

Youth Violence and Engagement in Conflicts Management in Kaptembwo Estate; Nakuru County, Kenya

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Abstract: This study assessed the causes of Youth violence and conflict management in Kaptembwo Estate Nakuru County ; Kenya. The Study was purposively selected for the study as it was one of the epicenters of post election violence in Kenya in 2007-2008. An exploratory and descriptive research design was adopted, employing cross sectional survey with use of questionnaires and key informant guides to obtain in-depth information about the community. The study employed homogeneous sampling technique that reduced variations and simplified analysis to the target population. A systematic purposive non probability sampling, snowball technique and ethnography techniques were employed to identify key study informants who included youth leaders and youth groups, Government official, elders and religious leaders. Both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were employed. The convergent mixed method approach provides different types of information on participants qualitatively and scores made on instruments qualitatively yield results. The primary data was collected using questionnaires and interview guides. Secondary data was from journals, books and articles to support the study findings from the field. The data was presented through statistical tables. The collected data was cleaned for possible errors, organized and coded, then analysed qualitatively. Research findings revealed that youth participated in politically motivated violence due to their low socio-economic status as well as a long political and ethnic divides as well as uneven distribution of resources, high proportion of unemployed youth, police brutality, exclusion of youth in the national agenda, historical injustices, politicization of ethnicity and hate speech. The study recommends that the youth should be involved in activities that enhance peaceful co-existence and cohesiveness among Kenyans for sustainable peace and socio-economic development.

Keywords: *Youth Violence, Conflict Management, Kaptembwo Estate, Nakuru County.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Political struggles have dominated human existence since ancient times. People or nations sharing same interests, culture or religion have always been compelled in one way or another to agitate for their freedom and to protect their interests whenever they are threatened (Kamoet, 2008). Agitation varies from violent struggles culminating into war to civil disobedience and demonstrations. This is well demonstrated by the Civil Rights Movement led by Dr. Martin Luther King in the United States (Harbom, 2004). The youth are featured in political struggles due to their ideals for change, their disposition for action and more importantly their increasing availability to be mobilized for political activities. As a result, society and institutions are confronted with diversity of people with different belief systems, cultures and identities (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 2004). In addition, urbanization, access to education, improved communication and infrastructure has also enabled free flow of information and the championing for democratic space. This has resulted in the evolution of the political structure of most societies. Consequently, standing up for one's own identity and freedom of speech has become increasingly important (Horgan, 2008). Violent conflicts are multi-dimensional with varied underlying causes and motivations. For instance, violence has youth and gender dimensions where both groups become victims and perpetrators in the process. The youth are used as instruments in fighting wars that they have little knowledge of. More often, the youth find themselves caught up in complex and confusing conflicts with multiple causes, but lack clear resolution prospects.

Youth involvement in most conflicts in Africa such as Angola, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi has introduced the phenomenon of child soldiers. In Kenya, in spite of educational goals and philosophy emphasizing national unity, moral and religious values, social equality and responsible citizenship, peace has been elusive since independence. In the last two decades, Kenya has experienced escalating cases of violence in several quarters. This manifests itself in recurrent ethnic clashes and

political violence that has been witnessed in the country (Kagwanja, 2009). The recurrent violence has seen loss of human life, property and forced displacement of persons among a host of the vices. The recurrent cycles of ethnic and politically motivated armed conflicts eventually culminated into the 2007-2008 post-election violence emanating from disputed presidential poll results (Mungai, 2007). The 2007/2008 violence almost drove the country to the brink of civil war. Notably, the Rift Valley Province and Nakuru County in particular were the epicenter of post-election violence. The youth were actively involved in this violence and were perpetrators of the violent aftermath working at the behest of their politicians (Waki Report, 2008). However, lack of adequate legal facilities provided an opportunity for majority of those who participated in the chaos to escape prosecution. However, it is important to underscore that such scenario provides for a fertile ground in the future if left unaddressed. This calls for proactive engagement of the youth in peace building in an effort to mitigate similar occurrences in future (Kagwanja, 2009). The physical suffering and economic damage that lack of peace inflicts upon different institutions in the society is immense. Kenya has developed several strategies such as peace education in schools with the aim of instilling and promoting a culture of peace to the young generation. Development of peace education is timely and critical in addressing both short-term and long-term societal conflicts.

The youth in Kenya constitute almost one third of the country's population. However, despite their energetic and sizeable percentage in relation to the general population, they have not been fully engaged in development issues. For example, majority of them are marginalized as they live in poverty, unemployment and underemployment. This marginalization predisposes the youth to negative political influence as seen during the 2007/2008 post election violence. Accordingly, the generalized youth crisis could also be linked to frustration, disillusionment, and structural exclusion that delineate them from the National Agenda. This reinforces youth' vulnerability as they become easy targets to parties that recruit and make them perpetrators as well as victims of political violence. Thus, the involvement of youth in conflict management initiatives is critical for sustainable peace (Mc Evoy-Levy, 2001).

Most conflict management strategies have focused on the input of the elderly people and not the youth, yet they have a huge stake in the society (Nderitu, 2012). In this case, it was imperative for a study of this magnitude to be carried out in order to establish the need to involve the youth in peace development initiatives. This study therefore provided working solutions in terms of youth involvement in conflicts and also their contribution in peace initiatives. This study analyzed factors influencing youth involvement in violent conflict and the extent to which they participated in conflict management in Kaptembwo slums in Nakuru Municipality during the post election violence of 2007/08.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.2 Youth Involvement in Violence and Conflict Management

Children and youth by extension of certain exclusive social circles standing, grow in societies where armed violence is a norm as experienced within families, communities, or states. Contemporary conflict affecting youth manifest itself in cases such as youth proximity to violence and erosion of boundaries between different kinds of violence. Young people in developing countries live in environments where firearms are cheap, poorly regulated, widely circulated and often traded illicitly. In Kenya however, youth engagement in violence seems to emanate from non inclusion of the youth in mainstream economic activities. Akiwumi Commission of inquiry Report and Kenya human rights (2007-2008) found out that Kenya's youth make up a majority of the population and were perpetrators of PEV of 2007-2008. This raises concerns for further research to address the challenges the Youth face especially in Kenya. If given an opportunity, the youth have proven to be critical social capital that can contribute significantly to peace and development. However, in contemporary developing countries, youth face challenges such as unemployment and underemployment, and access to quality education among others. Therefore, based on this, it was important for this study to be carried out to address some of the issues that predispose the youth to violence and how the same youth can be used in developing peace initiatives in the society.

2.3 Causes of Politically Motivated Conflicts

Policy-makers and practitioners have documented causes of politically motivated conflicts. A close examination of available evidence suggests that underlying psychological factors influencing voluntary youth participation in different violent groups is similar across the world. For example, youth in Latin America are motivated to join a gang for similar reasons as youth in Africa join armed groups (Huntington, 1996). The main social hypothesis is that conflict is generated out of grievances based on horizontal inequalities among cultural groups (Stewards, 2008). According to Duffield (2001) the fundamental incapability between cultures is challenged by those who refute the idea that cultural differences are the root cause of violent conflicts. He argues that identity factors such as language, culture and religion are ways of mobilizing people to become involved in violent conflicts. Therefore, they have deep political and economic roots in the context of global

power relations. Muller and Weede (1990) noted that political violence is relevant to controversy in the social sciences over theories of rebellious political behaviour. However, although theories of why people rebel cannot be tested directly with countries as the unit of analysis, evidence about properties of countries that cause variation in the magnitude of political violence can be evaluated as to ascertain whether it is consistent or not with hypotheses derived from causal mechanisms assumed to operate at the level of individual behaviour. Crofoot and Wrangham (2010) established that inter-group aggression in primates and humans in group interactions dominate or kill members of the other group. Thus, aggression is characteristic of most human societies and states. Whereas, the strategies and tactful aspects of warfare are dynamic, violence and warfare is often formulated with youth driven violence. The practice may be used by politicians as a means of repression or rally together domestic popular support or probable deterrence on their group motives support. This study is important to the study because it highlights the aspects of politicians taking advantage of the youth to instigate the violence even though the study looks conflicts in general terms. Eyber and Ager (2004) emphasizes on child and youth “vulnerability rather than resilience.” The recurring theme in youth literature portrays the youth as passive beings instead of agencies able to alter their social conditions. Such a narrative is deterministic it portrays young people as a homogenous category isolated from the rest of the society. The perception of discontent in Kenya spurs tension in every electioneering year. A case in point here is demonstrated in the events of Land clashes of 1992 and 1997 and 2007/2008 post election violence. Such a recurring scenario in Kenya demanded this study to delve into historical root causes of conflicts and provide lasting solutions to the same. Historical post-colonial systemic ethnic pattern of forceful alienation on economic disparities in Kenya exacerbate violence. Moreover, still lack of effective opportunities that integrate ethnic communities has received insufficient attention leading to marginalization and inequality.

Ethno-political violence has been witnessed in the Rift-Valley through forceful transfer of alien population (Macharia, 2008; Oyugi, 1992; & Nraman, 2003). Most political establishments in Kenya exploit on ethnicity in the administration of the country leading skewed distribution of resources, the suppression of dissent and selective appointments allied to those in power. This approach to political leadership is recipe for violence that has been witnessed in Kenya. According to Nraman (2003) the concept of ethnicity and ethnic alignments are outwardly manifested on either intra elite conflicts or shifts of alliances, owed to similar patron–client relationship within the young people and civil society. These ideas are germane in understanding the contribution of ethnicity to violence in the society as exacerbated the 2007/2008 post election violence.

2.4 Youth Involvement in Conflicts

According to Watts (2007) and Ukiwo (2007) Africa youth bulge gangs and rebel groups in Niger Delta demonstrated a demand for oil wealth. They argue that youth insurgency decontextualizes ethnic groups in the region that illustrate the dominance of political patronage, and undermines youth’s adequacy. The greed of militant groups is based on the political groupings of their leader’s repressions through marginalization and inequality. These two texts highlight that the youth have been marginalized and this has reduced their opportunities for empowerment of which has pushed them to violence. In this regard, contemporary conflicts make it difficult to ignore socio-economic grievances as a key variable of youth armed violence. Hirshleifer (2001) points out that ethnic political repression, political exclusion and political inequalities impact negatively the living standards in developing countries. This is because the ruling elites in most post-independent countries are driven by the need to maintain a political power base at the expense of societal basic needs (Bates, 2008). In this way, such leaders concentrate on a narrow section of the population, rather than developing policies that provide social good such as education for all. A good example in Africa is Sir Charles Taylor who profited from armed violence at the expense of the citizenry. This allowed him to control natural resources such as diamond, gold, timber and rubber (Collier & Hoeffler, 2004). Though these studies focused on youth in regards to management of natural resources, this study focused on election related violence and how the youth were used to instigate the violence.

Maclay and Ozerdem (2010) posit that studies on Liberia’s ex-combatant population, countless personal accounts from the war’s belligerents, victims and bystanders, demonstrated that the war was fought mainly by the youth. Youth employment is an essential popular measure to harness their energy towards constructive peace building. Collier and Hoeffler (2002) also observed that “poor and marginalized youth have legitimate grievances against the state; which is often manipulated by political elites to create violent conflicts. Most scholarly works in the preceding literature review capture the fact that young people are in crisis. In addition, they are readily prone to manipulative reasons that did not have the interests of ordinary citizens at heart. This portrays youth as the vulnerable section of the population as such underlining invisible roots of genuine non- inclusion in the National Agenda on development and peace building initiatives. In showing the impact of youth exclusion, Ismail (2009) submits that youth in West Africa are characterized by hardship, political exclusion and disenfranchisement. This study examines the hardships that the youth are exposed to therefore failing to make connection with elections of which this study will seek to address. Despite the presence of such reports, highlighting devastating effects of war on young people, there still exists gaps as seen

in the literature review. This is because the exclusion of youth from the National development agenda has not been adequately explored. Other studies such as Mercy Corps (2011) indicate the nexus between youth unemployment, youth engagement in violence and gang involvement. Similarly, in the Niger Delta, the prevalence of youth gangs and militancy is attributed to socio-economic and political marginalization emanating from oil and National resource control (Ukeje, 2001). The search for Common Ground (SFCG) organization operating in Burundi, warns that high youth unemployment poses a threat to society. Therefore, the youth become vulnerable to political manipulation so long as they can be paid for engaging in violence. It is also important to point out that not so much has been achieved in relation to equipping the youth with skills necessary in the labour market and also in preventing violence. Therefore, there is need for co-ordinated strategies on defenses of peace to be constructed through collaboration (Nderitu, & Kariuki, 2012). When Youth are socially integrated, they are less susceptible to involvement in violent groups (Hegre & Goldstone, 2001). The above studies proposed how to reduce susceptibility of recruitment of the youth into armed groups but they failed to identify ways of preventing the youth from being used by politicians to promote violence. Therefore, this study sought to fill this gap.

In Kenya, 70 percent of participants in Kenya's 2007-2008 post-election violence were youth (OECD, 2009). To a large extent, youth involvement in this violence resulted from youth exclusion from political processes. Therefore, identity deprivations are essential factors for violence eruption. For example, the presence of the styled Sabaot Land Defense force (SLDF) in Mt. Elgon District of Western Kenya and Mungiki outfit sect in Central Province of Kenya which was formed as forums to air youth issues that the government had failed to address. The Waki and Akiwumi commission of inquiry reports on 2007/2008 post-election violence, point out that 'young men raided and demanded that the male elders in some communities should direct, bless and most importantly fund the violence. Therefore, this confirms the fact that elders have a unique advantage of being listened to by political leaders and most importantly why the young people are excluded. This clearly demonstrates why the youth engage in violence to get attention from the society. Indeed, the above observation explains why violent gangs comprising young people have proliferated in most parts of Kenya.

The existence and flourishing of these gangs has been robust because the government has been ineffective in dealing with violent criminal gangs (Kagwanja, 2002). From this scenario, the following questions can be raised: who is in charge of these violent gangs? Why do politicians use violent gangs to ascend to power? Most studies undertaken present the youth in Kenya as victims or perpetrators because of unaddressed grievances that lead to despair. The vulnerability of youth and proneness to conflict was highlighted by the UN Security council (2001). The report indicated that young, uneducated people could be easy recruits for parties of violent conflicts. Thus, if conflicts and violence is to be stemmed, there is need to include the youth in national agenda.

III. METHODOLOGY

An exploratory and descriptive research design was adopted, employing cross sectional survey. The study employed homogeneous sampling technique that reduced variations and simplified analysis to the target population. A systematic purposive non probability sampling, snowball technique and ethnography techniques were employed to identify key informants who included youth leaders and youth groups, Government official, elders and religious leaders. Questionnaires and key informant guides were used to obtain in-depth information about the community. The questionnaires were both open and closed ended. Hence, both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were employed. The convergent mixed method approach provided different types of information on participants qualitatively and scores made on instruments yielded quantitative results. The primary data was collected using questionnaires and interview guides. Secondary data was from journals, books and articles to support the study findings from the field. The data was presented using tables.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

The following section presents the basic information of respondents, such as age of respondents, gender, level of education, residency marital status, information prior to the outbreak of the PEV 2007/2008 and ethno-political dimension of conflict. This information is important because it shows the kind of youth in the conflict study who are involved in. The results on the distribution of the respondents according age is presented in table 1.

Table 1: Age bracket of the respondents

Age category	Frequency	Percentage
Below 25	143	53
26 – 30	62	23
31 – 35	33	12
Above 36	32	12

Total	270	100
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Table 1 shows that 143(53%) respondents were below 25 years while 62(23%) were 26-30 years. 33 (12%) and 32 (12%) of the respondents were of 31-35years and above 36 years respectively. The study targeted the youth who were deemed to have been heavily involved in the post-election violence. It was also easy to access younger people during the day since the research was conducted during the day. Thus, the findings show that in Kaptembwo Estate, the highest population among the youth is below 25 years of age. The study also sought to establish the distribution of the respondents according to gender and the results are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Gender of the respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Males	138	51
Females	132	49
Total	270	100

Table 2 shows that 138 (51%) of the respondents were male while 132 (49%) were female. There was no significant variance in gender disparity among the study participants in Kaptembwo Estate. Both men and women participated in the process as either perpetrators or victims of the violence. The results in relation to length of residency are presented in table 3.

Table 3: Residency

Length of residency	Frequency	Percentage
1-5 years	60	23
6-10 years	83	31
11-15 years	56	20
Over 15 years	71	26
Total	270	100

Table 3 shows that 83 (31%) of the respondents had lived in Kaptembwo for 6-10 years, and 71 (26%) for over 15years. Results of this study revealed that 56 (20%) of the respondents had lived in Kaptembwo Estate for a period of 11-15 years while 60 (23%) had been there for 1-5 years. This means that most of the residents in this area were caught up in PEV 2007/2008 either as victims or as perpetrators. This confirms that the respondents have in-depth knowledge of politically motivated conflicts and the impact of PEV in the study area since they have stayed in Kaptembwo Estate.

4.2 Ethno-political dimension

The results on the Ethno-political dimension of the violence are presentd in this section. The study sought to ascertain whether there was ethno-political dimension. The findings are presented in table 4.

Table 4: Ethno-political dimension

Was there ethno-political dimension?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	167	62
No	77	28
Not so much	26	10
Total	270	100

Table 6 shows that majority of the respondents confirmed the presence of ethno-political dimension (62%), 77(28%) declined while 26(10%) revealed that there was not so much engagement of ethno political groupings during the PEV 2007/2008 in Kaptembwo estate. As supported by Klopp (2001) political conflict in Kenya has often taken an ethno-political dimension where shifting political allegiance and alliances have led to similar shift in ethnic groupings. These ethno-political groupings illustrate how culture and identity shape peoples' views in regards to conflict. A perfect example is the idea of identification of people along ethnicity who were interviewed in the aftermath of PEV 2007/2008. They referred to PNU leader, Kibaki as a Kikuyu, and the ODM challenger, Raila Odinga, also a Luo.

Kaptembwo Estate hosts nearly majority of ethnic groups in Kenya with shifted political alliances that may have occasioned ethnic groupings. Thus violence generally took an ethno-political dimension where members of ethnic groups affiliated to one political party or coalition came together against communities affiliated to the opposing political party or coalition. The Youth from the Kalenjin, Luo, and Luhya and to a lesser extent the Kisii communities were largely affiliated to the ODM party. This youth attacked members who

hailed from the Kikuyu community. Youth affiliated to ODM also attacked members of the Kamba and Kisii communities when it appeared that actual loyalty of members of these communities was in doubt (Horowitz, 2009). This suspicion was accentuated by the decision of the leadership of ODM-K to support PNU in the disputed 2007 elections. Members of the Kamba community were in particular perceived as traitors by Youth affiliated to the ODM party. Thus the changing political dynamics also had an impact on political realignments (Akiwumi, 2008).

4.3 Causes of Conflicts in Kenya

4.3.1 Socioeconomic Inequality and uneven Distribution of Resources

The history of conflicts in Kenya has been based on uneven distribution of resources and marginalization of some regions by successive governments since independence. The states in Africa and indeed Kenya have therefore not lived up to expectations of their citizens in terms of socioeconomic development. Bates (2008) contends that ruling elites in most post-independent countries are driven by the need to maintain a political power base at the expense of societal basic needs. This provides fodder for conflict which is mainly generated out of grievances based on horizontal inequalities among cultural groups (Stewards, 2008). This is consistent with Ostby (2008) who established that conflicts rose significantly in countries with sharp socioeconomic inequalities. Successive governments in Kenya have also employed politics of exclusion especially for regions that are dominated by the opposition political parties and their communities from mainstream decision making processes. These include regions such as the Eastern communities notably the Kamba community, Nyanza and Western Kenya, which still remain poorer relative to other regions. This scenario provided an opportunity for the youth in Kenya to ventilate their frustration albeit violently during the 2007 electoral dispute. They felt that they were being punished by the government for expressing their electoral rights (International Crisis group, 2013). Most youth in Kaptembwo estate, who were affiliated to ODM at the time, lamented the unfairness of the government and poverty in the regions that supported the opposition. Prior to the 2007 general elections, the NARC government dismissed a significant number of senior civil servants from the Kalenjin community after the fall of KANU in 2002. President Kibaki, who hails from the Kikuyu ethnic community, followed his predecessor's footsteps by selecting people for appointment positions primarily through ethnic bias, thus breaking his election promise. This was perceived as deprivation among the Kalenjin community. These frustrations fuelled PEV 2007/2008. Respondents who come from the Kalenjin community felt that individuals from their community were unfairly dismissed from the service simply due to their remote association with the KANU regime. This profiling of members of the Kalenjin community in the civil service purge made majority of the Kalenjin community to support the ODM. The Kalenjin community hoped that ODM would win the elections and help restore their influence in the civil service and government at large. However, the failure by the party of their choice to out rightly win the elections dampened their hope of re-entry into the government (Tostense, 2009).

Interviews revealed the existence of persistent feelings among Youth from the opposition ODM that even though some members from their communities were serving in government, the offices they held were less influential. The youth from ODM further claimed that government bureaucrats starved the ministries and agencies headed by individuals from the opposition critical resources leading to their underperformance (Katumanga, 2005). Interviews with Kaptembwo residents illustrated that skewed resource allocations in favour of areas that governments drew much of its political support was a contributing factor to political violence. Hence, the marginalization and inequality deprived the youth of their potential and contributed to armed conflicts (Peters, 2009). Thus, there is a nexus between contemporary conflicts and socioeconomic grievances. The findings established that 50% of the people who fled from the study area were due to ethnic differences. In the words of a prominent businessman in Kaptembwo Estate, the violence set in motion the beginning of a chain of events that were ultimately dangerous for sustainability of business.

4.3.2 Youth Bulge and High Proportion of unemployed youth

The youthful population in Kenya accounts for about 70-74 percent of the Kenyan population thus making the country's population generally being described as youthful. It is further projected that the population of the youth is likely to rise to about 75percent by the 2030. This is a challenge to the government since employment opportunities are not commensurate with the number of unemployed youth. Even though unemployment affects everybody, the youth are thought to be the worst hit by unemployment given their numerical superiority in the population structure (Henshion & Urdal, 2008). The Housing and Population Census (2009) indicates that majority of the youth belong to marginalised population exposed to poverty. This scenario is evident in Kaptembwo estate. Factories such as Eveready, Pyrethrum Board of Kenya, KCC, Milling Corporations and Kenya Farmers Association (KFA) among others used to offer thousands of employment opportunities to the Youth in Nakuru town. Currently, these factories have either collapsed or operate below the capacity, a situation that has led to loss of thousands of permanent or temporary employment opportunities. The

collapse of the Kenya Railway Cooperation and Nyayo Bus Cooperation that had branches in Nakuru town also contributed to high rates of unemployment among the youth in the town.

There is a tendency by the unemployed youth to retreat to slums due to low cost of living in the areas. This has led to a huge population of the unemployed youth living in Kaptembwo slum. Thus, when demonstrating Kaptembwo estate, population is an important predictor of collective violence which emerges as a result of relative deprivation. This seemed the reason of reconstruction of structural programs such as Youth Fund, and Uwezo Fund, which were established to promote youth involvement in meaningful employment opportunities (Wolf, 2009). The youth also suffer in the area of skill development especially at tertiary level. While about half a million youth sit for their end of secondary level education, about 30percent attain minimum university entry grades. Inadequate learning facilities and staff shortages at public universities imply that only fractions of youth who qualify to join the universities are admitted. In as much as public universities introduced module II learning programs in late 1990s to cater for the increasing demand for university education, only a handful of the Youth can afford the cost of the programs (Bagonko, 1992). Thus, the instituted mechanisms have denied the youth educational opportunities and the realization of their full potential. This contributes to youth crisis and making them vulnerable to manipulation.

The change of regime from the Moi to the Kibaki government in 2002 brought renewed hope, since the new government promised to factor youth concerns in mainstream politics and the national development agenda (UNDP, 2013). Even with the change of regime, the unemployed youth, had little or no prospects for access to employment nor did they wield any form of power within the Kibaki regime. The mismanagement of the Youth Funds based on patronage further dampened their prospects for a better future (Wamalwa, 2014). The ODM party capitalized on youth unemployment as a window that they could harness organized voting blocks and promises of employment. The high rates of unemployment in Kenya persisted despite government's pledge to create about half a million job opportunities each year. According to the World Bank (2009) unemployment among the Kenyan youth was very high, with about 38 percent unemployed, 20 percent with unsecure jobs and the rest either on seasonal or temporary employment, prior to PEV 2007/2008. This implies that a significant proportion of the Kenyan Youth are idle and economically inactive. Out of the 151 (80%) youth interviewed 130 (70%) stated that they were unemployed at the time of PEV 2007/2008 outbreak. The allegations of election rigging gave the youth from other communities that have historically felt discriminated against in job appointments an opportunity to express their discontent. Most youth interviewed were alarmed that the Kibaki government failed to revive Kisumu Cotton Mills, Rivatex, Panpaper, Miwani Sugar Factory, and the fishing industry among others. Whereas, the government revived the Kenya Co-operative Creameries (KCC) which had also collapsed, the youth argued that the revival of KCC was to protect the fortunes of dairy farmers, majority of whom hailed from Mt. Kenya region. The Youth also observed that the government decided to write off the debts of companies in the coffee and tea sectors but not those in the Sugar sector. The Youth perceived this as a calculated move to stifle economic life-line of their regions, while promoting the productive sectors of the regions where the government draws the greatest support. This affected the Youth in Kaptembwo since a significant percentage who relied on contract jobs in these industries were rendered jobless (Cussac, 2008).

4.3.3 The Police

One of the core functions of the police is the commitment to prevention of mass atrocity and crimes. As part of this commitment, the government has responsibility to ensure that the police have the capacity to respond to threats, observe international human rights standards and desist from human rights violations (Halakhe, 2013). In the case of PEV 2007/2008, the youth pointed out that they were angered by the government's use of state machinery to intimidate them (Waki, 2008). However, majority of those interviewed noted that they were alarmed and angered by the manner in which the then President, Mwai Kibaki was controversially declared the winner and hurriedly sworn in as the president. The footage of police killing the youth in ODM strongholds and sealing Uhuru Park, Kibera and Mathare slums, the bed rock of ODM support in Nairobi saw the youth retaliate to express their outrage. It was alleged that the state pre-planned to 'steal' their victory and to use the security to suppress any dissent. They further noted that their attempts to express their displeasure with the results were repulsed through brutal interventions by the police (Anderson, 2002).

The youth's anger following the declaration of Mwai Kibaki as the winner of the fiercely contested presidential election was exacerbated by the celebrations of PNU supporters, some of whom were within Kaptembwo. The youth interviewed in this study were even more angered by some of Kibaki supporters who taunted them as election losers. Yet according to them, the decision by the Electoral Commission of Kenya to declare Kibaki the winner was unprocedural and illegitimate. This is seen in the declaration of the electoral chairman that he could not locate some of his electoral officials from Mt. Kenya region, confirming their fears that ODM party had been violently robbed of victory (Obonyo, 2009). However, the Youth interviewed in Kaptembwo insisted that their demonstrations were to be peaceful had they been allowed by the police to express their constitutional right. They argued that it was the violent response of the state to their demand for electoral fairness that led them to resort to violent resistance to counter the state-sponsored violence against

(Akiwumi, 2002). This was evident during the field study as the interviewed youths expressed disappointment. Therefore, it is unlikely that the demonstrations would not turn violent as it happened, leading to massive disruptions of normal operations in Kaptembwo estate. The findings of this study are similar to other studies have reported a link between ethno-political violence in many countries to state oppression. Douma (2003) observed that ethnic conflicts in countries such as Chad, Ethiopia, Sudan, Niger, and Nigeria have been largely due to state oppression.

4.3.4 Exclusion of youth in the national agenda

The Waki Report (2008) on PEV 2007/2008 notes that the reason for the overwhelming involvement of the youth in the crisis may have been their exclusion from political process. According to Kagwanja (2002), social movements such as Mungiki sect in Central Province of Kenya, emerged in the late 1980s due to exclusion of the youth from the national development agenda as well as repression under the one-party state. This sect initially celebrated the Gikuyu traditional systems of power, later turned violent especially when its members penetrated the urban areas. Other criminal groupings such as Sungu Sungu, Chinkororo and Bagdad boys among others followed suit. The establishment of the mentioned gangs could be explained by frustration, hopelessness and exploitation in terms of youth needs. The Waki Report (2008) indicates that these criminal groups were used by politicians to attack opponents during PEV 2007/2008. The Report further illustrates that some politicians may have financed Mungiki gang during the PEV 2007/2008, since it is impossible, that member's could finance themselves. This demonstrates that Youth are predisposed to some extent due to powerlessness and survival as a means of contesting sociopolitical and economic grievance as a result of relative deprivation (Gurr, 1999). This denies them a voice in the political process and contributes to youth crisis and making them vulnerable to manipulation. According to Dahl (2010) marginalization of the youth in Burundi, Tanzania and Kenya induced them into a state of apathy, frustration and therefore exacerbates violence. Youth involvement in violence should therefore be resolved to avoid the risk of the society losing the most crucial element of human resource that is embedded in the potential that Youth have, they add. Thus, the inclusion of the youth in the national agenda affirms the position of the youth as leaders of tomorrow (Mwangola, 2007).

4.3.5 Historical Injustices

This study established that constrictions of political space and failure by successive governments to bring to justice individuals responsible for the disappearance and assassination of key political figures, was another cause of violence. Some of the key figures assassinated since independence include J.M Karuiki who though a Kikuyu, was opposed to Mzee Kenyatta's political ideologies and corrupt dealings. Another notable person is Tom Mboya. The youth interviewed argued that they failed to understand how the government could fail to bring to book perpetrators of atrocities of justice. Others include Robert Ouko and Masinde Muliro and the unconvincing reports on their deaths that illustrate political impunity among others (Cohen & Odhiambo, 2004). From the foregoing, the youth's expression of discontent was also based on historical injustices and the history of impunity since independence as well as clamping down on dissidents by successive governments. This views were expressed by the Youth in Kaptembwo mainly from the Luhya, Kalenjin and Luo communities. It is imperative to note that there can not be complete justice in Kenya; since we cannot bring back the dead. However, there is a possibility that we can rebuild what has been destroyed or recover completely what has been lost.

4.3.6 Politicization of Ethnicity

According to Klopp (2001) the main problem is not ethnicity, but poor governance that has led to politicization of ethnicity by the political elite in their pursuit for power and political support leading to conflict. Negative ethnicity has its roots in the colonial era due to the 'divide and rule' policy that favored some communities leading to intense ethnic rivalry among communities. This scenario was extended into post-colonial Africa where politics continued to be mobilized along ethnic lines. Consequently, it led to economic inequality and poverty due to skewed resource allocation. Negative ethnicity as the Waki Report (2008) documented was a main contributor to PEV 2007/2008. This is because communities in Kenya regard the presidency as the ultimate crown even when they have very little to gain at a personal level. The political elite have understood this and used ethnicity as a pole to mobilize their ethnic communities to compete against other communities. According to Maupeu (2008) political parties in Kenya fall under ethnic lines that value ethnicity above political ideology and policy. It is for this reason that The Waki Report (2008) observed that the polarization of communities along ethnic lines prior to the 2007 general elections was a precursor to the PEV 2007/2008. This is an illustration of leadership of predatory elite, where members of the community may be urged to form or circumvent and organize political action group. Ethnicity continues to inform job opportunities, allocation of scarce resources and appointment to government jobs in spite of constitutional provision to the contrary.

4.3.7 The Media and Hate Speech

Before the 2007 general elections, hate speech played a critical role in inciting deadly violence. Local radio stations and other vernacular media bore particular responsibility for inciting violence through broadcast that included the role of ethnic war songs (Halakhe, 2013). Waki Report (2008) observes that before the elections KASS-FM announced that there would be rigging of elections. All forms of Media were implicated in breeding an environment that was not conducive by irresponsible utterances that raised tensions between contending ethnic groups. Kibuja (2008) observes that communication on Short Message Service was widely used to incite violence. Although, freedom of speech and expression is one of the fundamental rights enshrined in the constitution, several members of parliament were constant perpetrators of hate speech that almost brought the country to a brink. Most scholars note that hate speech needs to be critically studied and reviewed in developing countries so that perpetrators can be face justice (Hegre, 2001)

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMENDATIONS

The study established that young people were exposed to and initiated into political violence by political leaders who manipulated them to participate in post election violence of 2007-2008. The research findings explain the rise of youth participation in conflicts emanated from unaddressed youth grievances. It is evident that there was a large pool of idle youth with few prospects and little to lose in life. The study concluded that the rise of youth participation in conflicts was also motivated by socioeconomic inequality and uneven distribution of resources, high proportion of unemployed youth, police brutality, exclusion of youth in the national agenda, historical injustices, politicization of ethnicity and hate speech.

The study recommends that the youth should be involved in activities that enhance peaceful existence and cohesiveness among Kenyans for sustainable peace and socio-economic development. Further research on the impact of digital media, on propagation of information that encouraged violent conflicts among Kenyan communities, need to be carried out as a way of curtailing youth involvement in violence.

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