



ROLE PLAYED BY THE YOUTH IN THE 2007 POST-ELECTION VIOLENCE IN KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The research examined the role of the youth in 2007 post-election violence in Kenya. At these initial stages, the researcher attempted to examine the concept of the youth, electoral violence, and the role of the youth in 2007 electoral violence in Kenya. The contribution of various scholars on youth, electoral and political violence plus the role of the youth in post 2007 electoral violence in Kenya is highlighted. While many reports conceded that electoral violence was rampant in Kenya, there was little knowledge on the nature and extent of youth involvement in electoral violence beyond the fact that, invariably, the youth were the one social group that was most visibly engaged and used to penetrate and spread violence. The study was guided by the questions; what was the role played by the youth in the post-election violence in Kenya? The study contended that the youth participation in the violence that erupted following the disputed December 2007 General Elections had its foundation in the role of the youth and especially the unemployed ones. The involvement of the youth in Kenyan politics can be categorized into legitimate and illegitimate roles. The legitimate roles include their participation as candidates, voters, poll agents, campaigners for various candidates and political parties. The illegitimate participation involves bribery, intimidation, obstruction and violence. Both primary and secondary data were widely used, including text books, academic journals and newspapers, supplemented with Kenya Government documents. For theoretical underpinnings and actual appreciation of reality, academic materials and interviews with actors were conducted. The study recommended, among other measures, that the Ministry of Education should broaden the curriculum to encourage excellence in non-conventional fields of learning such as dance and gymnastics. Such a curriculum should provide training and policy guidelines on inter-ethnic issues to teachers (who are among the first to interact with youth) and other actors who have an important role in moulding the youths. This is in order to avoid recurrence of political violence in future.

Key terms: Post-election Violence, Electoral Violence, Political Violence, Violence, Youth

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INTRODUCTION

Globally, young people are commonly considered as the major participants in most of electoral violence (Barkan, 1993). Violence is the physical manifestation of a conflict. Conflict is in turn a situation where two or more identifiable groups called protagonists, are in conscious opposition to each other as they pursue different goals. The groups may be tribal, ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious, socio-economic or political. Every conflict involves a struggle over values or/and claims to scarce resources such as land power, or/and status. The aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals. They also fail to make a distinction between civilians and combatants and disregard the rules of war. The overall effect of violence is that it impinges on the standard of free and fair elections and violates fundamental freedoms." Internationally, election violence has taken place in United States, Asia, Latin America, and Africa where the "disappearance" of government critics, informal repression styled along ethnic or land clashes is one of the newest threats to human rights in the multiparty era. Elections over the years have been characterized by violence, bribery and intimidation. Such violence has often resulted in loss of life, destruction of livelihoods and denying people their rights to vote as polling stations cannot be accessed. It is well known that much of this violence is usually perpetrated by the youth. However, the real masterminds- be it the politicians themselves or their organizers are usually older people who are angels by the day and devils by night (Barker, 2005).

These are people who in public are peace-makers but in private are war-merchants. In the African electoral violence of the last twenty years, combatants have become increasingly youthful. Some of the forces are made up largely of young teenagers. Combatants may sometimes be as young as 8 or 10 years old. Girl fighters are increasingly common. This is partly demographic. Africa is not only the world's poorest continent; it is also its youngest. Half or more of the population of African

countries are under the age of 18. Militia life offers training and a livelihood in countries where poverty and number overwhelm education and jobs. But the trend to more youthful combatants also reflects the discovery that children - their social support disrupted by war, make brave and loyal fighters. The company of comrades-in-arms becomes a family substitute. Notable examples of electoral violence have been witnessed in South Africa, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Nigeria, Angola, Mozambique, Togo, Ivory Coast and Kenya. The intermittent election violence raises serious concerns about the future of Kenya. The violence has resulted in significant loss of lives and property, disruption of business and uncalled for internal displacements of people. For instance, the 2007 post-election violence is associated with 1,300 deaths, displacement of more than 350,000 persons, disruption or economic (e.g., agriculture, tourism, international trade) and social (e.g., local and international travel) activities, loss and destruction of public and private property and high inflation. This poses great fundamental questions. First, is whether the attainment of developmental goals as envisioned in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)" and Kenya's Vision 2030 will be realized. Second, is that many youths are wounded and even killed in some of these violent acts. Third, the future of our youths is negatively affected. Instead of being engaged in productive ventures that would prepare them for future leadership and productive adult lives they are rather engaged in destructive violent activities that could destroy them. Fourth, electoral violence erodes credibility in the rule of law and impact negatively in democratic activities. By engaging in electoral violence, Kenyan youths are helping to erode confidence in the system, and thus working against the current campaign to make Kenya a truly democratic country for the benefit of all. It is, therefore, important to study the violence, and establish the nature, form and extent of the use and misuse of the youth. The nature of violence is either planned or spontaneous while form seeks to find the kind of violence perpetrated. Extent on the

other hand, sought to establish the levels of youth participation in the chain of electoral violence (Barber, 2003).

Objective of the Study

The objective of this study was to examine the role of the youth in 2007 post-election violence in Kenya. The study tried to answer the question, what was the role played by the youth in the post-election violence in Kenya?

RELATED LITERATURE

Electoral Violence

Electoral violence is a political violence which is defined as an episodic interaction between social identity groups engaged in an ongoing, interactive relationship in which instrumental force is used and results in death and/or injury of humans. Political violence is intrinsically political, in that it involves concerted, affected actions by individuals in a social context. Mwangi defines electoral violence as political violence that is geared towards winning political competition or power through violence, subverting the ends of electoral and democratic processes. Its tool of trade is the intimidation and disempowerment of political opponents. Electoral violence takes place not only just at electoral times, but in periods leading to elections, during the elections themselves and in the period immediately following elections such as counting of ballots. Violence has abnormal aspects. Becker argues that violence itself involves the threat or realization of physical or psychological harm with an attending sense of violation of the harmed person's integrity. He presents six points on violence for discussion. These are first, that violence is an extreme behaviour that is very dramatic, strongly emotive, and so, highly visible; it tends to distort general perceptions by "flooding" the senses and sensibilities of observers. Secondly, the decision to use violence directly involves only a subset of the mobilized population; even in the most extreme situations, only a minority of any population is actively engaged in violent action. Thirdly, violent action is extremely consumptive and, so, requires a

relatively large support; the majority of the mobilized population is indirectly involved in the violence through such acceptance and support activities. Fourthly, the most insidious aspect of protracted violence is the increasing scope and the range of violent effect; victims of violence (the survivors) and others who are directly affected by violence are very strongly imprinted by experience and such imprint will often stimulate a will to revenge the violence and will remain as lifelong physical and psychological impairments. Fifth, the non-violent (normal) infrastructure of the mobilized group is retained throughout the conflict process, is supported by the majority of the population, and remains the preferred alternative to violence. Sixth, a group that has repeated experiences with violence will tend to institutionalize and glorify its capacity to engage in violence; in such situations, the conflict process becomes "overgrown with stylized ornamentation and ritual (the culture of violence) and, so, becomes increasingly less transparent. Scholars such as Olzak, Tarrow and Beissinger have contributed a lot in this field of political violence. Assembling data on ethnic and racial confrontations and protests in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Olzak uses every history analysis and ecological theories of competition and niche overlap to show that the breakdown of ethnic and racial segregation, by increasing economic and political competition, triggers exclusively collective action, including ethnic and racial violence. Beissinger, constructing a database on violent collective events in the disintegrating Soviet Union and its incipient successor states, analyzes the highly clustered incidence of nationalist violence in the context of a larger cycle of nationalist contention. He shows that nationalist struggles turned increasingly violent (and increasingly assumed the form of sustained armed conflict) late in the mobilization cycle, in connection with the contestation of republican (and incipient state) borders at a moment when effective authority was passing from the collapsing centre to the incipient successor states." In part, Beissinger chose the

findings of Tarrow et al, concerning the tendency for violence in Italy to occur towards the end of a mobilization cycle. Although not directly concerned with ethnicity, Tarrow's work notably his finding that violence does not map directly onto protest has implications for the study of ethnic violence. In Italy, violence appears to increase when organized protest weakens. As mobilization wanes, violence is practiced by splinter groups as the only way to cause disruption." Although the dynamics of the two cases differ, both Beissinger and Tarrow analyze violence as a phase in a mobilization cycle rather than as a natural expression of social conflict or social protest. As mentioned earlier, Africa is not left behind in electoral violence. A classic example is Zimbabwe. In this country, youth has been an important instrument of ruling party violence. The perpetrators of election violence have enjoyed have enjoyed impunity, often buttressed by presidential pardons and amnesties. Beside coercion, ZANU (PF) has also engaged in political discourse that demonizes its key opponents as reactionary, subversive, and often stooges of whites and foreigners. Organized violence and intimidation of the opposition, albeit of varying intensity, has been a recurrent strategy of the ruling party before, during and after elections to punish constituencies that dared oppose it," Opponents were abducted and then disappeared, and scores of homes of suspected ZAPU Supporters were looted and destroyed. ZANU (PF)'s Youth Brigade was actively involved in forcibly busing villagers to party rallies and ordering them to vote for the ruling party. Masipula Sithole argues that the four general elections held in Zimbabwe since 1980 exposes startling similarities in the ruling party's discourse and coercive mechanisms. Opponents were cast as reactionary enemies of the state and as mere puppets of the whites. The leaders mobilized unemployed youth, mostly males and sometimes women, to attack opposition supporters and their property, and threatened voters with loss of jobs, houses and food relief and a return to war if they supported the opposition. The perpetrators of violence were the benefactors of police inaction or

party protection, either through presidential pardons and amnesties for political crimes. The police themselves actively participated in violence on behalf of the ruling party. Despite pleas for reconciliation after three of the four elections, the party leadership sanctioned local vendettas against constituencies that had voted for the opposition.

Kenya's electoral violence is not a new phenomenon. Every one of the nine elections held in the country since independence- in 1963, 1969, 1974, 1979, 1983, 1988, 1992, 1997, and 2002- and most of the by elections in between, have been characterised by varying degrees of electoral violence. The youth have been at the centre of it all. While the 2002 election was arguably the least violent and most democratic, the 1992 was the most violent. In the 1992 elections, the first after country's return to multiparty politics in 1991, the country witnessed unprecedented election-related bloodbath as a result of the politically instigated ethnic clashes. The clashes instigated by the then Moi-KANU regime claimed the lives of over 700 Kenyans. This was repeated again in 1997. observers have noted thus; "The country has therefore seen forms of violence each election year, in many instances, resulting in deaths of the innocent. The level of electoral violence has varied across elections. The elections were a stark contrast with the 1997 and 1992 elections which were undoubtedly violent" According to Mutahi, the 1992 elections saw the open use of violence in killing, intimidation, and displacing of communities perceived as opposition supporters. The violence which began in 1991, came after KANU, the then ruling party, then reluctantly agreed to repeal Section 2A of the Constitution, which prohibited the establishment of other political parties except KANU, hence allowing the formation of other parties in the country. Most KANU politicians predicted that the country would disintegrate along tribal lines, leading to anarchy and chaos. Consequently, KANU Members of Parliament and other politicians allied to the party mostly from the Rift Valley Province, began to call for the forceful

removal of other ethnic groups from the province as they were viewed as opposition adherents. In addition, they called for the Majimbo system of governance to be enacted in order to protect their regional interests from outsiders. (Majimbo is a Kenyan style of federal government) As mentioned earlier, the 1997 elections were full of vigilante violence. Kagwanja asserts that this was a continuation of the orgy of ethnic cleansing that engulfed parts of rural Kenya from late 1991 and which was partly responsible for the flawed elections of December 1992. The violence shattered the euphoric celebrations of Kenya's return to pluralism. He further argues that vigilante violence, that went under the epithets of 'ethnic', 'land clashes', 'cattle rustling border dispute, or simply "gangsterism was state sponsored. The government was accused of sponsoring vigilantism as a tool of informal repression in its desperate bid to derail multi-parties and to hold on to power. Vigilantism in Africa is not as developed as in the West. Kelly Hine notes that vigilantism in western society, especially in United States, rose in response to the failure of laws enforcement system to provide full protection to citizens and their property. As such, such vigilantes laid a legitimate claim to a moral high ground for their work in the preservation and betterment of the existing system. They had no connection to the state or its functionaries. On the contrary, the vigilantes of multi-party Kenya were sponsored by the state to stem the tide of the multiparty challenge and to help sustain the hegemonic elite of one party era in power. Vigilantism, according to Kagwanja, assumed several characteristics. First, it was portrayed as a product of ancient animosities or long-standing communal hatreds. Second, it relied on ethnic warriors, often identified with traditional ethnic symbols and attire, and wielding traditional weapons such as spears, swords, bows and arrows. In some cases, warriors wielded modern firearms. Thirdly, sometimes, security forces provided training, protection and worked hand in hand with ethnic vigilantes during attacks. Without exception, attacks were made against groups associated with

the opposition or pro-democracy movement. Mutahi further argues that the 2002 general elections were, relatively violence-free. They are widely hailed as the most democratic to be held in the country. Kenya was cited as the role model for other countries in the continent and the world to emulate for undergoing a peaceful transition. This clean report card was given by the local and international observers who were accredited by the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) to observe the elections. In addition, election observers generally agreed that there was reduced electoral violence, which had experienced large-scale electoral violence. The Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) has documented that over 4000 people have died due to political violence, which has at the same time displaced almost 600,000 people between 1991 and 2001. Indeed the history of post-independent Kenya, clearly shows that the successive three post-independence regimes have used Violence as a means of entrenching their dominance and hold on to power. However, even in 2002 election, there were a significant number of incidences or violence, bribery and intimidation in what was otherwise regarded as a historical and peaceful election process. Other observers showed that a large percentage of political thuggery committed were incidences of assault. Other incidences involved threats, intimidation, hate speech, inter-ethnic violence and forcible disruption of public meetings in most cases perpetrated by political parties either singly or jointly, the police and terror groups like the Mungiki, Jeshi la Embakasi and Kamjesh. The government to be blamed for perpetrating violence Similarly, the 2005 referendum elections were relatively non-violent but still saw instances of political violence in the nature of incitement to violence, hate speech and misuse of state resources, and abuse of public office. Worryingly, electoral violence in the country in the recent past has taken a gender dimension where female aspirants have been harassed and assaulted with a view of intimidating them from contesting Electoral violence continues to be a major governance problem in the region.

The Role of the Youth in the 2007 Electoral Violence in Kenya

It has been observed that living in a democracy means that youth has the right to have a say in how things are run locally, nationally and globally. Doing that in practice means two things: participating in their community and being active citizens. By active citizenship is meant: Understanding rights and responsibilities as citizens in a democracy and having the skills and confidence to put them into practice. By participation is meant: Playing an active part in the decisions and, most of all, taking action to change things for a better community. One may ask: To what extent did the Kenyan Youth play a responsible role in the 2007 elections and in the post-election violence? In the attempt to answer this question, one looks at the Kenya youth in terms of their motivation (what drives them) and their instrumentality (what gives them the ability to carry out that which they are motivated to do). Contextually, one considers reported youth activities in terms of "the real world of African democracy in particular, needs to take cognizance of Sandbrook's idea that most African democracies (in my regime(s) that (Occupy) the hazy terrain between genuine representative or multiparty democracy, on the one hand, and authoritarianism, on the other". In other words, they have not made the "second transition, i.e. "the phases of consolidation in which all major actors accept the rules of the democratic game. The youth of Kenya participated in that game in various capacities, particularly as voters, agents, protesters and also as candidates for both civic and parliamentary seats. The role of the Kenyan youth in power politics is generally defined by Dikshit as follows: A fundamental problem for the rulers in any state is related to converting power into Authority, that is, the right to rule, which comes into existence only when the citizens recognize the right of the political masters to govern; and to make laws; and the citizens' duty to obey those laws. Having defined the quest for authority by those who wield political power, Dikshit draws a useful distinction between "legality of authority" and "legitimacy of authority",

saying that: Legitimacy implies voluntary acceptance by the ruled of the ruler's authority to govern. In modern societies such an authority is derived from popular support obtained through free and fair multiparty election contests. The Kenya events that are being examined here (the 2007 elections and the post-election violence) had to do with the politicians scramble for authority and the citizens struggle to ensure that none of the competing politicians grabbed it only through legality without legitimacy. In both events the participation of the youth was deemed significant. Their attractiveness to the contending parties depended on their instrumentality: their capacity for carrying out both constructive and destructive assignments. The instrumentality of the youth depended on two of their attributes: their energy and their numbers. The energy or vitality is universally acknowledged. The numbers depended on the demographic facts of the Kenyan voter registration. According to information obtained from the Youth Agenda (quoting ECK sources), the youth constituted approximately 60% of voters registered for the 2007 elections. Thus, the youth vote was a much sought-after vote by the contending political parties and individual candidates. The instrumentality of the youth, based on their energy and their numbers, was reflected in the wide range of youth groups that were formed to campaign especially for the presidential candidates. featuring such groups as: Vijana na Kibaki (A pro-Kibaki youth group) and Youth Patriots 4 change (A pro-Kala youth group). Such groups, and various less prominent ones, gave their numbers, beauty and vitality to their favourite candidates in the 2007 elections. They played both positive (responsible) roles, e.g., singing and dancing to popularize their candidates, and negative (irresponsible) roles, e.g. beating up those campaigning for the rivals of their candidates. While their capacity for constructive or destructive (responsible or irresponsible) participation depended on their instrumentality, what they actually did and whom they did it for depended on their motivational attributes, including their

idealism: their belief in and commitment to the idea of "democratic citizenship" - based on the desire and ability of young people to be part of the process that determines what happens to one's life and the lives of others in the community." The Kenyan youth did believe that they could make a difference in shaping the future of Kenya. In the pre-election period, they had organized and participated in a wide range of "youth leadership forums, community forums, meetings and public education activities, whose outcome, among other things, was to have increase consciousness among youth and their leader...."³⁷ In terms of explanatory parameters, this idealism can be seen as a strong sense of responsibility. In the expression of Mokwena, it is about the youth "taking the initiative." In this perspective, the youth participate in public affairs (especially decision-making) because it is their right, since the future belongs to them and the decisions made today will affect them more than they will affect the older citizens. The idealism of the Kenyan youth accounts for the positive aspects of their participation in both the 2007 elections and the post-election violence that erupted upon the declaration of the presidential election results. Apart from idealism, their poverty arising, from the joblessness was a definite factor in the negative (irresponsible) aspects of their participation in the 2007 elections and as re-stated below, the post-election violence. In informal interviews based on convenience sampling, Kenyan youth repeatedly mentioned their poverty as their reason for having among other misdeeds sold their voting cards, asked candidates for money, harassed the rivals of their candidates, formed hired crowds for candidates they did into support and joined bands of youths for hire by candidates who needed them for defence or offence. When interrogated on the irresponsibility of such actions, a number of Kenyan youth express elements of cynicism, disillusionment and even bitterness about the Kenyan society, which they believe has been immensely unfair to their (the youth's) generation. Their excitability was another factor that cannot be ignored. The youth are prone to getting excited

whenever there are events which are a bit out of the ordinary, such as election campaigns. The noise, the dancing, the public exchanges and even the occasional insults and scuffles brought a measure of excitement to which the youth by their nature would be more attracted than would their older counterparts. Moreover, they would not just be attracted as onlookers but as active participants. Thus, if there were ugly but exiting incidents in the 2007 elections, nature would indicate that the youth would be more likely to get involved in such incidents. The logic of the instrumentality and motivation of the youth as explained above extends rather effortlessly to their participation, in the post-election violence. Post-election violence scenes portrayed in the Kenyan mass media (print and electronic) suggested that the youth were the most prominent participants in the violence. Considering their energy and numbers (the basis of their instrumentality) one would expect them to form the vanguard of the expression the anger that characterized the suspicions about the genuineness of the declared presidential results. One would also expect that if anyone wanted to use any group of citizens to fight their battle to defensive or offensive purposes they would target the youth. Looking at the types of motivation for youth participation in political activities, as outlined above, it is clear that the youth would have been involved in the post-election violence with or without instigation by individuals or groups of individuals with personal or collective interests in the results. If one takes the view that the violence erupted out of the citizen's disappointment with the result, we can see the idealism of the youth making them the most likely group of citizens to come out and demonstrate their anger especially in a violent manner. Everywhere in the world the youth are more likely to fight for their rights in situations where older citizens would show some restraint. The tendency of the Kenyan youth to engage in destructive activities in such circumstances may also be explained by their poverty and the cynicism, anger and disillusionment that emanate from it (the poverty). The poverty of

the Kenyan youth would also explain their readiness to be hired by interested persons who might want someone to do some dirty jobs for them. In general, their idealism, poverty and excitability would explain their participation in the post-election violence whether we see the violence as spontaneous or instigated. In terms of responsible citizenship, it is arguable that if the youth acted irresponsibly in the post-election protests, the negativity of their behaviour is not in the mere fact that they protested, but in the violent nature of the protest, especially the fact that it targeted people whose only crime was that they were ethnically identified with a given presidential candidate in a particular neighbourhood. The violence may have something to do with conflict culture but the asymmetric nature of the conflict (involving a government side and a non-government side) required that the government side find it expensive to take an oppressive option in resolving the conflict." In line with this perspective, it is arguable that it was the unruly behaviour of the Kenyan youth that brought the government side to the negotiating table and not the mediation skills of the Annan team. In this regard, there is a sense in which the post-election behaviour of the youth had elements of responsible citizenship. It is their violence on fellow citizens that remains questionable. In conclusion, while many reports concede that electoral violence is rampant in all over the world and in particular Kenya, there is little knowledge on the nature and extent of youth involvement in electoral violence beyond the fact that, invariably, the youth are the one social group that is most visibly engaged and used to penetrate and spread violence. It is for the purpose of unravelling this apparent dilemma that the researcher undertook to study the patterns, extent, character and form of youth involvement in electoral violence.

STUDY FINDINGS

Role of the Youth in the 2007 Post-Election Violence in Kenya

The study has long-established the strong relationship between environment conditions and youth and adolescent behavior. Among the environmental conditions that affect youth and adolescent behavior are unemployment and poverty, family structures such as membership in single-parent families and levels of integration into family and other social support groups. Thus the relationship between youth unemployment and security in the context of the Kenya politics is deep and intricate. This is evident from the fact that even prior to the outbreak of violence following the announcement of the disputed results of the 2007 presidential elections, the youth in various parts of Kenya were involved in different ways in politics. They actively campaigned for various political parties and candidates and received from candidates, either freely or by extortion, campaign funds and felt that they also participated in distributing among potential voters. Some presented themselves as Candidates for elective offices while others were involved in intimidating and even assaulting supporters and rivals of their preferred parties and candidates. The youth also served as organized groups providing security to different candidates and political parties that also deployed them either as polling or agents during the elections.

All these Suggest that the youth participation in the violence that erupted following the disputed December 2007 General Elections arising from the December 27, 2007 elections had its foundation in the already defined role of the youth and especially the unemployed youth in politics in Kenya. The involvement of the youth in Kenyan politics could be categorized into legitimate and illegitimate roles. The legitimate participation included their role as candidates, voters, and poll agents as well as campaigners for various candidates and political parties. The illegitimate roles included bribery, intimidation, obstruction and violence.

Some authors like Hogeveen, observe that modern society generally considers violence unpalatable and dreams of armistice but in the same instant

rises to cheer violence in sport and entertainment. Hogeveen further asserts that we are fascinated by violence so long as it is not done to us or anyone near to us. It has been observed that in the Kenyan political milieu marginalized communities and the youth in particular often see violence as a means of driving away the members of the "non-indigenous ethnic groups in order to the natives to gain access to jobs, educational opportunities and land.

Youth, Education and Training

Large numbers of the youth in Kenya are affected by a number of factors in the field of causation and training. These include their inability to access post-secondary school education and training, the negative effects of poor educational conditions in their regions of origin and the quality and relevance of the education and training they receive. It is also evident that the values that are fundamental to achieving national cohesion and stability are not emphasized either in theory or practice in the national institutions including the education system. It is therefore not surprising that a large number of youth are the most affected by unemployment in most parts of Kenya Youth Unemployment as a Trigger of the Post-Election Violence, argues that socio-economic factors have frequently been important causes of violent conflicts in developing countries. Many of these conflicts, Brinkman argues, are caused by the unequal distribution of economic opportunities. Other forms of socio-economic inequalities according to Brinkman (2001) are less explicit but also result from the unequal distribution of public jobs, licenses, contracts, taxation, subsidies, investments and services across different groups in a country.

Since the early 1990s, Kenya has experienced broadening of democratic space and with this; participation of different groups including the youth in politics has increased. However, democratization does not always coincide with broadening of participation in economic arena. The patterns of political and economic changes affecting the people of Kenya since about 1991 are best understood in

the context of economic reform policies supported by international funding and donor agencies like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank since the 1980s. Liberalized and globalized markets not only create enormous opportunities but also sharpen the distinctions between winners and losers. The winners are increasingly those who are educated, skilled and know how to use new technology. Judging by this pattern, it is not surprising therefore, that the parts of Kenya with better social and economic infrastructure tend to have dominant representation in both political and economic institutions of the country. Developing countries like Kenya have therefore tended to struggle to balance issues of economic liberalization and efficiency with good governance and equity. Unemployment has been a major problem that cuts across all regions in Kenya. However, the youth, unlike any other social group tend to be more adversely affected by unemployment.

Youth are the most affected by unemployment followed by women. The youth in Kenya constitute about 78.1 per cent of all the unemployed persons. The cited causes of unemployment especially among the youth included: inadequate job opportunities, poor educational background, lack of required skills, discrimination based on tribe, unrealistic expectations exemplified by youth's choosiness about jobs and poor national policy. A significant percentage of youth perceive discrimination on tribal basis as the cause of their unemployment. Such youth can easily be manipulated politically to engage in ethnic violence cells and impact of youth unemployment however, differ from region to region. The rural and industrially' more prosperous regions of Kenya tend to experience lower levels employment than the poorer regions of the country. The averages levels of education and skills attainment also explain the differences in patterns and impact of unemployment among the youth in different parts of Kenya. The convergence of low levels of education achievement, poor skill attainment, high density of population and high levels of youth

unemployment are observed in the Coast, Nyanza and some parts of Central and Western provinces. While North Eastern Province is hit by the problem of low education attainment and inadequacies in relevant skills, compared to other regions, its sparse population reduces the magnitude of youth unemployment. In particular, in some parts of the country (including Nairobi, Central, Nyanza, Western and Eastern Provinces), high population densities, most of which consist of the youth, coincide with relatively higher levels of educational attainment and high levels of youth unemployment and poverty. Although in most instances the youth in Kenya are perceived to be disadvantaged by inadequate education and job opportunities, some of the youth are victims of their own unrealistic expectations. They pointed out that most educated young people in Kenya have been socialized to expect formal employment and tend to disregard opportunities in the non-formal sectors and especially agriculture is also observed that whereas the local economies in many of the impoverished regions of the country contribute immensely to the national revenue pool, they contribute little directly to the local populations in terms of employment creation and poverty reduction. At the Coast and in the South Rift, for instance, the thriving tourism industry contributes a lot of foreign exchange to national economy but the local communities and particularly the youth derive little or no benefit from the industry. In western and Nyanza the fishing and sugar industries generate a lot of revenue to the Central Government but their impact on poverty and unemployment among then local communities is minimal. It is this state of affairs that drives particularly the youth into desperation and hostility toward the long-term immigrants from other parts of the country that often are more prosperous than the indigenous populations

Post-Election Youth Violence

Zeldin in an analysis of facts and misconceptions about youth and violence in USA points out that the youths between the ages of 15 and 24 often are

disproportionately at risk of being both a victim and a perpetrator of violence. Zeldin identifies one of the misconceptions as the tact that adults exaggerate the rate of youth violence sometimes by a factor of four to one. Another misconception is that youth crime is often equated with race with African American and Hispanic young men being perceived as less law abiding and disciplined and more prone to violent behaviour. In the Kenyan case, ethnicity would substitute for race; there is a perception that Luo and Luhya young men are violent. In the context of post-election violence, IDPs in the Mount Kenya region reported that this pattern of youth aggression appeared to be deeply entrenched among the Kalenjin and other nomadic communities especially in the Rift Valley Such perceptions appeared to have influenced the police response to demonstrations and riots across the country with more brutal tactics used in the Luo, Kalenjin and Luhya dominated areas of Rift Valley, Western Kenya and Nairobi slums.

Zeldin also points out that another prevalent misconception is that Violence is a premeditated event that is randomly' directed toward innocent bystanders. Zeldin notes that the opposite is true and that the vast majority of violent encounters occur between friends, acquaintances and within families. Many of the victims of post-election violence knew the people who killed their relatives, looted and destroyed their property or attacked, threatened and evicted them from the homes or property. Since the restoration of multiparty politics in Kenya in the early 1990s, there has been tremendous manipulation of ethnicity by the political class. A common thread between the Moi and Kibaki governments is that both have been accused of engaging in ethnic, political patronage that mainly favoured their own ethnic political constituencies. In such circumstances, competing political blocks tend to appeal to ethnic sentiments that fuel tensions that often degenerate into violence. The youth usually play an important role in such ethnically charged political processes as perpetrators of violence. They tend to enforce

restrictions of access to implicitly demarcated political zones where 'outsiders' and opponents are not allowed to campaign. This suggests that some of the youth involved in the post-election violence were not necessarily seeking or defending their personal interests but furthering the objectives of their inciters. Freeman, however argues that the notion that ethnic diversity necessitates conflict is gross- misguided. Freeman points to the example of Tanzania that has a great deal of ethnic diversion/ yet has remained strife free as a result of a government system that effectively, manages and distributes political and economic power. According to Freeman, ethnicity only becomes salient when it overlaps' with patterns of relative deprivation. Freeman therefore concludes that deprivation rather than poverty is meaningful indicator of the source of conflict. Citing Natziger and Auvinen, Freeman defines relative deprivation as the conditions in which people deprived of something they had, but subsequent, lost, or when others have gained relative to them Most forms of deprivation that are likely, to lead into conflicts and violence are economic and political. For examples groups that perceive the risks of losing political power and related economic privileges are likely, to resort to aggression against competing groups. In the Cnyan case, the youth who had the perception that their future would be bleak with particular groups gaining Or retaining power were seen to be more involved in violence. Brinkman argues that from an economic point of view, individuals and groups in society are usually, motivated to engage in violence or war if the benefits are larger than the costs. Thus, if members of the 'other ethnic group can be attacked and evicted, and land, natural resources, or cattle can be seized with limited costs, it is likely, that violence will occur. Brinkman further observes that the most critical role of economic policy is to ameliorate socio-economic disparities among different groups that tend to fuel conflicts and violence It has been observed that there is an established pattern in Kenya in which members of the politically, dominant groups enjoy privileged access to opportunities in education, employment

and basic services such as health. They pointed out that this trend is often reflected in the dominance of top civil service positions as well as business opportunities by members of the same ethnic group or political party as those of the president and powerful cabinet ministers Likewise the interests of the political and economic elite tend to override those of the disadvantaged groups such as the youth. The latter pattern is reflected in the apparent reluctance of the government to protect disadvantaged citizens against unfair job recruitment and labour compensation practices. In addition, the government has failed to ensure justice to individuals and groups that fall victim to illegal acquisition of property including land. Since a majority of the youth are self-employed in the informal sector (commonly known in Kenya as Jua Kali), they are frequently victims of arbitrary licensing systems and confiscation of goods on account of allegations of conducting illegal' businesses. The sweeping changes introduced in the public transport sector in 2004 that occurred almost simultaneously with a general freeze on licensing of hawkers especially in Nairobi rendered many youth jobless and this has had repercussions in the levels of violence and crime involving the youth in Kenya. It is in this context that it was observed that the post-2007 election violence in Kenya provided a camouflage for settling of property and employment disputes Knoester and Hayne have outlined three structural characteristics associated with social disorganization that predict crime and delinquency: economic status, ethnic heterogeneity and residential mobility. All these factors exist in different degrees and combinations in the regions that were most affected by post-2007 General Elections violence in Kenya. For example, considering the increasingly sharp distinctions between the winners and losers in the liberalized Economy in Kenya and the relatively higher levels of economic deprivation among the youth there is usually a higher likelihood of the youth expressing their grievances violently regard to ethnic heterogeneity, it could be observed that individuals are more likely, to resort to aggression used on

perceptions that their neighbours from particular ethnic groups have better access to political and economic opportunities than themselves. Residential mobility mainly explains the pattern of violence in cities and particularly in slums. Impoverishment or Slum dwellers often coincide with high levels of change of residence location and little commitment to neighbourhoods. Majority of residents in poor neighborhoods are therefore often less likely than residents of middle class neighbourhoods to be adversely affected by the economic impacts of violence and destruction. It is the poor parts of the cities, therefore that have a reputation of being the most militant and it was to such parts of the cities that the police were deployed in late December 2007 to either prevent riots or quell protests that had erupted. The patterns and trajectory of post-2007 election violence affirm the strong correlation between relative deprivation and intensity of violence. The areas most affected by post-election violence were the densely populated cosmopolitan rural areas and the urban slums. Examples of such rural areas that were most affected by violence were Kipkelion, Burnt Forest, Turbo, Molo and Mumias. Some of the slums that were most affected were Mathare, Kibera, Kariobangi and Dandora in Nairobi; Langas and Huruma in Eldoret; Rhonda in Nakuru; and; Manyatta, Kondele and Nyalenda in Kisumu. In slums and other socially deprived neighborhoods, the youth often have easy access to alcohol, drugs, and offensive illegal weapons all of which tend to reinforce Violent behaviour and to signify a lack of community social control. Furthermore, in such neighbourhoods, the limited opportunities for education and employment and the resultant Competition for the few available resources are bound not to only weaken community ties and social bonds but also to aggravate the sense of hopelessness among the unemployed youth.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study recommended two categories of durable measures focus on first, socio-economic policies that should reduce the levels of relative deprivation

among the youth and second, ensuring transparency and accountability in public institutions including clear mechanisms for redress for aggrieved parties.

Reducing Relative Deprivation

The Public Service Commission and other similar agencies should adopt the best practices already in place in other parts of the world such as Asia, Europe and USA in order to improve on transparency and accountability in recruitment processes. For example, public service recruitment should be done through an independent and fair multistage examinations system to protect the process from political and other manipulations.

The Ministry of Youth Affairs should liaise with experts in entrepreneurship to help transform the youth talents and energy into employment and business opportunities in line with the Vision 2030 objectives of national development. The Youth Enterprise should allow flexibility in project funding and broaden its scope to harness youth.

The ministries of provisional Administration, Local Government Trade and industry should adopt more Synchronized and friendly trade licensing and regulation mechanisms that are supportive to youth business initiatives. The youth, majority of whom work in the informal sector, often are victims of arbitrary laws and corruption perpetrated in some these departments.

The ministries of Planning and Finances should take deliberate equity measures while allocating resources for development of educational and other infrastructure across the country. Such measures would support equitable skill development and also Stimulate economic development that would absorb the youth into gainful employment.

Corporations and business associations should encourage voluntary contributions to support youth employment programs in cities and municipalities throughout the country to dissuade them from joining militia and other extortion gangs. This would

not only help to empower the youth economically but also contribute to crime and violence reduction.

Transparency and Accountability

Parliament should initiate and facilitate a wide range of legal reforms. For example, reforms that focus on diversity policies should allow integration across ethnic and social groups not only in schools but also in places of work and business. Similarly, it should initiate electoral reforms with aim of discouraging and severely penalizing political bribery, Violence, hate speech, malicious propaganda and any form of intimidation and manipulation, such measures would drastically curtail the level of youth involvement in electoral misconduct and violence.

The media council should take measures to strengthen practice regulations that discourage among others broadcast or publication political vulgarity, hate speech, and ethnic, class or gender slander. The media organizations should adopt a collective resolution the expressly discourages or blocks broadcast or publication of comments and views that undermine inter-group harmony in Kenya. The media organizations should take

deliberate steps to give more prominence to political leaders that set good examples by their public conduct and utterances. These measures would help cut down on inciting media contents that could negatively influence the youth.

The police should adopt professional and friendly methods of dealing with the youth. The police often tend to victimize the youth for appearing to be idle and in some cases even prefer trumped up charges against them such as belonging to proscribed groups such as Mungiki. Currently in some parts of the country and particularly in urban areas the youth cannot gather in small groups without being rounded and locked up by the police. The ministries of Land and Justice should introduce policies and laws that eliminate irregularities in land tenure governance especially in the rural areas since the youth are not immune to the problems that affect their families or communities and tend to be dragged into disputes and violence arising from such regularizes. They should collaborate with the ministry of information to organize live forums for public deliberations on land governance and other relevant issues.

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