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**ABSTRACT**

*The study purpose was to determine the key risk factors that exacerbated the involvement of the youth in the post-election violence 2007 in Kenya. While in all past politically instigated and electoral induced ethnic clashes, the youth were condemned for perpetrating violence as ethnic warriors, what is less acknowledged is the fact that the youth were condemned, and still are the biggest victims and casualties. 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 were the key risk factors that exacerbated the involvement of the youth in the 2007 post-election violence in Kenya. 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 mounding 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

Kenya began as a multiparty state at independence in 1963 but it was a de facto single party state. It became a de jure single party state in 1982 during the presidency of Daniel Arap Moi when the Constitution of Kenya was amended to insert Section 2(A) to make KANU (Kenya African National Union - the independence party) the only political party. In 1991, the government yielded to national and international pressure and amended the Constitution again to remove Section 2(A). This was during a wave of democratization that swept the globe following the end of the Cold War in 1989. The country held the first multi-party elections in 1992, and since then, cross-ethnic violence has characterized every national electoral exercise. The single most important explanatory factor for the electoral violence appears to be ethnic-based competition for the presidency because of the perceived socio-economic benefits expected to accrue to the president's ethnic community. Although Kenya held presidential elections from 1963 to 1992, the incumbent always ran unopposed, which undermined the intentions of effective leadership transformation? Indeed, the governments of former presidents Jomo Kenyatta (1963- 1978) and Daniel Arap Moi (1978-2002) detained opposition leaders without trial demonstrating that state functionaries considered competition for the presidency treasonable. During the election violence witnessed in 1992 and 1997, the conflict's epicenters were mainly the Rift Valley and Coast provinces. The indigenous communities targeted the "migrant" ethnic communities ostensibly to drive them back to their original homelands. Although much of the past waves of violence were driven by competition over resources (e.g., land, employment and business opportunities), such violence still had political overtones. Practically, just before the General Elections, indigenous communities would organize to drive out migrant ethnic communities to deny them an opportunity to vote. Consequently, this reduced the chances of the

presidential candidate supported by the migrant communities from garnering the minimum of 25per cent of the vote from at least five (5) out of the eight (8) provinces as required by law. On December 27 2007, Kenyans went into a general election that was to place the country on the brink of making history of sorts. Firstly, the elections witnessed the highest voter turnout ever, a vindication of the democratic credentials or lack thereof that Kenya had built over time. Secondly, the 2007 elections attracted by far, the highest number of candidates vying at all levels. Further, the election attracted the highest number of political parties sponsoring such candidates. This buttressed the notion that competitive politics had at last taken firm root in the country's polity. Thirdly, the level of organization within electoral institutions that went on prior to the elections was lauded by many as exceeding continental standards. Indeed, opinion polls at the time showed that there was an overwhelming confidence in which the public held that the elections would be conducted in a free and fair manner. Fourthly, the elections came soon after the government had lost a crucial referendum vote to the opposition over the issue of the proposed new constitution of Kenya. To many, the referendum was seen as a dress rehearsal for the epic election battle to come. In the ensuing race, opinion polls gave the opposition a slim edge over the incumbent and therefore, many saw a possibility that Kenya would be the first country where a President was democratically unseated after his first term. However, the outcome of the elections thrust Kenya into the wrong trajectory in history-making. The astonishing scale of violence that greeted the announcement of the "winner" Honorable Mwai Kibaki of the Party of National Unity brought out the ugly face of African politics, where democratic contests invariably ended in bloodshed amidst claims of electoral fraud and flaws. These events triggered the worst violent times witnessed hitherto in the country. There was wanton destruction of property and massive looting of private property, staggering cases of loss of life

(approximately 1,150) and limb, anarchy and displacement of more than 300,000 persons. The economic loss was estimated at several billions of shillings as the economic growth rate severely declined in the first quarter of the year. The international community sharpened its focus on the situation in Kenya, calling peace and urging both Kibaki and Raila to enter into dialogue. For this reason, His Excellency Kofi Annan was appointed by the African Union to spearhead dialogue efforts between the two warring sides, culminating into the signing of the National Peace Accord on 28 February 2008. The post-election crisis has attracted significant academic interest locally and internationally.

### **Objective of the Study**

The objective of this study was to examine the key risk factors that exacerbated the involvement of the youth in the post-election violence 2007 in Kenya.

### **RELATED LITERATURE**

According to Murunga et al, the term youth is a concept whose use is heavily dependent on context. Many people understand this term in relation to age, which is generally accepted as the most important characteristic in formal delineation of this category". The confusion that the emphasis on age creates in discourses of youth in Kenya is evident in discrepancies in statistical information testifying to the inability of those with vested interest in youth issues to set universally acceptable age boundaries. Estimates of the number of Kenyan youths, depending on the age boundaries under consideration, range from as high as 50 per cent of the Kenyan population to somewhere around the 25 per cent mark. Some consider 13-year-olds as 'youth, especially when all those who should be in secondary school or have graduated through rites of initiation from childhood are included in this constituency. Others base their classification on purely pragmatic grounds. Youth Agenda, for example, a leading NGO on making 'youth issues part of the national agenda',

considers all those falling between 15 and 40 years of age as youth. As adolescents, youth are often considered as being too immature to have anything significant to contribute to present discourses of national importance. On this basis, they are therefore, marginalized in significant decision-making forums. It is important to seek out alternative ways of conceptualizing youth that displace the emphasis on physical immaturity, making it possible for those in this social category to be recognized as partners in and active contributors to, national development. The term 'youth' in this project is used to denote the transitional stage of life between childhood and adulthood characterized by transfer of societal responsibilities affirming the change of status from the former to the latter the commemoration of the commencement and cessation of youth as a stage of life differs in timing and orientation from one community to another. Specific rites of passage may mark the entry into and out of this period. Some of these rites of passage of initiation are celebrated accordingly as public occasions emphasizing the individual's membership of a community.

The youth are the greatest resource, the wealth par excellence and the future of the nation. The character and quality of the youth are the embodiment of national vision for the future. They must therefore, receive the best preparation for the life ahead. Above all, they must be educated to accept their responsibility for national and domestic life. They represent best efforts in preparing the society for the future. For these reasons, nations spend huge amounts of their national budget on the education of the youth. According to Daniel Arap Moi, in his book Keya African Nationalism, youthful energy is like flood waters which can either be conserved and managed in a reservoir, for systematic perennial irrigation, or be let loose to wreak havoc on the unsuspecting settlements in landscape below."

Studies on politics tend to ignore or downplay the contribution of youth who are seen either as

purveyors of violence or as victims of poverty, according to Diouf, the construction of African youth as a threat or as a problem is symptomatic of a changing society where the status quo is being challenged in important arenas. He identifies in particular the changing relationship between identity and relationship, the emergence of new forms of inequality, and the transformation of the nature of chronological and psychological passage from youth to adulthood as important phenomena worthy of academic attention.

Kenya's population is predominantly young with the age group 15-35 years accounting for approximately 35 per cent of the total population. It is at this age that much of the human capital is formed. Consequently, human development strategies implemented during this transitional period have long-term impacts on the structure and quality of human capital. Kenya has instituted a system of youth preparation beyond the normal school system and professional training colleges. The most significant of post-independence youth organizations is the National Youth Service (NYS). In the NYS, the youth absorb a large dose of varied practical education and training. All this is designed to improve the quality of the youth and to prepare them for leadership. Furthermore, in 1984, the Government decided that a pre-university National Youth Service programme should be given before the selected first-year students join the university.

The programme offered a large number of talks and lectures from May to September each year. The common purpose of all these topics was to introduce a programme of intellectual upgrading of insight and outlook for the attendants; a sharing of national viewpoints on joint responsibilities; a definition of national goals toward which the nation, including the youth, must purposefully direct their energies and hopes. The programme aimed at giving the youth a sense of national belonging, and at demonstrating the essence and constructive values of peace for all, unity

of purpose and the effectiveness of love as a constructive force. The programme aimed at producing an appreciation (by the youth) of committed and responsible citizenship. Loyalty to the state and constructively responsible custodianship of the national heritage, nation-building, security and peaceful progress were all emphasized. The programme, however, was well intentioned, but due to poor implementation, coupled with limitation of resources, could not survive. Kenyan youth face many challenges. These include limited opportunities for educational advancement and technical training, limited opportunities for employment, high levels of poverty, lack of finance or access to credit, disproportionate exposure to high health and social risk such as HIV/AIDS drug and substance abuse, and crime, and lack of opportunities and mechanisms to participate in decisions that affect their lives. They therefore feel deprived of what they believe is rightfully theirs. They also have a higher dependency rate compared to comparable countries, which is attributed to unemployment, limited skills, and lack of resources and opportunities. As a consequence, many youths are tempted to engage in crime, drug abuse and prostitution, among other vices, and are also likely to enter into early marriage. Lack of resources and opportunities also increase the vulnerability of youth such that they become easy prey for political manipulation including and not limited to violence.

### **Election Violence**

**Theoretical Background of Elections.** The justification for elections can be traced to the idea of the social contract found in the works of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau though these are by no means the First account of the concept. The substance of the social contract theory is that the state is created through the medium of a contract. Hobbes idea of a social contract consists in individuals handing over their rights of self-government to a single authority thereafter authorized to act on their

behalf on the condition that every individual does the same. The result is a relationship of sovereign and subject which leaned towards absolutism. Departing from the absolutism of Hobbes, Locke postulates that political power is constituted by the consent of the people. The power must be exercised as it is given for the good of the people. The people in turn obey so far as the government acts within the trust reposed in it; but when it acts contrary to that trust, the people have a right to replace that government. By contrast Rousseau postulated that government is a result of an agreement among the citizenry. The legitimacy of a government was only to the extent to which it fulfils the instructions or the general will. When the government fails so to act it can be revoked and changed. The account of Rousseau represents the rudimentary basis of democracy. It is a condition of legitimate government that there are periodic elections. The electoral process facilitates regime transition and provides a choice option as an alternative to violent change. But elections can also be used by the ruling elite to confirm the regime. Therefore, the two strands of theoretical approach to elections emphasise the "voter choice and "legitimation of state authority respectively. The first focuses on the uncertainty of outcomes presented by the electoral process. The second is concerned with the functionality of the electoral process and focuses on some intent that outcomes should be predictable. In this study democracy is defined as a system of government that meets three essential conditions. These are competition for political power amongst individuals and organized groups; inclusive participation in the selection of leaders and policies, at least through free and fair elections; and a level of civil and political liberties sufficient to ensure the integrity of political competition and participation. In this context the electoral process is a multi-candidate game contested not just by candidates and parties, but their supporters as well in which different strategies of cooperation or antagonism between the

players can increase or decrease their prospects for success.

### **Elections and Violence**

Election violence has attracted various scholars among them being Fisher. He defines election violence as "any random or organized act or threat to intimidate, physically harm, blackmail, or abuse a political stakeholder in seeking to determine, delay or to otherwise influence an electoral process. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines electoral violence to mean any act that 'seeks to determine, delay, or otherwise influence an electoral process through the issuance of a threat, through language such as hate speech or verbal intimidation, or through "physical assault, or destruction of property or assassination'. This definition, due to its imitation, is further broadened to include a culturalism perspective. The concept of electoral violence encompasses violence in terms of the processes by which individuals are culturally socialized by the practices of the community and locality in which they are embedded. Here the resort to violence to influence electoral outcomes is not regarded as a major transgression of some important rule but as a matter of fact an event that is normatively not unacceptable. The culturalism lens also urges that a distinction be made between the violence of the state, the violence of dominant groups and the violence of oppressed and subaltern groups. It also draws attention to the spatial and temporal aspects of violence. What was considered as an act of violence, and hence a violation of the electoral process, at a certain period of time, at a certain place, may later not be regarded otherwise. Violence emanates from conflict behavior with destructive effects on the relationship between groups and individuals. This is because election processes are vehicles, through which political power is retained or pursued, and social differences are highlighted by candidates and parties in campaigns for popular support, they tap deep vulnerabilities for violent

interactions." Fischer argues that election Violence can occur at five intervals in an election chronology: identity conflict during the registration process, campaign conflict, ballot conflict, results conflict and representation conflict related to the electoral system. The victims of electoral violence can be people, places, or things. Such violence could be local, regional or national, sporadic or continuing, superficial or deep-rooted. Targets of violence could be individuals or communities that have particular demographic features. Violence could be at one or more stages in the electoral process.

In some instances, election violence is considered to be a particular type of political violence occurring within the context of the Overall process of democracy and democratization. Mwangi, in a paper titled "Political and Election Violence in Kenya", defines political violence as, violence over political competition at its heart. Political violence is concerned with the issue of the legitimacy of government. Above all, it removes or fractures political competition, and is aimed at removing or covering political dissent. It encompasses overt state sponsored or tolerated violence but may also include actions taken or not by the state or its agents with the express intention of realizing certain goals in the affairs of the state. A scholar named Hoglund, identifies two approaches in conceptualizing the term electoral violence. Almost similar to the view advanced by Sisk the first approach sees electoral violence as a sub-set of activities in a larger political conflict. In this aspect studies focus on electoral violence as part of the trajectory of ethnic or communal violence in divided societies. Instances of this characterization of electoral violence are countries like Kenya, Sri Lanka and India in which violence is clustered around elections. In the second approach, electoral violence is seen as the ultimate kind of electoral fraud by which he means clandestine efforts to shape election results through activities like ballot rigging, vote buying, and disruptions of the

registration process. The nexus in these two approaches is the focus on the goal oriented and instrumental character of violence. A third approach is based on Galtung's defining concept of structural violence which distinguishes between structural violence from personal violence. Structural violence refers to a situation where damage is done to a person because of the structure of the social system thus preventing that person from fulfilling their aspirations. Structures are therefore blamed for the emergence of violence. Electoral violence activities include the harassing, assault and intimidation of candidate's election workers, and voters; rioting: destruction of property: and kidnapping. The targets can be separated into four categories: electoral stakeholders (voters, candidates, election worker's media, and monitors), electoral information (registration data, vote results, ballots, campaign material), electoral facilities (polling and counting stations), and electoral events (campaign rallies, travelling to polling station)." Electoral violence is separated from other forms of political violence by a combination of timing and motive. The time aspect relates to violence carried out during the election period. The objective of electoral violence is to influence the electoral process and in extension its outcome. Electoral violence seriously undermines the electoral process by dislocating voters from places of residence, scaring voters away from polling stations and intimidating them to vote for particular candidates or parties. Types of electoral violence include assassination, attempted assassination, confinement, battery, threats of violence, torture, arson, rape, sexual harassment, abduction, obstruction, looting, threats and intimidation, hate-speeches, defamation ,insult, political thuggery, hijacking, destruction of property, property damage, economic repression, sabotage, eviction or displacement, closure of party or campaign premises, and violent or physical disrupting of public meetings and campaign rallies. Electoral violence can occur before, during or after an election.

Pre-election violence takes place before election. Political competitors are known to use all types of tricks in order to realize their goals. Kiunjuri Irungu asserts that one tactic used by politicians is diversion. He asserts that, violence, wars and quarrels may serve the purpose of distracting the people's attention from a given issue a strategy most used by leaders. He gave as an example, a situation where Socrates dies which creates heated animosities in Athens. Suppose Athenians demanded the resignation of the democratic leaders. Other than resigning, democrats decide to divert people's attention by instigating war between Sparta and Sicily. The effect would be to obscure the issue of Socrates and relegated to the periphery. War would become the prime issue of the day. The threat of insecurity that accompanies wars and quarrels would constitute new food for thought for the people. When their minds are diverted, they would forget the issue of Socrates. Nor would the issue of Socrates regain its sharpness again after the distraction. Election violence is at times used to divert people's attention from certain sensitive issues.

The relational dimension of conflict is necessary to constitute election conflict and violence. People or groups with little or no contact either directly or indirectly are unlikely to have either conflicting or harmonious relations. These individuals or groups are not static thereby requiring a dynamic analysis to conflict. The sources of election conflict include individuals, groups, and the state. Therefore, locating the actors is a key component in tracing the causes and enabling factors of a conflict. Actors are necessary in explaining the motivational dimension (why parties opt for conflictive or cooperative strategies) of the conflict and violence. The actors should be located through the entire cycle of a conflict. As the conflict is transformed so are the actors. Actor transformation involves either the internal changes in the major parties or admission of new parties in the conflict. There is a wide spectrum

of actors in election conflict and election violence. The participation of the state as an actor can be obscured where the distinction between the government and the political party is blurred. Similarly, the privatization of state violence can be used to camouflage state perpetrated violence during elections. The use of hired militia by the opposition is not uncommon. Political parties hire thugs and youths to unleash violence or intimidate opponents.

The issues and interests in election conflict are complex and not easy to isolate. They vary from one actor to another actor and through time. Furthermore, they are not static. They can shift dramatically within the life cycle of the conflict. As it is elaborated further in this section the instrumentalism logic the 'we and 'they authority relationships have permeated societies to marginalize some groups while benefiting others. These groups could be social classes, ethnic or tribal communities, minorities and other stratifications. Thus, elections have become a contest between groups seeking to acquire power and those after the maintenance of the status quo. It can also be contended that whatever their other purposes, the tribal clashes in most parts of the world also constitute a very effective red herring. Undeniably, these clashes keep the opposition politicians and other lobby groups very busy. The clashes are particularly effective since by their sheer sadism and absurdity, they are naturally disgusting. In annoying the opposition politicians and other members of the public, those in power are able to impede clear thinking. An annoyed person is not able to think clearly. Besides annoying the opposition, tribal clashes also motivates the opposition expend resources both intellectual and material in an effort to stop them. The pre-election violence is subject to many meetings and press conferences. In this way, the ruling party shifts the attention and energies of the opposition from the critical issues. Some of the strategies used by the ruling elites is leaving the country so often and embarking on vigorous foreign



policies when the situation back at home is tense with burning issues. It is argued in certain quarters that in so doing, the elite want to show the local and international public how stable he is. The most probable reason, however, is that he wanted to downplay the burning issues or crisis at home. The foreign policies he purports to pursue outside the country are mere red herrings. They are intended to shift the attention of the people from issues at home. The people are then drawn to other issues as they follow their leader in their minds outside the country.

Pre-election violence normally results to deaths, burning of houses, displacement of voters, among others. Other instances of campaign violence involve the shooting of candidates and clashes between armed supporters of political rivals. Pre-election deaths were also attributed to communist rebels who impose "permit to campaign fees in countryside area they control. Muslim rebels and armed groups employed by politicians were also security threats during elections. One can conclude that identity violence can occur during the registration process when refugees or other conflict-forced migrants cannot establish their officially recognized identities. The result is that these populations can remain disfranchised and outside of political process and potentially provoking violence in the process. Campaign violence can also occur as rivals seek to disrupt the opponents' campaigns, intimidate voters and candidates, and use threats and violence to influence participation in voting.

### **Election Violence**

This may be referred to as balloting violence which occurs on Election Day when political rivalries are played out at the polling station. At times electoral violence may come from coercive organs of the state to support candidates of a ruling regime. In this case, representatives of the state at the local level in the administration and security organs may participate in influencing voters towards electing pro-government candidates. The polling day may also attract violence

including kidnapping of opponents. But electoral violence may also be promoted by candidates and their agents. This may degenerate into mass riots and violent demonstrations.

Elections to be meaningful, presuppose a certain level of political organization. Huntington's notes that the principal institutional means for organising the expansion of political participation are political parties and the party system." The stability and the strength of a party and of a party system depend upon both the level of institutionalization and its level of participation. A high level of participation combined with low levels of political party institutionalization produces anomic politics and violence. Participation without organization degenerates into mass movements; organization lacking participation degenerates into personalistic cliques. Electoral competition between parties tends to expand political participation and at the same time to strengthen party organization.

Electoral manipulation assails the very essence of democratic governance. No electoral jurisdiction is immune from manipulation or accusations that some form or other of manipulation takes place. Indeed, even the older mature democracies like the United States of America have witnessed accusations of election fraud and manipulation. It would be a misconceived notion to assume that elections at least in democracies are beyond reproach. However, beyond passing such judgments there seems to be a broad acceptance of the requirement that elections must be free and fair. There also seems to be a broad consensus of what constitutes a free and fair election.

Therefore, holding governments to account on their obligations to international and regional agreements is one way of managing election conflict and violence. Article 21 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the United Nations in 1948 states that the will of the people "shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by

universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures. Elections have a human rights dimension which must be emphasized especially in emerging democracies.

Elections have become a high-stakes game perceived as opportunities for marginalized groups to be represented in decision making processes. For the political elite elections is merely the tool to access the instruments of state. The overall objective of electoral conflict and specially election violence is to influence the electoral process. If disaggregated further, we find that there are different motives behind the violence. Some actors might object to elections of any sort and find elections an illegitimate method for the transfer of political power. Other perpetrators might not object to elections as such, but are opposed to the system under which the elections are held, and might try to prevent or postpone elections. Yet other actors behind violence might want to influence the outcome of election. Finally, if elections do not yield the expected results, groups or parties might use violence to overthrow or alter the election outcome. The polarization of the electorate in an election may induce political stalemate, regime instability or even widespread political violence.

The proportional representation (PR) systems appoint seats in the legislature based on the percentage of the vote received, rather than who got the most votes. Each electoral district therefore, sends multiple representatives to the legislature. There is often a minimum percentage of the vote needed in order to gain a seat, but this allows smaller parties to gain a voice in the legislature. As a result, groups are more likely to form their own party and compete, rather than engage in negotiation within a party as would be more likely in a plurality system. The rationale of all PR Systems is to reduce the disparity between a party's share of the national votes and its share of the parliamentary seats.

Whether it is the majoritarian or proportional representation systems the scope of electoral systems in the management of conflict depends on two institutional dimensions. According to Reynolds and Reilly "electoral systems translates the votes cast in a general election into seats won by parties and candidates. The key variables are the electoral formula used (i.e., whether the system is majoritarian or proportional, what mathematical formula is used to calculate the seat allocation) and the district magnitude (not how many voters live in a district, but how many members of parliament that district elects" These influence the political outcomes and determine the political consequences of electoral systems for conflict management. The choice of electoral system presents a peculiar challenge for divided societies or societies emerging from conflict. For example, particular electoral systems can reward candidates and parties who act in co-operative, accommodative manner to rival groups; or they can instead reward those who appeal only to their own ethnic group. Thus, in an ethnically diverse society lacking shared values elections might prove deeply divisive, generate artificial ideological rigidities release powerful aggressive impulses and channel them into dangerous and unaccustomed directions. This has led critics of democracy argue that elections are Un-African and that traditional African societies formulated decisions by consensus unlike democracies.

According to Ake the argument, "premised on the misconception that democracy (including elections) is solely a Western creation, stems from confusion between the principles of democracy and their institutional manifestations. The principles of democracy include widespread participation, consent of the governed and public accountability of those in power.

These principles may prevail in a wide variety of political arrangements and practices which naturally vary according to historical conditions. Furthermore,

elections exert an effect well beyond the time when it is not being exercised. Thus, popular control underpins elections. To concentrate on the act of voting is to ignore the shadow that the vote casts in front of it. Scholars have proposed some theoretical perspectives on democracy and elections with an emphasis on electoral system design for divided societies. The consensus democracy theories advocate for institutions that facilitate cooperation and compromise among political leaders. The theorists of this system have proposed it for use in deeply divided societies arguing that it maximizes the number of winners in the system, so that separate communities can co-exist. But the preference for proportionality and criticism of the majoritarian systems advocated by these theorists has been challenged by advocates for majoritarian systems. A second approach is centripetalism which envisages democracy as a continual process of conflict management, a recurring cycle of dispute resolution in which contentious issues must ultimately be solved via negotiation and reciprocal cooperation, rather than simple majority rule.

According to Reilly, "the heart of the case for centripetalism as a form of conflict management is thus the need to create incentives for accommodation". The argument here is that electoral systems that encourage reciprocal vote transfer deals between rival candidates representing antagonistic social groups can have a major impact upon the nature of electoral politics, vastly increasing the prospects for the consolidation of moderate, centrist political competition. Election violence is mostly concentrated in urban areas. This is due to the great number of voters who are concentrated in those areas as opposed to scattered populations in the rural areas. Voters accuse candidates of distributing bribes for votes. This type of violence is meant to deny voters their right to vote. At times, inhuman tactics such as chopping off of fingers, hands, noses, or lips

with the machetes in the name of democracy is employed.

In conclusion, voter intimidation is intended to produce a self-imposed loss of freedom on the victim. If intimidated, the victim will vote or behave in a certain fashion. However, in some instances, electoral intimidation takes on a real property dimension, with hired thugs enforcing electoral behavior in recognizable physical districts.

Post-election violence is that violence that results from the outcome of the elections. They can occur in disputes over election results and the inability of judicial mechanisms to resolve these disputes in a timely, fair, and transparent manner. The manner in which results are reported can also be a conflict issue. Elections are indispensable to any democratic political system. But, as with any other mode or succession, in many countries, election also involve explicit or implicit use of force either by the political parties contesting the election themselves or outside agents like the military, labor unions or private militias. This use of force undermines the very premise of the democratic ideal that rest on freedom of expression and choice. As research in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, England and America and journalistic accounts of elections today in most parts of the world shows, electoral politics is and has been marred by substantial use of force. In the United States, the Hayes-Tilden election of 1876 almost led to a national crisis. The election results were dubious in four states and violence was a factor in three.

Contestability is a defining element of democracy. It is the point where competition and democracy overlap. There can be democracy without competition but not competition without democracy. For this reason, political competition needs constraining and sustaining conditions as it is unlikely to be effective in a world of rational, maximizing, selfish, and independent actors. Neither too tight to suppress

competition nor too weak as to be detrimental to the benefit of competition." These are the boundaries that limit and constrain competition and at the same time sustain it and make it viable. In all sustainable democracies the party system must be deeply durably entrenched in specific substructures of the specific society. The problem is that this is not always the case particularly in developing world. This no doubt leads to violence once slightest irregularity is noted.

Elections in the world even today are marred with post-electoral conflict and intrigue. As Churchill once said 'democracy may be the casualty of elections The European Union's election Observation Mission in its report on elections in many countries "remains concerned by politically motivated violent incidents and their effects on overall atmospheres of the electoral campaign. It notices that political parties also bear a significant responsibility in the spreading of election related violence".

There is a growing relationship between democracy and political unrest in general and elections and the use of force to affect electoral outcomes in particular. Hibbs was the first one to study this link in a systematic way. In a cross-country empirical study that analyzed the incidence of political violence in post-world war 2 period, he shows how democratic nations experienced about as much mass violent conflict as do non-democratic nations. Hence a democratized world would not necessarily be a non-violent one. His definition of unrest is broader than the one we use in this paper in the sense that we focus on political unrest just after elections whereas for him the timing of elections is not of significance." In two related papers, Wantchekon and Ellman show how the threat of political unrest (possibly initiated by the political parties themselves) after the election influences voting behavior and equilibrium policy outcomes. Strategic forward-looking voters, who take into account the possibility of post-election unrest, can in some cases vote in a manner that avoids the incidence of violence. A counterintuitive result from

their model is that a weak party (defined as one which does not initiate violence) will moderate its policy sufficiently to placate the strong party that is more likely to initiate political violence. Also, in their model there is no effort to win elections.

This seems particularly unrealistic in the case of developing countries where parties spend substantial amount of resources before elections to influence the campaigning process. Moreover, the parties are purely ideological in their model and do not care about office for office sake. Parties just want to win elections-the reason for seeking electoral victory could be either purely ideological or opportunistic or a combination of the two. Finally, in their model only one party is likely to initiate political violence, while in the model below both parties initiate violence in equilibrium.

What form has post-election been taking like pre-election and election violence, post-election violence has its own way of manifestation. One of them is disruption of vote counting by violent protests in several constituencies. The violence is motivated by voters believing that local election officials are biased in their counting procedures. Deaths, burning of houses," among others are some common incidences reported during post-election skirmishes. It is also common to witness youth brandishing machetes, bows and poisonous arrows and occasionally firearms, matches and projectiles filled with petrol. This menacing gangs man blockades, blocking numerous roads with tree trunks and huge rocks-some of which been transported there by tractors from other areas. They also burn vehicles and tires, refusing to allow anyone to pass, while their comrades engage in Killing, insurgence, and marauding.

Post-election violence also associated with emergence of Internally Displaced People's Camps. Hundreds of camps spring up in several parts of the country, signifying the magnitude of displacement.

Some citizens sought asylum in neighbouring countries. Besides the destruction of infrastructure and roads, economic losses due to looting, and forced closure due to insecurity, social disturbances and ethnic tensions that undermined the will to build cosmopolitan communities, humanitarian needs (hunger, shelter, and medicine) insecurity and loss of lives, numerous cases of physical assault and rape- especially of women and children- are reported. Many women, who allow the police in to their homes in the hope of ensuring their own security, are raped and threatened. With the need for protection and food it is reported that women and young girls are forced to provide sexual favors in return for these essential commodities. Men who ostensibly provide security in these camps are also linked to cases of rape. Many victims could not get to hospital for treatment, nor could they take legal action against their aggressors, due to the chaotic situation in the country. After the violence had ebbed, doctors do indicate that they are not only treating the physical injuries of the rape victims, but also sexually transmitted infections. This leads to high rate of HIV/AIDS. In conclusion. post-election violence is as disastrous as pre-election and election violence. They have led to untold suffering particularly to the weak states which have very weak institutions. This scenario is very common in developing countries and more so in Africa.

## **CAUSES OF ELECTION VIOLENCE**

### **Ethnic Balkanization**

The colonialists divided Africa along administrative lines forgetting ethnic groupings. This was meant to ease their exploitation of resources. This left many ethnic groupings subdivided along administrative boundaries. The effect of this action is still felt today for the post-colonial period electoral boundaries have favored continuity. Where boundaries have been reviewed it has been beyond the limits of permissible departure. Political association has fortified the

structure with parliaments and the election managing bodies tending to adhere to the requirements of the constitutions. The associational relationship has dividends in the form of resource allocation to certain areas to the exclusion of others.

The party formations as from 1990s were established along ethnic lines. It was a form of conspiracy where the national multi-ethnic outlook was a camouflage for the separate ethnic representation that identified with a leader as opposed to the party. This phenomenon of patronage politics, characterized by political manipulation of ethnicity and sharp horizontal inequalities have exacerbated ethnic tension in many parts of the world, particularly developing countries. It is this tension that develops to conflict. When conflict is not managed it develops into violent conflict and political instability.

### **Unresolved Land Expropriation**

Land has remained an emotive issue and an underlying factor behind much of the violence in developing world. Many reports noted that throughout the 1990's. Public land was irregularly and illegally allocated in total disregard of the public interest and the law. The recommendations of these reports were not implemented. Indeed, since the 1990s certain leaders have exploited grievances over perceived 'historical injustices and poorly handled settlement schemes for electoral advantage. These grievances are related to perceived favoritism and corruption by successive governments in allocation of fertile land, including a refusal to prevent and reverse settlement of outsiders in land originally appropriated from the local residents by the colonial authorities. This of course has occurred in a context of rapid population growth in what remains a largely agricultural society.

In retrospect, the land situation in the developing world had been, according to Anderson and Lochery, a "time bomb waiting to explode. However, prior to the elections, the extent of the grievances and the

ease with which they could be mobilized appear less obvious to many observers.

### **Lack of Constitutionalism and Rule of Law**

Most states in developing world have failed to integrate constitutionalism in their institutions and affairs of governance. Constitutionalism is more than just the instrument. It embodies all the various dimensions of statecraft and governance. It addresses the question how should the state structures be arranged and governed. The post-colonial state inherited a constitution in the case of former British colonies, modelled around the Westminster parliamentary system. But instead of developing the idea of constitutional supremacy most of the constitutions paid homage to the executive. In other cases, the independence constitution was a strongly contested document.

Many Constitutions underwent various amendments all geared towards strengthening the executives. This process of dismantling the constitution resulted in ethnicisation of resource allocation favoring the ethnic coalitions in power, and the emergence of political monolithic and the Big Man Rule or King Leader phenomenon. Ngonyi argues that at the normative level, this led to the entrenchment of presidentialism at the expense of constitutionalism. Successive regimes have made constitutional amendments that focus mainly on the equation of power. For example, Constitutional Amendments made some countries a de jure one party state while further amendments removed the security of tenure for holders of constitutional offices including the Attorney Generals and High Court Judges. The single party regime exacerbated the crisis of political legitimacy. Increasingly the regimes acquired a distinctly ethnic political foundation, monopolizing power at the center and personalizing the state. The larger populace was marginalized and excluded from the mainstream of political power. The offending provisions of the constitutions were repealed to introduce multiparty democracy. However, the repeal

of the constitution did not alter the fundamental flaws which facilitate the infamous electoral malpractices and fraud.

### **Economic and Political Exclusion**

The patron client politics have engendered grievances relating to economic and rising political inequality, Regimes came up with political and economic ideologies that had no foundation such that they were un-implementable. However, with more than forty years of the independence, these countries are still highly unequal societies with marked regional economic disparities. The economies of dependency have perpetuated primitive accumulation by the political elite increasing the stakes of election competition. Political institutions were perverted to serve the self-aggrandizing interests of ethnically based political elite. This has often been sustained by the interests of external actors who shift positions to either support the status quo or support political change, depending on the interest. With the flaws in the 1990s elections, donors were reluctant to reject the outcome once they were held."

### **Political and Electoral Systems**

A political system is the generic term for all those institutions which contribute to the formation and execution of policy within and without government. A political system needs to be impartial. AS Huntington states, 'democracy has come as much from top down. The idea that consent legitimates government and the state system generally has been central to the discourse on liberal democracy. The ballot box has been viewed as the mechanism whereby the individual citizen expresses political preferences and the citizens as a whole periodically confer authority on government to enact laws and regulate economic and social life. The perception of impropriety, regardless of actual foul play undermines the integrity of an election process.

Harbeson John in a study of multiparty elections in Africa found that countries where multiparty

elections were preceded by multiparty agreements defining the fundamental rules were likely to make more democratic movement than those which did not. Whereas elections have generally been acceptably free and fair on the election day, the campaigns were largely marred by serious abuses. Constitutions were amended to accommodate multiparty politics. However, to discredit the very notion of political competition, key government officials are alleged to have committed ethnic clashes in many parts of developing world.

The multiparty reforms betrayed the aspirations of the populace. For example, in many instances, the multiparty elections were held before the opposition could mount an effective challenge: in others elections were internally stolen by the government. The ruling elites resolutely resisted calls for constitutional reforms, while calls for independent electoral commissions were ignored by the ruling parties. The few examples of successful transitions were soon overshadowed by leadership resorting to the flawed structures.

In both the single party and multi-party system ethnicity continued to provide an instrument for mobilization of party support. Olukoshi and Laakso aptly observe that "many African one-party and military regimes, in spite of their supposed aversion to ethnicity rested on distinctly ethnic political foundations and reproduced themselves on the basis of definable, and in most cases narrow ethnic alliances"" More generally Ottaway argues that ethnicity is not a problem until it is made a problem. Competitive party politics invites divisive tactics by aspirants as well as by incumbent regimes.

### **The Problematic State**

States are hierarchical organizations, systems of power that are legitimized for specific functions that they are supposed to carry out. The basis of state in Africa is the colonial state. The colonial state condoned authoritarianism and viewed political

activity as a disguised form of self-interest, subversive of public welfare. The post-colonial state did not deconstruct the colonial state. Mboya once remarked that "there is no point in change for its own sake.... look at the political institutions this is the system we have been used to working with. We may introduce superficial innovations but the principles and so much of the machinery remain the same.

The most salient characteristic of political life in Africa is that it constitutes the most institution less arena in which conflict and disorder as its most prominent features. Elections have remained for the purpose of regime legitimation. Rather than reflect aspirations of electorate to choose who governs they reproduce a political elite. The state is essentially a loot able resource.

In the thinned political space those who get in control the resource for self-aggrandizement and will use every available means including electoral manipulation to keep others out while those who are out will do everything to create space including rejecting election outcomes.

The failure to deconstruct the colonial state and construct a new state which reflects the aspirations of the citizens has ramifications on social and political conflicts. This creates push and 'pull' factors which exert pressure on elections as an instrument of managing political conflicts. Unequal resource distribution and the gaping disparity between the elite and the poor create a volatile environment susceptible to violence, especially among those in absolute poverty.

Elections become a high stakes game in a highly politicized environment which if not managed develops into conflict. In analyzing the African State, Chazan et al note that. Political competition was curtailed, dominant political parties were fortified, administrative structures were expanded, and decision making was heavily centralized around the head of state and his cohorts. Przeworski has

remarked that "without an effective state, there can be no democracy or market. In a nutshell the state is subordinated to small elite heavily dependent on rent-seeking, laden with illegitimacy and surrounded by poverty and inequality.

As a result, politics has become a struggle between individual and group identity. Olukoshi and Laakso argue that the conflicts afflicting the state in Africa are as a result of the crisis of individual and group identity. According to Ake as the phenomenon of mutual fear pulled apart, the groups placed more value on capturing political power for themselves and grew increasingly fearful about what seemed to them to be the grave consequences of losing to their rivals in the competition for control of state power. Thus the premium on political power raised higher and higher and with it the intensity of political competition and its domination by efficiency norms. There was a systematic subordination of the peripheral state institutions (including the electoral authority, judiciary and parliament) to the executive.

#### **Failure of State Policing Apparatus**

The state exists to provide amongst other things guarantee of security to the citizenry. In the Hobbesian state the subject surrenders the instruments of violence to the state on the terms that every other citizen will do the same. The security apparatus has been failing to take proactive-actions to stop the violence despite forewarning by their counterparts in the intelligence agencies. This calls to question the preparedness of the forces no doubt in the provision of security but also in providing security for special functions such as the election.

#### **The Use of Political Violence**

Violence was part and parcel of the colonial state, which used it to ensure control. The post-independence regimes used both the carrot and the stick to maintain power, with the use of violence mainly concentrated in the hands of the State, rather than outside of it. Opposition parties were subjected

to political harassment and those individuals who refused to support the status quo experienced various types of repression and even detention without trial. Rallies, by students and others, were dispersed by the paramilitary forces.

#### **CASE STUDY OF KIBERA IN NAIROBI**

Kibera is Situated in Nairobi's South-western Peri-urban zone approximately seven kilometers from the Nairobi City Centre. Kibera as a whole is an informal settlement comprising of ten villages covering approximately 250 hectares of land with an estimated population of about 500,000 people. That gives an average population density of 2000 people per hectare although some villages are more crowded than others. The villages are Lindi, Kisumu Ndogo, Soweto, Makina, Kianda, Mashimoni, Siranga, Gatuikira, Laini Saba and the newly founded Raila Village.

The village is densely populated with 95 per cent of the residents living below poverty line. Most of them are working in the industrial area of the city as casual laborers with an average income of Kshs.45.00 per day. The average family of 7 occupies a small room of 10 by 10 feet. There are no street lights. Most of the houses are made of mud and roofed with either corrugated iron sheets or covered with polythene paper.

#### **Political and Policy Aspects**

Politically, Kibera is a volatile area because of its history. Residents here are Nubian squatters who were settled on this land after the World War II by the British Colonial government. On the other hand, there are the "illegal" local squatters who have been squatting on the land as a means Survival. The official Kenya government position is that this is government land. Till recently, the land tenure policy regarding "illegal" settlements was that the government could not develop or invest on such land. The government has therefore not developed any infrastructure according to its policy on investment which states



that this can only be done on legally owned land. This scenario pits the tenants of Kibera against land lords who in most cases do not put up proper water and sanitation facilities in the area to match the rental housing units.

Urban interventions that address the issues of slums have been triggered only by external factors such as land development and speculation, health and safety threats to the wealth owned by external landlords, etc. This has therefore been mainly reactive rather than proactive to emerging problems in the area. Regardless of the case, there is an absence or failure of coordinating mechanisms that set the roles and jurisdiction in the area effectively.

Compounded by lack of a clear policy framework, there aren't effective government programs for meeting the needs of the residents of Kibera informal settlement. Poor water supply and sanitation are among the most serious infrastructure problem. Notable interventions have only been received from other agencies i.e. donors, development partners, NGOs. However, these efforts are still to a large extent uncoordinated.

### **Social Aspects**

Kibera residents consist of different ethnic communities as alluded to earlier on. Most of them have come to the city to look for sustainable livelihoods. In the event of social conflicts in the area, ethnic reactions tend to flare up especially between the original Nubian community on one hand and other local ethnic groups. Kenya's water resources crisis carries significant social risks. Growing demand over limited endowment of water generates competition and causes conflicts over water use within the village, posing considerable social risks to the poor and the communities without adequate representation in the location in decision making. In terms of family pattern, households consist of either single person with an average family size of 7. Most households are female-headed households as the

village is a big source of day domestic workers who work in the middle and high class estates around Nairobi.

The researcher carried out survey in the above mentioned area due to the fact that it is always very volatile in terms of violence. It also has a lot of youth who are idle. Above all, it is this area which was one of the epic center of 2007 post-election violence where youth even uprooted the railway line affecting the economy of not only Kenya, but also for East African countries.

### **Quantitative Data Analysis**

This section entails attempts to analyze the recorded data from the interviews and literature review plus the observed data in relation to the set objectives of the study. It analyses specifically, role of the youth in post-election violence, Socio-demographic, economic and political profiles of the youths involved in post-election violence, and key risk factors that exacerbated involvement of youths in post-election violence. It also analyses other factors that contributed to youth participation in violence.

### **RISK FACTORS FOR YOUTH VIOLENCE**

#### **Response on Peer Influence**

Peer influences among the youth are generally considered positive and important in shaping interpersonal relationships, but they can also have negative effects. Having delinquent friends, for instance, is associated with violence in young people. According to the survey carried out, the researcher found out that the respondents value their peers to the fact that during the post-election violence majority of the respondents got involved in groups. The respondents who participated in post-election violence in groups accounted for 75 per cent of all the responses while those who participated individually accounted for only 25 per cent. It was also found that most of the respondents spend their free time visiting their peers and this constituted of 820 responses which is clear the peers are of great importance to

the respondents and hence the high rate of working in groups during the post-election violence. Cross tabulation Table 1 Response on the form in which

respondents involved themselves in post-election violence against how they spend their free time.

**Table 1: Activities engaged in during free time**

		Indoors	Playing games	Visiting friends/ Peers	
		Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	Percentage
Form of involvement in the post-election violence	Groups	80	100	520	70.0
	Individually	0	0	300	30.0
Total		80	100	820	100.0

### Response on Community Factors

The communities in which young people live are an important influence on their families, the nature of their peer groups, and the way they may be exposed to situations that lead to violence. The findings of the survey revealed that majority of the peer groups are

formed on the basis of ethnic background and political grounds. The peer groups formed on ethnic backgrounds counted for 75.8 per cent of all the responses while those formed on political grounds accounted for 23 per cent of all the responses.

**Table 2: Response on basis of peer Groups formation**

	Frequency	Percentage
School/alumni	5	0.5
Age	7	0.7
Ethnic background	758	75.8
Political grounds	230	23.0
Total	1000	100.0

The survey findings also revealed that the respondents are patriotic to their community as well as to their political party and politician. This was evident by the fact that majority of the respondents were prompted to post-election violence because of

self-defense and that of their community and accounted for 46 per cent of all the responses followed by loyalty to political party and politician which accounted for 30.7 per cent.

**Table 3: Response on what prompted respondents to post-election violence**

	Frequency	Percentage
Self-defense and that of the community	460	46.0
Loyalty to political party and politician	307	30.7
Forced into	19	1.9
Social and political frustration	214	21.4
Total	1000	100.0

**Response on Demographic and Social changes**

Rapid demographic growth and accelerating urbanization together created conditions, including unemployment and grossly inadequate housing. which in turn led to extreme frustration, anger and pent-up tensions among youths. Young people, as a result, were more likely to turn to petty crime and violence, particularly under the influence of peers.

The survey findings revealed that majority of the respondents were born in Kibera which is a slum and this accounted for 70.1 per cent of all the responses but it was also revealed that there were emigrants from other different places and this accounted for 29.9 per cent of the total responses.

**Table 4: Response on place of birth**

	Frequency	Percentage
Kibera	701	70.1
Elsewhere	299	29.9
Total	1000	100.0

It was also revealed that majority of the youths in the area of survey are unemployed and this mostly leads to frustration, anger and pent-up tensions among themselves and as a result most of them are likely to turn to petty crime and violence particularly under

the influence of peers. From the findings of the survey, 76.2 per cent of the respondents were unemployed and 84 per cent of their friends were also unemployed.

**Table 5: Response on employment status of the respondents against their friends**

Employment status of friends					
		Unemployed	Permanently employed	Casual laborer	Percentage
		Frequency	Frequency	Frequency	
Employment status of the respondents	Yes	238	0	0	23.8
	No	602	5	155	76.2
Total		840	5	155	100.0

**Response on Cultural Influences**

Culture, which is reflected in the inherited norms and values of society, helps determine how people respond to a changing environment. Cultural factors can affect the amount of violence in a society for instance, by endorsing violence as a normal method to resolve conflicts and by teaching young people to adopt norms and values that support violent behavior. According to the survey carried out, the researcher found all the respondents had common

communal grievances against other communities which were either economic or political. The economical grievances were based on the fact that economical resources are unfairly distributed among the different communities and this accounted for 87 per cent of all the responses. The political grievances concern the belief the only people from certain communities can rule over the country and this accounted for 13 per cent of all the responses.

**Table 6: Response on common communal grievances**

	Frequency	Percentage
Economical	870	87.0
Political	130	13.0
Total	1000	100.0

The survey also revealed that other factors that prompted majority of the respondents to engage in the post-election violence was tribal grudges and this accounted for 90 per cent of all the responses which

is likely to be as a result of the common communal grievances. The other factor that was also revealed was the delay of the electoral process and this accounted for only 10 per cent of all the responses.

**Table 7: Responses on other factors that prompted respondent to engage in the post-election violence**

	Frequency	Percentage
Tribal grudges	900	90.0
Delay of the electoral process	100	10.0
Total	1000	100.0

## FINDINGS

### Political and Electoral Violence in Kenya

Kenya is a country undergoing a political transition reflected in its constitutional reform process. Consequently, violence and the issues it impacts on have not remained static, and therefore it is necessary to assess how manifestations of violence relate to existing and emerging factors, such as the political, social and economic environment, the legal and regulatory infrastructure and capacity, and other issues of institutional transformation.

The term "political and electoral violence in Kenya" relates to a myriad of conflicts, distinct in their manifestations, yet woven together by common themes and violations. The situation is compounded by difficult socio-economic conditions, which have continued to worsen over the even years resulting in increased unemployment. Increases in the cost of living have left desperate and insecure. Youth and other marginalized groups have been particularly characterized other social and economic disputes, including evictions and border-conflicts. Although interpretations of causes and responsibilities for this violence remain contested, the nature of much of this

violence is directly attributed to political and electoral Violence, which, for the most part, is deeply interrelated.

Although not unique to the multi-party context, violence has become a common nature in the conduct of elections in Kenya. Both the 1992 and 1997 general elections were held against a backdrop of acute violence and intimidation in many parts of the country. The parliamentary by- elections in 2001 for the constituencies of Kilome and Taita-Taveta were also extremely violent. It has been estimated that between 1992 and 2002, at least 2,000 people have been killed and 400,000 displaced in politically motivated violence targeting ethnic groups perceived to support the opposition<sup>1</sup>.

Political violence occurs in various contexts, both between and within political party formations. In a number of areas, the conflict is fueled by ethnic and clan rivalries, and other forms of internal conflict. The general security situation has also worsened as a result of instability and insurgencies in several neighbouring countries, and Kenya's porous borders, which have resulted in an increase in the availability of small firearms. The situation is further

compounded by the involvement of vigilante and militia groups that are implicated in a range of criminal actions, from intimidation and murder to organized stock theft. Many of these groups are little more than guns to hire, and have been utilized by politicians from various political groups for offensive as well as defensive purposes.

As the primary responsible to crime prevention, and criminal investigations, the role of police in relation to political and electoral violence is pivotal. The Kenya Police, which has primary responsibility for internal security, has a force of only 30,000, is clearly ill-equipped and struggles to deal with its constitutional and other legal obligations to maintain security conditions for a free and fair election. Its image is further weakened by allegations of incompetence and complicity, and concerns regarding political partiality and alleged bias in favor of those in power.

#### **Risk Factors for Youth Violence**

In some countries the rapid growth of youth populations, combined with high levels of unemployment and rapid and uncontrolled urbanization, are seen by many observers to be correlated with violence. The likelihood of a violent onset is believed to be particularly acute in contexts where a large population of young people is coming of age in the face of unstable governments, insecurity and development challenges. In such circumstances youth are more likely to band together in search of solutions and in some cases resort to violent means.

A myriad of elements interacts determining the involvement of young people as either perpetrators or victims of armed violence. These include social and economic deprivation and marginalization, lack of educational opportunities and demographic factors such as age and gender. In addition, important societal factors at the macro-level can exacerbate the involvement of young people in violence. These include cultural norms that support violence as an acceptable means of resolving conflicts, as well as

norms that entrench male dominance and well as those that support excessive use of force by police against citizens. Age and gender are some of the most important biological risk factors in the perpetration of armed violence and being a victim of armed violence: young men between the age of 15 and 29 years are most at risk of being killed with a firearm or using a gun to kill someone. In other instances, research shows that firearms have increased the lethality of domestic violence being witness to such violence or subjected to it or any other abuse or neglect, conditions young people for later involvement in acts of violence. These factors combined with poor social support structures, such as a lack of parental supervision increase the risk for other forms of violence. Other factors that exacerbate the link between violence and youth include the continent's daunting post-independence history of socio-political change, severe unrest, and poverty. Young people are seen as particularly vulnerable during periods of socio-political unrest and struggle.

#### **Family Influences**

Parental behavior and the family environment are central factors in the development of violent behavior in young people. Poor monitoring and supervision of children by parents and the use of harsh physical punishment to discipline children is strong predictors of violence during adolescence and adulthood. Parental aggression and harsh discipline at the age of 10 years strongly increased the risk of later convictions for violence up to 45 years of age. Several researchers followed up almost 900 children in New York, United States and found that harsh physical punishment by parents at the age of 8 years predicted not only arrests for violence up to the age of 30 years, but also for boys the severity of punishment of their own children and their own histories of spouse abuse. In a study of over 900 abused children and nearly 700 controls, showed that recorded physical abuse and neglect as a child predicted later arrests for violence - independently of

other predictors such as sex, ethnicity and age. Other studies have recorded similar findings. Other factors include: a large number of children in the family; and a low level of family cohesion. Family structure is also an important factor for aggression and violence. Findings from studies conducted in New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States show that children growing up in single-parent houses are at a greater risk for violence. In the study in Dunedin, New Zealand, living with a single parent at the age of 13 years predicted convictions for violence up to the age of 18 years. In general, low socioeconomic status of the family is associated with future violence. For example, in a national survey of young people in the United States, the prevalence of self-reported assault and robbery among youths from low socio-economic classes was about twice that among middle-class youths in Lima, Peru, low educational levels of the mother and high housing density were both found to be associated with youth violence.

### **Peer Influences**

Peer influences during adolescence are generally considered positive and important in shaping interpersonal relationships, but they can also have negative effects. Having delinquent friends for instance, is associated with violence in young people. The results of studies in developed countries are consistent with a study in Lima, Peru which found a correlation between violent behaviour and having friends who used drugs. A number of researchers concluded that delinquency caused peer bonding and, at the same time, that bonding with delinquent peers caused delinquency.

### **Community factors**

The communities in which young people live are an important influence on their families, the nature of their peer groups, and the way they may be exposed to situations that lead to violence.

Generally speaking, boys in urban areas are more likely to be involved in violent behavior than those living in rural areas within urban areas, those living in neighborhoods with high levels of crime are more likely to be involved in violent behavior than those living in other neighborhoods.

The degree of social integration within a community also affects rates of youth violence. Social capital is a concept that attempts to measure such community integration. It refers, roughly speaking, to the rules, norms, obligations, reciprocity and trust that exist in social relations and institutions. Some researchers studied five poor urban communities in Jamaica". They found a cyclical relationship between violence and the destruction of social capital. When community violence occurred, physical mobility in the particular locality was restricted, employment and educational opportunities were reduced, businesses were reluctant to invest in the area and local people were less likely to build new houses or repair or improve existing property. This reduction in social capital, the increased mistrust resulting from the destruction of infrastructure, amenities and opportunities, increased the likelihood of violent behavior, especially among young people. A study on the relation between social capital and crime rates in a wide range of counties during the period 1980-1994, found that the level of trust among community members had a strong effect on the incidence of violent crimes. It is evident that indices of social capital reflecting low social cohesion and high levels of interpersonal mistrust were linked with both higher homicide rates and greater economic inequality.

### **Demographic and Social Changes**

Rapid demographic changes in the youth population, modernization, emigration, urbanization and changing social policies have all been linked with an increase in youth violence. In countries that have suffered economic crises and ensuing structural adjustment policies, real wages have often declined

sharply, laws intended to protect labor have been weakened or discarded, and a substantial decline in basic infrastructure and social services has occurred. Poverty has become heavily concentrated in cities experiencing high population growth rates among young people in their demographic analysis of young people in Africa, researchers suggest that the tension between a rapidly swelling population of young people and a deteriorating infrastructure has resulted in school-based and student revolts. There was experienced a Similar situation of student strikes and rebellions in Senegal, where the population under 20 years of age doubled between 1970 and 1988, during a period of economic recession and the implementation of structural adjustment policies. In a survey of youths in Algeria, Likewise, it was found that rapid demographic growth and accelerating urbanization together created conditions, including unemployment and grossly inadequate housing which in turn led to extreme frustration, anger and pent-up tensions among youths. Young people, as a result, were more likely to turn to petty crime and violence, particularly under the influence of peers

#### **Income Inequality**

Research has shown links between economic growth and violence, and between income inequality and violence. Gartner, in 1990, in a study of 18 industrialized countries during the period 1950-1980, found that income inequality, as measured by the Gini Coefficient, had a significant and positive effect on the homicide rate. More researchers obtained the same results in an investigation of 45 industrialized and developing countries between 1965 and 1995. The rate of growth of the GDP was also significantly negatively associated with the homicide rate, but this effect was in many cases offset by rising levels of income inequality.

#### **Political Governance**

The quality of governance in a country, both in terms of the legal framework and the policies offering social protection, is an important determinant of violence.

In particular, the extent to which a society enforces its existing laws on violence, by arresting and prosecuting offenders can act as a deterrent against violence. It has been found, through studies, that the arrest rate for homicides had a significant negative effect on the homicide rate.

In all those studies, objective measures of governance (Such as arrest rates) were negatively correlated with crime rates, while subjective measures (such as confidence in the judiciary and the perceived quality of governance) were only weakly correlated with crime rates.

#### **Cultural Influences**

Culture which is reflected in the inherited norms and values of society helps determine how people respond to a changing environment. Cultural factors can affect the amount of violence in the society- for instance, by endorsing violence as a normal method to resolve conflicts and by teaching young people to adapt norms and values that support violent behavior.

#### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

This study recommended imparting appropriate values to the youth to shape their character as responsible citizens. The religious organizations should encourage the integration of cultural youth initiation programs with their own programs. Such initiatives would help moderate values and practices that glorify youth violence and that encourage them to look down upon members of particular sex or groups and cultural practices that are not their own. In the Same way, religious leaders at all levels should strive to moderate their utterances and to conduct themselves in ways that set good examples to the youth. The Religious institutions in collaboration with the ministries of Education Information should establish school programs that encourage debate and dialogue on critical national issues. This would help cultivate a culture of dialogue and debate among the young people and discourage use of violence as a

mechanism or resolving disputes. The ministry of Education should broaden the curriculum to encourage excellence in non- conventional fields of learning such as dance and gymnastics so as not to tie students to examination success in narrowly defined curricula. Such a curriculum should provide training and policy guidelines on inter-ethnic issues to teachers and other actors that have an important role in molding the youth. The ministries of Information, Education and justice should establish long-term civic education committees throughout the country that

are de-linked from General Elections to sensitized and educate all social groups and particularly the youth on responsible citizenship. These measures should help counteract the adverse effects of rumours, propaganda and misinformation especially during election campaigns. The media should moderate their negative portrayal of the youth since such repeated negative portrayal far from informing and warning the public about youth deviance could have the opposite effect of 'negative socialization.

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