Nature and Influence of Conflict in Kibera and Mathare Slums after 2007 Elections in Kenya

Dennis Nyongesa Wamalwa[1], Tecla Namachanja Wanjala[2], Sylia Jebet Tuikong[3]

[1]PhD. Peace and Conflict Studies, Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Kenya, MA Counselling Studies, The University of Manchester UK
[2]PhD. Peace and Conflict Studies, Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Kenya, MA in Conflict Transformation, Eastern Mennonite University, Harrisonburg Virginia, U. S. A
[3]PhD. Peace and Conflict Studies, Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Kenya, MA Counseling Psychology, Daystar University, Kenya

Abstract: **Conflict remains common place in the modern world with little clear distinction between war and peace. Even localized conflicts may have implications for world peace, stability and trade. Therefore, many nations who are not directly engaged in conflict are involved in efforts to monitor, manage and resolve actual or potential conflicts. If conflict is protracted, it will affect and transform a society and, therefore, a return to the situation prior to the conflict may not be possible or desirable. In many instances, these conflicts start because of the old regimes and the ways of dealing with its citizens by not representing them and oppressing or forcing them to a minimal standard of living. Conflicts can be classified in different ways depending on the nature and root cause as seen in the sub sections bellow. This paper Assess the nature and influence of the conflict in Kibera and Mathare divisions during the 2007/8 Post Election Violence. Methodologically, the study utilized secondary sources with major emphasis on primary data collection.**

Keywords: **Nature, Influence, Conflict, post -conflict reconstruction.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Immediately after the announcement of the Kenyan Presidential election results in 2007, violence erupted almost simultaneously in a number of different locations. In the multi-ethnic slums of Nairobi, ethnic-based fighting erupted and more than 100 persons were killed (Okombo, 2010). Studies conducted by Gillies (2009) and Okombo (2010) indicated that between 300,000 and 600,000 persons were displaced and 1,100 killed as a result of the post-election violence in Kenya. This arguably places the conflict in the "civil war" category. The conflict turned to be a political, economic, and humanitarian crisis, in part due to the ethnic and geographic diversity of the Kenyan politics.

Research carried out in Nairobi's Kenyan slums by Muchiri (2010) confirm the importance of service provision and employment in relation to safety. Criminal violence and protection provided through hybrid criminal organisations have become a way of life in the city's poor neighbourhoods. Vigilante groups mushroomed from the late 1990s in response to worsening security in poor neighbourhoods and ineffectual, corrupt, or altogether absent policing of these areas. Some groups were first instigated by community elders in search of safer streets but quickly developed into more complex organisations that extracted 'protection' money from small-business owners and slum dwellers.

In Nairobi's Kibera and Mathare neighbourhoods where riots or post-electoral violence occurred between 2007/2008 post - election violence tended to have had prevalent crime and gang activities rooted in poverty. To tackle urban violence, policies must address the vulnerability-violence nexus which lead to this study.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design:

The research design for this study was an exploratory comparative design that was undertaken within the study (2013-2015) period. This design was selected essentially in order to draw comparisons between two selected divisions. Further comparisons and interventions were undertaken by CSOs and State in both divisions and challenges experienced.

2.2 The Area of Study:

The study area was Kibera and Mathare divisions as it was considered the hot spots of 2007/8 post-election violence (PEV) in Kenya. Muchiri (2010) maintains that they are the largest, most populated and poorest slums in East and Central Africa at large. Kibera and Mathare divisions are characterized by lack of basic services and infrastructure such as adequate access to water, sanitation, garbage collection, roads and footpaths, storm drainage, electricity and public lighting. Housing units are semi-permanent in nature. Social amenities are inadequate, with facilities such as schools and hospitals unable to cope with the population demand.

2. 3 Study Population:

According to 2009 Kenya Population and Housing Census, Kibera and Mathare division had a population of 533, 484 (Kenya Bureau of Statistics, 2009). 453,175 (243,038 male) and (210 137 female) in Kibera occupying 232.488 area –sq km and 80,309 (44,098 male) and (36,620 female) in Mathare occupying 0.08837 area –sq km respectively.

The study specifically targeted the following population; 45,939 household heads, 442 Government officials, and 117 Civil Society Organizations. The Government officials targeted included; 41 Village elders, 10 chiefs, 10 Members of county assembly (MCAs), 377 security officers, 4 Assistant Sub-County Officers, and 2 Assistant County commissioners as shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Number of sampled categories of the government (state) officials

State	Kibera		Mathare	
	Total Population	Sample size	Total Population	Sample size
Village elders	27	27	14	14
Sub-County Commissioner (DC)	1	1	1	1
Assistant Sub county commissioner (DO)	2	2	2	2
Security officers	200	20	177	18
Chiefs	4	4	6	6
MCA's	4	4	6	6
TOTAL	**238**	**58**	**206**	**47**

Source (Records from Assistant County Commissioner's office, 2014)

On the other hand, the targeted population in relation to civil society included; 59 Non-Governmental Organizations staff, 36 Community Based Organizations (CBOs) staff, and 22 Faith-Based Organizations as shown in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Number of the population and sampled categories of the CSO's

	Kibera		Mathare	
	Total Population	Sample size	Total Population	Sample size
NGO's	33	10	26	8
CBO's	23	7	13	4
FBO's	13	4	9	3
Total	69	21	48	15

Source (Records from Assistant County Commissioner's office, 2014)

2.4 Sampling Strategy and Sample Size:

This research drew a sample following the recommendation of Kombo and Tromp (2006) of 10% to 30% to be a representative for a study population. While (Kalin 2006) recommends a 20% to 30% as ideal to represent a target population under study.

2.4.1 Sample Distribution of the Household heads:

The sample distribution of the household heads was categorized along the demarcated administrative units in the two divisions (Kibera and Mathare). A list of the entire house hold respondents per village was availed from the Deputy county commissioner's office out of which Mugenda and Mugenda (2006) proportional formula was applied to come up with an all-inclusive and representative household sample size.

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), the sample size from a larger population can be determined by the formula:

$$S = \frac{N(CV^2)}{CV^2 + (N-1)e^2}$$

Where:

S =   Desired sample

N = Population

CV = Coefficient of variation (set at 0.1)

e   = Tolerance at desired level of confidence (set at 0.5 at   95% confidence level.

Substitution of the constituents in the relationship is done as follows:

S = 45,939 (0.01)

= 459.39 (Household heads)

From the study population of 45,939 household heads for both divisions, with 18,127 households in Kibera and 27,812 household heads in Mathare, a sample size of 181 household heads respondents from Kibera and 278 households from Mathare was picked to get a grand total of 459 household heads respondents.

2.4.2 Sample Distribution of state officials:

The study employed various sampling techniques to get respondents in this category. Census procedure was used on Sub County Commissioners, Deputy Sub County Commissioners and Members of the county assembly. Purposive random sampling was used on obtaining the sample on village elders, and chiefs. In Kibera, the sample population frame entailed; 27 village elders, 4 chiefs, 200 security officers, 1 assistant sub county commissioner, 1 sub county commissioner, and 4 Members of County Assemblies (MCAs). On the other hand, the sample frame in Mathare included; 14 village elders, 4 chiefs, 177 security officers, 1 assistant sub county commissioner, 1 sub county commissioner, and 6 MCAs (table 2.1 above)

2.4.3 Sample Distribution of the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) Staff:

There are several Civil Society organizations operating in Kibera and Mathare divisions. Their numbers were obtained from the National Council of NGOs through the Ministry of Culture and Social Services. However, preference was given to CSOs that were directly involved in post conflict reconstruction (PCR) after 2007/8 PEV. Similarly, Mugenda and Mugenda's formula was applied for this category. In Kibera, sample population frame for civil society entailed; 10 NGOs, 7 CBOs and 4 FBOs while in Mathare were 8 NGOs, 4 CBOs, and 3 FBOs (see table 2.2 above).

2.5 Data Collection:

In this study triangulation method which is the use of different methods to obtain different but complementary data on the same topic was more appropriate. Primary data was collected through the questionnaires, interview schedules, FGD guides and observation check list. While secondary data was collected through document and content analysis guide to ascertain an in-depth analysis on the implementation of post conflict reconstruction programs. The combination of data collection tools was selected to enable the investigators have an in-depth understanding of the nature and extent of the problem.

2.6 Validity and Reliability of Data Instruments:

The researchers used content validity so as to ascertain whether the tools measured were stated in the objectives. This was done through cross checking with the supervisors. This meant that the researchers content validity measures contained all possible items that were used in measuring the concept. In this study, a valid measure of 0.5 was acceptable as in spearman correlation coefficient.

Researchers used test and retest techniques where the same data instrument was administered twice to the same respondents after a period of 2 weeks. After the research instrument had yielded the same results the researcher went ahead and administered them to the selected samples in Kibera and Mathare divisions.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data collected was gleaned, coded and analysed through Excel and SPSS and the results were as follows:-

3.1 Nature of the conflict:

House hold heads respondents from Kibera and Mathare informal settlements were asked if they experienced any kind of violence after 2007/2008 disputed election results. The findings were as shown in table 3.1

Analysis of the results showed that 398 (87%) of the house hold heads respondents in Kibera and Mathare experienced the 2007/2008 post-election violence.

Table 3.1 Respondents' experience of the conflict

Location	Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Mathare	Yes	241	86.7
	No	37	13.3
Kibera	Yes	157	88.4
	No	21	11.6

Source: Field Data (2015)

The 2007/2008 PEV affected most of the residents of Kibera and Mathare in one way or another. Some neighborhoods, families and individuals suffered multiple and repeated losses. Some respondents have been directly affected by the conflict as victims of violence, as bereaved relative and friends and as the people who have often had to cope with direct and indirect effects of conflict in families and communities.

A key informant from Kenya Red Cross Society had this to say;

In Mathare, most of the wounded patients we saw were victims of police violence brutality. Our teams witnessed severely wounded people with lacerated bodies and mutilated limbs or heads…(Key informant Medical Personnel Mathare)

On the other hand, negative ethnicity and politicians were blamed for the conflicts. From Table 3.2, 123 (44.5%) and 75 (41.4%) of the respondents from Mathare and Kibera respectively, perceived power (political) to be the main cause of the conflicts within their areas during the 2007/8 PEV. Additionally, 70 (25.1%) and 46 (25.2%) of the respondents from Mathare and Kibera respectively, considered the conflict to have been ethnically instigated. Remi Carrier, then field coordinator for MSF-Belgium during an interview on January 22nd 2008 had this to report;

During the violence, we sent counselors who work in our HIV program to provide psychological support to victims and families at Masaba Hospital. In total, our team treated 18 patients including 15 with bullet wounds. The ruling party sent security offices to opposition strongholds to counter the violence.

Similarly, there has been a strong feeling among certain ethnic groups of historical marginalization, arising from perceived inequities concerning the allocation of land and other national resources as well as access to public goods and services. This feeling has been employed by politicians to articulate grievances about historical injustices which resonate with certain sections of the public. This has created an underlying climate of tension and hate, and the potential for violence, waiting to be ignited and to explode, especially at election time (Waki Report, 2008). This information is summarized in Table 3.2

Table 3.2 Nature and Influence of Conflict in Kibera and Mathare as per the Household Heads

Location	Nature of conflict	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Mathare	Political (power)	123	44.5
	Physical assault	26	9.3
	Rent- land lord dispute	45	16.1
	Ethnic related	70	25.1
	Destruction of properties	14	5.2
Kibera	Political (power)	75	41.4
	Physical assault	21	11.1
	Rent- landlord dispute	27	15.6
	Ethnic related	46	25.2
	Destruction of properties	12	6.7

Source: (Field data, 2015)

From the interview schedules, most of the respondents both from the state and civil society considered the nature of conflict to be political which led to physical assaults. They perceived that the political diversities and the struggle for power played a key role in the fueling of the conflict. One of the Government officials in Mathare responded that;

The issue of land and political power sharing needs to be addressed as it creates the seeds of hatred among the communities living around this area. Every election year in this area, violence erupts and the people who don't have land fight those who own parcels of land. In other incidences, the landlords force the tenants that are not affiliated to their party out of their houses. This makes it hard to curb this act within these ever growing slum dwellings (Chief Mathare, 2015).

According to the KPTJ Report (2010), the above dynamics, tribal loyalties and the ethnic mix of politics in the city's poor neighborhoods strongly contributed to the pattern of violence that Nairobi witnessed. Two of NGOs running free medical facilities both in Mathare and Kibera considered the violence to have been politically and ethnically motivated as it erupted after the disputed elections results.

3.2 Influence of conflict:

Most of the key informants from Government officials and Civil Society were of the view that lack of employment among the youths in both slums was the major factor which negatively influenced young people to engage in violence as shown in Table 3.3. The study concurred with these findings mainly because the youth became vulnerable and accepted to engage in any activity that could provide them with a means of livelihood through incitement by politicians. Mushrooming of criminal gangs and militias formed by youth around electioneering period in many cases shaped the political and security dynamics even as politicians sought support and sympathy from such groups. Political parties and individual politicians manipulated the youth to provide them with security around the electioneering period. These militias were used to fend off rivals through fierce fighting and continued to engage in other exploitative ventures as was found out by (Hansen, 2009).

Yieke (2008) concurs with these findings by arguing that politics in Kenya is still primarily organized around ethnic interests where politicians seek political office on the "Best defenders" platform of their ethnic communities. These negative aspects politics have been a source of conflicts in the Kenyan politics which have influenced investment in terms of land tenure.

Table 3.3 Civil Society staff and Government staff views on the influence of conflict

Item	Village elders		FBO's		Chiefs		NGOs		Overall	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1.	21	52.5	15	55.6	6	85.8	3	50.0	71	82.7
2.	17	42.5	17	70.0	4	67.5	4	67.7	75	81.2
3.	18	45	16	59.3	7	92.6	3	50.0	74	75.3
4.	23	57.5	18	66.7	8	97.8	2	33.3	79	79.7

Key:-

1. Ethnicity

2. Political violence

3. Land disputes

4. Unemployement

Results from Table 3.3 showed that most of the respondents along the four categories were of the opinion that ethnicity, political violence, land disputes and unemployment, were the major influences of conflict in Mathare and Kibera slums. Village elders and chiefs 23 (57.5%) and 8 (97.8%) ranked unemployment respectively as a major influence of the conflict. From the sampled FBO's and NGO's, 17 (70.0%) and 4 (67.7%) ranked political violence as the primary influence of the conflict. This was attributed to the fact that the voting patterns in Kenya was along the tribal lines and politicians took an ethnic angle which resulted in hatred and distrust among the communities living together as was observed by Markussen (2011). .

The findings revealed that ethnic tension developed especially around the structure of access to economic opportunities and redistribution of some of the land formerly owned by the white settlers. This agrees with Muchiri (2010) who argues that politicization of ethnicity often takes place in a situation characterized by an inequitable structure of access. At the center of this scenario are the elites who, feeling excluded or threatened with exclusion, begin to invoke ethnic ideology in the hope of establishing a "reliable" base of support to fight what is purely personal and/or elite interests.

The 74 year old respondent from Kibera had this to share:

> After the announcement of the elections results, I was busy attending to my small business at Olympic stage in Kibera. I saw a group coming chanting "No ODM No Peace!!!! No ODM No Peace!!! PNU Must Go!!! PNU Must Go!!!.." and charging towards my direction. "Here he is .. they have stolen our votes .. they must leave Kibera or die". I was slapped I saw stars they pulled out match box and pore petrol both in front and back of my T- shirt. While all that was happening, I called God in my language (*Ngai Ngai wa fafa*) "My God!! My God!!". I cursed the one who was with the spear; you!! He looked direct in my eyes with astonishment.. "your children will die by the same sword" I shouted at him just before he lit the match box' I had gray beards so the Man got scared of the curse and ran off. I jumped on one who looked the strongest we fell on the ground together and the rest took to their heels. The fire never touched me I took off though I was bleeding. This was the Ethnic group that was crucifying me for having cast the vote to the ruling party (FGD 3 Village Elder from Kibera, 2014).

The divisiveness of ethnic cleavages in Kenya is in large part the result of a history of perceived ethnic favoritism by Kenyan leaders. A second factor behind ethnicity divisions is the party system, which has historically reflected and reinforced ethnic cleavages.

For a long time, the Constitution of Kenya was based on its colonial-era form where the president was awarded with extensive powers. Human Rights Watch (2008) suggests that this increases the risks of a winner-takes-all calculus. This has led the public to believe that a person from their own ethnic group must be in power, both to secure benefits and to provide a defensive strategy to keep other ethnic groups from taking jobs, land, and entitlements. This has led both politicians and the public to see acquisition of presidential power as a zero sum game in which losing is seen as hugely costly and unaccepted (Wolf, 2006).

One of the key informants mentioned that;

> The informality and lack of security of tenure has been used by politicians to entrench themselves in power, thereby generating conflicts and violence. Politicians use squatters to protect illegally- allocated public land. 'Clientele' relationships are rife between politicians and the squatters, where depending on the period, the politicians would either lead in demanding that the squatters be granted tenure security, and fight against evictions, or even plan land invasions, in exchange for votes (Member of the County Assembly from Mathare 2014).

Disputes over land ownership are historically related to colonial and post-independent allocation of land and the colonial government forceful resettlement of individuals from certain ethnic groups into different areas. Such disputes remain unsolved, and some political leaders escalate land-related tensions by making reference to ethnicity. By doing so, the problem acquires potential for inter-community conflict, as has indeed been a characteristic of political violence

throughout Kenya's history). Despite several attempts of reforms, land grievances dating back to the colonial era continue to constitute a major obstacle to peaceful co-existence in Kenya ((Aapenguo, 2010).

Politicized land distributions schemes by post-independence governments have been a lasting source of inter group resentment. This has led to sidelining of younger generation in leadership positions, thus giving political traction to youth militias, separatists' movements, and criminal gangs organized along ethnic lines. In agreement with the findings, a study conducted by Hansen (2009) found out that, land issues, unequal distribution of resources are the critical factors that have led to violence in the slums.

The dual manifestation of the land problem in Nairobi is in evictions and insecurity of tenure. The challenges range from persons with vested interests in public and private land, which they use illegally to their socio - economic advantage. In terms of social reproduction, there are perpetual squatters on public land whose tenure has not been secured. This has led to cases where individuals have squatted on public land for more than a century without being able to secure their tenure, as is the case with the Nubian population in the Kibera area. In some settlements, people have squatted for over 50 years, without their tenure being recognized. The situation is the same in most informal settlements in the city, making it difficult for either the state or the residents to improve these areas and make them livable (Mwangiru, 1998).

IV. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the findings, it was concluded that the conflict that was experienced during and after 2007/2008 PEV was political and ethnic in nature. Politicians were on the forefront in inciting their supporters to turn against their opponents. In Kibera and Mathare divisions, some neighborhoods, families and individuals suffered multiple and repeated losses. From the study, the politicians, electoral commission, and ethnicity were the primary agents to be blamed for the 2007/2008 post-election violence.

The study recommends that for the country to attain a lasting culture of peaceful co-existence, the government and civil society need to take a wider look at national politics. The government should step up efforts to initiate and to enforce innovative policies that will guard its citizens against political impunity. It is only through justice and a strict adherence to democratic ideals and practices that inter-ethnic peace can be guaranteed not only in the slums of Nairobi but the entire country.

REFERENCES

[1] Aapenguo. C.M. (2010). *Misinterpreting Ethnic Conflicts in Africa*. Africa Center for Strategic Studies, University Press

[2] Gillies, D. (2009). *Elections in Dangerous Places: Democracy and the Paradoxes of Peace building*. Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation.

[3] Hansen, T. (2009). "Political Violence in Kenya: A study of Causes, Responses and a Framework for Discussing Preventive Action" *ISS Paper* 205.

[4] Human Rights Watch 2008 Report. *All the Men Have Gone: War Crimes in Kenya's Mt. Elgon District*. New York: HRW.

[5] Kalin, W. (2006)."The future of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement." Forced Migration Review. Brookings-Bern Special Issue: 5-7.

[6] Kenya Bureau of Statistics (2009). Accessed from office of the Nairobi Sub County Commissioners, 2014.

[7] KPTJ Report (2010). "The Post-Election Violence in Kenya: Seeking Justice for Victims" (Unpublished).

[8] Kombo D. K. & Tromp, D. L. A. (2006). *Proposal and thesis writing*. Nairobi: Paulines publications Africa.

[9] Markussen, T. (2011). *When do ethnic lead to violence?* Evidence from the 2007 elections in Kenya.Copenhagen, Denmark: University of Copenhagen.

[10] Muchiri Karanja, (3 September 2010). "Myth shattered: Kibera numbers fail to add up". Daily Nation 22-21.

[11] HYPERLINK "http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daily_Nation" \o "Daily Nation" Daily Nation, pp 22-21.

[12] Mugenda, O. & Mugenda, A. (2006). *Research Methods, Quantitative and Qualitative Approaches*. Nairobi: ACTS Press.

[13] Mwagiru,M.(1998) *Understanding Conflict and its Management: Some Kenyan Perspectives,* CCR-WLEA series no.2

[14] Okombo, O. (2010). *Balaa Mitaani; The Challenge of Mending Ethnic Relations in the Nairobi Slums.* Fredrch Elbert Stiftung (FES): Nairobi- Kenya.

[15] Waki Report (2008). *A Report Compiled by the Commission of Inquiry into the 2007 Post Election Violence.* Government Printer, Nairobi.

[16] Wolf. S., (2006). *Ethnic Conflicts a Global Perspective*. Oxford University Press: Great Calderon Street Oxford.

[17] Yieke, F.A. (2008). *The Discursive Construction of Ethnicity: The Case of the 2007 Kenyan General Election*. Egerton University, Kenya.