

12

MAKING JUST PEACE A REALITY IN KENYA

A New “Flavor” to Peace Building

TERESIA WAMÛYÛ WACHIRA

This chapter aims to find the nexus between just peace approaches and African indigenous approaches to violent conflicts, especially in the selected cases in the Kenya North Rift region (Baringo, Elgeyo–Marakwet, and West Pokot). First, I contextualize the North Rift region conflicts in the counties indicated. Second, I highlight the role that the current African indigenous approaches are playing in promoting a just and peaceful society. Third, I discuss the issue of how the conflicts in the North Rift region (Baringo, Elgeyo–Marakwet, and West Pokot) can be transformed through incorporating the positive aspects of the African indigenous approaches and a just peace approach.

Contextualizing Violent Conflicts in the North Rift Region of Kenya

Africa is the continent most affected by armed conflict.¹ Availability of modern weapons and also widespread trade with small arms and light weapons (SALWs) have been on the rise. For instance, in a survey carried out in 2012, it was noted that 30 million illegal small arms were in circulation in Sub-Saharan Africa and some of these are in the hands of civilians.² Kenya, conversely, has experienced episodes of armed conflicts mainly in the North Rift region that cradles the pastoralist nomadic communities. The North Rift region is key to this chapter as we focus on the perennial and multifaceted conflicts in three of its counties—Baringo, Elgeyo–Marakwet, and West Pokot.³ As shown in the map in figure 12.1, there is a high level of volatility regarding small arms in these three counties in Kenya.

The violent conflicts in the identified counties are associated with access and control of resources and political power.⁴ Those in control of political/state power have the authority to make decisions about the control of resources—especially land; hence the resource–power nexus. Proliferation of SALWs due to porous borders with countries in armed conflict escalates



Figure 12.1 Kenya—Counties by Level of Volatility, 2011

Source: Manasseh Wepundi, Eliud Nthiga, Eliud Kabuu, Ryan Murray, and Anna Alvazzi del Frate, “Availability of Small Arms and Perceptions of Security in Kenya: An Assessment.” © Small Arms Survey, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, 2012, p. 39. Available at <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/C-Special-reports/SAS-SR16-Kenya.pdf>. Used with permission.

the violence. Escalation is also seen with the incitement, especially of the youth, by political leaders to engage in violence; lack of protection of borders; and the practices especially surrounding cattle rustling, which is embedded in the culture.⁵ For instance one of the youth respondents confirms the importance of cattle raids in his community when he states that if youth do not engage in cattle rustling, they will experience exclusion and lack of respect. The following narrative is not uncommon among the youth in these three counties because cattle raids contribute to their social acceptance and personal prestige.

If we young people do not go for cattle raids, they will call us cowards, and we will not be able to get a girl to marry and when people in the community see us they will laugh and “throw words” at us. No one will give us respect and we will be excluded from many activities where men are. Like me here, I and my friends went to the elders to bless us as is our custom before we went out to steal the cattle from the Pokot people. This was because we wanted to marry and earn respect from our communities.⁶

The autochthonous discourses of belonging and exclusion tend to deepen these complex and multifaceted conflicts.⁷ The militaristic approach of the state in dealing with these conflicts has contributed to the protraction of conflicts in the region and has complicated an already volatile situation. Unfortunately, such conflicts have led to deaths of people and livestock, destruction of essential infrastructure, and loss of livelihoods due to fear especially among women going to fetch water and collect firewood. In addition, such conflicts tend to leave behind a displaced, traumatized, and disillusioned population, especially the youth who form over 65 percent of the total Kenyan population. This is evident in the narrative of one of the youth engaging in cattle rustling:

You know it is not easy to go for cattle raids but what do you do. You have to go and if you are killed that is ok and if you kill that is ok. It is our culture and since the elders bless us we are fine. Every young man goes through it though it is tough. Some young men are really afraid but they have to do it. The girls wait and see who is brave because they all want to marry a brave man who can protect her and take care of the family.⁸

However, despite the various peace interventions, whether from the top leadership or at the grassroots level, the violent conflicts continue unabated and seem to create cycles of violence. Could this be because often the responses are militaristic or generic (one-size-fits-all approach) and top-down?

The next section is an attempt to respond to this question by examining some of the peace building approaches in place to deal with the violence in these counties.

Reflecting with a Just Peace Ethic: Responses to Violent Conflicts in the North Rift Region (Baringo, Elgeyo-Marakwet, West Pokot)

As noted at the start of the chapter, Kenya has experienced different forms of violence across the country but to a greater degree in the arid and semi-arid North Rift region, which forms the basis of this work. The responses to violence have been both bottom-up and top-down. The top-down approaches have been mainly applied by the top leadership in the country, for instance the security forces spanning across all ranks. The bottom-up approaches are mainly at the grassroots level among women and youth and to some extent the faith-based organizations and community-based organizations at both the local and international levels. There is no shortage of examples where the peace building approaches have been successful or have failed, but in this chapter the focus is on three counties in the North Rift region—Baringo, Elgeyo-Marakwet, and West Pokot.

Religious leaders have been at the core of peace building for decades. The following story illustrates a nonviolent response to violent conflicts in the North Rift region. In 1997 during the second multiparty elections after years of dictatorial rule, Kenya experienced violent conflicts dubbed the “tribal clashes.”⁹ The late Bishop Cornelius Korir was the bishop of Eldoret then, and he played a major role in providing shelter to displaced persons. Today he is fondly remembered as the “goodwill ambassador for peace.”¹⁰

In one of the violent incidents in 1992, Bishop Korir, following in Jesus’s way of active nonviolence, decided to go and check on the safety of the religious sisters who lived and worked in one of the violence-prone areas in his diocese. As he drove, every vehicle he passed along the way flashed lights as a warning not to proceed with the journey because of the magnitude of the violence. Fearing for the safety of the religious sisters, Bishop Korir ignored the warning and drove right into a riotous group of armed youth (from the Kalenjin ethnic community) who were forcibly evicting people and threatening to burn down the town. He stood between the hundreds of youth who were armed with bows and arrows against about ten overwhelmed police officers who had now sought his assistance.¹¹ As the youth surged forward, the police started shooting, which forced the bishop to raise his hands over his head and shout “Don’t shoot! Don’t shoot!”¹² After a tense standoff between the youth and the police, the youth retreated. However, they requested that Bishop Korir escort them away from the police for fear the police would shoot them in the back as they left. He obliged, and when the youth were

leaving he overheard them express their regret that they had not attacked their “enemies” before his arrival. Like Jesus, he was at the forefront “protecting and leading his flock” while risking his own life. He lived and practiced the gospel of nonviolence—love of the enemies. In this incident, he modeled the just peace practice of unarmed civilian protection.

In a similar violent incident in 1997, while violence was at its peak, Pokot warriors shot at the car of one of the government officers—the district commissioner—but decided not to shoot at Bishop Korir’s car because he was a bishop and his diocese had provided their villages with food when they experienced famine.¹³ After these experiences Bishop Korir realized that his diocese “could play a special role in calling for peace in their valley” and together with his diocesan Justice and Peace Commission “they resolved to work with the people to achieve sustainable peace.”¹⁴ Furthermore, as part of his efforts in peace building, he sent the diocesan Justice and Peace Commission coordinator to ask the warring communities what they desired and they replied, “We want you to help us to talk to each other”—hence their desire for reconciliation, harmony, and peace.¹⁵ The just peace practice of identifying the human needs of all parties illuminates this experience. Yet, the communities faced challenges in their efforts to bring peace; for instance, they were ridiculed as “peace mercenaries,” “professional seminar goers,” and “the people who go to eat rice.”¹⁶ Despite this ridicule, the people’s desire was for peace and therefore they continued to meet in order to seek ways of resolving their conflicts. They selected representatives from each community who met and ironed out their grievances. As one shared: “It was a very tough meeting; a lot of nasty words were thrown.”¹⁷ The communities worked together for some peace initiatives that were started in order to resolve the conflicts. Cattle dips were built in a neutral place for four purposes: to reduce cattle rustling activity; to ensure that the animals were free of diseases and thus would multiply; to be able to identify stolen livestock; and to give the people an opportunity to meet, have open conversations, bond, and bridge. Other activities in which they engaged were rebuilding houses that were destroyed and building common markets and water points in neutral places. In addition, the communities engaged in common activities such as sharing meals and participating in sports (e.g., the peace marathon).¹⁸ This helped people to bond and bridge with each other. In addition, such initiatives actualize the just peace norm of cultivating peacemaking communities and institutions.

The government and other peace builders such as nongovernmental organizations (both local and international) in the three counties are engaged in addressing these deep-rooted conflicts.¹⁹ Referring mainly to government peace initiatives, the government has invested in civic education, which is communicated mainly through *barazas* and peace forums within communities.²⁰ Government policies and other germane issues, such as voting rights,

surrendering of arms (disarmament), dangers of possessing illegal arms, and engaging in dangerous activities such as cattle rustlings and banditry, are communicated. The communities have the opportunity to interact freely as they engage in dialogue with their leaders at the local and top level.²¹ Such initiatives actualize the just peace norms of integral disarmament, participation, and relationality. Although some people heed the messages and surrender their arms and ammunition, others are reluctant to do so, mainly because of the incitement by some of the politicians. An example of this was in the county when one politician cautioned his people not to surrender their guns; he equated it with a person asking another to surrender their walking stick that an enemy can use to later beat them up.²² Other initiatives that the government has put in place are the Security Sector Reforms; the introduction of unarmed community policing, especially the *Nyumba kumi* initiative; and efforts to create cultures of peace in schools (both public and private).²³ However, the government's first response to any conflicts in the region is to employ militaristic and securitized approaches by deploying security forces, mainly police and armed forces.²⁴ These officers have often used high handedness and are sometimes extremely brutal in dealing with affected communities. The extent of such brutality is captured in the following excerpt:

The methods used in the interrogation of communities suspected to harbor raiders are punitive and include physical, economic, and psychological torture such as beatings and confiscation of animals to force confessions. In the process the societies come to fear and lose confidence in their own government. Additionally, some corrupt administrators keep some of the recovered animals and later sell them, thereby adding to the society's suspicions."²⁵

Communities are also engaged in grassroots peace building mainly through African indigenous approaches to addressing conflict. These approaches are predominantly invested in the elders and are geared toward a consensus often based on a bottom-up approach. The different communities in the identified counties engage their elders, for instance in resolving family conflicts. Most important, for decades the council of elders has been engaged by their communities as repositories of history and wisdom. They perform rituals and bless the youth before the cattle raids and when they return. They also assist the youth in strategizing and blessing them for counterattacks after the community's livestock has been raided. Additionally, they may gather to plan how to deter the neighbors from encroaching on their land especially during drought seasons. However, we cannot romanticize these traditional approaches because they are sometimes politically motivated by the "powerful" of the society and are equally shrouded in cultural stereotypes,

especially of women, youth, and children. One of the respondents shared her observation: “The Council of elders is made of men only. Women are involved in the fact that they can come and listen to what men are deliberating on but they are not allowed to speak.”²⁶ Hence, any approaches to address the violent conflicts have to be inclusive of all people, following the gospel of nonviolence of love for all, even “the enemy”—the other.²⁷

Women who are in violence-prone areas are actively involved in nonviolence initiatives. However, what they do is sometimes not visible mainly due to “feminisation and masculinisation of conflicts.”²⁸ The 2007–2008 post-election eruption of violence in Kenya “led to the death of over 1,000 people and displacement of almost 700,000 others in two months,” and the majority of these were women.²⁹ One of the highlights in this chapter is a group of women from the North Rift region who chose to group together to promote cohesion and to create a peaceful and just society.³⁰ They started by cooking together and constructing mud houses for other women whose houses had been destroyed in the violence.

Also as they interacted they prayed and shared their stories of pain thus breaking the communications barriers. These initiatives actualize the just peace norms of sustaining spiritual practices and the virtue of empathy. Further, in 2012 they started a “knitting for peace project” that received support from the Rural Women Peace Link organization. They made calabashes, *kiondos*, bracelets, and other ornaments which they sold in their nearest markets.³¹ One woman shares that as they engaged in their daily routine of knitting they would discuss ways of averting the violence in the future. As a result of engaging in the peace activities and sharing their narratives, they were creating and working toward a peaceful coexistence. However, while trying to reach out to other people that were displaced they were met with great open hostility. This was because they were perceived as aggressors. Eventually, as observed in the following narrative, one of the women was successful: “I was able to succeed because I always appealed to the women as a woman and would ask them to go talk with their husbands and their sons. Women are very strong. They do not easily break up from their experiences.”³²

Another example of women employing active nonviolence in situations of conflict is found among the Pokot women. Women in the North Rift region have borne the brunt of violent conflicts for decades. As a result they have learned to balance their role as mothers of young men ready for cattle rustling. They are also advisers to their husbands, who protect the family and mentor the youth. However, sometimes they do not support cattle rustling and banditry. In these cases they have devised a traditional way of dealing with it. Every Pokot woman has a *leketio* (birth belt) that she wears for support when she is pregnant (see figure 12.2). She also wears it during war or conflict as a charm to protect her son from external harm, including during



Figure 12.2 Leketio—the birth belt

Source: Irene Chepoisho Tulel, “Women and Peace-building in Pastoral Conflicts: A Case Study of Pokot Women in Sigor Region of West Pokot County, 1984–2000” (Nairobi: Department of History and Archeology, University of Nairobi, 2013), 60.

cattle raids. In some instances when a mother is not in support of any male members of the family taking part in the conflicts or war, she will refuse to wear the leketio. Also, a woman can decide to remove her leketio at the peak of a fight or war and lay it down between the people who are fighting. They will instantly stop fighting; it is taboo for a man to touch a leketio because it is a birth belt. In addition, a man cannot force a woman to wear a leketio. If he does, then this action will warrant a curse. This is one of the ways that women can participate in peace building. The tradition of using a leketio to stop or prevent conflicts or wars is practiced among all of the Kalenjin sub-tribes.³³ This practice also resembles the tactic of identifying and mobilizing credible messengers in the community to interrupt violence, which is often found within groups that use the just peace practice of unarmed civilian protection.

Recommendations for a Just Peace Ethic and to Transform the Conflict in the North Rift Region of Kenya

Parallels can be drawn from local and global contexts to show the reality that violence does not lead to peace. On the contrary, nonviolent strategies and tools have proved the most viable option. This view is in accord

with the late Saint John Paul II who while addressing politicians during his visit in Ireland challenged them: “You politicians must prove them to be wrong. You must show that there is a peaceful, political way to justice. You must show that peace achieves the works of justice, and violence does not.”³⁴

Although just peace is sometimes touted as a utopian idea, there are examples of visionaries in our times who were ready and laid down their lives physically or symbolically for a just and peaceful society. A few that come to mind are Mohandas Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Oscar Romero, the Women of Liberia, the late Wangari Muta Maathai and the women that supported her at the Freedom Corner, and Nelson Mandela. They all represent the uniqueness of our world and its people. These great people, representing different genders, did this using the power of love—active nonviolence. Following in their path, the community can incorporate those positive virtues as a foundation for their just peace approach to violence.

In the traditional African context, the values were passed from generation to generation through oral narratives, proverbs, metaphors, songs and dances, myths, and legends of a given community. The challenge therefore for the communities—the focus of this chapter—is to ensure that the values a community passes to its younger generations do not remain abstract but that they live and practice them. For instance, telling children stories about the dishonest hare that was punished for stealing honey is important, but there is a need to go further. Parents need to model honesty because this is “not taught but caught.” The value has to be lived and made a habit. The Kiswahili saying *haraka, haraka haina baraka* is a reminder that such an undertaking is a challenge.³⁵ True peace takes time; therefore there is a need to keep trying even when we do not see the end in sight. Acquiring virtues so that we can embody the transformative practices of a just peace approach will take time. Therefore, communities need to be encouraged to keep trying the virtues for a just peace approach to violence no matter how far they fall short of their goals.

Cultural sphere, beliefs, and customs are held as the essence of the identity of a community. Culture, as noted previously, refers to the habits, values, beliefs, customs, and worldviews of a given group. It is culture that validates values and needs within a given community. Thus, culture is dynamic and context-specific.³⁶ However, a group has to go beyond its values in order to practice virtue-based just peace ethics. What one is taught and learns as an individual in a community—for instance, caring for animals and the environment, respect for elders and significant adults, tolerance, friendship, and trust—will remain merely values if they are not put into practice. Therefore, a virtue-based approach to the North Rift region conflicts will involve

people going beyond the value of cattle raiding for restocking and will begin to reflect on the violent actions that involve stealing from and killing the “enemy.”³⁷ The community can embrace the spirit of *ubuntu*—of respecting “the other”—because all people are interconnected.³⁸ *Ubuntu* is about restoration of relationships through asking forgiveness and then being ready for the other to offer forgiveness. It is here that reconciliation is a meeting place because “truth and mercy have met together and justice and peace have kissed.”³⁹ In the African worldview of *ubuntu*, the people thrive individually and collectively by living together in harmony, making the following Biblical aspiration a reality: “How delightful it is to live as brothers [and sisters] all together.”⁴⁰ In essence, therefore, incorporating the *ubuntu* approach in peace building would promote an African perspective to a just peace approach. To go farther along this path, Pope Francis, in his homily on World Day of Peace 2017, invites the world’s peoples and nations to “make active nonviolence our way of life.”⁴¹

Parents, teachers, and any significant adults must go beyond their community’s oral narratives that are used to pass on values, beliefs, and customs, especially those that perpetuate stereotypes about their neighbors in the counties. For instance, in the case of cattle rustling, children must be taught that all the cattle in Kenya do not belong to them and that killing anyone, irrespective of their ethnic community, is a violation of one’s human rights. Therefore, to address this violent conflict, a peace builder needs to understand a community’s values and beliefs and critique them with the aim of addressing its challenges. In this case, the younger generation might be taught the values of honesty and hard work, but for them to integrate the values they must act honestly and work hard to purchase their own cattle. The community can enhance the importance of a virtue-based just peace approach. This would entail a transformation of all forms of violence (direct, cultural, and structural).⁴² This means stressing the positive values that enhance peace as opposed to focusing on violence. For instance, the communities can utilize the African wise sayings and metaphors from the three counties. The following examples from communities in Kenya will suffice: “Justice breaks a prepared arrow,” “Fighting has no fun,” “War is not porridge,” and “A person sent away with justice does not come back.”⁴³ Everyone can be an artisan of peace.⁴⁴

Sawatsky contends that “[our] virtues are part of the lens that shape understanding of the world. In addition, that they are “rooted in and inspired by particular stories, cultures, and narratives. While this is the case it is important to include experiences and attitudes which are interlinked in worldviews that are a source of cultural values.”⁴⁵

I suggest three cultural dimensions that could be incorporated as a foundation of a virtue-based approach to a just peace ethic. These dimensions

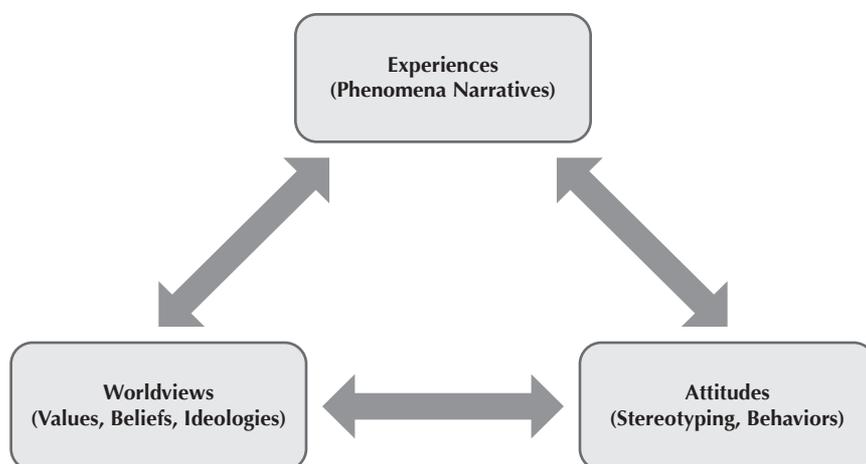


Figure 12.3 Cultural Dimensions for Peace Building

Source: Teresia Wamũyũ Wachira, “Exploring Violence through the Narratives of Youth in Kenyan Secondary Schools: Implications for Reconceptualising Peacebuilding” (PhD diss., University of Bradford, UK, 2009), 45. Available at <https://bradscholars.brad.ac.uk/bitstream/handle/10454/6292/PhD%20thesis%20-TWWachira%20-%20UB%2007012877%20-%2018%20Nov.%202013%20-%20Pdf%20version.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

AQ1

particularly help to illuminate the just peace norm of cultivating peacemaking cultures. They are the worldviews, experiences, and attitudes of the affected communities (see figure 12.3).⁴⁶

1. The importance of experiences, which are kept real and alive by narratives passed from generation to generation. This includes events such as births, deaths/violent conflict, and the nature of interaction with others.
2. The importance of worldviews, which are the cultural notions of the meaning of life within a specific community and thus have a bearing on how meanings are transmitted. Worldviews are the source of cultural values and thus provide the tools for interpretation of events and solutions to challenges.
3. The importance of attitudes, which are acquired through experience and cultural values in a given context. These could be incorporated in any approach toward creating just and peaceful societies.

In both the virtue ethic and Gandhian theory of nonviolence, *who one is* is of importance and *what one does* derives importance from who one is—social as well as personal virtue (*ahimsa*). Virtue is therefore to be cultivated and needs to be practiced. The “love of the enemy” that Jesus is referring to is a direct

and deliberate choice of reaching out to the “other,” including those who are different from us irrespective of where they come from. This involves the total giving of one’s self to *all* as Jesus did on the cross. In the particular context of this chapter, the challenge for all of the different groups would be “going that extra mile” to meet “the enemy”—practicing the virtue of total and selfless love.⁴⁷ Conversely, Kaveline-Popov outlines fifty-two virtues such as forgiveness, justice, love, mercy, patience, respect, tolerance, and unity.⁴⁸ She pinpoints peacefulness as a virtue in itself. Borba is of a similar view but places the virtue of “peacefulness” within the moral intelligence; hence, something that is learned.⁴⁹ This approach to virtue as peacefulness is important because it explains “how peace is understood that peace is lived out.”⁵⁰ Hence, in peace building in the North Rift region, it is important to understand these communities’ concepts of peace because their views will influence their behaviors and attitudes, which will have a bearing on peacemaking and justice making.

Through the paschal mystery of Jesus Christ, humanity is enlightened and challenged on what it really means to walk the path of active nonviolence. Jesus had the choice to retaliate but he chose to love and forgive those who mocked and crucified him. He chose to embrace the “enemies” by asking his Father to forgive them “for they do not know what they are doing.”⁵¹ Hence, it seems to me that the argument often crafted in justification of war as one of “the solutions to attain peace” is unsustainable. A peaceful end does not justify violent means, as the just peace norm of reflexivity also illuminates. Hence, to be a true disciple of Jesus is to follow in his footsteps of love and forgiveness even amid violence.⁵²

Practical Suggestions

The following are peace building initiatives that can enhance a transformative practice of a just peace ethic to violent conflicts specifically in the North Rift region (Baringo, Elgeyo-Marakwet, and West Pokot).

- The communities can engage women more at all levels of decision making and practices of peacemaking and justice making. As Pope Francis noted in his World Day of Peace 2017 message, “Women in particular are often leaders of nonviolence.”⁵³ Also, communities can create forums for people who experience marginalization in society—for instance, women, youth, children, and people with disabilities—so their voices can be heard. This will assist in promoting a just peace approach to exclusion, which is structural violence. It would also actualize the just peace norm of participation. Additionally, the members of the different communities can create forums where intercommunity dialogue can be enhanced to develop just and peaceful societies.
- Learning institutions (early childhood, primary, secondary, and tertiary levels) within the North Rift region where these counties are situated can be encouraged to create and utilize Peace Corners in or outside of the

classroom, and Peace Clubs and Peace Cafés (depending on the name preferred by the school/college/university). These can be spaces where children and young people practice and engage in dialogue on issues such as care and protection of the environment—“our common home”—and other species that share our planet, such as domestic and wild animals.⁵⁴ This reinforces the foundation built in the family setting: “In the family we first learn how to show love and respect for life . . . respect for local ecosystem and care for all creatures . . . we receive an integral education, which enables us to grow harmoniously in personal maturity . . . to control our aggressivity and greed, and to ask forgiveness when we have caused harm.”⁵⁵

- Such spaces of peace will also assist in the implementation of sustainable development outlined in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development; especially goal 16, which aims to reduce all forms of violence.⁵⁶ More importantly, it is in learning institutions, no matter at what level, that the gospel of nonviolence can be inculcated so that it becomes part of the DNA of the students, staff, and all stakeholders. This would actualize the just peace norm of education in nonviolence.
- In academia, too, scholars can engage with those at the grassroots level through constructive research and dialogue; for instance, on community peace building and application of just peace approaches in conflict transformation. This will enable scholars not only to articulate their aspirations of a just and peaceful society but also to build up the scholarly works employing the just peace approaches that will enhance a culture of peace for today and future generations. Additionally, donors should invest in research on peace and justice making. This entails supporting projects that are geared toward building peaceful and just societies.
- The Catholic Church can support and invest energy and finances in developing Small Christian Communities (SCCs), which currently act as family cells of spiritual nourishment, training, and nurturing for a generation of people.⁵⁷ This is of the utmost importance because these communities can be the foundation of re-evangelizing on a gospel of active nonviolence. Through such communities the church can model the virtues of love for all, including the “enemies”—community sharing, forgiveness, compassion, harmony, peace, tolerance, mercy, and justice. There is an equal need for healing communities of believers—representing different faiths—so that they can lead by example.
- The Catholic Church leadership in Kenya, under the umbrella of the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops in solidarity with the leadership of other religions (e.g., the National Council of Churches, the Inter-Religious Council of Kenya, and the World Council of Churches, together with the Leaders of the African Traditional Religions) can from time to time visit and prepare and circulate common pastoral letters that foster and promote virtues of peace, justice, and harmonious coexistence. Through this action the religious leaders will be modeling Jesus’s desire for the church “that they may be one.”

- More important, the leaders can make joint visits to the government leadership—both locally and nationally—to discuss and share ways of building a society that is grounded in “effective pedagogy to grow in solidarity, responsibility and compassionate care” of one another and our environment.⁵⁸ These groups of leaders can also incorporate and create opportunities for the Council of Elders representing different communities in the North Rift region. For example, they can have joint meetings with them toward the aim of sharing grassroots peace-building activities for sustainable development.
- In today’s world with high technological knowledge, social media has a challenge to practice peace journalism (peace oriented as opposed to violence oriented). The journalists can be invited to practice the virtues of peace and justice as they mold young minds. They do this through social media posts and reporting and through various modern platforms such as smartphones. These platforms include Facebook, Twitter, Whatsapp, and blogs, among others.
- Religious leaders in Kenya and specifically in the North Rift region counties have access to nonviolent teachings, moral authority, and permanence (religious structures). Thus, they have opportunities to act as bridges between the government and the citizens spread out in different counties in Kenya. Such bridging initiatives actualize the just peace norm of relationality.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have argued for transformative practices of a just peace ethic that would incorporate African indigenous approaches to dealing with violent conflicts. Contextualizing the North Rift region conflicts specifically by focusing on three counties, it is evident that the violence is deep rooted. The main challenge is that cattle raiding has been legitimized by the community, thus becoming a way of life despite its morphosis into the deadly commercialized cattle rustling. Most important, cattle rustling is carried out by unmarried male youth with the blessing of spiritual leaders—elders who are male. Women also play a role but it is peripheral (e.g., to encourage or discourage raiding by the youth). Usually this is supported by rituals, which are key in most ceremonies among the African communities.

Further, some of the grassroots Afrocentric approaches that create and promote a peaceful and just society in the North Rift region have been critically examined. It is important to note that the particular nonviolent initiatives are not restricted to the three counties discussed in this chapter but to the North Rift region where the counties are situated. In addition, an effort has been made to be inclusive of both genders in the selected nonviolent approaches.

Finally, this chapter contained a detailed discussion on the virtue-based approaches that embody the transformative practices of a just peace approach.

The argument in this chapter is that a transformative practice of a just peace ethic needs to be inclusive of the positive aspects of African indigenous approaches. Also proffered are three cultural dimensions suggested for inclusion as a foundation of a virtue-based approach; that is, the narratives, experiences, and attitudes of the affected communities. Practical suggestions and reflective questions were included to allow for a continuation of this ongoing debate.

Discussion Questions

1. What violent events are common in your local community? Which of these violent events have you personally experienced? In your opinion, what are the underlying causes of the violent events? How are these violent events addressed?
2. Select a community from your country and explore the indigenous non-violent activities that they engage in to reconcile people. Look at the story of the late Bishop Cornelius Korir in this text. How does his effort to reconcile different warring communities challenge us to use a just peace perspective in resolving violent events in our schools, parishes, local communities, and country?
3. In your opinion, what are the underlying causes of the conflict? What are the (i) virtues and (ii) skills needed to transform the conflicts?
 - At the top level (leadership)
 - At the grassroots level (citizens)
4. What positive approaches and policies are in place to transform the conflicts? What more positive approaches and policies could be incorporated to transform the conflicts?
 - At the top level (leadership)
 - At the grassroots level (citizens)
5. What positive contribution could the following groups of people make to transform the conflicts?
 - Women, youth, people with disabilities

Notes

1. Peter Wallenstein and Margareta Sollenberg, "Armed Conflicts, Conflict Termination and Peace Agreements, 1989–96," *Journal of Peace Research* 34, no. 3 (1997): 339–58; referenced in Kennedy Agade Mktutu, *Guns and Governance in the Rift Valley: Pastoralist Conflict and Small Arms* (Oxford: James Currey, 2008), 1.

2. Mktutu, *Guns and Governance*, 4.

3. The Marakwet and the Pokot are subgroups of the Kalenjin, who share Nilo-Hamitic ancestry and similar customs. The violent conflicts in which they engage are mainly along the Kerio River, which flows through the valley; the Marakwet are to the west of the river, and the Pokot of Baringo County are to the east. The Marakwet engage in mixed farming and cattle-rearing for their livelihood and are not nomadic,

unlike the Pokot, who have a nomadic or semi-nomadic livelihood. C. Clemens Greiner, “Guns, Land, and Votes: Cattle Rustling and the Politics of Boundary (Re) making in Northern Kenya,” *African Affairs* 122, no. 447 (2013): 216–37.

4. Mkutu, *Guns and Governance*, 13–14.

5. “Political authorities were sowing seeds of discord, dividing citizens along tribal lines and instigating terrible communal violence; battles between Pokot and Marakwet warriors, provoked by cattle rustling, raged in the Kerio Valley”; Bishop Korir, *Amani Mashinani—Peace at the Grassroots* (Eldoret, Kenya: Catholic Diocese of Eldoret, 2009). Raiding has a cultural significance and is a multifaceted social (almost ceremonial) event aimed at recovering, restocking, and avenging insults and damages inflicted by enemies. Mkutu, *Guns and Governance*; Mohamud Adan and Ruto Pkalya, *Closed to Progress: An Assessment of the Socio-Economic Impacts of Conflict on Pastoral and Semi Pastoral Economies in Kenya and Uganda* (Eastern Africa: Practical Action, 2005); Pax Christi Horn of Africa, *What Warriors Want*, 2004. The practice has continued despite the warning in 2018 from the president of Kenya and the minister of security. Jael Keya, “Fred Matiangi’s Warning to Rift Valley Leaders,” *Kenyans.co.ke*, August 21, 2018.

6. Male youth participant (coded JN1) from West Pokot, interviewed in February 2018.

7. Timothy M. Anderson, “Identity and Exclusion in Africa: An Examination of Autochthony and Xenophobia” (master’s thesis, Ohio University, May 2013).

8. Male youth participant (coded ML2) from Elgeyo Marakwet, interviewed in February 2018.

9. Korir, *Amani Mashinani*.

10. “In 2015, he was made the Goodwill Ambassador for Peace by the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC)”. Titus Too and Fred Kibor, “Bishop Kiror: A Cleric who Cherished Peace,” in Standard Digital Daily Newspaper, Nairobi, Kenya, Nov. 5, 2017.

11. They were from the Kalenjin ethnic community fighting the Kikuyu people. They referred to them as “foreigners” or “madoadoa” (Kiswahili for “spots”). Bishop Korir was also from the Kalenjin community.

12. Korir, *Amani Mashinani*, 10.

13. Korir, 2.

14. Korir, *Amani Mashinani*.

15. Korir, *Amani Mashinani*.

16. Korir, *Amani Mashinani*.

17. Korir, 41.

18. Korir, *Amani Mashinani*, 12. In the African context, sharing a meal is very important. People do not share a meal when they are not in agreement—therefore, people can share a meal as a sign that they are ready to reconcile or that they are in oneness with the other. People do not fight or quarrel about food. Regarding shared sports activities, see Korir, 22.

19. Lederach, in his pyramid of actors in peace building, argues that the middle level of actors (nongovernmental organizations) is key for sustainable peace building. Actors at this level have access to both the top-level leadership and the grassroots level (the citizens). John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997).

20. *Barazas* are informal gatherings among communities to discuss issues of interest to them.

21. An example is the recent events that brought together warring communities on April 28, 2018 during a peace run. The leaders impressed upon the people the need to desist from cattle rustling for economic development and prosperity. Florah Koech, “Call for Unity in Crime-Prone North Rift during Peace Run,” *Daily Nation*, April 30, 2018.

22. Joram N. Kareithi, “The Multi-Factoral Nature of Inter-Ethnic Conflicts in North-Rift Frontier Border Lands, Kenya: Implications on Pastoralists’ Welfare and Livelihoods,” *Journal of Anthropology and Archaeology* 3, no. 1 (June 2015): 37–57.

23. *Nyumba kumi* refers to ten households creating good neighborliness and enhancing community security.

24. “President Kenyatta Now Deploys the KDF to Baringo,” *Daily Nation*, March 17, 2017. Deployment of the Kenya Defense Forces was to increase security in the North Rift region.

25. Kareithi, “The Multi-Factoral Nature of Inter-Ethnic Conflicts,” 53.

26. Participant BMb1, interview, February 2018.

27. This teaching of Christ forms the basis for a gospel of nonviolence. This is expounded in Lisa S. Cahill, *Love Your Enemies: Discipleship, Pacifism, and Just War Theory* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Press, 1994).

28. Men are perceived as aggressors and women as victims. Peace-building activities more often exclude women.

29. Gabrielle Lynch, “Durable Solution, Help or Hindrance? The Failings and Unintended Implications of Relief and Recovery Efforts for Kenya’s Post-Election IDPs,” *Review of African Political Economy* 36, no. 122 (2009): 604–610.

30. Beatrice Cherono, “Knitting Peace,” in *Stories of Women Building Peace: Transforming Inter-Ethnic Violence in North Rift Region* (Nairobi: Coalition for Peace in Africa, June 2014), 120–23.

31. Special bag made mainly from sisal that is used casually or formally.

32. A member of the displaced women from the Kikuyu and the Kalenjin communities within Eldoret town in Kenya captured in the women stories in Cherono, “Knitting Peace,” 122.

33. Betty Rabar and Martin Karimi, eds., *Indigenous Democracy: Traditional Conflict Resolution Mechanisms* (Intermediate Technology Development Group—Eastern Africa, 2004), 9.

34. “Violence Destroys What It Claims to Defend: The Dignity, the Life, the Freedom of Human Beings. Violence Is a Crime against Humanity, for It Destroys the Very Fabric of Society.” Homily of his holiness John Paul II, September 29, 1979.

35. “Hurry, hurry has not blessings” in Kiswahili—the language spoken in most of Eastern Africa.

36. Kevin Avruch, *Culture and Conflict Resolution* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press, 2001), 7–14.

37. Anthony Langat, “Why Kenya’s Cattle Raids Are Getting Deadlier: The Infiltration of Illegal Firearms Has Led to a Rise in Violent Cattle Raids. Pastoralists Are Now Arming Themselves,” *Aljazeera*, December 27, 2016.

38. “A person is a person through other people,” in Tim Murithi, “African Approaches to Building Peace and Social Solidarity,” *Accord*, September 25, 2006.

39. Psalm 85:10; John Paul Lederach, *The Journey Towards Reconciliation* (Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press, 1999).

40. Psalm 133:1.

41. Pope Francis, “Nonviolence: A Style of Politics for Peace,” 2017 World Day of Peace Message, January 1, 2017.

42. Johan Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization* (London: Sage Publications, 1996).

43. Porridge is a meal prepared from maize (mealie) and often eaten at breakfast to sustain one for a long time. “A person sent away with justice does not come back” means that they are contented and are at peace.

44. Pope Francis, “Nonviolence: A Style of Politics for Peace.”

45. Jarem Sawatsky, *Just Peace Ethics: A Guide to Restorative Justice and Peacebuilding* (Cambridge: The Lutterworth Press, 2009).

46. Schirch states that those engaging in peace building must include each person’s world sharing through word, symbol, and ritual his or her unique worldview. Lisa Schirch, *Ritual and Symbol in Peacebuilding* (Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press, 2005).

47. Teresia Wamũyũ Wachira, “Exploring Violence through the Narratives of Youth in Kenyan Secondary Schools: Implications for Reconceptualising Peacebuilding,” unpublished, University of Bradford, 2012, 44.

48. Linda Kaveline-Popov referred to in James Page, *Peace Education: Exploring Ethical and Philosophical Foundations*, (Information Age Publishing Inc., USA, 2008), 54.

49. MacIntyre’s argument of virtue as an acquired human quality that facilitates practice expressed concern for peaceful society although does not mention peace—links society and morality; Alasdair Chalmers MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007).

50. Matt. 5:41.

51. Luke 23:34.

52. Teresia Wamũyũ Wachira, “Peace Is Therefore a Way of Life; We Develop the Virtue of Peace by Doing Peace” (PhD diss., 2012), 26; Galtung, *Peace by Peaceful Means*. The way to attain peace is to apply peaceful means, not violence; otherwise we create cycles of violence.

53. Pope Francis, “Nonviolence: A Style of Politics for Peace.”

54. Pope Francis, *Laudato si: Encyclical Letter of the Holy Father Francis on Care for Our Common Home* (Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2015).

55. Francis, 117.

56. These goals aim to reduce all forms of violence and find lasting solutions to conflicts and insecurity.

57. There are more than 160,000 Small Christian Communities (SCCs) in the nine countries of Eastern Africa. SCCs are a new model of being church in Africa today. They operate in parishes (in the rural and urban centers); in different levels of learning institutions and religious formation houses. www.smallchristiancommunities.org; <https://maryknollmissionarchives.org/?p=4569>.

58. Francis, *Laudato si*, 116.

QUERY:

AQ1: Can this be shortened? A reader will likely not type in the entire address.