

**COMMUNITY CONFLICTS AFFECTING YOUTH CRIMINALITY IN  
LAIKIPIA COUNTY, KENYA**

**ATSIAVULLA LAVENDER ALIVIDZA**

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Requirements for the Award of the Degree of Master of Arts in Criminology and  
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## DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

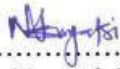
### Declaration


This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for an award of diploma or conferment of degree in this or any other university.

Signature .....  ..... Date..... 22/10/2024 .....  
Atsiavulla Lavender Alividza  
AM17/39912/19

### Recommendation

This thesis has been examined, passed and submitted with our approval as University supervisors.

Signature .....  ..... Date..... 22/10/24 .....  
Dr. Monicah Buyatsi Oundo  
Chuka University

Signature .....  ..... Date..... 22/10/24 .....  
Dr. Wycliffe Nyachoti Otiso  
Chuka University



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## **DEDICATION**

To my beloved son Eston Kylean Harvey, whose smile and laughter have been my constant source of inspiration and strength. Your love and presence have given me the courage to persevere and the motivation to succeed.

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## ABSTRACT

Contemporary rural communities struggle with many conflicts, including political battles, racial tensions, gang activities, and resource disputes. These conflicts often significantly impact youths' behaviours and choices, potentially pushing them towards criminal activities. This research aimed to investigate the multifaceted interplay between community conflicts and youth criminality, and focused on Laikipia County of Kenya which has been experiencing recurrent community conflicts for decades. The study objectives were to; determine the resource conflicts affecting youth criminality, establish cultural conflicts affecting youth criminality and examine ideological conflicts affecting youth criminality. The target population for the study was 1324 convicted youths in Laikipia County. The sample size for the study was 302 convicted youths serving custodial and non-custodial sentences. The sample size was determined using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table. The study utilized stratified random sampling for the convicted youths in Laikipia County and purposive sampling for the key informants who included 6 probation officers and 6 prison officers in Laikipia County, purposively selected to ensure a comprehensive understanding of youth criminality. The study employed a descriptive survey research design, which combined quantitative analysis of crime data with qualitative data gathered through questionnaires and interviews. Data gathered was analysed using Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) software Version 25.0 and results presented in frequencies and percentages. The results from the analysis indicated that resource conflicts affected youth criminality in Laikipia County. Similar findings were established regarding cultural and ideological conflicts affecting youth criminality within the county. The study recommended that the various stakeholders should strive to understand the dynamics of youth criminality in the conflict regions to promote positive youth development in Laikipia County and other regions facing similar challenges. The findings of this study are useful in contributing to a deeper comprehension of how community conflicts shaped the lives of youths and provides actionable insights for stakeholders, including interior security personnel, community leaders, policymakers, non-governmental organizations and youth support organizations.

