disputes, and gender-based conflicts. Inter-communal conflicts constituted about 29.2% of total

conflicts, with cattle raiding and resource-based disputes each accounting for 25% and 12.5% respectively. Gender-based conflicts also represented 25% of the total, highlighting the socio-cultural dimensions of the conflict landscape. Additionally, localiszed disputes over land and political disagreements further complicate the conflict dynamics in the region.

The study underscored the protracted nature of these conflicts, with many persisting for over a decade, revealing deep-seated grievances and significant challenges to achieving sustainable peace. Vulnerable groups such as women, the elderly, and children disproportionately suffer from the conflict's impact. With 60% of the local population reporting profound effects, the study emphasizes the urgent need for comprehensive and targeted interventions to address these drivers of conflict and promote peace and stability in Rumbek East County.

Previous studies on inter-clan conflicts in South Sudan have often generalized the conflict landscape without specific attention to the unique historical and socio-cultural contexts of individual Counties. This lack of localized analysis overlooks the distinct drivers of conflict and the interplay between different forms of disputes. By focusing specifically on Rumbek East County, this study provides a detailed examination of the multifaceted nature of inter-clan conflicts, highlighting the importance of historical grievances, power dynamics, and resource competition. The findings not only substantiate existing literature but also fill a critical gap by providing empirical data on the specific factors driving conflict in this region.

5.2.2 The Peacebuilding Strategies the Church employs in resolving Inter-Clan Conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan

The study revealed that the church employs several strategic interventions to address inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County. Peace meetings emerged as the most common approach, accounting for 28.6% of responses, and facilitating essential dialogues and reconciliation among conflicting clans. Additionally, the Church emphasizes the importance of preaching forgiveness, with 22.9% of respondents acknowledging its role in providing moral guidance. Appeals to local leaders constituted 17.1% of the responses, highlighting the Church's collaboration with community authority figures for mediation. Furthermore, the Church adopts a comprehensive

strategy that includes dialogues, mediations, and compensatory payments aimed at addressing material grievances and rebuilding trust.

Key actors in the peacebuilding process were identified, with elders playing a central role (31.3%) by leveraging their traditional knowledge and respect to mediate conflicts. Youth engagement was notably significant at 25%, indicating their involvement in innovative solutions, while women elders contributed 15.6%, offering unique perspectives on conflict resolution. Despite these efforts, 30% of respondents perceived the peacebuilding activities as having a very large impact, while 50% considered their effectiveness to be only average, indicating ongoing challenges in the peacebuilding process.

While existing literature recognizes the role of religious institutions in peacebuilding, there is a notable lack of empirical research detailing the specific methods and effectiveness of such interventions within the context of inter-clan conflicts in South Sudan. This study addresses this gap by providing a thorough evaluation of the church's peacebuilding strategies, highlighting their practical implementation and perceived effectiveness within the community. The data collected demonstrates how these strategies contribute to conflict resolution and reconciliation, thereby enriching the existing literature on faith-based peacebuilding efforts.

Overall, the findings underscore the complexities of the conflict landscape in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan and emphasize the need for adaptive and inclusive strategies to achieve sustainable peace.

5.2.3 The Challenges experienced by the Church in addressing the Inter-Clan Conflicts in Rumbek East County, South Sudan

The study identified several critical challenges impacting the church's effectiveness in resolving inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan. The most significant barrier, cited by 42.9% of respondents, was financial and resource constraints. These limitations hinder key peacebuilding activities, including mediation, capacity-building, and community engagement .programs. Additionally, 19.0% of respondents highlighted a lack of

cooperation within the community, noting that internal divisions, historical grievances, and mistrust among community members severely undermine collective efforts toward reconciliation and sustainable peace.

Another major finding was the 9.5% of respondents who pointed out the lack of government support as a significant obstacle. This lack of support affects policy alignment, infrastructure development, and institutional stability, all of which are crucial for the effectiveness and sustainability of peace initiatives. Furthermore, 28.6% of respondents reported that the closure of churches due to security concerns or other disruptions was a major challenge. These closures disrupt essential peacebuilding activities and eliminate crucial neutral spaces for dialogue, mediation, and community gatherings, ~~which are~~ vital for fostering reconciliation and maintaining social cohesion.

Previous studies have often overlooked the internal and external challenges faced by religious institutions in conflict resolution, resulting in a lack of understanding of the barriers that impede effective peacebuilding initiatives. This research fills this gap by systematically identifying the challenges the c~~h~~urch faces, both from within the community and from broader socio-political factors.

5.2 Conclusions

Based on the findings, several conclusions can be drawn:

Rumbek East County faces a multifaceted conflict landscape characterize~~d~~d by deep-rooted historical grievances, socio-economic pressures, and entrenched cultural norms. Key issues such as inter-communal disputes, cattle raiding, resource conflicts, and gender-based tensions perpetuate ongoing violence and instability. The enduring nature of these conflicts poses significant challenges to sustainable peace efforts, with vulnerable groups like women, the elderly, and children bearing the greatest impact. These findings underscore the urgent need for targeted and coordinated peacebuilding initiatives to address the specific needs of affected populations and to foster long-term stability and resilience in the region.

The study highlights the Church's effective use of diverse strategies such as peace meetings, forgiveness preaching, and mediation through local leaders. These approaches leverage community elders' wisdom and youth's innovative perspectives, alongside specific contributions

from women elders. This inclusive approach not only fosters reconciliation but also promotes community cohesion and addresses socio-cultural dimensions of conflict.

The study identifies significant challenges hindering the Church's peacebuilding efforts in Rumbek East County. Financial constraints limit resources for essential initiatives, while internal community divisions and church closures due to security concerns impede trust-building and stakeholder engagement. To overcome these barriers, increased support from governmental and international bodies is crucial for strengthening infrastructure, promoting dialogue, and sustaining long-term peacebuilding efforts.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn from the study on inter-clan conflicts and Inter-Church Committee in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan, several recommendations can be proposed:

Policy Recommendations:

In order to address the complex tensions fueled by historical animosities and socio-economic factors, there is an urgent need for comprehensive policy reforms. The Church and local organizations should advocate for governmental and international support to enhance the capacity for conflict resolution. This includes promoting policies that prioritize the training of mediators, especially community elders, in dialogue facilitation, mediation techniques, and conflict transformation. Efforts should also focus on addressing the root causes of persistent conflicts, such as cattle rustling and resource-based disputes, through policies that improve access to alternative livelihoods and promote inclusive economic development. Special attention must be paid to vulnerable groups, including women, the elderly, and children, ensuring that policies protect their rights and address their unique needs during conflicts.

Community Engagement Strategies:

Sustaining peacebuilding efforts requires inclusive and participatory community engagement. The Church should foster platforms for dialogue that involve all stakeholders, including women, youth, and marginalized groups. Creating opportunities for joint problem-solving, conflict

prevention, and community-led reconciliation processes will enhance mutual understanding and social cohesion. Additionally, initiatives should integrate local customs and traditions into peacebuilding practices to increase community acceptance and effectiveness. Engaging community leaders and local organizations in the planning and implementation of these initiatives will further strengthen local ownership and commitment to conflict resolution efforts.

Academic Contributions and Research Development:

Strengthening the academic foundation for conflict resolution and peacebuilding is vital. The Church and associated organizations should collaborate with educational institutions to develop research initiatives that focus on conflict dynamics and effective peacebuilding strategies in South Sudan. This includes supporting academic programs that emphasize conflict resolution, peace studies, and social justice. Conducting comprehensive studies will provide evidence-based insights into the challenges and opportunities present within the community. Additionally, fostering inter-generational dialogue within academic contexts can integrate youth perspectives into research, ensuring that innovative solutions are considered and developed. Academic findings should be disseminated widely to inform policy decisions and community practices, bridging the gap between theory and practice.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I Recommendation Letter

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

Private Bag 00217 Limuru,
Kenya
Email: office@spu.ac.ke
Website: www.spu.ac.ke

Tel Office: +254 (0) 20-2020505/10
Mobile: +254 (0) 728-669000
(0) 736-424440

REF: SPU/177/2024 **Date: 14th June 2024**

TO: Abraham Nhial
St. Paul's University

Dear Abraham,

==========

REF: Inter-Church Committee's Role in Resolving Inter-Clan Conflicts in Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan

==========

Greetings,

This is to inform you that SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee has reviewed the above-named research proposal. **Your ERB approval number is 186, for the period between 14th June 2024 – 14th June 2025 (1 year).**

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements;

i. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments) will be used.
ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee.
iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee within 72 hours of notification
iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affected safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to *SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee* within 72 hours

v. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.

vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.

vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee.

viii. Please note that it is within the ISERC's mandate to monitor your research and to do random visits to the site. All research is subject to post approval monitoring.

Prior to commencing your study, you are required to apply for an ethical approval from an accredited IRB in South Sudan and apply for a research License from the relevant South Sudan Government Agency.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Daniel Nzengya, PhD
Chairperson
SPU- Institutional Scientific & Ethics Review Committee

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY
(ISERC)
APPROVAL WITH
CONTIGENCIES
RESEARCH
DIRECTORATE
INSTITUTIONAL SCIENTIFIC ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Ouriginal

Document Information

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Analysis address	aodek.unistp@analysis.urkund.com

Sources included in the report

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Entire Document

THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN RESOVING CLAN CONFLICTS IN IN RUMBEK EAST COUNTY, LAKE SATE, SOUTH SUDAN
ABRAHAM YEL NHIAL MDS/LMR/5351/13
THIS PROPOSAL IS

88%	**MATCHING BLOCK 1/8**	W

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF

Appendix II Authorization Letter from Republic of South Sudan

Appendix 1:SPU-ERC Application check list

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY
SPU-ISERC PROTOCOL SUBMISSION CHECKLIST
Please make sure that ALL the requirements below have been fulfilled. The SPU-ISERC Committee will NOT review your protocol until all these items are completed.

1. For a research project that is NOT a thesis or an academic requirement:

- Research Application Form must be dulyfilled.
- Required CVs, survey questionnaires, consent forms, conflict-of-interest forms, must be attached
- The paper work must be submitted in soft copy by email to iserc@spu.ac.ke

2. For a research project that is a thesis or an academic requirement:

- Research Application Form must be duly filled
- Required CVs, survey questionnaires, consent forms, must be attached
- Study proposal or thesis proposal must be submitted in soft copy by email iserc@spu.ac.ke
- The names of the research supervisor must be submitted

(To be completed by Applicant and checked by SPU-ISERC secretariat during protocol submission)

INTER-CHURCH COMMITTEE'S ROLE IN RESOLVING INTER-CLAN CONFLICTS IN RUMBEK EAST COUNTY, LAKE STATE, SOUTH SUDAN

Submission checklist item ***(Please answer YES, NO or NOT APPLICABLE (NA) in the "applicant column".***	***Applicant***	***SPU-ISERC Office***
	Indicate Yes/No/NA	
Details of Applicant/ Investigator/Co-investigators/ Supervisors	**Yes**	
Addresses and signatures included	**Yes**	
Any collaborating institutions, including details of collaborating Investigator	**NA**	
Funding agency	**NA**	
Declaration of originality of study where applicable	**Yes**	
List of abbreviations and acronyms	**Yes**	
Operational definitions	**Yes**	
Table of contents	**Yes**	
Structured abstract (Approximately 200-300 words)	**Yes**	
Introduction/background	**Yes**	
Summary of Literature review including conceptual/theoretical framework	**Yes**	
Rationale/ Study justification	**Yes**	
Study aim and specific objectives	**Yes**	
Methodology | Study design	**Yes**	

1Revised on 6th February 2023

	Study area and site description	**Yes**	
	Study population description	**Yes**	
	Sample size determination and formula	**Yes**	
	Sampling procedure/selection of study participants	**Yes**	
	Target population Criteria for exclusion and inclusion	**Yes**	
	Variables – dependent, independent, confounders (where applicable)	**Yes**	
	Data collection procedures (qualitative and quantitative data, field data collection tools); Validity and reliability of study	**Yes**	
	Training procedures for research teams	**NA**	
	Quality assurance	**NA**	
Ethical considerations, incl. informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity, 'do no harm principle'		**Yes**	
Data management		**Yes**	
Research dissemination plan		**Yes**	
Budget and budget justification		**Yes**	
Timeline		**Yes**	
Study limitations and how to minimize them		**Yes**	
References/Bibliography		**Yes**	
Appendices	Informed consent/assent explanation	**Yes**	
	Consent form/statement of consent	**Yes**	
	Study instruments or tools (Survey questionnaire); Interview Schedule/Guide	**Yes**	
	Special information e.g. educational materials	**NA**	
	Recruitment material/ Advertisement(s)	**NA**	
	Maps (where applicable); photos	**NA**	
	Curriculum vitae attached (where applicable)	**Yes**	
	Anti-plagiarism check certificate (<15% similarity) **(please attach this report as you send the application form)**	**Yes**	
Proof of payment for protocol review		**Yes**	

Applicants Name: Abraham Nyial------ Signature: Date: 25.05.2024

SPU-ISERC Administration office comments:

Register ☐

Return for update ☐

Signature:_____ Date: __

Appendix III Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

My name is Yel, a student at St Paul's University in Nairobi pursuing a master's degree in development studies. As part the requirements of the study, I am carrying out research on 'Church's role in resolving inter-clan conflicts: Case of Inter Church Committee, Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan'. All information that you will give will be treated with outmost confidentiality.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

1a) Indicate your Gender: Male [ ] Female [ ]
b) Age bracket: Below 20 [ ] 20-30 [ ] 30-40 [ ] Above 40 [ ]
c) Level of Education: Primary [ ] Secondary [ ] Tertiary [ ]
d) Length of stay in the area: Below 1 year [ ] 1-5 years [ ] above 5 years [ ]
e) Occupation: Employed [ ] Self-Employed [ ] Not employed [ ]

SECTION B: The Nature of conflicts in Rumbek East WHERE IS THIS?

2a) What type of conflicts have you experienced in Rumbek East?
i) ……
ii) ……
iii) ……

b) What is the duration of these conflicts? ……
c) Have you been involved in the conflicts?
Yes [ ]
No [ ]

Please explain
……
……
……
……..
d) Who are mainly affected by these conflicts?
Women [ ]
Men [ ]
Children [ ]
Elderly [ ]
Youth [ ]
Others …….

Please explain in which ways they are involved in these conflicts……
……
……
e) How have the conflicts affected you? This has affected me to a
Very large extent [ ]
Large extent [ ]
Not much [ ]
Not at all [ ]

SECTION C: Church's interventions in addressing inter-clan conflicts

3(a) What specific interventions did the church adopt in resolving the inter-clan conflicts? Please tick those that apply.
Peace meetings [ ]
Public gatherings [ ]
Appeals to leaders [ ]
Preaching forgiveness [ ]
Any other ……..

3(b) Who were mainly involved in these peacebuilding activities? Please tick those that apply.
i. Elders (both men and women)
ii. Elders (Men only)
iii. Elders (Women only)
iv. The youth [ ]
v. The whole community members

3(c) To what extent did these activities address the inter-clan conflicts?
Very large extent [ ]
Average extent [ ]
Low extent [ ]
No extent [ ]

3(d) Did the church collaborate with other players in addressing the inter-clan conflicts? Yes [ ] No [ ]
3(e) If 'Yes', what role did they play? ……
How successful was this collaboration?
……
……
3(f) Suggest more peacebuilding activities the church can engage in to address the inter-clan conflicts.
……
……

SECTION D: Challenges faced by the church in peace building

4(a) Please give some challenges that the church faced in addressing the inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East.

i……
ii……
iii……

4(b) In your opinion, why does the church face these challenges?

……
……
……
……
……

SECTION E: Management of the Challenges

5(a) How does the Inter-Church Committee manage the various challenges encountered during conflict resolution processes? Please select those that apply.

i. Engaging elders in the community

ii. Bringing the people at the grassroots together

iii. Bringing the warring parties together for dialogue

iv. Inviting the leaders of the warring communities for dialogue

v. Other ……

5(b) In what ways does the management of challenges by the Inter-Church Committee influence the effectiveness of their conflict resolution efforts?

……
……
……
……
……

5(c) Can the effectiveness of the Inter-Church Committee's conflict resolution initiatives be attributed to their adept management of challenges encountered?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If 'Yes', explain

……
……
……
……
……

5(d) To what extent do the management skills of the Inter-Church Committee members influence the successful resolution of inter-clan conflicts?

No Impacts [ ]

Minimal [ ]

Moderate [ ]

Significant [ ]

Very Significant [ ]

5(e) Are there any particular challenges that the Inter-Church Committee consistently faces?

……
……
……
……
……

5(f) How do external factors, such as resource limitations or political influences, influence the management of challenges by the Inter-Church Committee during conflict resolution processes?

……
……
……
……
……

SECTION F: Inter-clan conflicts in Rumbek East County, lake state

5 (a) How would you rate the current relationship between your clan and neighboring clans compared to five years ago?

Much worse [ ]

Worse [ ]

The same [ ]

Better [ ]

Much better [ ]

5 (b) In the past year, how often have you interacted positively with members of other clans (e.g., shared meals, participated in joint activities)?

Never [ ]
Rarely [ ]
Sometimes [ ]
Often [ ]
Very often [ ]

5 (c) To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "There are more opportunities for collaborative projects and joint activities between clans now than in the past."

Strongly disagree[ ]
Disagree [ ]
Neutral [ ]
Agree [ ]
Strongly agree [ ]

5 (d) Have there been any recent initiatives led by the Church or other organizations that have helped improve relationships between clans?

Yes [ ] No [ ]

If yes, please describe

……

……

……

5 (e) How much do you trust members of other clans in your community?

Not at all [ ]
A little [ ]
Moderately [ ]
Very much [ ]
Completely [ ]

5 (f) In the past year, how often have you witnessed or heard of acts of cooperation and support between different clans?

Never [ ]
Rarely [ ]
Sometimes [ ]
Often [ ]
Very often [ ]

5 (g) To what extent do you agree with the following statement: "Members of other clans can be relied upon to keep their promises and agreements."

Strongly disagree [ ]
Disagree [ ]
Neutral [ ]
Agree [ ]
Strongly agree [ ]

5 (h) How comfortable are you in sharing resources (e.g., water, grazing land) with members of other clans?

Very uncomfortable [ ]
Uncomfortable [ ]
Neutral [ ]
Comfortable [ ]
Very comfortable [ ]

5 (i) How would you describe the level of peace and harmony within your community compared to five years ago? [ ]

Much worse [ ]
Worse [ ]
The same [ ]
Better [ ]
Much better [ ]

5 (j) Would say there are fewer violent conflicts between clans now than in the past.

Yes [ ] No [ ]

Explain your answer

……

……

……

……

……..

5 (k) Have peacebuilding initiatives (e.g., Church-led dialogues, workshops) contributed to the current state of peace and harmony in your community?

Not at all [ ]

A little [ ]

Moderately [ ]

Significantly [ ]

Completely [ ]

5 (l) Please provide any additional comments or suggestions on how the Church and other organizations can further contribute to peacebuilding in your community.

……

……

……

……

……

THANK YOU

Appendix IV Interview guide for Church leaders and community leaders

1. What type of inter-clan conflicts are experienced by the people of Rumbek East County, Lake State, South Sudan
2. Who are involved in these conflicts?
3. Who is affected by these conflicts?
4. What peacebuilding activities are used to deal with these conflicts?
5. Who are actively involved in these peacebuilding activities?
6. What activities does the church engage in to address these inter-clan conflicts?
7. How successful are these interventions in addressing the inter-clan conflicts?
8. What challenges does the church face in her mediation role in the inter-clan conflicts?
9. Which organizations are in collaboration with the church in addressing this inter-clan conflicts?
10. How effective is the collaboration of the church with other organizations in addressing these inter-clan conflicts?
11. What lessons for the future can be drawn from the church's peacebuilding efforts in addressing these inter-clan conflicts?
12. What in your opinion can the Church do more to ensure sustainable peace in Rumbek East County, Lake Sate, South Sudan?

Appendix V Work Plan

YEAR	2024							
ACTIVITY	**January**	**February**	**March**	**April**	**May**	**June**	**July**	**August**
Chapter One Draft								
Chapter two and three								
Corrections to proposal								
Defense of proposal								
Correction and submission of proposal								
Preparation and administration of research instruments								
Data collection and thesis write up								
Submission of thesis for examination								
Thesis defense								

Appendix VI Budget

ACTIVITIES	COST PER UNIT(KSH)	UNITS	TOTAL COST(KSH)
Internet (per month)	3000	8	24,000
Communication	1000	8	8,000
Stationery	8000	1	8000
Concept Development	5000	1	5000
Proposal Writing	8000	1	8000
Proposal Printing	20	3 copies of 200 pages	12,000
Pilot Survey	10000	1	10,000
Data Collection	30000	1	30,000
SPSS software	5000	1	5,000
Data analysis	15000	1	15,000
Thesis printing (3 copies)	20	3 copies of 200pages	12,000
Binding	300	3	900
Transport	1000	8	8,000
NACOSTI authorization letter	2000	1	2,000
Total			**147,900**
Contingency Expenses	15% of the total		22,185
Sum Total			**170,085**