

**EAST AFRICA COMMUNITY AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN NORTH KIVU
PROVINCE, EASTERN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

BY

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2021-01-02208

**A RESEARCH DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES
AND SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE
REQUIREMENT OF THE AWARD OF MASTERS OF
CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PEACE
BUILDING OF KAMPALA
INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY**

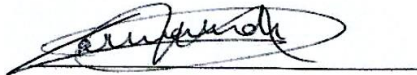
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DECLARATION


I, declare that this research dissertation is my original work and to the best of my knowledge, has not been submitted for any award at any academic institution.

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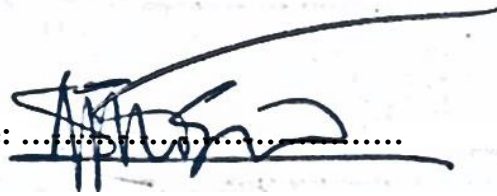


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APPROVAL

This is to confirm that this research dissertation is under my supervision and is now ready for submission to the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of Kampala International University.

Signature:



Date: 20th/11/2023.

SUPERVISOR:

DEDICATION

First of all, I dedicate this research to my dear beloved parents my father Mr Mushagalusa Roger, My mother Ghyslaine Bikuba and my aunties Esperance Bikuba ,Viviane Bikuba for their both moral and financial support in my academic career. May the Almighty God Bless You.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Firstly, I do thank the Almighty God for everything he has done for me throughout my completely academic career. I would like to acknowledge and extend my sincere and hearty gratitude to my supportive supervisor, Dr. Ojo Olusola for his critical reviews, expert advice, and regular availability to me throughout the course of my research work.

I cannot forget my exemplary lecturers at the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, especially for their great assistance and excellent academic pieces of advice. I owe a special debt of gratitude to all of them.

I acknowledge the authors whose works have been cited in this study.

Special thanks go to respondents who participated in the study and providing the required data. May the Almighty God bless you all?

Finally, my great appreciation goes to my friends for their unconditional support. It is through them that I successfully completed this piece of work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
APPROVAL	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
LIST OF TABLES	x
LIST OF FIGURES	xi
ABSTRACT	xii
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.0 Introduction	1
1.1 Background to the study	1
1.1.1 Historical perspective	1
1.1.2 Theoretical Perspective.....	4
1.1.3 Conceptual Perspective.....	4
1.1.4 Contextual perspective	5
1.2. Problem Statement	6
1.3 Purpose of the study.....	8
1.4 Specific Objectives of the Study	8
1.5 Research Questions.....	8
1.6 Scope of the Study	9
1.6.1 Geographical Scope.....	9

1.6.2 Content Scope	9
1.6.3 Time Scope	9
1.7 Significance of the Study	9
1.8 Definition of Key terms	10
CHAPTER TWO	11
LITERATURE REVIEW	11
2.0 Introduction	11
2.1 Theoretical Review	11
2.1.1 Dual Concern Theory of Conflict Resolution.....	11
2.2 Conceptual framework.....	13
2.3 Review of related studies	13
2.3.1 Effects of Free Trade Area on conflict resolution.....	13
2.3.2 Effects of Economic Union on conflict resolution.....	17
2.3.3 Effects of Common Market on conflict resolution	21
2.4 Empirical Studies.....	24
2.5 Research Gaps	32
CHAPTER THREE	34
METHODOLOGY.....	34
3.0 Introduction	34
3.1 Research design	34
3.2 Study area and population.....	34
3.3 Sample size and sample selection.....	35
3.4 Sampling Techniques.....	36

3.4.1 Purposive sampling	36
3.4.2 Random sampling.....	36
3.5 Sources of Data.....	37
3.5.1 Primary Data	37
3.5.2 Secondary Data	37
3.6 Data collection methods.....	37
3.6.1 Questionnaires.....	37
3.6.2 Interview Guide.....	37
3.7 Validity and Reliability of the Instruments	38
3.7.1 Validity	38
3.7.2 Reliability	38
3.8 Data Processing	38
3.9 Data Analysis and presentation	39
3.10 Ethical Consideration.....	39
3.11 Limitations of study	39
CHAPTER FOUR.....	41
DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS.....	41
4.0 Introduction	41
4.1 Response rate.....	41
4.2 Demographic characteristics of the respondents	41
4.2 Findings on the effects of Free Trade Area on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, DRC	46
4.3 Findings on the effects of Economic Union on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, DRC.....	48

4.4 Findings on the effects of Common Market on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, DRC	50
CHAPTER FIVE.....	54
DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	54
5.0 Introduction	54
5.1 Discussions of findings	54
5.1.1 Demographic characteristics of the respondents.....	54
5.1.2 Effects of Free Trade Area on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, DRC.....	54
5.1.3 Effects of Economic Union on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, DRC	55
5.1.4 Effects of Common Market on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, DRC	55
5.2 Conclusions	56
5.2.1 Effects of Free Trade Area on conflict resolution.....	56
5.2.2 Effects of Economic Union on conflict resolution.....	56
5.2.3 Effects of Common Market on conflict resolution	57
5.3 Recommendations:	57
5.3.1 Effects of Free Trade Area on Conflict Resolution:	57
5.3.2 Effects of Economic Union on Conflict Resolution:	58
5.3.3 Effects of Common Market on Conflict Resolution:	58
5.4 Originality of contribution to knowledge.....	59
5.5 Areas of further research.....	60
REFERENCES.....	61
APPENDICES	65
APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE.....	65

APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW GUIDE68

APPENDIX III: BUDGET69

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Showing Research Population and sample size	36
Table 3.2: Reliability Statistics	38
Table 4.1: Demographic characteristics of respondents	42
Table 4.2: Effects of Free Trade Area on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, DRC	46
Table 4.3: Effects of Economic Union on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, DRC	48

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1: Showing the conceptual framework.....	13
Figure 4.1: Gender of respondents.....	43
Figure 4.2: Education level of respondents.....	44
Figure 4.3: Age of the respondents.....	45

ABSTRACT

The study sought to examine the East Africa Community and conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, Eastern DRC. The study objectives were to; examine the effects of Free Trade Area on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, Eastern DRC, determine the effects of Economic Union on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, Eastern DRC and establish the effects of Common Market on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, Eastern DRC. This study employed both qualitative and quantitative design. The study also used only qualitative approaches for making valid conclusions. Quantitative approach was experimental and general survey design examined the study topic and involved the use of questionnaires whereas qualitative approach, which was classified in two broad categories, these were; interview guides, that helped to examine the effects of East Africa Community and conflict resolution. However, the study was carried out from North Kivu Province with approximately a total population of 3,561,288 households as indicated in by National Institute of Statistics (2015). However, in this study, the researcher randomly targeted a population of 380 respondents and this involved; North Kivu Province Governor, local chiefs and traditional leaders, Authorities of EAC, Community Leaders in post-conflict region of Eastern DRC, Officials from MONUSCO and Residents in North Kivu Province, Eastern DRC. A sample size of 195 respondents was determined using Solvne's formula. The study found out that the males were 89(57.8%) and female 65(42.2%), this implies that the number of men was higher than that of women since it was believed men were the ones mostly involved in East African Community and conflict resolution in North Kivu Province. The study concluded that dispute resolution mechanisms are key to not only an effective operation of a free trade area but to an effective investment framework. Furthermore, free trade agreements have the potential to lift environmental, labor, human rights and living standards. If designed and implemented that way, trade can indeed reduce root causes of destructive conflict. The study recommends that in a conflict situation, assumptions that human rationality is a constant should be contextualized to include the possibility that one or both parties may abandon their original claims and accept a suboptimal settlement. The study also recommended that though alternative dispute resolution mechanisms are an important avenue of settling disputes in the East Africa region, there is need for member states to adhere to the resolutions under EAC's Draft Protocol on Foreign policy.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions and assumptions, scope of the study, significance of the study, the justification of the study and the operational definitions of terms and concepts as applied to suit the context of the study.

1.1 Background to the study

1.1.1 Historical perspective

Globally, the rationale for the study of regional integration in a conflict resolution capacity is drawn from the post-World War II experience of Western Europe and the history of the European Union. The problem with a proper assessment of the relevance of regional integration to peace building is that it is an economic and transactions-based geopolitical process (Aboagye, 2010). There is an apparent lack of approaches emphasizing its security-related component, while its liberal market dimension is omnipresent. At the same time, there is significant potential to explore the contribution of European integration to conflict resolution and reconciliation based on its capacity to transform prior conflict formations (Aly, 2012). The logic of integration applied as a strategy of conflict resolution differs from the classical model.

The end of the cold war and the marginalization of Africa, coupled with the vicious cycle of poverty, underdevelopment, disease and internecine conflicts have generally been cited as the fundamental reasons for the aggressive effort for such architects of regional integration and the establishment of an African peace and security mechanism (Aly, 2012). This concept emanated from regionalism which implies cooperation among states in geographically proximate and delimited areas for the pursuit of mutual gains in one or more issue areas. In most of the successful cases of regionalism, states that are already partners in solid political processes; based on shared and complementary values, devolve collective decisions, to structures that supplement,

rather than supplant national institutions (Aboagye, 2010): While regionalism may lead to the creation of new political organizations over time, regionalism and state strength are not supposed to stand in opposition to one another, as states remain the essential building blocks from which such arrangements are constructed. In Africa, regionalization is associated with the trade and investment strategies of private agents who operate in the absence of, or, as in Africa, in opposition to, institutionalized regional structures (Annan, 2013). The specific nature of the regionalization process in Africa results from this ambivalent relationship between regionalization, as impulses by private agents, and institutionalized patterns of regionalization - a distinction which recoups that between *de jure* and *de facto* regionalism

In DRC, East African Community (EAC) appears to be the best known of these organizations, having gained a good measure of international recognition through its massive peacekeeping efforts in Africa (Ayoob, 2013). EAC is also fast gaining a reputation for involvement in robust conflict resolution activities and the Community has begun to assert a role for itself in the resolution of sub-regional conflict. Indeed the EAC seems to have been relegated to a conflict resolution role in DRC as an intermediary with its higher moral authority for ensuring international peace and security on the one hand, and the sub-regional organizations with their perceived greater political will and power on the other hand. If almost the Economic Community is still standing on very shaky ground, it is difficult to see how the previous, already unrealistic, time frame could be shortened (Corum, 2012). The political exigencies of the EAC reflect no lessons from history. What is even more troubling is the fact that the intractable political and economic problems that were encountered while establishing sub-regional cooperation and integration arrangements in Africa in the last four decades have been simply assumed away.

The concept of dispute resolution mechanisms have been used as fronts for cultivating sustainable peace in the East Africa Community. However, the success of this approach has not fully been documented (Aboagye, 2010). Despite the East African region being endowed with plenty of resources, the region has experienced numerous security upheavals that have devastated her economic growth. Majority of EAC countries have experienced security challenges some that have threatened the very existence of the nations. In some of the countries like Burundi and South Sudan, there is still active violence. Countries like Kenya that are

peaceful right now only have restive peace with structural factors that contribute to conflict still being unaddressed.

Most of the conflicts realized in EAC countries have had a relationship to economic competitions not just between functions within the countries but between countries in EAC (Annan, 2013). This is exemplified by various commercial disputes such as the one between Kenya and Tanzania and Uganda and Rwanda (Ayoob, 2013). Some of these disputes threaten the fragile peace and coexistence in the region. Initially, the concern was that with formation of East African Community, mechanisms to address disputes both within communities in individual countries and between countries have not been well developed to address the level of conflicts likely to explode. It is with this background in mind that this research investigates how dispute resolution mechanisms within EAC are contributing to sustainable peace in the region.

In accordance with the Treaty establishing the EAC, member states agreed to promote sustainable economic growth, good governance, and durable peace and security throughout the region (Aly, 2012). In this context, the regional body adopted a peace and security strategy as a guiding framework to address security concerns in the sub-region. Three years after his inauguration, president Tshisekedi made good on his pledge by signing the EAC Treaty and thereby joining the regional organisation. Despite efforts by the UN peacekeeping operation (Monusco), the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and the Congolese government to cease the violence in eastern Congo, insecurity and instability persist in the region (Corum, 2012).

Ever since DRC joined EAC, the deployed EAC regional force, in cooperation with the military and administrative forces of the DRC, seek to stabilise and secure the peace in the country especially in the eastern parts (Ayoob, 2013). The decision to deploy an EAC regional force was arrived at during the third EAC heads of state conclave on Inter-Congolese dialogue of the Nairobi process on the peace and security situation in North Kivu Province, Eastern DRC, which was held on Monday at State House and chaired by Kenya's President Uhuru Kenyatta.

1.1.2 Theoretical Perspective

The study was based on dual concern theory of conflict resolution. In 1986, Pruitt and Rubin were the proponents of the dual concern theory of conflict resolution (Hans, and Langenhove, 2014). According to this theory, there are two factors that influence an individual or organization's involvement in conflict resolution: concern for oneself and compassion for other people. As they attempt to strike a balance that takes care of the assertive interests and concerns of others that are significant to them, entities will engage in or act in ways that are constantly shifting. The mechanisms for conflict resolution that the entities will accept and use are determined by the dissection of the two opposing positions.

Based on where the self and empathy positions intersect, this theory suggests five possible positions for entities (Keohane, 2015). When the disputing parties or one of them is unwilling to confront the issue, the avoidance approach is used. The group will adopt a wait-and-see attitude, hoping that the conflict will resolve itself on its own. This position arises when the party or parties are confronted with cultural contexts that are unsettling. In contrast, the yielding conflict style occurs when one party is more concerned about the other person's situation than they are about themselves. One of the conflicting parties may derive moral benefit from addressing the other party's needs or may be extremely concerned about maintaining the status quo in their relationship (Kindleberger, 2014).

1.1.3 Conceptual Perspective

The East African Community (EAC) is a regional intergovernmental organisation of 7 Partner States: The Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republics of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Uganda, and the United Republic of Tanzania, with its headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania (Hans, and Langenhove, 2014). The East African Community (EAC) is the regional intergovernmental organisation of the Republics of Kenya, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Republic of Burundi and Republic of Rwanda with its headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania. The EAC aims at widening and deepening co-operation among the partner states and other regional economic communities in, among others, political, economic and social fields for their mutual benefit.

Conflict resolution is the process by which two or more parties engaged in a disagreement, dispute or debate reach an agreement resolving it. Conflict resolution is a way for two or more parties to find a peaceful solution to a disagreement among them (Keohane, 2015). The disagreement may be personal, financial, political, or emotional. When a dispute arises, often the best course of action is negotiation to resolve the disagreement. The goals of negotiation are: To produce a solution that all parties can agree to work as quickly as possible to find this solution, To improve, not hurt, the relationship between the groups in conflict. Conflict resolution through negotiation can be good for all parties involved.

1.1.4 Contextual perspective

North Kivu has been a hotspot for armed conflict, with numerous armed groups vying for control over territory, resources, and power. These groups have engaged in violence, leading to civilian casualties and displacement (Keohane, 2015). The ongoing conflict has resulted in a humanitarian crisis, with millions of people in need of assistance. This includes internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees seeking shelter, food, and medical care. The region is rich in valuable natural resources, such as minerals, timber, and agricultural land. Competition over these resources has fueled conflicts and contributed to instability.

Political violence events remained concentrated in the eastern region in 2022, driven by political rivalries, land disputes, mineral interests, and foreign intervention. Specifically, Nord-Kivu province accounted for the highest number of political violence events and grew by 7% from last year (Hans, and Langenhove, 2014). Of the groups operating in eastern DRC, the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and the Cooperative for the Development of the Congo (CODECO) remained two of the most active. The ADF has early roots as an opposition group to the Ugandan government but later positioned itself as an Islamist militia with pledges to the Islamic State and merger with other militias operating in Nord-Kivu and Ituri provinces (Keohane, 2015). Despite an overall decrease in ADF activity from 2021, the group directed more violence toward civilians in 2022, driving an overall increase in attack events in the DRC of 12% compared to 2021. ADF's targeting of civilians accounted for nearly 40% of the total estimated fatalities across the country and comprised 27% of violence targeting civilians in Ituri province.

The North Kivu Province has been embroiled in conflict for over two decades, with various armed groups, including the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), and various Mai-Mai militias, perpetuating violence (MacGaffey, 2012). The DRC is the largest internal displacement crisis in Africa, with 5.8 million people internally displaced, mainly in the east of the country. It also hosts over a million refugees from neighbouring countries. It is also one of UNHCR's most underfunded operations worldwide. For 2023, UNHCR is asking for US\$232.6 million to assist internally displaced people and refugees in the DRC.

Ethnic tensions and rivalries have played a role in exacerbating the conflict, with some communities being disproportionately affected (Kindleberger, 2014). The instability in North Kivu Province has spilled over into neighboring countries, including Rwanda and Uganda, affecting regional stability and relations. Efforts to resolve the conflicts and promote peace have faced significant challenges, including issues related to disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of combatants, as well as political negotiations. Human rights abuses, including sexual violence, child recruitment, and forced labor, have been prevalent in the region, leading to further suffering and insecurity. The conflict has hindered the development of infrastructure and basic services, including education and healthcare, in North Kivu.

1.2. Problem Statement

In an ideal scenario, the East African Community (EAC) would assume a pivotal role in fostering peace and stability within the conflict-ridden North Kivu Province of the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). This envisioned state would be characterized by sustainable peace, a flourishing economy, and the overall well-being of its inhabitants, as postulated by Kindleberger (2014). In this utopian landscape, armed groups would be disarmed and disbanded, and robust governance structures would be in place to address the root causes of the conflict. Human rights violations, particularly sexual violence, would be eradicated, and displaced populations would return to their homes with the support of the international community.

Regrettably, the reality in North Kivu is starkly different, marked by a protracted conflict with no clear end in sight. Armed groups persist in their operations, exploiting the region's resources and inflicting suffering upon civilians, as highlighted by MacGaffey (2012). The extent of displacement is staggering, with 1.2 million people fleeing conflict in North Kivu since March 2022, demanding urgent and increased support from the international community. Displacement is widespread, with people seeking refuge both internally and in neighboring countries like Rwanda and Uganda. Human rights abuses, especially sexual violence against women and girls, persist unabated. Effective governance and infrastructure to address the root causes of the conflict are lacking, and peace negotiations remain fragile and inconclusive. The conflicts in eastern DRC pose a multifaceted challenge within the region, necessitating high-level attention at both regional and global levels to support the DRC government in finding a sustainable solution and steering the country towards development.

The resurgence of M23, a rebel military group in eastern DRC, and the ensuing human rights violations in North Kivu have garnered regional interest (MacGaffey, 2012). A notable development is the agreement among EAC member states, made during a meeting of military chiefs in Nairobi on June 20, 2022, to deploy an East Africa regional force (excluding Rwanda) to address the threat posed by M23 in DRC. The willingness of these member states to assist DRC in dealing with M23 not only bolsters collective security in the region but also sets a precedent for addressing other security threats through collaborative regional efforts.

The ongoing conflict's consequences are devastating, with thousands of lives lost, and millions enduring precarious conditions in displacement camps. Children are recruited as soldiers, and civilians face persistent threats of violence, exacerbating poverty and hindering economic development. This conflict-induced instability perpetuates a vicious cycle.

Despite international recognition of the North Kivu conflict and EAC's involvement in peace efforts, a substantial gap exists in achieving sustainable peace and addressing the conflict's root causes (MacGaffey, 2012). Diplomatic efforts have yet to yield a lasting resolution, and armed groups continue to thrive. While the importance of economic and political stability is acknowledged, concrete action and comprehensive strategies are lacking. A notable gap also

exists in addressing the specific issue of gender-based violence, which persists despite international condemnation.

As a consequence, the wars have thwarted the DRC and its neighbors from capitalizing on cross-border trade opportunities (Nhara, 2014). They have compromised regional infrastructure development, particularly in the power and transport sector, undermining overall growth. Furthermore, these conflicts have eroded the conducive environment for cooperation in the Great Lakes region, hindering the implementation of mutually beneficial regional integration programs. Consequently, the focus of this study is to examine the impact of conflict resolution mechanisms employed by the EAC in managing the profound conflict in the North Kivu Province of Eastern DRC.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The general purpose of the study is to examine the role of EAC in managing the conflict in North Kivu Province of Eastern DRC through the instrumentality of conflict resolution mechanisms

1.4 Specific Objectives of the Study

The Specific Objectives of the study are to;

- (i) Examine the effects of Free Trade Area on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, Eastern DRC
- (ii) Determine the effects of Economic Union on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, Eastern DRC
- (iii) Establish the effects of Common Market on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, Eastern DRC

1.5 Research Questions

- (i) What are the effects of Free Trade Area on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, Eastern DRC?
- (ii) What are the effects of Economic Union on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, Eastern DRC?

(iii)What are the effects of Common Market on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, Eastern DRC?

1.6 Scope of the Study

1.6.1 Geographical Scope

The study was carried from Post-conflict region of North Kivu Province, Eastern DRC. North Kivu is a province bordering Lake Kivu in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Its capital is Goma. North Kivu borders the provinces of Ituri to the north, Tshopo to the northwest, Maniema to the southwest, and South Kivu to the south. To the east, it borders the countries of Uganda and Rwanda. This study covered this post-conflict region of Eastern DRC because of the recent conflict of M23 rebels that lasted for a year.

1.6.2 Content Scope

This study addressed the effects of Free Trade Area on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, Eastern DRC, effects of Economic Union on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, Eastern DRC and effects of Common Market on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, Eastern DRC

1.6.3 Time Scope

The study focused on the period between 2012 -2020 since it was during this time period when Post-conflict regions of DRC was under siege with M23 rebels and this study covered a period of ten months due to the nature of activities that were carried out. It took place from July 2022 to April 2023.

1.7 Significance of the Study

In this context, this study seeks to contribute to deepening knowledge on the root causes and developmental implications of the conflicts in order to formulate informed policy decisions at national, regional, and international levels.

This study will help to deepen knowledge through analytical work and to mobilize debates around the root causes of the DRC conflicts and their developmental implications for the country and the region. The analytical work will shed light on the nature of the conflicts and their impact on economic and human development, and thus help in the formulation of informed policy decisions at the national, regional, and international levels

The study if accomplished will provide a foundation for future research by narrowing down the existing gaps in the East Africa Community strategy.

1.8 Definition of Key terms

East Africa Community

East African Community (EAC), organization that provides for cooperation, including the maintenance of a common market and the operation of common services, between the republics of Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda, South Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda (Nhara, 2014).

Conflict resolution

Conflict resolution is a way for two or more parties to find a peaceful solution to a disagreement among them. The disagreement may be personal, financial, political, or emotional (Behrend, Heike, 2014). When a dispute arises, often the best course of action is negotiation to resolve the disagreement.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of existing literature relating to the subject of the study and was structured according to the research objectives. This is a very wide aspect and the information given helps the researcher during the research study.

2.1 Theoretical Review

2.1.1 Dual Concern Theory of Conflict Resolution

The proponents of this theory were Pruitt and Rubin in 1986. This theory holds that an individuals or entities engagement in conflict resolution is informed by two dimensions; concern for self and empathy for others (MacGaffey, 2012). Entities will engage or behave in ways that are constantly changing as they attempt to maintain a balance that takes care of the assertive interests and concerns for others important to them. The dissection of the two conflicting positions determines the conflict resolution mechanisms the entities will accept and adopt.

The theory categorizes conflict resolution styles into five categories: avoiding, accommodating, competing, compromising, and collaborating. Understanding these styles allows policymakers and mediators to assess which approach is most suitable for specific phases of the conflict (Keohane, 2015). For example, in situations where violence escalates, a more assertive approach may be needed to protect civilians, while in negotiations, a collaborative approach may promote lasting peace. Dual Concern Theory underscores the importance of tailoring conflict resolution interventions to the specific context. In the North Kivu conflict, where multiple armed groups and interests are at play, it is crucial to recognize that different parties may require different approaches. Some may respond positively to cooperative measures, while others may require assertive pressure to cease hostilities.

The North Kivu conflict is partly driven by competition over valuable natural resources (Malan, 2014). Dual Concern Theory emphasizes the role of compromise in resolving resource-related

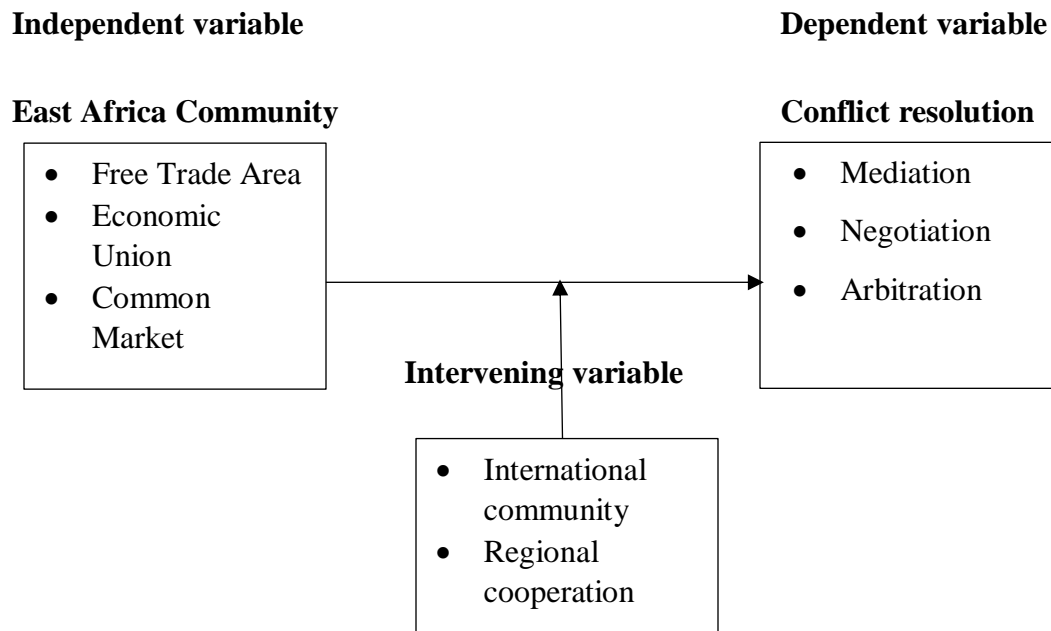
conflicts. By facilitating negotiations and agreements over resource allocation, conflict stakeholders can find mutually beneficial solutions that reduce the drivers of violence. Leadership plays a critical role in conflict resolution. The theory highlights that effective leaders can balance assertiveness and cooperativeness to lead their parties toward resolution. In the context of North Kivu, strong leadership from both regional actors and international mediators is essential to guide peace efforts.

This theory provides five position entities are likely to take depending on where the self and empathy positions intersect (Malan, 2014). Avoidance approach happens when the conflicting parties or one of them is unwilling to confront the issue. The party will take a wait and see posture hoping the conflict will end by itself. This position occurs when the party or parties have to deal with uncomfortable cultural contexts. On the other hand, yielding conflict style happens when one party is more concerned about the situation of the other more than self. One of the parties in the conflicting may be deriving moral rent from addressing the needs of the other or is highly concerned about maintaining status quo in their relationship with the other party concerned.

Competitive posture on the other hand is highly assertive with one of the conflicting parties taking a dominant position. Conflict resolution is seen as win or lose outcome (Nhara, 2014). Where parties have intermediate concern for each other, they are likely to pick conciliation approach to conflict resolution. Here the parties will negotiate and bargain positions until a middle ground that fairly accommodates all parties is arrived at¹⁴. This theory is relevant as it describes the reality of the manner in which countries in East Africa Community approach conflicts (Osilon, 2012). Competitive posture is an approach used by Tanzania when dealing with Kenya in trade related disputes. This arises from the fact that Tanzania is apprehensive of the domineering nature of Kenya. Conciliatory approach has been used by Rwanda and Uganda in resolving their security and border dispute.

2.2 Conceptual framework

Figure 2.1: Showing the conceptual framework



The conceptual framework above indicates that the independent variable is East Africa Community and it concerns; Free Trade Area, Economic Union and Common Market and the dependent variable is conflict resolution and it comprises of Mediation, Negotiation and Arbitration. The intervening variables are; international community and regional cooperation. Conflict resolution mainly focuses on the methods or techniques of resolving conflicts whereas the East Africa Community concerns the levels of economic integration.

2.3 Review of related studies

2.3.1 Effects of Free Trade Area on conflict resolution

One key theoretical framework supporting the potential positive impact of FTAs on conflict resolution is the concept of economic interdependence. Scholars such as Keohane and Nye (2014) argue that increased economic ties between nations create mutual dependencies, making the costs of conflict prohibitively high. In the context of FTAs, where member countries engage in preferential trade arrangements, this interdependence is expected to reduce the likelihood of

armed conflicts. Empirical studies by Barbieri and Schneider (2016) and Polachek et al. (2012) provide evidence supporting the inverse relationship between economic interdependence and the propensity for conflict, emphasizing the potential pacifying effect of FTAs.

FTAs can also serve as a platform for diplomatic engagement and conflict resolution. By providing a structured environment for negotiations and dispute settlement mechanisms, FTAs offer participating countries opportunities to address and resolve contentious issues through dialogue rather than confrontation (Mansfield et al., 2016). This notion aligns with the argument put forth by Copeland (2016) that trade relations act as a "propagating force for peace" by fostering communication channels that may deter conflict. Analyzing the European Union's experience, Poast and Urpelainen (2017) found that the Common Market, a precursor to the EU, played a significant role in reducing the probability of militarized disputes among member states.

The institutional frameworks embedded within FTAs can contribute to conflict prevention and resolution. The creation of supranational institutions, such as dispute resolution bodies and regional organizations, provides member countries with peaceful avenues to address trade-related disagreements (Pauwelyn, 2019). The North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and its successor, the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), exemplify the incorporation of dispute resolution mechanisms to mitigate trade-related conflicts (Hufbauer et al., 2019). This institutionalization of conflict resolution processes within FTAs may extend to addressing broader geopolitical tensions, as seen in the case of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its role in regional stability (Acharya, 2014).

Despite the potential positive impacts, FTAs are not without challenges regarding conflict resolution. Critics argue that economic integration can exacerbate existing inequalities, potentially leading to social unrest and internal conflicts (Rodrik, 2015). Additionally, the benefits of FTAs may not be evenly distributed among member countries, creating disparities that could contribute to tensions rather than alleviate them (Winters, 2017). It is crucial to acknowledge these challenges to better understand the nuanced relationship between FTAs and conflict resolution.

Examining the impact of FTAs on regional stability reveals another dimension of their potential influence on conflict resolution. Regional economic integration, facilitated by FTAs, can create a

stable environment that fosters trust and cooperation among neighboring countries (Mayer, 2016). Rose (2017) found that regional trade agreements are associated with a significant reduction in the probability of conflict between member states. The European Union's success in promoting peace among historically conflicting nations, as demonstrated by the integration of Germany and France, serves as a compelling case study illustrating the potential pacifying effects of economic integration (Mansfield and Pevehouse, 2018).

The relationship between trade liberalization, democratization, and conflict resolution has garnered attention in recent literature. One argument posits that increased economic openness, as facilitated by FTAs, can lead to democratization, ultimately contributing to a more peaceful international environment (Li and Resnick, 2014). Democratic nations are thought to be less prone to armed conflicts with one another (Russett, 2018). However, scholars like Gartzke et al. (2019) caution that the relationship between trade, democracy, and conflict is complex, with various factors influencing the dynamics.

FTAs can play a crucial role in post-conflict settings, aiding reconstruction and reconciliation efforts. Post-conflict nations engaging in preferential trade agreements may experience economic revitalization, creating a foundation for long-term stability (Collier and Hoeffler, 2015). The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is an emerging example, aiming to boost economic integration across the continent and potentially contribute to conflict resolution in conflict-affected regions (African Union, 2018).

Beyond the economic aspects, FTAs contribute to social integration and people-to-people contacts, which can have positive spill-over effects on conflict resolution. Increased cultural and societal interactions facilitated by enhanced trade relations may foster mutual understanding and diminish prejudices (Rauch, 2016). Such social integration can act as an informal mechanism for conflict prevention, promoting peace at the grassroots level (Bussmann and Schneider, 2016).

Free trade often has conflict connotations. These connotations stem from different takes on the subject. Different media, particularly newspapers, refer constantly to the positive and negative ramifications of trade; they also tend to polarise public opinion on the subject. In fact, free trade is part of an intricate web of complexities that can yield more than the two sides of the proverbial coin. In other words, the outcome is never black and white (Oslon, 2012). Hence studies, such as

this one, which attempt to identify potential links between trade and conflict, as well as the incidence of conflict resolution in the context of increased interdependence, are important.

Dispute resolution mechanisms are key to not only an effective operation of a free trade area but to an effective investment framework (Phillipe, and Langenhove, 2010). The fact that the framework mirrors that of the WTO provides certainty and confidence especially with foreign investors as the mechanisms provided under the WTO have been tried and tested thus winning the confidence of investors and traders. It is important for a State Party to a dispute under the agreement to pay attention to a number of considerations such as cost-implication, time, as well as the finality associated with each process before selecting a method for dispute resolution.

Free trade agreements have the potential to lift environmental, labor, human rights and living standards. If designed and implemented that way, trade can indeed reduce root causes of destructive conflict. As currently practiced and implemented, trade interests are above the interests of people and the planet, consequently the potential for conflict is increased (Posen, 1993). The current debate on the Trans Pacific Partnership suggests that the agreement can lead to immense social conflict, unrest and instability. While the peace through trade question leads to inconclusive results regarding direct violence, it can be clearly stated that unregulated free trade strongly contributes to structural violence – the violence where social structures and institutions prevent people from meeting their basic needs (Phillipe, and Langenhove, 2010). Trade is not the issue. People and societies have always traded and will continue to do so. The trade relationships and mechanisms are at the core of whether trade contributes to peace or drives violent conflict and war.

Free trade supporters have greater interest in peace – better expressed as stability – since violence and war will most likely disrupt profits. Global trade relationships – in history and at present – usually are unequal between developed and less developed nations (Rugumamu, 2013). Moreover the benefits of trade both within developed and less developed nations are distributed to disproportionately few. The nature of trade relationships becomes one of the most important variables in determining whether trade is conducive to peace or conflict.

One of the most notable debates on free trade agreements currently evolves around the Trans Pacific Partnership (TPP). The lens of peace and conflict studies offers a unique angle. An international trade policy like TPP has the potential to lift environmental, labor, human rights and living standards (Rugumamu, 2015). If designed and implemented that way, trade can indeed reduce root causes of destructive conflict. However, the history of free trade agreements, the secrecy around TPP, and the leaked information of the actual agreement suggest tremendous potential for social conflict if implemented.

Trade and economies have the potential to lead to peace as well as violence and war. We need to view trade and conflict with all its nuances and add layers like equality and justice (Toit, 2014). While the peace through trade question leads to inconclusive results regarding direct violence, it can be clearly stated that unregulated free trade strongly contributes to structural violence – the violence where social structures and institutions prevent people from meeting their basic needs. The current global economic system is a war economy (Rugumamu, 2013).

2.3.2 Effects of Economic Union on conflict resolution

The theoretical foundation supporting the positive impact of Economic Unions on conflict resolution lies in the concept of economic interdependence. Increased economic ties between nations within an EU are argued to create mutual dependencies, thus lowering the incentives for armed conflict (Keohane and Nye, 2014). Empirical evidence by Polachek et al. (2015) supports this notion, finding that enhanced economic interdependence within the European Union has contributed to a decrease in the likelihood of militarized disputes among member states. This emphasizes the potential pacifying effect of Economic Unions through the promotion of economic cooperation.

Economic Unions often come with well-defined institutional mechanisms for dispute resolution, providing member states with peaceful avenues to address conflicts. The European Union, for instance, has established robust institutions such as the European Court of Justice and the European Parliament, which offer mechanisms for resolving trade-related disputes and fostering diplomatic dialogue (Hix, 2015). These institutional frameworks can contribute to conflict

prevention and resolution by providing structured mechanisms for negotiation, reducing the likelihood of resorting to force (Francois and Nelson, 2014).

The creation of Economic Unions facilitates continuous economic cooperation and trade-induced diplomacy, contributing to conflict resolution. The European Union's experience demonstrates how economic integration has been accompanied by diplomatic engagement, creating forums for dialogue and cooperation that extend beyond economic matters (Nugent, 2017). This ongoing diplomatic interaction has played a role in preventing conflicts among member states, showcasing how Economic Unions can serve as platforms for peaceful dialogue.

The stability brought about by Economic Unions can extend beyond economic matters to foster regional peace and stability. Rose (2017) argues that regional economic integration, as exemplified by Economic Unions, reduces the likelihood of militarized conflicts among member states. The African Union's efforts to establish the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) provide a contemporary example of an economic union seeking to promote regional stability and peacebuilding in Africa (African Union, 2018). The potential positive effects on conflict resolution are intertwined with the broader goals of fostering economic cooperation and shared prosperity.

While Economic Unions hold promise for conflict resolution, challenges persist. Economic integration may exacerbate existing inequalities among member states, potentially contributing to tensions and conflicts (Gnutzmann-Mkrtychyan and Hirschmann, 2017). Moreover, the Eurozone crisis exposed vulnerabilities in the EU's economic integration, raising questions about its effectiveness in addressing economic disparities and potential spillover effects on regional stability (Blyth, 2013). Addressing these challenges is essential to fully understand the impact of Economic Unions on conflict resolution.

Economic Unions often foster the development of shared norms and values among member states, creating a common identity that transcends economic interests. This shared identity can contribute to conflict resolution by promoting a sense of solidarity and cooperation (Kostadinova, 2015). Studies on the European Union highlight how the shared commitment to democratic values and human rights has acted as a stabilizing force, reinforcing the peaceful coexistence of member states (De Vries, 2018). The cultivation of common norms within

Economic Unions can thus serve as a foundation for addressing and resolving conflicts peacefully.

The ability of Economic Unions to effectively manage and respond to economic crises can influence conflict dynamics. Crisis situations, such as the global financial crisis of 2008, underscore the importance of coordinated responses within Economic Unions to prevent economic downturns from escalating into geopolitical conflicts (Jones, 2015). The European Union's handling of the Eurozone crisis, despite criticisms, demonstrated the potential of integrated crisis management mechanisms in averting conflicts triggered by economic challenges (Verdun, 2015). This crisis management aspect is crucial for conflict prevention and resolution within the context of Economic Unions.

The inclusive development facilitated by Economic Unions can contribute to conflict reduction. By fostering economic growth and reducing disparities among member states, Economic Unions address root causes of potential conflicts (Freitag et al., 2016). A study by Milner and Tingley (2013) found that increased economic integration within NAFTA led to significant reductions in income inequality among member countries, suggesting a potential positive impact on long-term stability. Inclusive development strategies within Economic Unions can, therefore, play a pivotal role in addressing socioeconomic grievances that may fuel conflicts.

Economic Unions often go beyond economic cooperation to include cross-border security integration. The security dimension of Economic Unions, as exemplified by the European Union's Common Security and Defense Policy, contributes to conflict prevention and resolution (Raik, 2017). Shared security frameworks create incentives for member states to work collaboratively in addressing common threats, thereby reducing the likelihood of inter-state conflicts. The integration of security considerations within Economic Unions provides a comprehensive approach to regional stability and peacebuilding.

Addressing environmental challenges through sustainable development strategies within Economic Unions can also contribute to conflict prevention. Shared environmental concerns, such as climate change, can be effectively addressed through collaborative efforts within Economic Unions (Oberthür and Gehring, 2016). By promoting sustainable practices and

environmental cooperation, Economic Unions contribute to the mitigation of resource-based conflicts and enhance the overall resilience of member states to environmental stressors.

Despite questions about the effectiveness and efficiency of economic integration treaties to prevent conflicts in the DRC, they certainly provide a chance for the secessionist regions to overcome isolation and improve their economies (Vogt, 2014). Sources indicate that some businesses there are seeking the opportunity of exporting their niche products to markets.

Development actors need to be much more aware of the impact that economic and social policies have on peacebuilding and security. So far, development and peacebuilding actors—whether at the national, regional, or international level—do not interact sufficiently (Rugumamu, 2013). Development has particularly important implications for security, first because insecurity greatly undermines development efforts but also because development interventions can often contribute to local security much more than policing alone (Zartman, 2012). However, this requires that actors—both on the security and the development side—understand each other and enter into constructive cooperation. Finally, the role of humanitarian and development actors is complementary, especially from a prevention perspective and more efforts are required to make the humanitarian and development nexus a reality.

Economic Unions can play a central role in preventing violent conflict; the second is that development needs to be conceived differently in countries or regions that have obvious risks of violent conflict (Aly, 2012). The report also argues that governments and the donor community are far from having internalized these messages; as a result, huge opportunities are being missed. Prevention works and creates significant savings—but for these to be realized, actions must be undertaken early and sustained over a long period of time (Rugumamu 2015). They must also be strongly focused on the ways in which security, peacebuilding, development, and humanitarian concerns intersect.

Power is often regarded as separate from economic and social policies, but policies of decentralization, citizens' participation and voice, and transparency in budget and economic decision making are all at the end of the day about power (Annan, 2013). Issues that are often considered outside the realm of development—such as justice and security—must be considered when addressing economic and social development.

Improving on the areas will require major changes in the way Economic Unions at country levels—and in the institutions that support them—carry out their work (Ayoob, 2013). The study looks at many examples of countries that have successfully addressed the risk of violent conflicts, often with the support of the international community, and have as a result found sustainable pathways toward peace

2.3.3 Effects of Common Market on conflict resolution

The theoretical underpinning of Common Markets fostering conflict resolution lies in the concept of economic interdependence. As nations within a Common Market increase economic ties, mutual dependencies are expected to grow, thereby reducing the incentives for armed conflicts (Keohane and Nye, 2014). Empirical evidence supporting this relationship is found in studies like Polachek et al. (2015), which shows that enhanced economic interdependence within Common Markets has been associated with a decrease in the likelihood of militarized disputes among member states. This highlights the potential pacifying effect of Common Markets through the promotion of economic cooperation.

Common Markets often come with well-defined institutional mechanisms for dispute resolution, providing member states with peaceful avenues to address conflicts. The European Union's Common Market, for instance, has established robust institutions such as the European Court of Justice, which offers mechanisms for resolving trade-related disputes and fostering diplomatic dialogue (Hix, 2015). These institutional frameworks can contribute to conflict prevention and resolution by providing structured mechanisms for negotiation, reducing the likelihood of resorting to force (Francois and Nelson, 2014).

The establishment of a Common Market facilitates ongoing economic cooperation and trade-induced diplomacy, contributing to conflict resolution. The European Common Market, for example, has demonstrated how economic integration can be accompanied by diplomatic engagement, creating forums for dialogue and cooperation that extend beyond purely economic matters (Nugent, 2017). This continuous diplomatic interaction plays a role in preventing

conflicts among member states, showcasing how Common Markets can serve as platforms for peaceful dialogue.

The stability brought about by Common Markets can extend beyond economic matters to foster regional peace and stability. Research by Rose (2017) argues that regional economic integration, as exemplified by Common Markets, reduces the likelihood of militarized conflicts among member states. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and its Common Market initiatives provide a contemporary example, where economic integration is seen as a means to promote regional stability and peacebuilding (Rüland, 2014). The potential positive effects on conflict resolution are interconnected with the broader goals of fostering economic cooperation and shared prosperity.

While Common Markets hold promise for conflict resolution, challenges persist. Economic integration may exacerbate existing inequalities among member states, potentially contributing to tensions and conflicts (Gnutzmann-Mkrtychyan and Hirschmann, 2017). Moreover, the Eurozone crisis exposed vulnerabilities in the European Common Market, raising questions about its effectiveness in addressing economic disparities and potential spillover effects on regional stability (Blyth, 2013). Addressing these challenges is essential to fully understand the impact of Common Markets on conflict resolution.

Common Markets often foster the development of shared norms and values among member states, creating a common identity that goes beyond economic interests. This shared identity can contribute to conflict resolution by promoting a sense of solidarity and cooperation (Kostadinova, 2015). Studies on the European Common Market highlight how the shared commitment to democratic values and human rights has acted as a stabilizing force, reinforcing the peaceful coexistence of member states (De Vries, 2018). The cultivation of common norms within Common Markets can serve as a foundation for addressing and resolving conflicts peacefully.

The ability of Common Markets to effectively manage and respond to economic crises can influence conflict dynamics. Crisis situations, such as the global financial crisis of 2008, underscore the importance of coordinated responses within Common Markets to prevent economic downturns from escalating into geopolitical conflicts (Jones, 2015). The European

Union's handling of the Eurozone crisis, despite criticisms, demonstrated the potential of integrated crisis management mechanisms in averting conflicts triggered by economic challenges (Verdun, 2015). This crisis management aspect is crucial for conflict prevention and resolution within the context of Common Markets.

The inclusive development facilitated by Common Markets can contribute to conflict reduction. By fostering economic growth and reducing disparities among member states, Common Markets address root causes of potential conflicts (Freytag et al., 2016). A study by Milner and Tingley (2013) found that increased economic integration within NAFTA led to significant reductions in income inequality among member countries, suggesting a potential positive impact on long-term stability. Inclusive development strategies within Common Markets can, therefore, play a pivotal role in addressing socioeconomic grievances that may fuel conflicts.

Common Markets often go beyond economic cooperation to include cross-border security integration. The security dimension of Common Markets, as exemplified by the European Common Market's Common Security and Defense Policy, contributes to conflict prevention and resolution (Raik, 2017). Shared security frameworks create incentives for member states to work collaboratively in addressing common threats, thereby reducing the likelihood of inter-state conflicts. The integration of security considerations within Common Markets provides a comprehensive approach to regional stability and peacebuilding.

Addressing environmental challenges through sustainable development strategies within Common Markets can also contribute to conflict prevention. Shared environmental concerns, such as climate change, can be effectively addressed through collaborative efforts within Common Markets (Oberthür and Gehring, 2016). By promoting sustainable practices and environmental cooperation, Common Markets contribute to the mitigation of resource-based conflicts and enhance the overall resilience of member states to environmental stressors.

Any free trade, customs union or common market agreement¹ must have, at a minimum, political institutions and a dispute settlement mechanism. The political institutions are necessary to allow the countries to reach decisions about how to implement the treaty obligations and objectives and to oversee that implementation (Ayoob, 2013). The dispute settlement mechanism is needed to resolve disputes that may arise over the meaning and application of the

agreement's legal obligations and objectives. A dispute settlement mechanism is crucial to the viability of an economic integration arrangement because the traditional method by which states resolve disputes is through negotiations

Peace or at least the avoidance of conflicts is a second important pillar in the rise of Asia. Differences over trade can and will be likely to arise (Hans, and Langenhove, 2014). While the importance of trade is almost universally recognised, particular groups and sectors may well face losses, and drive political and social sensitivities to liberalisation. There can and have been disagreements on other issues too, such as the environmental impacts of trade in certain goods, or their impact on human and labour rights (MacGaffey, 2012).

Such differences over trade arise at different levels and scales and can lead to wider political differences and tensions between states (Keohane, 2015). The resolution of such differences in the WTO has been developed and increasingly strengthened. Yet regional approaches to trade dispute resolution are also needed in Asia and other regions. Efforts should be made so that trade relations can be dealt with in a wider context of relations and the need to avoid increasing tension and possible conflict between states.

Wider and more fundamental conflicts must also be managed and avoided at the regional levels, between neighbours and near neighbours (Kindleberger, 2014). These include the political and security tensions that exist in Asia and other countries. Some relate to historical differences, narrow nationalism, ethnic differences (or indeed commonalities) and territorial claims (MacGaffey, 2012). Others even more dangerously perhaps relate to political hegemony presently or in the future, whereby security, trade and other concerns are brought together in a heady and potentially dangerous brew.

2.4 Empirical Studies

The history of East African community runs back to the colonial days. Kenya and Uganda were under British colonialists. After the defeat of Germany in First World War, Tanzania who were formerly under Germany colonialists, joined British Colonies (Toit, 2014). The governors of the three different regions in East Africa severally met and agreed on common positions that would facilitate their operations in East Africa. In most of the agreements, there were no formal

structures that would address any arising disputes. However, the home office in London would often keep record of the agreements amongst EAC governors and give directions on their implementation in situations of disputes.

With cooperation between the East African territories being challenged by lack of a legal framework, lack of logistical coordination and personal challenges, the governors established the East African High Commission in 1947 (Vogt, 2014). The commission which had a judicial mandate over saw the implementation of various common services. East African Central Legislative Assembly was formed as the legislative arm of the newly established East African cooperation.

The new growth in East African Cooperation brought the need for a more formalized and structured dispute resolution mechanism (Zartman, 2012). The East African Court of Appeal was born. The court used the common English law. Each region had domestic courts but appeals in all those courts were done at East African Court of Appeal. The court determined disputes falling under East Africa's common services. The court however was limited domestic laws of the East African regions

When Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania gained their independence from British colonialists, the East African Community was reshaped to accommodate the changed circumstances (Oslon, 2012). There were no clear dispute resolution mechanisms that were put in place, considering that the colonial era community had much a very smooth flow (Phillipe, and Langenhove, 2010). However, this was not to apply in the new formation. The three regions were no independent states with divergent interests and sovereignty. They were now open competitors in trade and other aspects which raised conflicts. The countries were also having very divergent ideological inclinations that raised tensions. Kenya was a capitalist's country while Tanzania leaned towards socialism.

Though the original court of appeal was retained by the independent nations, it did not have the mandate to handle dispute emerging from EAC treaty (Phillipe, and Langenhove, 2010). Lack of adequate dispute resolution mechanisms led to mistrust in EAC community that eventually collapsed it in 1984. The re-launch of new East African Community started in 1986 when heads

of states from Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania met to deliberate on the same²⁴. A series of meetings followed that culminated in the agreement for the revival of a new commission in 1993. On November 30th 2016, a treaty for formation of East African Community was signed by Kenya Uganda and Tanzania.

Rugumamu (2013) investigated the history of East African Community and its impact on major economic milestones for EAC member countries and the challenges the bloc has encountered in meeting its regional objectives in the period 2000 to 2015. The study focuses on customs union and common markets in EAC. Secondary literature review was the mode of data collection employed. The study established that low level of public awareness of progress in EAC on customs union and common market has resulted to low level of exploitation of economic opportunities between the nationals of member states.

Rugumamu (2015) investigated the genesis of EAC common market protocol and its impact on economic growth in Kenya. Specifically, the study investigated how movement of labor and persons, movement of capital, and contribution of trade on economic growth on Kenya. Exploratory research design was done to establish the relationship between the various variables. Directorate of commerce and three companies operating across East Africa were involved in the study. The study established that since its inception, capital movement affected economic growth in Kenya owing to the small amount of capital inflow in Kenya as compared to the much bigger amounts flowing out.

East African countries have various dispute resolution mechanisms. Most countries in East Africa have common law jurisdictions having been colonized by Britain and hence inherited English legal tradition (Rugumamu 2015). In common law approach, statutory law is established by legislative arm of government while regulatory law is developed by the executive arm. In common law, the courts will interpret the statutory law when an issue is brought before it or when there is no regulatory law guiding the statutory law.

Common law is perceived as friendly to investors and this has encouraged other nations to invest in East Africa (Rugumamu, 2015). It is used by many countries across the world including USA and hence its interpretation worldwide is much more uniform than other laws. Common law has

also guided EAC countries and national levels to easily adjudicate commercial disputes and in the process enhancing peaceful coexistence³⁸. Concerns however have been raised that common law in some EAC jurisdiction has been silent on some critical elements critical in commercial transactions which has resulted to ambiguous judgments“.

Kenyan company act, for example has had gaps that have failed to properly protect property rights or rights of first refusal that investors need clarity on (Toit, 2014). A similar scenario is present in Tanzanian company laws. The common laws in EAC have been observed to reinterpret existing laws that has resulted to unpredictable litigations. Other countries in East African Community, such as Rwanda, have civil law jurisdictions. These laws trace their roots to Romanian and Napoleon laws. Civil laws are different from common laws in that they do not allow the courts to interpret statutory laws where regulatory aspects of the same are missing.

However, Civil laws tend to be more detailed than common laws giving investors a higher level of certainty on judicial outcomes (Vogt, 2014). Nonetheless, difference in philosophies of law in East Africa has brought challenges in determining cases as different jurisdiction will draw different conclusions on similar matters. It is for this reason that Rwanda has started shifting to common law to be aligned to majority of EAC members. EACJ arbitration processes have been hailed as greatly successful in resolving disputes in EAC. It has clear procedures that provide time limits. This makes resolution of disputes transparent and expeditious. The cost of adjudication is also relatively cheap than other jurisdictions. Disputants do not need to pay the arbitrator and filing fees are relatively low as one hundred US dollars for disputes involving less than ten thousand US dollars.

There have been calls to ensure that dispute resolution mechanisms in EAC are fine tuned to ensure justice, sustainable benefits and peace (Zartman, 2012). Canadian International Development Association, Tanzanian chapter, states that the dispute resolving bodies should sensitize the public on their roles and process so that their judgments can receive wider public support and limit chances on inter country disputes and hence ensure peaceful coexistence. International Monetary Fund (IMF) considers clarity on key areas that are likely to be sources of dispute as the best preventive approach to disagreements that would threaten EAC peace. In the first EAC formed immediately after independence of EAC countries, lack of fair distribution of

economic benefits resulted to its eventual collapse and in the process led to enmity between countries such as Tanzania and Uganda and Kenya and Uganda (Aly, 2012). It is hence imperative to ensure the new EAC has laid down processes that will ensure all countries have equitable share of gains from the community for sustainable peaceful coexistence

A study by Aly, (2012) investigated the effectiveness of dispute resolution mechanisms in EAC as a precursor for peace and resolving of natural resources disputes⁴⁵. The study specifically focused on cases of oil exploration. The researcher used secondary literature review for data collection. The study reported that oil exploration is a new venture in East Africa but one with potential of raising sharp conflicts. The researcher concluded that the dispute resolution mechanisms in place are inadequate to address disputes of gas exploration. A recommendation is made to have dispute resolution mechanisms specific to oil exploration sector and which may be informed by other such processes in the world for peaceful resolution of community concerns.

Annan, (2013) provides an analysis of EAC conflicts linking security and peace to development. The study identified that all triggers of conflict are evident in EAC region which are structural, political, social and economic. Competition for natural resources has resulted to violence in the region. Availability of small arms has made violent crimes be on the rise in the last three decades threatening peaceful coexistence of communities and neighbouring countries in the region. The study concluded that for the region to benefit from economic benefits of peace and integration, they must address the security concerns in all the six member countries.

Based on secondary literature, Annan, (2013) studied on resource based disputes in EAC member countries borderlands, their history, current and future directions and the implication on integration. The study reported that trans-border resource conflicts are majorly as a result of poor boundary marking by colonial governments, poorly defined and unmarked borders, poor border management and inadequacy of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms to address border related disputes.

African states all belong to the most ambitious and successful collective security arrangement ever conceived- the UN. They also belong to the African Union (AU) formerly OAU which since the Cairo declaration of 1993 may be regarded as a regional collective security arrangement

under chapter viii of the UN charter. A number of geographically proximate Africa states have also entered into collective defence agreements - such as the treaty of Non-Aggression, Assistance and Mutual Defence; known by its French acronym – ANAD. In Europe, although often misperceived as a regional organization, NATO is a multinational alliance for collective self defence, as was the War-Saw Pact. A defensive alliance, according to art. 51 of the UN charter, may use force in self defence without waiting for the Security Council (SC) to take action, (only in response to an armed attack). Contrary, Art 53 (1) allows a regional organization to take enforcement action even if there was no prior armed attack, but with the SC authorization. Art 54 on the other hand requires that the SC “shall at all times be kept informed of activities undertaken or in contemplation under regional arrangements or by regional agencies for the maintenance of international peace and security”.

At its 37th Ordinary Session in Lusaka, in July 2001, the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government adopted the New African Initiative; later coined the New Partnership for Africa’s Development, (NEPAD). This seeks to reconfigure the continent’s political and economic institutions in order to manage the forces of globalization and stop the continent from sinking further into anarchy. The African Union seeks to promote democratic principles, peace, security and stability, greater unity and solidarity between African countries and African peoples, and the acceleration of political and socio-economic integration. NEPAD envisaged a new kind of partnership with the North and various multilateral and multinational institutions. It appears that the OAU has hitherto recognized five main sub-regions in Africa, and prioritized only one corresponding organization for each area; the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in the east, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the West, the Arab Maghreb Union (known by its French acronym - UMA) in the North, the South Africa Development Community (SADC) in the South, and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) in the Central Africa sub-region. ECOWAS appears to be the best known of these organizations, having gained a good measure of international recognition through its massive peacekeeping efforts in Liberia and Sierra Leone. SADC is also fast gaining a reputation for involvement in robust conflict management activities and IGAD has also begun to assert a role for itself in the resolution of sub-regional conflict. Indeed the OAU seems to have been relegated to a conflict management role as an intermediary between the U.N. with its higher

moral authority for ensuring international peace and security on the one hand, and the sub-regional organizations with their perceived greater political will and power on the other hand.

However, without the courtesy and formality of a prior rigorous assessment of the progress already made, the African Heads of State in 2016, decided to establish the African Union. More specifically, Point 8 of the Sirte (Libya) Declaration called for the stepping up of the implementation process of the Abuja Treaty through the reduction of the original time frame of 34 years. It also called for the immediate establishment of all institutions provided for under the Treaty. The institutions in question are the African Central Bank, the African Monetary Fund, the Court of Justice, and the Pan-African Parliament.

If almost all the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are still standing on very shaky ground, it is difficult to see how the previous, already unrealistic, time frame could be shortened. The political exigencies of the Sirte Declaration reflect no lessons from history. What is even more troubling is the fact that the intractable political and economic problems that were encountered while establishing sub-regional cooperation and integration arrangements in Africa in the last four decades have been simply assumed away (Mulat 1998a: 119 and Aly 1994:94-95).

There are absolutely no shortcuts to an African Economic Community (AEC) or to African political union. In short, the move toward building and consolidating a continental community through sub-regional communities is neither as easy nor as straightforward as it may look. Although the process of integration in Africa would appear complex and intractable, the difficulties involved are not insurmountable. Nor should they discourage ongoing reforms and progress toward cooperation and Integration. The existence of many integration organizations, in itself, be perceived as constituting an impossible impediment to reforms. They can all contribute negatively, in various ways, to the implementation effort of the AEC Treaty, if carefully thought-out harmonization and coordination policies are not undertaken along the way.

To proponents of integration, essential prerequisite would be for states to surrender a certain degree of national sovereignty to elected supra-national bodies. Sovereignty is likely to be one of the persistent areas of discontent. As noted, African states have, hitherto retained total sovereign

control of their territories and all aspects of decision-making, and have demonstrated a remarkable zeal not to cede any part of this authority for the common good of the continent. The Abuja Treaty calls on member-states to relinquish some of their powers to the Union. This implies a willingness to sacrifice some control over national economic policy management that directly affects the populations of member nations. Indeed, this is the basic litmus test for genuine political will and commitment to any regional integration effort. The Constitutive Act remains ambiguous on this very vital issue. On the one hand, it seeks to defend the national sovereignty of member-states, while on the other; it seeks to appropriate the right to intervene in the internal affairs of member-nations. This contradiction, if not properly handled, is likely to haunt future integration efforts in Africa.

In many integration attempts in Africa, political leaderships have jealously guarded their sovereignty and were not willing to surrender any of it to supra-national powers. As a result, national political agents tended to determine the nature of their participation in the integration project. The transfer of some powers will not only provide sub-regional secretariats with the necessary legitimacy but, most importantly, will vest in these institutions the necessary authority to make tough policy decisions and to enforce coordinated action in critical areas of national policy management. These shifts in decision-making do not necessarily imply erosion of existing state power and authority. Rather, what will have changed is the way in which states use their power and authority; decision-making will be made in coordination with other member-states. Moreover, the transfer of authority to elected supra-national bodies will enhance their ability to plan, coordinate, oversee and evaluate the implementation of collective projects and programs. Thus, sovereignty need no longer be thought of as a zero-sum game. Pooling it does not reduce sovereignty. Rather, the trade-offs of pooling sovereignty include security and stability, reduced anxiety and conflict, reduced military spending, and enhanced economic and technological cooperation (Rugumamu, 2016). In short, the imperative of political will would constitute another important test of commitment to an integration project. This means that strong institutions at the national level would be indispensable for implementing this increasingly diverse policy and project initiatives for integration arrangements.

2.5 Research Gaps

Various empirical studies have focused on history of dispute resolution mechanisms in EAC. For example Koigi investigated the history of East African Community and its impact on major economic milestones for EAC member countries and the challenges the bloc has encountered in meeting its regional objectives in the period 2000 to 2015. The gap in this study is that it primarily focused on the history of dispute resolution in customs union and common markets in EAC. Njuki investigated the genesis of EAC common market protocol and its impact on economic growth in Kenya. The gap in the study was its limitation to labor and persons, movement of capital, and contribution of trade on economic growth on Kenya.

A number of scholars studied on alternative dispute resolution mechanisms in EAC. For example, William investigates the effectiveness of dispute resolution mechanisms under EACJ. Warui investigated alternative dispute resolution mechanisms in East African Community with a case study of Migingo Islands contested by Kenya and Uganda. Mugambi examined use of ADR for resolving disputes in Kenya. The gaps in these studies was that they only focused on specific areas such as EACJ, Migingo Islands and Kenya unlike current study that focuses on alternative dispute resolution mechanisms in various fields of interaction in EAC.

Similarly, various scholars studied on dispute resolution mechanisms in EAC and prospect on sustainable peace. For instance, Katryn investigated the effectiveness of dispute resolution mechanisms in EAC as a precursor for peace and resolving of natural resources disputes. The study specifically focused on cases of oil exploration unlike the current study that basis is scholarly analyzes on different mechanisms for dispute resolutions and how they impact on sustainable peace in EAC.

Scholars such as Ayoob, (2013), Copeland, (2016) and Corum, (2012) have extensively studied conflict dynamics in the Great Lakes region and the broader DRC, often focusing on international interventions, historical grievances, and the intricate web of local, national, and regional actors. However, the specific impact and effectiveness of the East African Community in mediating and resolving conflicts in North Kivu Province remain understudied.

One key area that lacks comprehensive examination is the role of the East African Community in conflict prevention, resolution, and peacebuilding within North Kivu. Existing literature tends to focus on broader regional organizations or international actors, potentially overlooking the nuanced strategies and challenges faced by the EAC in this specific context. Scholars like MacGaffey, (2012) and Malan, M. (2014) have explored regional conflict resolution mechanisms, but a dedicated focus on the EAC's initiatives in North Kivu would offer a more granular understanding.

Moreover, the influence of historical, cultural, and economic factors on the success or failure of conflict resolution efforts by the East African Community in North Kivu has not been thoroughly investigated. A study conducted by Nhara, (2014) on cultural dimensions of conflict resolution provides a foundation, but a more tailored examination of how these factors manifest in the specific context of the EAC's involvement in North Kivu is needed.

Additionally, an analysis of the impact of the East African Community's conflict resolution strategies on local communities, especially considering the diverse ethnic and social landscape of North Kivu, is another area where research is lacking. Another study conducted by Pauwelyn, (2019) on community-level impacts of conflict resolution provides a broader framework, but a focused study on the specific experiences and perceptions of communities in North Kivu would enhance our understanding. In summary, the research gap lies in the insufficient attention given to the East African Community's role in conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, Eastern DRC. Scholars can build upon existing research on regional conflict resolution mechanisms and cultural dimensions to offer a more targeted and nuanced exploration of the EAC's initiatives and their impact in this particular conflict-ridden region.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology that was used in the research. The justification for the use of the research approach is explained. The chapter further provides a description of research design, nature of the study, sources of data collection, sources of information, sample size, the methods employed in data collection and limitations of the study.

3.1 Research design

This study used correlational research design this is because it involves the relationship between East Africa Community and conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, Eastern DRC. This study employed both qualitative and quantitative design. The study also used only qualitative approaches for making valid conclusions. Quantitative approach was non-experimental and general survey design examined the study topic and involved the use of questionnaires whereas qualitative approach, which was classified in two broad categories, these were; interview guides, that helped to examine the effects of East Africa Community on conflict resolution.

3.2 Study area and population

The study was carried out from Post-conflict region of North Kivu Province in Eastern DRC. North Kivu is a province bordering Lake Kivu in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo. Its capital is Goma. North Kivu borders the provinces of Ituri to the north, Tshopo to the northwest, Maniema to the southwest, and South Kivu to the south. To the east, it borders the countries of Uganda and Rwanda. However, the study was carried out from North Kivu Province with approximately a total population of 3,561,288 households as indicated in by National Institute of Statistics (2015). However, in this study, the researcher randomly targeted a population of 380 households because these are the respondents that could be accessible and had an intimate understanding of the region, its communities, and the dynamics of the conflict and they possessed valuable insights into the root causes of the conflict and the needs of the local

population. These were; local chiefs and traditional leaders, Community Leaders in post-conflict region of Eastern DRC, and Residents in North Kivu Province.

3.3 Sample size and sample selection

Sample size determination is the act of choosing the number of observations or replicates to include in a sample in an empirical study in which the goal is to make inferences about a population from a sample. The nature of data that has been generated required different techniques for better understanding of the research problem under investigation. Besides, the approach is also commonly known for achieving higher degree of validity and reliability as well as eliminating biases as per Amin (2015). The study used Sloven's formula to determine the sample size of the actual respondents.

Sloven's formula states: $n = \frac{N}{1+N(\alpha)^2}$

Solvent's formula is applied as follows,

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$
$$n = \frac{380}{1 + 380(0.0025)}$$
$$= 195 \text{ respondents}$$

Table 3.1: Showing Research Population and sample size

Category of respondents	Population	Sample size	Sampling method
Community Leaders in post-conflict region of Eastern DRC	49	15	Purposive sampling
Residents in North Kivu Province, Eastern DRC	331	180	Random sampling
Total	380	195	

Source: Primary Data (2023)

3.4 Sampling Techniques

3.4.1 Purposive sampling

Purposive sampling involved selecting a certain number of respondents based on the nature of their work. Community Leaders in post-conflict region of Eastern DRC were purposely selected because they resided in post-conflict regions of DRC and thus were believed to have knowledge about the study topic. This method was appropriate because the sample selected comprises of informed persons who provided data that was comprehensive enough to gain better insight into the problem

3.4.2 Random sampling

Random sampling involved selecting respondents from the population listing by chance. In this way, every member had an equal chance to be selected. The main disadvantage of this method was with the bias which it could diminish the integrity of random selection but this was overcome since the population listing involved only members with relevant information. Residents in North Kivu Province were randomly selected to give each an equal chance of representation. All respondents were assumed to have vital information on the subject matter of the research. Respondents who were willing to participate were approached.

3.5 Sources of Data

3.5.1 Primary Data

This was obtained through use of self- administered questionnaires and interview guides to the respondents.

3.5.2 Secondary Data

This was acquired from textbooks and other related works of outstanding scholars such as published magazines, written data sources including published and unpublished documents, company reports and internet sources which were all referred to, to provide more information on East Africa Community and conflict resolution.

3.6 Data collection methods

The researcher used both the questionnaire and interview guide to collect data.

3.6.1 Questionnaires

The researcher constructed questionnaires containing items in line with the study objectives. The questionnaires were self-administered to 180 respondents to fill and later be collected. The items on the questionnaire were structured in a closed ended format to ease response. One of the major advantages of using questionnaires was that many responses could be collected in a short time. The questionnaire was sectioned according to the objectives of the study.

3.6.2 Interview Guide

The researcher used interview guide to gather additional information from the 15 respondents and these were; Community Leaders in post-conflict region of Eastern DRC. Interview guide is a set of questions with structured answers to guide an observer interviewer, researcher or investigator. The researcher used this method because it helps to obtain detailed information about personal feelings, perceptions and opinions and it also allows more detailed questions to be asked.

3.7 Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

3.7.1 Validity

This instrument was mainly ensured through expert judgment and the researcher made sure the coefficient of validity to be at least 70%. After the assessment of the questionnaire, the necessary adjustments were made bearing in mind of the objectives of the study. The researcher used the following formula to calculate the validity of the instrument was

$$CVI = \frac{\text{no of items declared valid}}{\text{total no of items}}$$

$$CVI = \frac{15}{18} = 0.833$$

Therefore the instrument was valid since the CVI was greater than 0.70

3.7.2 Reliability

This is also another critical instrument that the researcher used as a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yielded consistent results or data after repeated trials (Amin, 2005). In addition, at least an interview schedule and numerous questions were tested with the use of the respondents in the other branches of areas that are conflict hit in nature.

Table 3.2: Reliability Statistics

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.856	18

Therefore, the instrument was reliable since the Cronbach Alpha's value was 0.856 which is above 0.75.

3.8 Data Processing

The processing of data was done after the collection of data for verification of the information that was gathered and for attainment of completeness, accuracy and uniformity. Data editing involved

checking the information for errors, which was an added advantage because it enabled the researcher to delete and eliminate possible errors that was traced which in the end would have manipulated the results of the study. Data was analyzed concurrently to avoid duplication thereby guiding the entire study for balanced and critical analysis. The researcher used hypothesis based on the questionnaire and for other items, tabulation and percentage and simple statistical methods were used for data presentation, analysis and qualification.

3.9 Data Analysis and presentation

The study explained, described, and presented the findings basing on the specific objectives of the study and research questions, where data analysis was initially done through sketchy and generalized summaries of the findings from observation and conclusions in the process of data collection. Data analysis was done using simple statistical percentages and frequencies and thereafter was presented in form of tables.

3.10 Ethical Consideration

The researcher carried out the study with full knowledge and authorisation of Eastern DRC. The researcher first of all acquired an introductory letter from the University which he used to eliminate suspicion. The researcher thereafter went ahead to select respondents, and arrange for dates upon which he would deliver questionnaires as well as pick them in addition to making appointments for interviews to be conducted. The researcher was charged with a task of ensuring that he would assure the respondents of their confidentiality as this was paramount to research.

3.11 Limitations of study

Time constraint was addressed through careful planning, devoting more time on the research work by reducing on leisure time.

Some of the targeted respondents were not willing to set aside time to respond to the investigator's questions thus somehow end up frustrating the researcher's efforts to collect substantial data.

Some respondents were too busy with their daily schedule and might fail to spare time for the questionnaire. In such circumstances the researcher would give ample time to those respondents. This would make it possible by serving them the questionnaires in time.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION AND ANALYSIS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter contains detailed descriptive of results obtained from the data analysis. It also focuses on the data presentation, interpretation and analysis in form of tables and figures.

4.1 Response rate

Out of 180 questionnaires that were distributed, only 154 of them were returned and this implies that the response rate was 85.6% as illustrated below;

$$\frac{154}{180} * 100\% = 85.6\%$$

4.2 Demographic characteristics of the respondents

This part presents the background information of the respondents who participated in the study. The purpose of presenting the background information was to find out the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Table 4.1: Demographic characteristics of respondents

MAIN CATEGORY	SUB-CATEGORY	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE
Gender	Male	89	57.8
	Female	65	42.2
	Total	154	100.0
Education level	Primary	15	9.7
	Secondary	78	50.6
	Certificate	17	11.0
	Diploma	26	16.9
	Bachelor Degree	12	7.8
	Higher Degree	6	3.9
	Total	154	100.0
Age of respondents	20-35 years	18	11.7
	36-51 years	70	45.5
	Above 51 years	66	42.9
	Total	154	100.0

Source: Primary Data (2023)

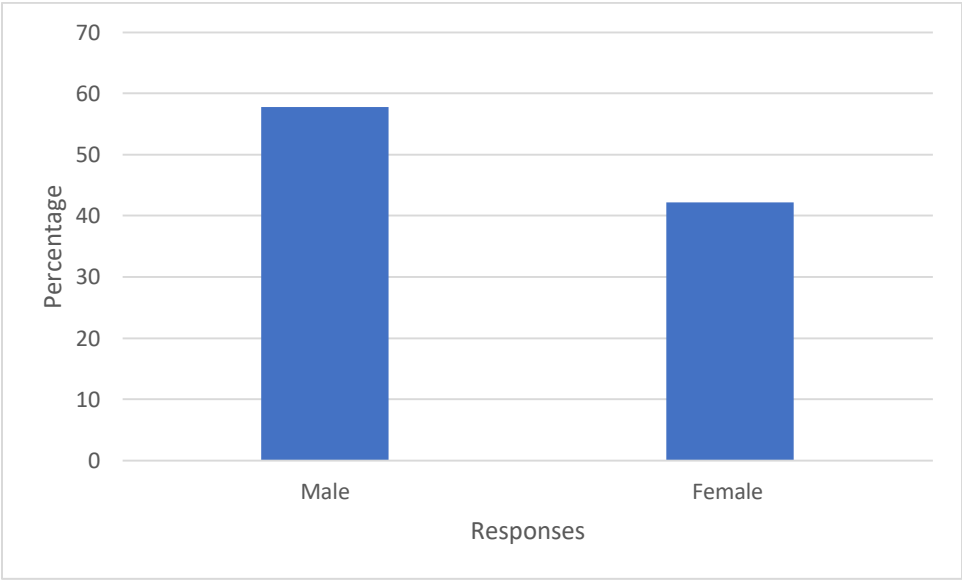
Demographic characteristics play a pivotal role in shaping the landscape of research findings, providing essential insights into the context and nuances of the studied population. In the investigation at hand, respondents were categorized based on gender, education level, and age, offering a comprehensive snapshot of the diverse group under scrutiny.

The gender distribution of the participants revealed a balanced yet slightly male-skewed representation. Among the 154 respondents, 57.8% identified as male, while 42.2% identified as female. This gender distribution prompts reflection on potential gender-specific perspectives and experiences that may influence responses and, consequently, the research outcomes. Understanding such dynamics is critical for ensuring the comprehensiveness and relevance of the study findings.

Examining the educational backgrounds of the participants further enriches the contextual understanding of the study. The majority of respondents, comprising 50.6%, held a secondary education level, reflecting a substantial emphasis on educational diversity. This diversity, ranging from primary to higher degree qualifications, introduces a spectrum of perspectives and potentially varying degrees of exposure to the study's focal point. It underscores the importance of considering the influence of educational backgrounds on participants' perceptions and responses.

Age, as a demographic variable, offers a temporal dimension to the study. The distribution of respondents across different age groups—11.7% in the 20-35 years bracket, 45.5% in the 36-51 years range, and 42.9% above 51 years—unveils a varied life experience and historical context within the sample. The age diversity within the study population prompts contemplation on generational influences on conflict resolution perspectives. The experiences and perspectives of those who have lived through different historical periods can significantly impact their approach to conflict and its resolution.

Figure 4.1: Gender of respondents

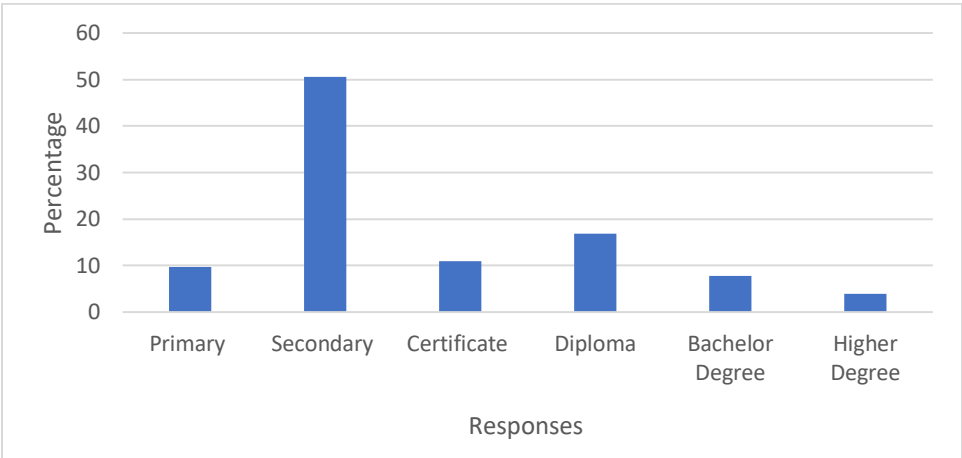


Source: Primary Data (2023)

Table 4.1 above and Figure 4.1 both illustrate that in respect to gender, the males were 89(57.8%) and female 65(42.2%), this implies that the number of men was higher than that of

women since it was believed men were the ones mostly involved in East African Community and conflict resolution in North Kivu Province. The observed gender distribution challenges pre-existing assumptions that predominantly associate men with involvement in East African Community affairs and conflict resolution. Historically, gender stereotypes have often depicted conflict-related activities as male-dominated. These findings call for a re-evaluation of such assumptions, urging researchers and practitioners to adopt a more inclusive perspective that considers and incorporates the active participation of women in EAC-related initiatives.

Figure 4.2: Education level of respondents



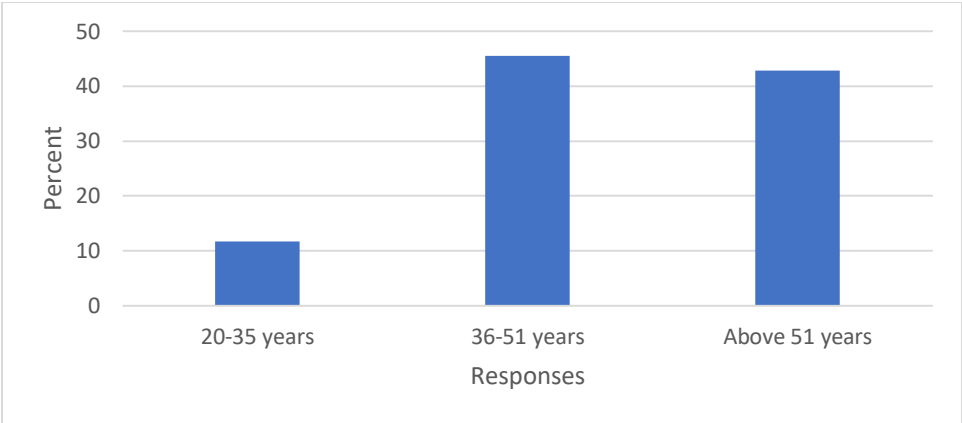
Source: Primary Data (2023)

With regard to education level, 15(9.7%) were at primary school level, 78(50.6%) were at secondary school level, 17(11%) were certificate holders, 26(16.9%) of the respondents were diploma holders, 12(7.8%) were bachelor’s degree and the remaining 6(3.9%) were master’s degree holders. This implies that most of the respondents were not relatively educated and thus were informed about the East African Community and conflict resolution.

The majority of respondents, comprising 50.6% at secondary school level, 16.9% with diplomas, and 9.7% at primary school level, indicate a considerable proportion with limited formal education. This suggests that a significant segment of the population engaged in EAC and conflict resolution activities might face challenges associated with lower educational attainment. The observed educational distribution implies that a substantial portion of respondents may have limited access to higher educational resources and information. This raises concerns about

potential information gaps regarding the East African Community and conflict resolution. Efforts to bridge these gaps should consider tailored communication strategies that are accessible and comprehensible to individuals with diverse educational backgrounds.

Figure 4.3: Age of the respondents



Source: Primary Data (2023)

In the aspect of age of respondents, 18(11.7%) were between that category of age 20-35 years, 70(45.5%) were between 36-51 years and lastly 66(42.9%) were above 51 years. This implies that the majority of the respondents were in the age bracket of 36-51 years who are middle aged adults who are old enough to engage different stakeholders in East African Community and conflict resolution of North Kivu Province.

The distribution of respondents based on age categories provides valuable insights into the demographic composition of individuals actively participating in East African Community (EAC) and conflict resolution efforts in North Kivu Province. The implications drawn from these age-related statistics offer nuanced perspectives on the potential influence and role of different age groups in regional initiatives. The dominance of the age bracket 36-51 years, comprising 45.5% of respondents, indicates a substantial involvement of middle-aged individuals in EAC and conflict resolution activities. This age group, considered as middle-aged adults, holds significance in facilitating engagement with diverse stakeholders. Their life experiences, professional backgrounds, and established networks make them potentially effective contributors to regional initiatives.

4.2 Findings on the effects of Free Trade Area on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, DRC

This section mainly concerns the effects of Free Trade Area on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, DRC. The study results are presented in the table 4.2;

Table 4.2: Effects of Free Trade Area on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, DRC

INDICATORS	MEAN	S. D	INTERPRETATION	RANK
Dispute resolution mechanisms are key to not only an effective operation of a free trade area but to an effective investment framework	4.09	1.023	High	4
Free trade often has conflict connotations	4.14	0.984	High	1
Unregulated free trade strongly contributes to structural violence	4.12	1.017	High	2
Free trade supporters have greater interest in peace – better expressed as stability – since violence and war will most likely disrupt profits	4.10	1.008	High	3
Free trade agreements have the potential to lift environmental, labor, human rights and living standards	3.04	1.060	None	5
Average Mean	3.9	1.018	High	

Source: Primary Data (2023)

Legend

Range	Mean Range	Response Mode	Interpretation
5	1 – 1.8	Strongly Disagree	Very Low
4	1.8– 2.6	Disagree	Low
3	2.6 – 3.4	Neutral	None
2	3.4 – 4.2	Agree	High
1	4.2 – 5	Strongly Agree	Very High

As indicated in the Table 4.2 above, the mean of the indicator that Dispute resolution mechanisms are key to not only an effective operation of a free trade area but to an effective investment framework was 4.09 with a standard deviation of 1.023 that equivalent to low on the Likert Scale. Free trade often has conflict connotations had a mean of 4.14 and standard deviation of 0.984 which is also equivalent to high on the Likert Scale. Further, the mean of the indicator that Unregulated free trade strongly contributes to structural violence was 4.12 and standard deviation of 1.017 which is also high.

Free trade supporters have greater interest in peace – better expressed as stability – since violence and war will most likely disrupt profits had a mean of 4.10 and standard deviation of 1.008 equivalent to high on the Likert Scale. In the fifth rank, it was the indicator that Free trade agreements have the potential to lift environmental, labor, human rights and living standards which had a mean of 3.04 and a standard deviation of 1.060 that is equivalent to none on the Likert Scale. Lastly, the average mean was 3.9 which was also high on the scale and this implies that Free Trade Area plays an essential role in the conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, DRC.

The overall high average mean across all indicators reflects a consistent tendency among respondents to view free trade in the context of North Kivu Province as having significant implications for conflict resolution. This collective perception, coupled with a relatively low standard deviation, suggests a notable level of agreement among participants on the assessed indicators. The interpretation of the table underscores the complex relationship between free trade areas and conflict resolution, as perceived by respondents in North Kivu Province. The high rankings and means indicate a general awareness of both the positive potential and potential challenges and conflicts associated with free trade agreements in the region.

Interview responses;

“The community has been very beneficial in the area since it guides the free movement of goods, people, labour, services and capital from one Partner State to another as well as the rights of establishment and residence without restrictions,” one of the authorities of EAC said. [KII, 2023]

“Free trade between countries has helped to reduce conflict because trade forges connections between nations and gives each country an incentive to avoid war with its trading partners,” one of the North Kivu Province Governor, local chiefs and traditional leaders narrated. [KII, 2023]

“Free Trade Area has helped in conflict resolution to a high extent since eradicating hostility and promoting cooperation is an important step leading to peace,” another member of North Kivu Province Governor, local chiefs and traditional leaders revealed. [KII, 2023]

4.3 Findings on the effects of Economic Union on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, DRC

This section mainly concerns effects of Economic Union on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, DRC. The study results are presented in the table below;

Table 4.3: Effects of Economic Union on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, DRC

INDICATORS	MEAN	S. D	INTERPRETATION	RANK
Economic Union can play a central role in preventing violent conflict	4.14	1.005	High	2
Economic Union needs to be conceived differently in regions that have obvious risks of violent conflict	4.12	0.996	High	3
Development actors need to be much more aware of the impact that economic union have on peacebuilding and security	3.07	1.116	None	5
Economic Union provides an opportunity to overcome conflicts	4.09	1.023	High	4
Economic Union has particularly important implications towards security	4.47	0.643	Very High	1
Average Mean	3.98	0.998	Very High	

Source: Primary Data (2023)

Legend

Range	Mean Range	Response Mode	Interpretation
5	1 – 1.8	Strongly Disagree	Very Low
4	1.8– 2.6	Disagree	Low
3	2.6 – 3.4	Neutral	None
2	3.4 – 4.2	Agree	High
1	4.2 – 5	Strongly Agree	Very High

The study results illustrated in the Table 4.3 above illustrates the effects of Economic Union on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, DRC .

It was evident that the first indicator that Economic Union can play a central role in preventing violent conflict had a mean of 4.14 and standard deviation of 1.005 which is equivalent to Low on the Likert Scale. Another indicator that Economic Union needs to be conceived differently in regions that have obvious risks of violent conflict had a mean of 4.12 and standard deviation of 0.996 equivalent to Low on the Likert Scale.

Development actors need to be much more aware of the impact that economic union have on peacebuilding and security had a mean of 3.07 and standard deviation of 1.116 equivalent to None on the Likert Scale. Another indicator that Economic Union provides an opportunity to overcome conflicts had 4.09 and standard deviation of 1.023, which was equivalent to high. Economic Union has particularly important implications towards security had a mean of 4.47 and standard deviation of 0.643 equivalent to very high. Lastly, the average mean was 3.98 equivalent to high. This implies that Economic Union play an important role in addressing the conflict in North Kivu, Eastern DRC.

The overall very high average mean across all indicators reflects a consistent and strong tendency among respondents to view Economic Union as having substantial and positive effects on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province. The low standard deviation suggests a high level of agreement among participants on the assessed indicators. The interpretation of the table highlights the perceived positive role of Economic Union in conflict prevention and resolution in North Kivu Province. Respondents emphasize the importance of considering regional context,

viewing Economic Union as an opportunity for overcoming conflicts, and acknowledging its significant implications for security in the region.

Interview responses;

“Economic Union has a significant effect on conflict resolution in the area. Furthermore, the economic union helps to mediate ethnic, religious and regional conflicts and thus strengthening economic prosperity,” one of the Authorities of EAC said. [KII, 2023]

“Dispute settlement mechanism is crucial to the viability of common market since the traditional method by which states resolve disputes is through negotiations since at times of tension the market place is a frequent flashpoint where conflict becomes tangible and conflagration a regular outcome,” another member of the Authorities of EAC noted. [KII, 2023]

4.4 Findings on the effects of Common Market on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, DRC

This section mainly concerns the effects of Common Market on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, DRC. The study results are presented in the table below;

Table 4. 1: Effects of Common Market on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, DRC

INDICATORS	MEAN	S. D	INTERPRETATION	RANK
Common market agreement must have, at a minimum, political institutions and a dispute settlement mechanism	4.09	1.023	Very high	4
Avoidance of conflicts is an important pillar for common market	4.13	0.982	Very high	2
Dispute settlement mechanism is crucial to the viability of common market since the traditional method by which states resolve disputes is through negotiations	4.11	1.010	Very high	3
Efforts should be made so that trade relations can be dealt with in a wider context of relations and the need to avoid increasing tension and possible conflict	3.04	1.069	None	5
Wider and more fundamental conflicts must also be managed and avoided to ensure successful common market	4.14	0.865	Very high	1
Average Mean	3.9	0.99	Very high	2

Source: Primary Data (2023)

Legend

Range	Mean Range	Response Mode	Interpretation
5	1 – 1.8	Strongly Disagree	Very Low
4	1.8– 2.6	Disagree	Low
3	2.6 – 3.4	Neutral	None
2	3.4 – 4.2	Agree	High
1	4.2 – 5	Strongly Agree	Very High

The study results indicated in the table 4.4, the first indicator used that Common market agreement must have, at a minimum, political institutions and a dispute settlement mechanism that had a mean of 4.09 and standard deviation of 1.023 which is equivalent to high on Likert Scale. Avoidance of conflicts is an important pillar for common market had a mean of 4.13 and standard deviation of 0.982 which is equivalent to high on the Likert Scale.

In the fifth rank, it was the indicator that Dispute settlement mechanism is crucial to the viability of common market since the traditional method by which states resolve disputes is through negotiations had a mean of 4.11 and standard deviation 1.010 which is equivalent to high. Efforts should be made so that trade relations can be dealt with in a wider context of relations and the need to avoid increasing tension and possible conflict had a mean of 3.04 and a standard deviation of 1.069. Wider and more fundamental conflicts must also be managed and avoided to ensure successful common market had a mean of 4.14 and standard deviation of 0.865.

Lastly the average mean was 3.9 which is equivalent to very high. The implication is that collaboration as the East African Community strategy plays a vital role towards conflict resolution of North Kivu Province as a whole.

The overall very high average mean across all indicators reflects a consistent and strong tendency among respondents to view the common market's positive effects on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province. The low standard deviation suggests a high level of agreement among participants on the assessed indicators. The interpretation of the table highlights the perceived importance of elements such as political institutions, dispute settlement mechanisms, and the avoidance of conflicts for the success of a common market in North Kivu Province. Respondents emphasize the need for a comprehensive approach to deal with trade relations and underscore the connection between conflict management and the overall viability of the common market.

Interview responses;

The Common Market has had a transformative impact on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province. By fostering economic integration and cooperation among East African Community member states, it has contributed to stability in the region. The shared economic interests created through the Common Market

provide a common ground for dialogue and collaboration, reducing the likelihood of conflicts. Additionally, the increased interconnectedness has encouraged diplomatic efforts, creating a conducive environment for peaceful resolution of disputes in North Kivu Province." [KII, 2023]

"The benefits of the Common Market in North Kivu Province have been substantial. At a fundamental level, it has facilitated the free movement of goods, services, and people, fostering economic growth and development. The increased trade and investment opportunities have not only improved living standards but have also played a crucial role in reducing tensions and conflicts. Moreover, the Common Market has promoted a sense of shared regional identity, encouraging collaboration and understanding among member states, which is vital for sustained peace and prosperity in Eastern DRC." [KII, 2023]

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses, concludes and recommends reflecting on the study findings presented in the previous chapter.

5.1 Discussions of findings

5.1.1 Demographic characteristics of the respondents

The study found out that the males were 89(57.8%) and female 65(42.2%) with regard to gender, this implies that the number of men was higher than that of women since it was believed men are more effective in dealing in East African Community than their female counterparts. With regard to education level, 15(9.7%) were at primary school level, 78(50.6%) were at secondary school level, 17(11%) were certificate holders, 26(16.9%) of the respondents were diploma holders, 12(7.8%) were bachelor's degree and the remaining 6(3.9%) were master's degree holders. This implies that most of the respondents were not relatively educated and thus were informed about the East African Community and conflict resolution. In the aspect of age of respondents, 18(11.7%) were between that category of age 20-35 years, 70(45.5%) were between 36-51 years and lastly 66(42.9%) were above 51 years. This implies that the majority of the respondents were in the age bracket of 36-51 years who are middle aged adults who are old enough to engage different stakeholders in East African Community and conflict resolution of North Kivu Province.

5.1.2 Effects of Free Trade Area on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, DRC

The study revealed that the average mean of effects of Free Trade Area on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, DRC was 3.9 which was also high on the scale and this implies that Free Trade Area plays an essential role in the conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, DRC. This is in line with Oslon, 2012 who noted that free trade often has conflict connotations. These

connotations stem from different takes on the subject. Different media, particularly newspapers, refer constantly to the positive and negative ramifications of trade; they also tend to polarise public opinion on the subject. In fact, free trade is part of an intricate web of complexities that can yield more than the two sides of the proverbial coin. In other words, the outcome is never black and white. This is also in line with Posen, 1993 who noted that free trade agreements have the potential to lift environmental, labor, human rights and living standards. If designed and implemented that way, trade can indeed reduce root causes of destructive conflict. As currently practiced and implemented, trade interests are above the interests of people and the planet, consequently the potential for conflict is increased.

5.1.3 Effects of Economic Union on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, DRC

It was discovered that the average mean of effects of Economic Union on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, DRC was 3.98 equivalent to high. This implies that Economic Union plays an important role in addressing the conflict in North Kivu, Eastern DRC. This is in line with Aly, 2012 who stressed that Economic Unions can play a central role in preventing violent conflict; the second is that development needs to be conceived differently in countries or regions that have obvious risks of violent conflict. Furthermore, this is also in line with Rugumamu, 2013 who noted that development actors need to be much more aware of the impact that economic and social policies have on peacebuilding and security. So far, development and peacebuilding actors whether at the national, regional, or international level do not interact sufficiently.

5.1.4 Effects of Common Market on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, DRC

It was found out that the average mean of effects of Common Market on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, DRC was 3.9 which is equivalent to very high. The implication is that collaboration as the East African Community strategy plays a vital role towards conflict resolution of North Kivu Province as a whole. This is in line with Ayoob, 2013 who agreed that any free trade, customs union or common market agreement¹ must have, at a minimum, political institutions and a dispute settlement mechanism. The political institutions are necessary to allow the countries to reach decisions about how to implement the treaty obligations and objectives and

to oversee that implementation. The dispute settlement mechanism is needed to resolve disputes that may arise over the meaning and application of the agreement's legal obligations and objectives. A dispute settlement mechanism is crucial to the viability of an economic integration arrangement because the traditional method by which states resolve disputes is through negotiations

5.2 Conclusions

5.2.1 Effects of Free Trade Area on conflict resolution

The analysis of the effects of Free Trade Areas (FTAs) on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, DRC, suggests a generally positive relationship. The findings highlight the importance of dispute resolution mechanisms within FTAs, indicating that they are key not only to the effective operation of a free trade area but also to an effective investment framework. The association of free trade with conflict is recognized, but the potential for conflict is seen more in unregulated free trade, which strongly contributes to structural violence. Supporters of free trade are believed to have a greater interest in peace and stability since violence and war could disrupt profits. However, there is a need for caution, as free trade agreements are perceived to have the potential to lift environmental, labor, human rights, and living standards, but the mean score suggests a more neutral stance on this aspect.

The study concluded that dispute resolution mechanisms are key to not only an effective operation of a free trade area but to an effective investment framework. Furthermore, free trade agreements have the potential to lift environmental, labor, human rights and living standards. If designed and implemented that way, trade can indeed reduce root causes of destructive conflict

5.2.2 Effects of Economic Union on conflict resolution

The examination of the effects of Economic Unions on conflict resolution in the same region reveals a positive perspective. Economic Unions are seen as playing a central role in preventing violent conflict, especially in regions with obvious risks. The development actors are urged to be more aware of the impact that economic unions can have on peacebuilding and security. Economic Unions are perceived to provide an opportunity to overcome conflicts, and their

implications toward security are particularly emphasized, indicating a very high level of significance.

The study concluded that Economic Unions can play a central role in preventing violent conflict; the second is that development needs to be conceived differently in countries or regions that have obvious risks of violent conflict. Development actors need to be much more aware of the impact that economic and social policies have on peacebuilding and security. So far, development and peacebuilding actors whether at the national, regional, or international level do not interact sufficiently.

5.2.3 Effects of Common Market on conflict resolution

The assessment of the effects of Common Markets on conflict resolution indicates a predominantly positive view. Political institutions and a dispute settlement mechanism are deemed crucial for the viability of a common market. Avoidance of conflicts is recognized as a significant pillar for common markets, reinforcing the importance of maintaining peace for their success. Dealing with trade relations in a broader context and avoiding fundamental conflicts are considered vital, although there is less agreement on this aspect. Overall, the results suggest a very high perception of the positive impact of Common Markets on conflict resolution.

It was also concluded that any free trade, customs union or common market agreement¹ must have, at a minimum, political institutions and a dispute settlement mechanism. The political institutions are necessary to allow the countries to reach decisions about how to implement the treaty obligations and objectives and to oversee that implementation.

5.3 Recommendations:

5.3.1 Effects of Free Trade Area on Conflict Resolution:

Strengthening and refining dispute resolution mechanisms within Free Trade Areas is essential to ensure effective conflict resolution. Regular evaluations and updates to these mechanisms should be conducted to adapt to evolving challenges.

Despite the perceived positive effects, attention should be given to potential negative consequences of free trade, particularly in areas of environmental, labor, and human rights standards. Mitigation measures and proactive policies should be in place to address any adverse effects. Encourage ongoing dialogue between free trade supporters and other stakeholders to maintain a shared interest in peace and stability. This can contribute to a collaborative approach to conflict prevention and resolution.

The study recommends that there is need to encourage the use of increased trade activities facilitated by the Free Trade Area as a confidence-building measure among conflicting parties in North Kivu. Trade can foster interdependence and cooperation, which are crucial elements in conflict resolution. To be resolved, conflict should be replaced by prioritizing other preferences, values, or needs. Within a conflict-resolution taxonomy, regional integration may be regarded provides for follow-up post settlement stage that assures the continued fulfillment of social needs in a non adversarial relationship.

5.3.2 Effects of Economic Union on Conflict Resolution:

Development actors should be more informed and aware of the impact that Economic Unions can have on peacebuilding and security. Training programs and awareness campaigns can help ensure a comprehensive understanding of the role of economic unions in conflict resolution.

Capitalize on the perceived role of Economic Unions in preventing violent conflicts by establishing and promoting initiatives focused on conflict prevention. These initiatives can include diplomatic efforts, peacebuilding programs, and early warning systems.

Given the importance of Economic Unions in enhancing security, regional collaboration on security frameworks should be strengthened. This can involve joint efforts to address common threats and challenges.

5.3.3 Effects of Common Market on Conflict Resolution:

The emphasis on political institutions within Common Markets suggests the need for their continuous strengthening. Efforts should be directed at enhancing the effectiveness and responsiveness of political institutions to contribute to conflict resolution.

Recognizing the significance of conflict avoidance, strategies should be developed and promoted to prevent conflicts within common markets. This includes early intervention, diplomatic approaches, and the establishment of mediation mechanisms.

To address the aspect of dealing with trade relations in a wider context, efforts should be made to enhance diplomatic relations among member states. Trade-related tensions should be managed through diplomatic channels to avoid escalation.

5.4 Originality of contribution to knowledge

This research contributes original insights at a critical juncture in history. It is conducted in a period marked by ongoing conflicts in the North Kivu Province of Eastern DRC, making its timing highly relevant. The study aligns with global efforts to address protracted conflicts in conflict-prone regions. The study's unique contribution lies in its specific geographical focus on the North Kivu Province within the broader Eastern DRC region. North Kivu is known for its persistent instability, and this research delves deeply into the dynamics of this specific conflict, shedding light on a lesser-explored area within the broader field of conflict resolution.

The research employs a multi-faceted methodology that combines qualitative and quantitative approaches. It leverages interviews, surveys, and document analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of the conflict resolution efforts led by the East African Community (EAC). This study offers a distinctive contribution by investigating the role of a regional organization, the EAC, in conflict resolution. While there is existing research on conflict resolution in Africa, the specific focus on the EAC's involvement in North Kivu is relatively uncharted territory.

The importance of this research lies in its potential to inform policymaking and peacebuilding efforts in a region marred by conflict. By highlighting the successes and challenges faced by the EAC, it provides practical insights into the 'how' of conflict resolution in complex, protracted conflicts. In summary, this research's originality is rooted in its timing, geographical focus, multi-method approach, examination of the EAC's role, and its potential to guide future conflict resolution efforts. By addressing these facets, the study significantly advances our understanding of conflict resolution dynamics in North Kivu Province, Eastern DRC, and the role of regional organizations in promoting peace and stability.

5.5 Areas of further research

More research needs to be done on the following;

- Impact of East African Community on peace building in DRC
- Effects of international non-governmental organizations on conflict resolution in DRC

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondent,

I am a student at Kampala International University, studying a Master's Degree in International Relations and Diplomacy. This questionnaire is intended to collect information on **EAST AFRICA COMMUNITY AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN NORTH KIVU PROVINCE, EASTERN DRC**. The information obtained will be strictly for academic purposes and it will be treated with at most confidentiality. I kindly request you to fill this questionnaire.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully

SECTION A: BACKGROUND VARIABLES

To help us to classify your responses, please supply the following facts by circling the right option as appropriate.

1: **Gender:** Male

Female

2: Age bracket of the respondent:

19-25

46 and above

26- 30

31-45

3: Educational level:

Master

Certificate

Bachelor degree

Other

Diploma

SECTION B:

Please indicate your response mode by writing only the score in the blank provided for each of the items or statement stated below.

KEY

Response mode	Score
Strongly agree (agree with no doubt at all)	5
Agree (agree with minor doubt)	4
Not sure (Neither agree nor disagree)	3
Disagree (disagree with minor doubt)	2
Strongly disagree (disagree with no doubt at all)	1

PART 1

Construct	Effects of Free Trade Area on conflict resolution	1	2	3	4	5
1	Dispute resolution mechanisms are key to not only an effective operation of a free trade area but to an effective investment framework					
2	Free trade often has conflict connotations					
3	Unregulated free trade strongly contributes to structural violence					
4	Free trade supporters have greater interest in peace – better expressed as stability – since violence and war will most likely disrupt profits					
5	Free trade agreements have the potential to lift environmental, labor, human rights and living standards					

Construct	Effects of Economic Union on conflict resolution	1	2	3	4	5
1	Economic Union can play a central role in preventing violent conflict					
2	Economic Union needs to be conceived differently in regions that have obvious risks of violent conflict					

3	Development actors need to be much more aware of the impact that economic union have on peacebuilding and security					
4	Economic Union provides an opportunity to overcome conflicts					
5	Economic Union has particularly important implications towards security					

Construct	Effects of Common Market on conflict resolution	1	2	3	4	5
1	Common market agreement must have, at a minimum, political institutions and a dispute settlement mechanism					
2	Avoidance of conflicts is an important pillar for common market					
3	Dispute settlement mechanism is crucial to the viability of common market since the traditional method by which states resolve disputes is through negotiations					
4	Efforts should be made so that trade relations can be dealt with in a wider context of relations and the need to avoid increasing tension and possible conflict					
5	Wider and more fundamental conflicts must also be managed and avoided to ensure successful common market					

Thank for your cooperation

END

APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW GUIDE

Has the East African Community been beneficial?

What is the effects of Free Trade Area on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, Eastern DRC?

To what extent has Free Trade Area helped in conflict resolution?

What is the effects of Economic Union on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, Eastern DRC?

What is the effects of Common Market on conflict resolution in North Kivu Province, Eastern DRC?

To what level has common market been beneficial?

APPENDIX III: BUDGET

ITEM	QUANTITY	AMOUNT (CONGOLESE FRANCS (CDF))
Communication	Air time	35,725.89
Transport	To &fro	151,835.03
Meals	Lunch (5)	59,543.15
Printing	3copies	29,771.57
Binding	3copies	26,198.99
Papers	1 ream	8,931.47
Total		312,006.1