

TANGAZA COLLEGE

CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EASTERN AFRICA

GODFREY OKOTH ONYANGO, MI

POLITICAL VIOLENCE

**Analysis of the related Psychosocial Factors as the basis for
Pastoral Response to the Social Problem
Application to 2007/2008 Kenya's Post Election Violence**

Supervisor

Rev. Fr. Hubert Pinto, SDB

A Long Essay submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Bachelor of Arts in Theology

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to all soul searching Kenyan youths, the families of all those who lost their loved ones in Kenya's Post Election Violence and in memory of all those who died due to that violence which could have otherwise been avoided.

EPIGRAPH

Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show his works by a good life in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart do not boast and be false to the truth. Wisdom of this kind doesn't come down from above but is earthly, unspiritual and demoniac. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every foul practice. But the wisdom from above is first of all pure, then peaceable, gentle, compliant, full of mercy and good fruits without inconstancy or insincerity and the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace for those who cultivate peace.

James. 3: 13-18

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Finally, I bow in great humility to appreciate all those who contributed towards the successful production of this essay.

May God Bless always

STUDENTS DECLARATION


I the undersigned declare that this essay is my original work achieved through my personal reading, scientific research method and critical reflection. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of Bachelor of Arts in Theology. It has never been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit. All sources have been cited in full and acknowledged.

Signed: _____ 

Name of Student: G O O F R E Y O K O T H O N Y A N G O

Date: 17 / 11 / 2009

This long Essay has been submitted for examination with my personal approval as the College Supervisor.

Signed: _____ 

Name of Supervisor: F R . H U B E R T P I N T O

Date: 17 / 11 / 2009

ABBREVIATIONS

al	<i>alli</i> ; Other Persons
Cf.	Confer
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIPEV	Commission of Inquiry into Post Election Violence
Deut.	Deuteronomy
ECK	Electoral Commission of Kenya
Ed.	Edited by
e.g.	<i>Exempli gratia</i> ; For example
Ex.	Exodus
Gen.	Genesis
i.e.	<i>Id est</i> .; That is
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IPPG	Inter Party Parliamentary Group
KADU	Kenya African Democratic Union
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KICC	Kenyatta International Conference Center
Lk.	Luke
MP	Member of Parliament
ODM	Orange Democratic Party
ODM-K	Orange Democratic Party-Kenya
PNU	Party of National Unity
SLDF	Sabaot Lands Defence Force
TV	Television
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

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1.0: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

On 31st December 2009 at about 5 pm, the family of *Mzee* Joseph Mwangi Macharia after having a family get together was visited by a group of about 40 young people among them his neighbours. They said they wanted 4 heads from his house- his and his four sons'. As he pleaded for mercy one of them struck his son on the chest with a club and another shot him with an arrow. Another son was pierced with a spear and his throat cut. His daughter and her child were pulled out from their hiding and their throats were slit. So was his wife's throat. *Mzee* Macharia escaped into a nearby bush and watched as his house was set on fire...¹ This testimony extracted from the Waki report shows how the contemporary human being has become so heartless and how violent atrocities against fellow human beings have become normal operations of human life such that human life is taken just for granted.

Politically oriented violence has led and is leading to widespread deaths in a number of African countries notable examples being Chad, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Ivory Coast, Democratic Republic of Congo, Zimbabwe and Kenya. Violence has become too common in Africa that it is almost uncommon for a political process to pass without noting any kind of violence associated with it.

This phenomenon is a clear indication that there is a serious problem in our society which is acting as the motivating factor for this violence. It is this perceived abnormality that has motivated the researcher to carry out an in depth research into the social problem of political violence particularly in Kenya of today.

¹ Cf. Government of Kenya, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Post Election Violence*. from http://www.communication.go.ke/Documents/CIPEV_FINAL_REPORT.pdf, 06/11/2009, 45

1.0.1. Problem Statement

Political violence gives rise to deadly consequences like death, loss of property, internal displacements and psychological trauma especially to innocent young children. According to basic ethics there are laws which guide social behaviour among humans by prescribing what should be done and proscribing what shouldn't be done.

First is the divine law. This is the law given to humanity by God. For instance we have the 10 commandments that were given to Moses by God on Mount Sinai to be handed on to the Israelites, when they forgot about God (Ex. 20: 1 -17). The fifth of these 10 laws categorically proscribes killing.

Secondly we have the natural law which is the naturally imprinted law in the conscience of everybody and it states what a human being can rightly do and what he or she cannot do. Finally we have the particular civil laws, norms, traditional taboos and various moral values stipulated by various communities. These laws as well are perceived by those who know them that they are against any kind of violent action.

All this knowledge concerning moral and pro social acts are proofs that violence and particularly political violence is expected to be perceived by people as morally wrong given its already stated devastating effects. However this seems not to be the situation with some people in the society of today. Some people seem to be committing various anti social and evil acts as if they were just normal moral acts. The experiences of political violence that we undergo in our society today are an indication of a serious problem in our society.

Furthermore, the well to do in our society mainly politicians and business people have grabbed public resources for themselves yet the vast majority of people are living in

abject poverty. For instance some have acquired large tracts of land yet many families sleep outside in the cold. Others live on people's lands as squatters working for the land owners and being paid very little. They acquire large sums of public money in well coordinated means of corruption yet people are starving to death in various parts of the country due to poverty. We live in a country where thugs can raid ones house anytime of the day or night, kill and take all ones valuables without minding about the welfare of the victim. People seem to have become so numb to social evils that they no longer care or empathize with the victims of their actions.

These instances show that our society is undergoing a certain crisis to the point that people can no longer regard the value of divine law, natural law and civil law and they operate as if morality is relative. In this situation we need to ask ourselves questions: Do violent people do what they do with a clear conscience on whether their acts are right or wrong? If their consciences are clear then what has gone so wrong in our society today that people knowingly commit evil acts like murder as if they were just normal moral acts? Has politically instigated violence become a naturally acceptable part of us that elections always have to be accompanied by violence?

These questions imply that the problem our society is facing today in relation to violence is that political violence is not being addressed in its right aspects. Seemingly the question being widely addressed is, "How can we stop violent people from being violent?" This question has downplayed the reasons why violent people do what they do. When somebody kills, the society with her laws prefers to take the person to the court to be judged then charged if found guilty. People rarely seek to know the psychological and sociological factors surrounding the person's act of killing. Establishing the reasons why

people engage in violent behaviour will be the best possible means of understanding such people so that they can be reintegrated into the society.

The question that this essay seeks to answer is, “Why do violent people act violently regardless of knowing that what they do is morally wrong?” This is why the researcher has picked on the psychosocial perspectives of violence in an attempt to explain why violence, though known to be evil, is so widespread in Africa today, especially during an electoral process. Being a Kenyan and having experienced first hand how devastating the effects of political violence can be, the researcher has chosen to apply these psychosocial factors related to violence to 2007/2008 Kenya’s Post Election violence in order to develop a more practical understanding of “why violence,” an understanding that can be used by Kenyans to prevent subsequent cases of violence.

1.0.2. Aim

To build peace, understanding and true reconciliation among the Kenyan people and Africa as a whole through establishing the psychosocial perspectives of political violence in order to make all people to understand why some people behave violently so that in so doing, all perpetrators of this social evil can find help, understanding and appreciation from the members of the society for the sake of better social co-existence.

1.0.3. Objectives of the search

- Identify the influence of and interplay between psychology, society and biology in an individual’s violent behaviour.

- Make people understand the violent individual in the context of his/her psychological, sociological and biological predispositions so that people can respond appropriately to this behaviour by addressing the right issues rightly.
- Suggest a pastoral response mechanism that can be employed by the Kenyan society to curb the subsequent cases of political violence basing on the findings of the psychosocial approach to political violence.
- Enhance better social integration especially in Kenya so that the Kenyan people can attain true reconciliation based on understanding human behaviour.

1.0.4. Research Hypotheses

The following shall be our working hypotheses:

- Violence is morally and ethically unacceptable yet it is a natural occurrence in the life of a human person.
- The environment in which a person is brought up often determines his/her proximity towards violent behaviour.
- Frustration at various levels in social living is the major cause of politically oriented violence and this renders politically oriented violence avoidable.
- Violence can be reduced by reviewing the history of ones upbringing and looking at the various social stressors.

1.0.5. Justification

The extent of this problem of political violence is evident both in the various cases in Africa where it has been experienced and in the effects it has caused to people.

Cases like the 1994 Rwandan genocide where thousands of moderate Hutus were killed by the majority Tutsis leave us without an option but to investigate the reasons why people engaged in such violent atrocities. In Zimbabwe, Several people have died in a violence that erupted after president Robert Mugabe was controversially declared winner of the 2008 presidential elections. In Kenya, over a thousand people died and property worth billions of shillings lost after violence broke out when President Mwai Kibaki was declared winner of the 2007 general elections amidst alleged election anomalies.

Violence has had a negative impact on the countries that have fallen victims. For instance there have been numerous deaths of innocent people, destruction of property, homelessness, starvation, a high rate of inflation, intercommunity hatred, negative ethnicity and a blow to democracy.

The people seem to be aware of these negative impacts of violence and due to this awareness one would expect that the society would record low rates of violence. This is not the case. The governments are using force to make people comply with the law but still the violence escalates. The international community is putting sanctions on certain countries and even travel bans on certain leaders yet these leaders seem not to care.

This numbness to negative things in the society justifies the proposal that we really need a new approach supposedly to complement the existing one. We should not continue sticking to only the moralistic way in which violence has been addressed but we ought to as well look into the explanations why people engage in violence. We ought to study the violent individual and the society in which he/she lives and relate this with his/her violent tendencies. Therefore to complement the moral outlook to violence, the researcher is proposing that violence should as well be looked at from its psychological,

sociological and even biological perspectives because there could be other compelling factors either past or present that push people to violence.

The significance of this approach is that from the point of view of human behaviour analyzed within the social context, it would help to establish why violent people engage in violence; not how we can act against violent individuals.

First, the response to this concern of “why violence” would help people to be slow in making judgments on the actions of these perpetrators of violence and be able to look into the appropriate and beneficial means of helping the violent individual to choose non-violence. If there are social or psychological factors in relation to their tendencies then the society will know that they need help and provide the appropriate help to them so that they are reintegrated in the society without condemnation.

Secondly, it would help the violent individual himself to confront his behaviour through being aware of the possible causes of his behaviour and evaluating the rationality and irrationality of these causes. This would enhance an internal self initiated transformation which in most cases is more genuine. Through understanding ones individual history and social situation, people can change their mentality towards violence and embrace the spirit of justice, true reconciliation and peace.

1.0.6. Research methods

The researcher intends to use already written material especially books, journals, magazines, internet materials and any other relevant written material. Reports on the findings of the different researches carried out by of different bodies regarding the Post Election Violence will be made use of. The main ones will be the report of the

commission of inquiry into the post election violence by Judge Philip Waki, the report by PeaceNet Kenya and the report by the Kenya Thabiti Taskforce 2008.

In order to complement the already existing literature, the researcher intends to seek the opinions of some selected individuals from some major towns in Kenya concerning this subject matter. This will be done through the means of interviews and questionnaire. Some of the findings will be presented as appendices which will appear towards the last section of this essay. The researcher will also depend on his own personal experience of the violence that took place in Kenya after 2007 elections.

It is worthy to note that this research will largely depend on already written literature. The main aim is to give a psychosocial analysis of the violence in Kenya as well as giving recommendations for future means of avoiding the violence using Social Psychology as our tool of analysis.

The foregoing section has given us a background of the problem we intend to tackle and how we intend to tackle it in this essay. The rest of the essay is divided into three Chapters. Chapter 1 gives a theoretical exposition of the concept of violence and the analysis will be given from a biological, sociological and psychological dimension. Chapter 2 will be a practical application of these theories to the Kenyan situation using the 2007/2008 Post Election Violence as our reference point. Finally Chapter 3 will give the theological reflections on violence, interventions/recommendations and the concluding remarks.

CHAPTER 1

1.1. Definition of terms

1.1.1. Violence

“Violence can be defined as an intentional behavior aimed at causing either physical or psychological pain or harm to an individual.”² This definition gives violence 4 major characteristics i.e. a violent act is an intentional act, it aims at causing harm or pain to the victim, the action must be physical or verbal and finally it might succeed in its goal or not. We can use the example of the raid illustrated in the introduction to illustrate our definition. The raid was a violent act since the raiders intended to go and cause harm either physically or just emotionally because they were armed. Their action turned to be a physical act that caused pain and harm to these family members since they killed people and left the father in trauma. Finally the act succeeded since they killed. On the other hand it wouldn't have succeeded if all would have escaped as the father did.

Violent acts can be mainly classified as hostile and instrumental. “Hostile violence is an act stemming from anger and aimed at inflicting pain or causing injury.”³ For instance beating a child who has thrown a stone at window louvers and broken them can be an act of hostile violence. “Instrumental violence involves actions which intend to hurt other people but the hurting occurs as a means to some other goals other than

² Cf. E. ARONSON – T. D. WILSON, – R. M. AKERT, *Social Psychology*, 4th ed., 417

³ Cf. E. ARONSON – T. D. WILSON, – R. M. AKERT, *Social Psychology*, 4th ed., 417

causing pain.”⁴ An example is punishment in the prisons which is not based on anger but aimed at rectifying behaviour.

Hostile and instrumental violence can be symbolic or sanctioned. “Symbolic aggression is one that doesn’t inflict physical harm but causes harm verbally”⁵ e.g. gossip and character assassination. “Sanctioned aggression is an aggressive act that occurs within a given situation.”⁶ An example is a case where somebody retaliates for self defense as it happens with soldiers at war.

1.1.2. Political Violence

This is an example of violence. “Political violence roughly defined is a considerable or destroying use of force against persons or things, a use of force prohibited by law, directed to a change in the policies, personnel or system of government and hence also directed to changes in the existence of individuals in the society and perhaps other societies.”⁷

This definition implies that first, political violence is unethical since it is prohibited by law. It qualifies among violent acts since it is a physical act whose immediate aim is to change governance policies, people or system of government and in the process it causes harm and pain to victims. Political violence is in most cases directed towards members who are of a different political opinion as perceived by the aggressor.

⁴ Cf. E. ARONSON - T. D. WILSON, – R. M. AKERT, *Social Psychology*, 4th ed., 417

⁵ Cf. I. A. HOROWITZ, – K. S. BORDENS, *Social Psychology*, 493

⁶ Cf. I. A. HOROWITZ, – K. S. BORDENS, *Social Psychology*, 493

⁷ Cf. H. TED, *Political Violence*, 9

1.1.3. Social Problem

“A social problem is defined as a condition affecting a significant number of people in ways considered undesirable about which it is felt something can be done through collective social action.”⁸ This definition raises 4 conditions that qualify an issue to be termed a social problem. First the condition has to be attracting the attention of a good number of people and they can be seen talking and even write about it. Secondly, a social problem is defined on the basis of social values and if it is believed by a significant number of people to be contradicting social values and its effects are undesirable then it is a problem. Thirdly, problems only qualify to be so if they have solutions. If nothing can be done about a situation then it is just to be put up with. Therefore social problems must be those with solutions. Finally this solution must be contemplated and implemented by the society not individual (Collective social action).

With this description, we can conclude that political violence is a social problem especially in Kenya since a good number of people e.g. the civil society, human rights groups, churches and even international community talk about it and condemn it as evil. Various tribunals and commissions are being formed to address it since people believe that something can be done about it. Infact this is why the researcher also engages in this research because he believes that the society can intervene in the cases of political violence by considering its psychosocial perspectives.

1.1.4: Psychosocial

This is a compound word originating from the words psychology and sociology. “Psychology is the scientific study of behaviour with particular concern with mental

⁸ Cf. P. B. HORTON, - al. *The Sociology of Social Problems*, 2

events as revealed through behaviour including introspection.”⁹ Psychology therefore deals with mental and emotional processes of an individual e.g. the processes of fear, doubt, desire, questioning and anxiety among others. Sociology is defined as “the systematic study of the functioning, organization, development and types of human societies.”¹⁰ Sociology deals with interaction of individuals within the society.

The society is made up of individuals who perceive the social factors differently given everyone’s individual history both genetic and environmental. Therefore both the individual and the society where he or she exists are necessary when analyzing human behaviour. Therefore the word ‘psychosocial’ is a product of merging the psychological and sociological approaches in analyzing human behaviour

Psychosocial approach mentioned here is intended to connote “an attempt to understand the nature and causes of individual behaviour and thought in social situations.”¹¹ This is exactly the task of Social Psychology. Therefore the scope of the psychosocial approach is to understand how and why individuals behave, think and feel as they do in social situations. Social situations are those involving actual presence of other persons. In our case the behaviour we are seeking to address is political violence.

Psychosocial approach is an attempt to address the behaviour of an individual in terms of the factors and conditions which shape this behaviour in which case it has to be done with consideration to the society. The reason for studying the individual behaviour within the social context is because individual behaviour is greatly influenced by the behaviour of other persons within the society.

⁹ Cf. D. JARY, - J. JARY, *Dictionary of Sociology*, 3rd ed. 498.

¹⁰ Cf. D. JARY, - J. JARY, *Dictionary of Sociology*, 3rd ed. 584

¹¹ Cf. R. A. BARON – D. BYRNE, *Social Psychology*, 5

1.2. Theoretical explanations of the origin of Politics oriented violence

1.2.1. Biological Explanation

Explanation of human violence biologically is based on the view that human beings are somehow programmed for violence by their basic nature and that human violence stems from in-built tendencies. Social psychologists classify biological explanations into two as explained below.

a. Violence as a means of survival of species

The view that violence is a means of survival of species holds that violence becomes a necessary behaviour that evolves in various species to help them adapt to their environment and evolve.¹² In the process of growth and as they increase in number, particular species in the animal kingdom undergo adaptation to their environment. By getting used to their environment some species develop a tendency of driving away from their environment of dwelling other animals that do not belong to their species. This is what is called territorial behaviour in animals. Territories can be described as selected areas that are guarded by a species for the sake of enhancing their survival. Animals guard their territories in order to protect themselves against foreign intrusions and to guard the resources available in that territory.

For example lions show territorial behaviour by roaring and marking their territory by urinating all round it and making marks with the hind feet all round.¹³ This pattern of territorial behaviour in animals may show that violence is natural and

¹² Cf. I. A. HOROWITZ, – K. S. BORDENS, *Social Psychology*, 497

¹³ Cf. <<http://www.pubmedcentral.nih.gov/articlerender.fcgi?artid=2602599>>, 26/08/2009, 1-3

instinctual in species and is triggered by certain intrusions of foreign species within the environment that a given species considers its own.

Territorial behaviour can also be applicable among human beings. For instance in Africa it is more common in communities which attach value to land and consider it ancestral and a community property. The community members, the clan or the family has to defend their land at all costs and drive away any perceived intruders. In the struggle to possess what one needs and what belongs to him/her there evolves a competition over the resources that the environment provides. This competition can lead to members fighting over the resources which are available in the environment and in the process only the stronger species survive.

For instance most individual tribes in Kenya consider themselves as having a common origin and so the land on which their ancestors settled belongs to them as a tribe and so any intrusion into this space by members of another tribe may easily lead to a violent retaliation. The probability is that this is part of the problem between the Kalenjin and the Kikuyu in the North rift especially Eldoret area. The Kalenjin believes that the land in Eldoret region has been theirs since time immemorial yet they live with Kikuyu people who were brought there by the post colonial government. Using territorial behaviour to explain this phenomenon, we can say that the Kalenjin are considering the Kikuyu as intruders and so by driving them away they are defending their territory.

b. Violence as a function of brain and hormonal activity

Violence can be attributed to brain stimulation especially the part of the brain called the hypothalamus.¹⁴ Stimulation of the hypothalamus occurs due to external factors like anxiety causing situations. This stimulation of the hypothalamus increases one's motivation and emotion and consequently the likelihood of violence. However we ought to note that not always does brain stimulation lead to violence.

For instance anxiety causing situations in the environment can highly motivate an individual to anger but this anger may not lead to violence when the angry individual is in the presence of a more dominant or powerful party. This is probably why angry individuals when in the presence of the police usually choose to run away since the force that can be exerted on them by the police is more powerful compared to the force that they can exert on the police.

Hormonal activity can be used to explain violence in terms of the male sex hormone called testosterone. "Biology has proved that high levels of testosterone lead to high affinity to violence."¹⁵ This may account for gender difference in violence. "Males act more aggressively and react faster compared to females."¹⁶ Males have more testosterone since it is a male sex hormone. This gender difference in violent acts can be proved by the case of the recent Kenya's Post Election violence. The results as they appeared to almost all the opposition supporters male and female alike were not pleasant but basing on pictures from Television and Newspapers it was dominantly the males who went out to fight.

¹⁴ Hypothalamus is a group of brain structures concerned with motivation and emotion

¹⁵ Cf. E. ARONSON - T. D. WILSON - R. M. AKERT, *Social Psychology*, 4th ed., 421

¹⁶ Cf. E. ARONSON - T. D. WILSON - R. M. AKERT, *Social Psychology*, 4th ed., 421

Biological explanations mainly tend to focus on the nature of the individual but don't take into consideration the social situations which awaken this nature into violence. However the individual is a complex being whose growth is influenced by historical, social, psychological, physical and even spiritual factors. Therefore human violence cannot be explained strictly biologically since there are other factors other than the human nature that dispose individuals to violence e.g. the social context in which he or she grows. This is why we now seek to explain violence from a social dimension.

1.2.2: Social explanation of violence

a. Frustration

“Frustration is defined as the feeling produced when a person's progress towards an expected goal is interrupted.”¹⁷ When a person attempts to achieve a desired goal and he/she is blocked, feelings of frustration come. For frustration to occur first there must be a motivating factor; a need that awakens one to the reality that he is lacking in something and so he requires fulfillment (instigator). Secondly, there must be a forward movement in action to fulfill this need (goal response). Finally, there should come something on the way towards achieving this goal which deactivates the forward action (Interference). Therefore frustration results from the interference with the goal response.

When the desired goal cannot be reached, the frustrated individual or group(s) can develop options lesser than the desired goal but at least 'fulfilling' in order to reduce the frustration. This is called the Substitute response i.e. any action which reduces to some

¹⁷ Cf. E. ARONSON – T. D. WILSON – R. M. AKERT, *Social Psychology*, 4th ed., 426

degree the strength of the instigation and acts as a replacement for the goal response¹⁸ (fall back option).

Substitute response is never perfectly fulfilling since it never work exactly as the previous desired goal. It only cools down the frustration but doesn't alleviate it. If this can no longer be sustained, the individual or the group can break up into violence in order to forcefully achieve the desired goal and also to expel the frustration which is an unpleasant feeling. The individual can opt to inflict injury either physical or emotional to any other individual whether directly involved with his/her frustration or innocent.

It is on the basis of this link between frustration and violence that social psychologists have formulated the frustration - aggression hypothesis which takes as its point of departure the assumption that "the occurrence of aggressive behaviour always presupposes the existence of frustration and contrariwise that the existence of frustration always leads to some form of aggression"¹⁹

For instance in Kenya's Post Election Violence, the instigator could be the exploitation and the injustice by the government of the day and the mentality that it is our turn to punish this tribe and to eat. The Waki report on Post Election Violence indeed states that the roots of the violence could be traced on facts like the feeling among certain ethnic groups of historical marginalization and increasing problem of a growing population of poor, unemployed youth educated and uneducated²⁰ at a time when the country had been suffering from corruption scandals like Goldenberg and Anglo leasing.

The goal response could be the formation of the grand opposition and the

¹⁸ Cf. J. DOLLARD, al, *Frustration and aggression*, 8

¹⁹ Cf. J. DOLLARD, al, *Frustration and Aggression*, 1

²⁰ Cf. Government of Kenya, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Post Election Violence*, from http://www.communication.go.ke/Documents/CIPEV_FINAL_REPORT.pdf, 06/11/2009, 23

consolidation of tribal votes to vote against the government which was seen by some Kenyans as dominantly a Kikuyu government. The interference was the alleged vote rigging which is the factor that caused frustration among the opposition supporters. The substitute response could be the planned mass action. Since this last resort failed and people saw no other option their frustration led them to violence.

Having explained frustration as a cause of violence we ought to note that there are exemptions to the frustration-aggression link. An individual or group of individuals may undergo frustration but given the prevailing conditions, he/she may not be able to respond by violence. Frustration may not lead to violence if the victim of frustration cannot retaliate because the cause of frustration is more powerful compared to the victim of frustration. For instance children suppress their anger because they cannot be violent to their parents and so they simply react by being sad, desperate and depressed.

In order to experience less or no violence under frustrating situations, the frustrating situations should be ones that people can understand and accept as just normal human conditions which could otherwise not be avoided since frustration is a normal human feeling. For instance the Post Election Violence would have probably been reduced or even avoided if the government would have been one that is straight forward, corruption free and concerned about people's economic welfare and if the opposition would have lost without any suspicion of vote doctoring.

b. Exposure to scenes of violence

The media especially the Television is impacting so much on the behaviour of youths today since most of them have access to it yet it contains a lot of scenes of

violence. “Certain stimuli like media violence would elicit impulsive aggressive responses from people who are set to respond in an aggressive manner due to the pairing of previously neutral stimuli with aggressive events.”²¹ This in other words called social learning theory holds that violence is a result of social learning through directly experiencing acts of violence or indirectly observing aggressive models igniting the wish to imitate what is experienced or observed.

By observing violent scenes and violent personalities on Television, an individual can identify with an actor or actress and wish to act like him/her. One can also adopt certain ways of fighting depicted by the model in the film and later be tempted to practice them. “Social strategies that are learned through watching violence are tried in the immediate environment and if reinforced are retained and used again.”²²

The social environment can present the individuals especially the young ones with conditions that necessitate feelings of acting violently. “Communities which expose their children to appliances of war e.g. rifles, bows arrows and pangas tend to initiate into their children aggressive responses when they grow up.”²³ Communities which are accustomed to wars frequently e.g. cattle rustling communities and those that always engage in inter clan or border violence expose their young ones to scenes that make them almost normalize violence and even engage in it as they grow up.

“Overexposure to violence in the media and in the surrounding society tends to have a numbing effect to people’s sensitivity on the events.”²⁴ This lowers reaction

²¹ Cf. J. H. GENTRY – P. SCHLEGEL, *Reason to Hope, A Psychosocial Perspective on Violence and youth*, 231

²² Cf. J. H. GENTRY – P. SCHLEGEL, *Reason to Hope, A Psychosocial Perspective on Violence and youth*, 233

²³ Cf. E. ARONSON – T. D. WILSON – R. M. AKERT, *Social Psychology*, 4th ed., 435

²⁴ Cf. E. ARONSON – T. D. WILSON – R. M. AKERT, *Social Psychology*, 4th ed., 435

against violent scenes. Such overexposure can make people have reduced sympathy and empathy thus rendering them indifferent to victims of violence and even accepting violence as a normal aspect of life in the society. Furthermore victims of overexposure can view the world as very dangerous and hostile to them and this feeling of insecurity can make them to sometimes act aggressively in self defense.

This reason can be used to justify violence in clash torn areas of Kenya. These people have always been fighting and killing each other at certain times mostly towards elections yet they are aware that it is bad to kill or loot property. This may mean that having been accustomed to violence that always occur within their vicinity, they have come to perceive violence as a normal part of inter clan or inter-ethnic living.

c. Violence and culture

Culture can be defined from a psychological perspective as “shared patterns of categorizations, beliefs, attitudes, norms, roles, values and behaviours that were adopted during the history of a distinct group and were transmitted to those who could interact with that group because of a common language and continued interaction.”²⁵ The first aspect of culture that this definition highlights and which can be linked to political violence is the group. People who share a common culture constitute a group. Since culture is diverse and varies with each group it implies that groups can be formed basing on culture. This introduces the concept of ‘in-group’ and the ‘out-group.’

Groups can be formed on the basis of social support, ideological similarity, protection, oppression, family, tribe and race. From our psychological definition, these

²⁵ Cf. J. H. GENTRY – P. SCHLEGEL, *Reason to Hope, A Psychosocial Perspective on Violence and youth*, 64

are all aspects of culture and so those who share in any or all of these aspects form a group. Individuation of these groups on the basis of these aspects of culture gives rise to a group that one belongs to and a group that one does not belong to. The 'in-group' consists of all those who share in a certain aspect of culture or lifestyle. The 'out-group' consists of all those who share nothing or insignificant commonality with members of another group. An 'out-group' is created when we give reference to more than one group. Each group is an 'in-group' in itself and an 'out-group' in relation to another group which possesses a different belief system or lifestyle. The 'in-group' is characterized by a high sense of belonging, interdependence and emotional ties among its members.

Culture originates from history and history constitutes part of an individual's growth process. Therefore culture forms a crucial part of an individual's identity. Since identity constitutes a person's self and it is the self which orders an individual's mode of action, people cling to their identity so tight so much so that members who share in this identical self greatly become part of each other. This explains why culture strongly bonds the members of a given group.

Group interdependence that results from cultural commonality can influence individual behaviour. Unique ways of behaviour that are distinct to a particular group help to guide their ideas, influence their decisions, action and reaction to issues hence determining their life choices. The 'in-group' is in most cases a socially integrated culture that enhances interdependence among its members and so they develop an 'I don't care' attitude towards members of the 'out-group' since the 'in-group' provides them with the necessary security that they need.

This explains why within the 'in-group' there are reduced cases of antisocial behaviour unlike towards members of the 'out-group'. This can be because culture of interdependence instills into people's mind the togetherness of members in the same group and so any attacks warranted or unwarranted towards members of ones group warrant a violent retaliation. This is probably why during the Post Election Violence, there was no fighting among tribe mates and among those who shared a political party but there was inter tribal fighting and fighting across the major political parties.

The relationship between the 'in-group' and 'out-group' constitute what is called group process. Group process can facilitate violence due to a process called de-individuation which refers to "getting lost in the crowd hence loosening of normal constrains on behaviour leading to an increase in impulsive and deviant acts. It reduces individual accountability due to anonymity, increases loyalty to the 'in-group' and increases possibilities of violence."²⁶ We shall elaborate this later in this essay.

The second aspect of culture that can be linked to political violence is the culture of violence. Some cultural groups are more prone to use violence than others and this can be linked to the culture of violence which refers to a code which prescribes violent conduct and which is passed through word and deed from one generation to the next.²⁷ An example of a culture of Violence would be a community that stresses on the use of violence to defend the interests of the group e.g. as the Muslims use Jihad.

Culture can also place the males so high that they ought to use whatever means to defend their own name, honor and dignity and the name and honor of their family, clan and tribe. In such a culture, a physical engagement becomes a show of courage and

²⁶ Cf. E. ARONSON – T. D. WILSON – R. M. AKERT, *Social Psychology*, 4th ed., 311

²⁷ Cf. H. TOCH, *Violent Men, An Inquiry into the Psychology of Violence*, 190

defense of status and a triumph at the end of it all is considered as being heroic. Most African cultures have as their culture that men should never cry even in the most difficult situations and should never fear or loose war since they are the protectors of the society. For instance the *Pokot* of Kenya believe that stealing cattle from the neighboring community is a heroic act and a means towards being accepted to get married. This encourages the young men to go and engage in violent battles with their enemies so that they can fulfill one of the cultural requirements for marriage. This mentality looks irrational and may just be instilling violent orientations into the minds of people for the sake of better survival in the community and also to keep a better self identity.

Close proximity to violence as presented by culture can have an effect on one's self perception and hence an effect on cognition, emotion and motivation."²⁸ These are the components of the self that play a big part in initiating behaviour. Cognition acts by the process of attribution i.e. what one attributes to the situation. For instance one whose culture and environment is violence oriented can attribute danger and perpetual unfriendliness to the environment such that the person ends up always perceiving the environment in terms of violence.

Emotion is the feeling that results from how one perceives himself or herself in relation to how he/she is treated by other people or influenced by other environmental factors. For instance one who is so much accustomed to violence can develop the emotions of rage, numbness and lack of sympathy towards victims of violence. Since feelings need to be expressed with time, one can easily develop the motivation to act violently since after all the environment seems to affirm violence.

²⁸ Cf. J. H. GENTRY – P. SCHLEGEL, *Reason to Hope, A Psychosocial Perspective on Violence and youth*, 65

As a conclusion we can say that social explanations of violence basically consider the individual within the society. The shortcoming of this is that it doesn't look into the individual who is detached from the society and what goes on within this individual when he/she experiences these social factors. This individual aspect is what we now explore in the following part (The psychological perspectives).

1.2.3. Psychological Perspectives in Violent behaviour

In order to analyze behaviour psychologically, there is need to look at its development and the emotional feelings that are associated with it. Violence involves outward expression of unpleasant inward feelings. Since violence manifests itself as an outburst of inward feelings, its psychological analysis should involve an analysis of violence oriented feelings like shame, anger, rage, anxiety and fear. In this essay we'll analyze shame and anxiety since most psychologists associate them with control of human behaviour. Anger and rage result from shame while fear results from anxiety. Infact James Bradshaw in his film "healing the shame that binds you" says that all addictions e.g. to sex, drugs, power and even violence come as a result of toxic shame.

a. Toxic Shame and its Development

Lewis Michael in his book 'Shame, The exposed Self' defines shame as "the feeling we have when we evaluate our actions, feelings and behaviour and we conclude that we have done wrong."²⁹ Shame is an attack on the whole self. It is unpleasant and embarrassing and this is why it generates wishes to hide, disappear and even to die.

²⁹ Cf. M., LEWIS, *Shame, The Exposed Self*, 2

Shame is a feeling that is developed during the process of growth starting from childhood. Psychologists have believed that shame develops as early as the first three years of growth³⁰ For a child to have any emotional feeling, it must have developed self consciousness and also has knowledge of the standards of operation such that when he/she does something contrary to what his or her conscience tells him or her as bad or if others do to him/her what he/she thinks is bad then the feeling of being bad comes. Therefore expressing emotional feelings needs a cognitive capacity or ability to know.

In children, shame results from some needs which are not catered for especially by parents who are the sole security agents of the child. One of the basic needs of a child is love and security which they only find from the people around them through offering them their basic needs and being available to them. If there is a rejection or love withdrawal from the people around, the child feels vulnerable and threatened and so he/she loses his/her basic security. The child feels that he or she is unloved and uncared for and so he or she perceives himself or herself as a failure hence he or she develops a negative self-perception (I am bad). Since this feeling can be unpleasant and painful, the child may develop mistrust towards the people most immediate to him or her for causing this pain and by extension every other human being. At this point already the self has been affected. Without an integrated self, there can be a leeway for development of dysfunctional behaviour like violence especially when the child grows up.

The Child – Other relationship and shame

The process of development of a child is characterized by two worlds i.e. the world of the caregiver, family and culture and the child's own world each having its own

³⁰ Cf. M., LEWIS, *Shame, The Exposed Self*, 86

standards, rules and goals.³¹ Shame is a result of the child's conscious evaluation of these two worlds.

As soon as the child begins to socialize, he or she is ruled by humble acceptance of the standards, rules and goals of the other since he/she sees certain behaviours rewarded and others punished. "The child passively accepts the standards of the other since the child's emotional life is determined by following or failing to follow the rules established by the other."³² This passivity implies that this child has not yet internalized any rule.

By observation, the child is able to see that he/she gets happy when he/she reaches the expectations of the caregiver and gets sad when he/she doesn't reach these standards and so is punished. This makes the child to develop his/her own standards and rules on top of the ones presented by the surrounding environment and people hence a process of evaluation starts; not mere acceptance of rules. This according to Lewis leads to objectification of the standards and rules by the child and so an objective integrated self emerges.

This should be the reason why a child may develop the feelings of being unworthy if he/she doesn't reach the expectations of other people in his/her life or if the other treats him/her in a way that is incompatible with the expectations of his/her objective self e.g. in punishment, sexual abuse, criticism, rejection and harsh discipline.

³¹ Cf. M., LEWIS, *Shame, The Exposed Self*, 2

³² Cf. M., LEWIS, *Shame, The Exposed Self*, 93

Shame in adults and its connection with violence

This explanation of shame in children can be used as well to explain shame in adults. Just like in children, shame in adults develops when in day to day living one cannot reach the expectations of the society around and so he/she develops the feelings of unworthiness (I am bad and by extension we are bad). Situations that can induce such feelings of unworthiness can be inability to find jobs and so inability of one to meet his/her basic needs and basic needs of the family. The family and the society may scoff at such a person and he/she may develop shame due to inability to meet the expectations of his/her family.

Cultural and ethnic superiority can also lead to identity shame and shame due to ones ethnicity especially among the despised group. Members of the despised group can perceive themselves as inadequate and bad since they are not like the favored group.

The occasions that trigger shame described above cause an unpleasant injury to the self. If an individual lives in such a situation, he/she develops the feelings of anger as the first response aimed at overcoming this obstacle towards self actualization. Anger is simply a conscious bodily response coming from recognition of injury and whose effects are fewer since it is mostly directed to a specific object and not displaced.

However when shame is prolonged, anger breaks down into rage. "Rage is a process and the point at which a person feels powerless, cannot contain the injury any longer and so being pushed from awareness responds by displacing the anger to various objects mostly in a violent manner."³³ At this point, the individual chooses violence because it is perceived to be a legitimate response which will boost the derailed self

³³ Cf. M. LEWIS, *Shame, The Exposed Self*, 153

esteem and restores the lost self-image. It is perceived to be a means of self assertion and recognition so that the self image that was destroyed can be restored.

b. Anxiety

“Anxiety is defined as the apprehension cued off by a threat to some value that the individual holds essential to his or her existence as a personality.”³⁴ Anxiety therefore results from the threat of withdrawal of those things we consider essentially part of us and so this brings a threat to ones existence (The fear of dying). Anxiety therefore can be a result of threat to physical life (looming death), threat to ones freedom and threat to values that one believes in e.g. sharing, love of another person and truthfulness. When fundamental principles and crucial aspects of a human person are threatened, one begins to wonder how possible it will be to exist normally or exist after all.

An example of an anxiety causing situation would be in a situation like traditional Africa where the spirit of community and sharing is held as a precious value. If the people find themselves in a government which champions individualism, grabbing and capitalism, the people’s existence gets threatened since they get worried about how life will be without the community which is a very important aspect to them. Consequently, the personality and personal identity is tampered with due to the feeling of self insecurity.

“The truth about anxiety is that the threat is to a value held by that particular individual to be essential to his existence and consequently to his security as a personality.”³⁵ This perceived threat can at times come true but at times it is just a

³⁴ Cf. M. ROLLO, *The Meaning of Anxiety*, 205

³⁵ Cf. M. ROLLO, *The Meaning of Anxiety*, 206

deception. This makes anxiety to be referred to as the fear of nothing or non-being. This makes anxiety sometimes to be a very irrational feeling.

Effects of Anxiety and its relation to Political Violence

Anxiety, just like shame is an attack on the whole self. "Mounting anxiety reduces self-awareness especially awareness of oneself as a subject in relation to objects in the external world."³⁶ This destruction of subject – object relationship comes about due to the already discussed threat to the existence of the self which result into weariness (fatigue), illness, destruction and eventually a threat to die. In such situations, people develop meaninglessness, uselessness and eventually they develop fear of becoming nothing.

Once the self is dissolved due to this fear, the I-THOU relationship is reduced to the I-IT relationship since a person loses touch with himself as one who should take care of the other objects and people. The idea of God's creation of man in his image and likeness and therefore his subsequent responsibility over other objects of God's creation is lost. Proper evaluation of situations is no longer there. At this point, an individual can opt to destroy and exploit other people's property, kill his fellow human beings and use other people to satisfy one's needs with violence as the penalty for non compliance since nothing remains important in his face including his own self. Hans Toch describes people at this point as persons who see themselves and their own needs as being the only fact of social relevance. Other people are viewed as objects rather than as persons whose needs must be taken into account.³⁷ Anxiety and its effects can be summarized as follows:

³⁶ Cf. M. ROLLO, *The Meaning of Anxiety*, 206

³⁷ Cf. H. TOCH, *Violent Men, An inquiry into the Psychology of Violence*, 136

Anxiety arises from the fact that the security base of the individual is threatened and since it is in terms of this security base that the individual has been able to experience himself as a self in relation to objects, the distinction between subject and object also breaks down.³⁸

According to Spinoza's insight into the political aspect of freedom from fear, the state is supposed to free each man from his fear in order to live and act with full security and without injury to himself or his neighbor.³⁹ Politics goes hand in hand with the state in most African countries since it is the political leaders who become governors of the state. In other words therefore the role of political/government systems should be to enhance individual and social security. This is however not the case in most systems. In such non-protective political systems, the individuals may develop cultural, economic, spiritual and even psychological vacuum since there is nobody to run to in order for ones needs to be fulfilled. It is this vacuum of individual insecurity that brings a feeling of fear of non existence and consequently anxiety.

But the human mind hates vacuum and so he/she looks for an option to fill this vacuum and counter this looming non existence or uselessness. When an option is found people stick to it irrespective of whether it is or will be good or bad so long as it gives some relief from anxiety. When a person cannot fill this vacuum appropriately i.e. he or she cannot find appropriate answers for his or her personal problems, fear crops in and fear being a close feeling to anxiety may lead to violent retaliations in an attempt to deny or expel it. Remaining in fear and anxiety for generations can builds tension and worry. For Kenyans to have lived like this for over 30 years indeed was a horror and probably this is why the violence broke up in such a manner. This will be explored further in Chapter 2.

³⁸ Cf. M. ROLLO, *The Meaning of Anxiety*, 208

³⁹ Cf. M. ROLLO, *The Meaning of Anxiety*, 209

As already discussed, violence resulting from these feelings of shame, anxiety, fear, anger and rage is a result of an attack on the self. Therefore violence is used as a response to restore the self. This is done by either boosting the self image to show people and oneself that after all one is still intact as well as defending the self image to show that one is not fearful but strong. These are what according to Hans Toch are called self image promoting and self image defending.⁴⁰ Psychologically therefore violence can be seen as a form of compensation for a lost self.

Since this damage to the self at times originates from the outside (others), the victim tends to perceive other persons as sources of physical danger and their presence needs to be counteracted. This counteraction may be done through violence in order to defend the self.

1.2.4. Conclusion

From the above discussion it seems that for every experience of an event in ones life there is established an effect whether positive or negative in ones behavior. These experiences implant certain feelings in an individual which may trigger him/her to act in a certain way at the social level. Therefore collective violence as a form of social activity which is carried out by individuals results from an interplay between the nature of the violent individual, the social triggers in his/her social environment and the psychological feelings that come from these social situations.

Political violence can therefore be summarized as resulting from a political environment that seems to approve or encourage violence, a feeling of powerlessness to move on, stalled social systems hence hopelessness (frustration), viewing a given social

⁴⁰ Cf. H. TOCH, *Violent Men, An inquiry into the Psychology of Violence*, 137

group as a symbol of power, racism/tribalism and oppression. The person or a group of people have problems, they seek relief but they obtain no satisfaction, they become bitter due to their failure, they put across demands which yield no substantial result and therefore as a last resort, they break into violence as an indirect means of self expression and a means of expelling their cumulative stress and mounting tension. Hans Toch thus explains violence as a result of unresolved grievances and cumulated feelings which emerge as an expression of impatience and an emotional discharge.⁴¹

⁴¹ Cf. H. TOCH, *Violent Men, An inquiry into the Psychology of Violence*, 138

CHAPTER 2

This chapter deals with an application of the theories explaining the causes of violent behaviour discussed in the previous chapter within the context of 2007/2008 Kenya's Post Election Violence and establishing the role that individuals' psychology and the social situation in Kenya played in igniting the violence.

2.1: Some facts about Kenya

Kenya is a country located in East Africa. It borders Ethiopia to the North, Sudan to the North West, Uganda to the West, Tanzania to the South West, Indian Ocean to the South East and Somalia to the East. The area covered by Kenya is approximately 591,383 square Kms.⁴² It is divided into 8 administrative provinces namely Coast, Central, Nairobi, North Eastern, Eastern, Nyanza, Western and Rift Valley (Cf. Appendix 1 showing Kenya and its administrative provinces).

2.1.1. Population

According to the 2007 estimates as recorded in the Kenya Book of Records, Kenya's population was approximated at 37,183,924 people.⁴³ According to 1999 figures released by the Central Bureau of Statistics, approximately 55.5% of Kenyans are aged between 0-19 years, 39.1% between 20-59 years and 4.7 % are aged 60 years and above.⁴⁴ (Cf. Appendix 2 showing Kenya's population pyramid as per the year 1999)

⁴² Cf. K. M. WACHIRA, *Kenya book of Records*, 4

⁴³ Cf. K. M. WACHIRA, *Kenya book of Records*, 5

⁴⁴ Cf. K. M. WACHIRA, *Kenya book of Records*, 103

The data as per the population pyramid shows that those aged between 0-19 years and 60 and above all combined together form the biggest part of Kenya's population. These also fall into the bracket of the dependant population. Those between 20-59 years of age which is the age bracket of active employment in Kenya (age of retirement is 55 years) just make up a minority. This shows that dependants are by far, more than the breadwinners. Majority of people in this age bracket of 20-59 constitute Kenya's economy drivers and are as well the breadwinners in their respective families. Furthermore this is the age bracket of youths who are just joining the world of responsibility and so if they find themselves unable to tackle their responsibilities due to factors like economic constrains, they may resort to acts like robbery and violence since they are at the stage of great potentiality.

According to the facts released by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics in 2007, approximately 75% of Kenya's population lives in the high agricultural belt which runs North East from Nairobi to the Ugandan border. This is the section covering Nairobi Province, Central province and Central Rift Valley and extending upwards to the North Rift. This belt only forms 10% of Kenya's land area.⁴⁵ This phenomenon points towards competition for the available land resource among the people who live here given the population compared to the land area available. This could explain why some of the hotspots of the violence fell in this region.

2.1.2. Ethnic Groups

Kenya has about 42 tribes. (Cf. Appendix 3 showing the distribution of Kenya's major ethnic groups into the different provinces and regions).

⁴⁵ <<http://www.kenya-information-guide.com/Kenya-population.html>>, 26/8/2009, 1-6.

Kenya is characterized by tribal groupings with each tribe dominantly residing in one region. The Kikuyu dominantly reside in Central province, the Luhya in Western Province, The Luo and Kisii in Nyanza, Kalenjin in Rift Valley, Kamba in Eastern and Mijikenda in the Coast. This phenomenon of tribes residing in their own regions has been in some cases an obstacle to interactions among people of different tribes.

However in the recent days factors like education, employment, intermarriages, business and migrations have helped to narrow the gap between tribes by enhancing inter-tribal interactions. Despite this interaction however, regionalism has still prevailed because not all Kenyans have found opportunities to expose them beyond their regions and even some of those who have got out of their regions still have the ethnocentric mentality. This ethnocentric mentality has influenced social interactions especially across tribes leading to tendencies like giving priority to members of one's tribe in matters like resource allocation and accessibility, better education facilities and employment opportunities.

2.1.3. Economy

The CIA world fact book put Kenya's economic growth at 0.2% in 2000, 1.2% in 2001 and 1.1% in 2002; a performance that could be attributed to weak commodity prices, corruption, low rains hampering agriculture, low investor confidence, meager donor support and political infightings.⁴⁶ However since 2002, Kenya has been reporting steady growth in the economy and the report of the 2007 economic survey revealed that

⁴⁶ Cf. <<http://www.cia.gov/library/publication/the-world-factbook/geos/ke.html>>, 26/8/2009, 1-7

Kenya's Gross Domestic Product expanded by 6.1% in 2006, compared to a revised 5.7% growth the previous year.⁴⁷

Despite this reported growth in economy, poverty has continued to be a biting reality in Kenya. According to the 2007 UNDP report on Kenya's poverty levels, 50% of Kenyans live below the poverty line.⁴⁸ The poor Kenyans have been unable to comfortably cater for their needs due to the low income they earn compared to the cost of living which keep going higher and higher. The 2006 report by the sustainability watch reflected the following:

Poverty in Kenya especially food poverty has been on the increase over time. The population of poor people has increased from 3.7 million in 1972 to 11.5 million people in 1994 and further to 12.5 million by 1997... The bottom 20 percent of the Kenyan population earns only 2.5 percent of the total income while the top 20 percent receive more than 50 percent.⁴⁹

This shows that there is a massive gap that exists between the extremely poor and the extremely rich in Kenya and much of Kenya's wealth is in the hands of the rich population. The UNDP report noted that 10 percent of the richest households control more than 42 percent of the incomes, while the poorest 10 percent control only 0.76 percent. The report further says that poorer people have little or no hope of bringing up a child to the age where they can benefit from the free primary education introduced by the government in 2003, let alone take them to a secondary school.⁵⁰ Due to this situation of poverty, there is need for establishing the possibility of there being a relationship between the frequent violence cases in Kenya and the poverty situation.

⁴⁷ Cf. < <http://www.communication.go.ke/media.asp?id=403>>, 1/11/2009, 1

⁴⁸ Cf. http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?no=347800&rel_no=1, 30th Oct. 2009, 1-3

⁴⁹ Cf. H. P. DEJGAARD – al, *Sustainability Watch 2006 Report, Implementation Barriers to Sustainable Development*, 89

⁵⁰ Cf. http://english.ohmynews.com/articleview/article_view.asp?no=347800&rel_no=1, 30th oct. 2009, 1-3

According to 2008 estimates, the world factbook estimated Kenya's unemployment rate at 40%.⁵¹ A big section of Kenya's population that is eligible for employment is unemployed and this is another pointer to poverty. Poverty is a threat to the country's security because this unemployed section of the population consists of people who are also breadwinners in their families and the society at large yet their poor situation doesn't enable them to fulfill with ease these responsibilities. This situation can lead to frustration and consequently acts like violence and robbery which are obvious threats to the security of people and the country at large. ✓

2.1.4. Political situation

Ever since her independence from the British in 1963, Kenya has been headed by three Presidents. Jomo Kenyatta, Kenya's founder president ruled until his death in 1978 and the then Vice President Daniel arap Moi took over the Presidency. President Moi ruled until 2002 when his term in office elapsed. Moi's successor President Mwai Kibaki won in a multiparty election in 2002 and is Kenya's President to date.

The factors related to politics that can be relevant to our study of political violence in Kenya today include the ethnicisation of politics, the presidency and the relationship between politics and land.

Politics in Kenya has been historically influenced to a great extent by ethnicity. The debate on regionalism (*Majimboism*) has characterized Kenya's political landscape ever since independence given that:

⁵¹Cf. <<http://www.cia.gov/library/publication/the-world-factbook/geos/ke.html>>, 26/8/2009, 1-7

At independence two political groupings had emerged, KANU and KADU, the former agitating for a unitary government and the latter for a federal unitary government. Majimbo proponents envisaged a country where all communities would secure semi-autonomous control of land resources in their regions. This was meant to act as a bulwark against what they perceived as danger of domination by bigger communities...notably the Kikuyu and the Luo. This quickly changed when the independent Constitution was altered repeatedly to what Jackson and Rosberg referred to as a system of personal rule; the second as the ethnicisation of politics.⁵²

Kenya's political leadership has for long stressed on politics being region based with each tribal group controlling the resources in its region and electing only the political leaders from that region.

Furthermore the Presidency as an office is held by an individual who has all the machinery at his disposal to manipulate and govern as he wishes since a lot of power was vested in that office by the post independence constitution. Political leadership in Kenya is characterized by personal rule whereby the president has a determining role in the political arena and politics depends on the person rather than institutions.⁵³ This situation has made it easy for the person of the President to manipulate government machinery and use force to his advantage.

The concepts of 'in-group' and 'out-group' that we explained in Chapter 1 also play a role here. Most politicians in Kenya have the ability to influence members of their 'in-group'. This makes it possible for them to incite their followers ('in-group') against members of the 'out-group' in order to create love for them within the 'in-group' and hate towards members of the 'out-group.' One's ethnic group therefore becomes the support base for one's political bid. The following extract from the Waki report illustrates the link between ethnicity, personalization of presidential power and the Post Election Violence:

⁵² Cf. PeaceNet -- Kenya, *Post Election Violence in Kenya, Facts and Figures*, 4-5

⁵³ Cf. PeaceNet -- Kenya, *Post Election Violence in Kenya, Facts and Figures*, 5

Personalization of presidential power has led to the perception on the part of the public that given the power of the President and the political class everything flows not from laws but from the President's personal decisions. This also has led the public to believe that a person from their own tribe must be in power both to secure for them benefits and as a defensive strategy to keep other ethnic groups, should these take over power from taking jobs, land and entitlements...losing is seen as hugely costly and is not accepted. Hence there is a tendency on the part of a variety of political actors to do anything including engaging in violence to obtain or retain political power⁵⁴

Tribal mistrust has made political parties to be formed dominantly along ethnic lines with almost each region having a political party. Members of a given tribe tend to support the party which has their tribemate as the leader or a party which has got a certain link with their tribe. For instance in 2007, the Luhya, Luo and the Kalenjin were dominantly associated with ODM, The Kikuyu, Meru and Embu were dominantly associated with PNU while the Kamba were dominantly associated with ODM-Kenya. This could be proved by how members of these tribes voted in the 2007 elections.

This can explain why voting is largely done in loyalty to the tribe that one comes from. Election is more of a battle between tribes and because of the feeling of tribal superiority, accepting defeat becomes a challenge since every party believes it should be the winner. Eventually, only the group with the majority wins. However, it is worthy to note that not all people in Kenya belong to a political party just because it has a link with their tribe. Some people choose political parties basing on the party's ideologies.

2.2: Presentation of 2007/2008 Post Election Violence

Most institutions that have researched on the Post Election Violence seem to agree on the causes on the violence as ranging from political, economic, ethnic to cultural

⁵⁴ Cf. Government of Kenya, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Post Election Violence*, from http://www.communication.go.ke/Documents/CIPEV_FINAL_REPORT.pdf, 06/11/2009, 29

factors. For instance the report by PeaceNet Kenya, Kenya Thabiti Taskforce and the Waki Commission report seem to largely agree on the following as some of the causes of the violence: They widely mention unilateral election of ECK commissioners by the President without regard to the principle of Consultation reached by the IPPG in 1997, delay in announcement and eventual announcement of Presidential results by ECK followed by the hasty swearing in of the President in the evening of the same day and the suspicion that rigging was going on at the tallying center at KICC.

Others included open conflict on camera between ODM MPs and the ECK Commissioners at KICC, election of a half cabinet and inclusion of ODM-K MPs in government, negative mentality that people developed towards the existing regime, the debate on *Majimboism* (Regionalism) and the differences in political opinions.

They as well mention illiteracy, poverty, culture and traditions, ownership and control of means of production including land, capital and labour, tribalism, high rate of unemployment and police action against the protesters. (Cf. Appendix 4b which gives a presentation of the findings related to the causes of the violence based on the research done by the author.)

It is believed that actual violence was triggered by the announcement of the Presidential results by ECK. However traces of Pre Election Violence were noted in some parts of the country between candidates and their supporters.⁵⁵

The announcement of the results could spark violence due to the frustration that we explained in Chapter 1 as resulting from the instigator, goal response, interference and eventually the substitute response which comes as a result of the frustration itself. Kenyans especially those who were inclined to the ODM party must have anxiously

⁵⁵ Cf. Waki *Mtaani*, The CIPEV Report, Causes of the Post Election Violence, 6

expected a win and were very much psychologically prepared to celebrate victory and achieve their long awaited change. The reasons for this anxiety for change (Instigator) could be factors like the economic difficulties that most people had been experiencing and even stereotypes like tribalism which made people to think that it was the turn of a different tribe to 'eat'. In order to actualize this desire for change, people acted by going out to vote (Goal response).

However the expectation of the opposition supporters was contradicted by the announcement made by ECK that it was Mwai Kibaki who had won and not Raila Odinga as they had expected (Interference). This turn of events interfered with their desired goals and the feeling of frustration cropped in since they felt as if their only hope was shattered. Violence was eventually found as the most immediate way of voicing their frustration. Violence thus became their substitute response.

The report by the Waki Commission narrated violence mainly in the major towns of Kenya. Nairobi experienced violence mainly in the city center and slum areas like Kibera, Mathari and Kawangware. In the Coast Violence was reported in Mombasa while in Nyanza, violence was reported in Kisumu and Kisii-Sotik border. In the Rift Valley, violence was reported in Central and North Rift stretching from Naivasha, Nakuru, Burnt Forest, Kipkelion and Kericho area, Eldoret region and Trans Nzoia. In Western Province the violence was reported in Kakamega, Mumias, Bungoma, Mbale, Lugari, Busia, Vihiga and Mount Elgon. This list doesn't rule out the possibility of violence having occurred in other places other than the ones mentioned here.

Looking at the mentioned regions closely we realize that violence was more dominant in the most populated and most prolific areas of Kenya in terms of resources

especially land, business and in terms of agriculture. Violence was more serious in the economic hubs of Kenya and due to this, economic factors should be put as an issue for discussion in relation to the 2007/2008 Post Election Violence.

The violence was also largely serious in regions where different tribes co-exist. Though there were cases where people who were not part of the targeted tribes experienced forms of violence such as robbery, looting and raping, the Post Election Violence was largely a conflict between ethnic groups. This makes negative ethnicity an issue to discuss in relation to political violence in Kenya.

Some of the places where tribalism could be seen in reality were Nairobi's informal settlements, Kisumu and the Rift Valley. Firstly, Waki report mentions that Nairobi's informal settlement areas are balkanized largely along tribal lines and specific ethnic groups are dominant in specific areas within the slums. Once the violence broke out, looting, destruction of property and arson became rampant forcing people to move to their ethnic enclaves.⁵⁶

Secondly in Kisumu, the Luo who considered themselves the locals decided to attack mainly the Kikuyu whom they felt were doing business in a region that is meant for the Luo. Finally in the Rift Valley, the Kalenjin attacked the Kikuyu whom they thought had been forcefully brought into their ancestral land by the Post-Independence government and so it was their time to leave.

Post Election Violence also occurred along the lines of political loyalty especially between those who were considered loyal to PNU or ODM. For example violence in Kisumu was largely directed towards the Kikuyu community by the Luos since the

⁵⁶ Cf. Government of Kenya, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Post Election Violence*, from http://www.communication.go.ke/Documents/CIPEV_FINAL_REPORT.pdf, 06/11/2009, 198

Kikuyu largely voted for PNU candidate and so the Luos who were largely in ODM considered them traitors hence the conflict between them.

From the pictures that appeared in the local dailies and TV stations, it appeared as if it was mainly the youths who were actively involved in the violence. The report by the Kenya Thabiti taskforce 2008 suggests that youths who were idle and economically deprived formed the largest group of those who got involved in the violence.⁵⁷ These are very active people since they are young and they constitute the most productive part of Kenya's population since they are rich in potentiality. They take care of Kenya's dependants and so they are expected to be in employment positions so that they are able to fulfill this responsibility.

As we stated earlier in our description of Kenya's economy, a number of youths are not in formal employment despite their potentiality. In reference to our explanation on frustration in Chapter 1 this state of affairs may lead to frustration and some negative feelings due to one's inability to take care of crucial personal and family needs. The youths having come of age expect to be economically stable and so they need an activity that can occupy their minds as well as earn them a living (Instigator). Therefore they seek to look for jobs in order to realize this goal (Goal response) but they are faced with the obstacle of corruption, nepotism, tribal favoritism and even illiteracy on their part due to inadequate education (Interference) hence some of them don't get employed.

Due to this economic crisis at a time when one is expected to fulfil crucial social duties, frustration comes in. In the process of seeking alternative engagements to cater for one's needs and to expel this undesirable feeling of frustration, anti-social acts like

⁵⁷ Cf. Kenya Thabiti Taskforce 2008, Commission by the Interreligious Forum, *Root Causes and Implications of the Post Election Violence of 2007*, 24

violence can easily be resorted to. This situation makes frustration a relevant point of discussion in relation to Political Violence in Kenya.

The Post Election Violence led to effects like death, destruction of property and displacement of people from their homes. According to the information in the Waki Commission report, the government statistics showed that the number of those who were internally displaced was approximately 350,000 people.⁵⁸ It is not clear how many people died in the violence since different institutions released different figures but the government put the figure at slightly over 1,000 people.

The Post Election Violence was perceived to have been pre-meditated in some places and spontaneous in others.

The violence was spontaneous and was in part a reaction to the perceived rigging of elections. In areas like the Rift Valley and Coast it targeted members of the Kikuyu and Kisii communities perceived to be associated with the PNU party and with President Kibaki who were seen as the beneficiaries of the rigged election. In Nyanza and Western, the spontaneous violence was mainly directed towards Government facilities and gradually took the form of looting and destruction. While it also targeted the Kikuyu and Kisii, the intention appeared to be not to kill them but rather to expel them and destroy their property.⁵⁹

Therefore spontaneous violence was witnessed with the announcement of results which were perceived as rigged. However as the violence continued, there were signs of an organized violence as the targeted communities especially the Kikuyu organized themselves to counter the attack against their people. The Waki Commission reports that such was the case particularly in Rift Valley in places like Naivasha, Nakuru and Nairobi particularly in slum areas like Kibera and Mathare where Kikuyu gangs especially

⁵⁸ Cf. Waki *Mtaani*, The CIPEV Report, Finding Relating to Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs),

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⁵⁹ Cf. Waki *Mtaani*, The CIPEV Report, Causes of the Post Election Violence, 6

Mungiki were mobilized to unleash violence against Luos, Luhyas and Kalenjins and expel them from regions they perceived as their own.⁶⁰

2.3. A Psychosocial analysis of the Post Election Violence

The sections above (1 and 2) that have dealt with some facts about Kenya's socio economic and political environment and the description of the Post Election Violence 2007/2008 have pointed out major issues related to violence in Kenya as competition for resources notably land, economic and political strain, negative ethnicity and continued exposure to violence aided by environment that is violence prone. This seem to agree to a great extent with the theoretical explanations of violence in Chapter 1 which proposed that violence results from biological, social and psychological factors.

In this section, we will seek to establish the psychological link that could be there between these social factors that characterized the Kenyan situation and the decision that people made to go for violence. These social factors are linked to violence by explaining how they shaped people's behaviour in terms of self and social perception, attribution, prejudice, conformity as an aspect of social influence, group processes and finally how all these resulted to the 2007/2008 Post Election Violence.

2.3.1. Frustration

As described earlier in chapter 1, frustration basically results from an individual's inability to progress and achieve an expected and significant goal. The social indicators that were widely mentioned and which could have a link with frustration and hence the possibility of violence as per the findings of the research done by the researcher (Cf.

⁶⁰ Cf. Waki *Mtaani*, The CIPEV Report, Causes of the Post Election Violence, 6

Appendix 4b) are poverty resulting from unemployment and illiteracy, economic inequality, strain on land and rigging of the elections. By basing our argument on what has been stated concerning Kenya's economy and statistics regarding poverty levels and situation of formal employment, we can say that poverty is a situation of great concern in Kenya. The poor people who form a big bulk of the population are undergoing economic crisis and this can lead to frustration and a possibility of violence if frustration aggression hypothesis is something to go by.

Closely linked to the situation of poverty is the competition for the land resource especially in the high potential agricultural belts of Kenya for instance Central and North Rift. As statistics stated earlier the land area covered by this region (10% of Kenya's land area) is smaller compared to the population living here (75% of Kenya's population). This suggests a possibility of competition among the inhabitants of this region for the available resources mainly land. Since we explained in Chapter 1 that biologically the human being has a natural tendency of protecting his or her resources, this competition has led to people acquiring the land resource for themselves and consequently those who are well positioned economically or politically can own adequate land while the poor and the weak continue competing for the portions left.

Land is a resource which sustains life and if one cannot access it adequately, especially among communities that depend to a great extent on Agriculture for their livelihood a feeling of inadequacy and frustration can be a result. This is because inability to access adequate land becomes an obstacle to ones development and a source of frustration especially if the landless people attempt to acquire it and they face obstacles

like land grabbing by the rich individuals, inability to access it due to overpopulation and inability to buy it due to poverty.

Rigging that was alleged mainly by the opposition supporters was also a source of frustration and the eventual violence. This is because people were yearning for change and there was already too much confidence in the opposition leaders who influenced their voters that the victory was on their side. The results however were to the disappointment of those in the opposition since their expectation of winning the election, forming the government and celebrating their eagerly awaited victory was no more hence people got frustrated (Cf. Appendix 5).

Frustration as a psychological feeling could only be felt at the individual level though the eventual violence that accompanied it was executed at the group level. In order to explain the impact that frustration had on the individual and how the frustrated group of individuals opted for violence, we ought to explain the self and why it led to the execution of the act of violence since as Horowitz describes, the self is the structure that contains the organized and stable contents of ones personal experiences and so it is what acts, guides and regulates our thoughts feelings and actions.⁶¹ In so doing we will establish how frustration molded people's behaviour in terms of self perception and social perception.

As a derivation from the definition of the self, self perception can be described as an individual's judgment of his/her thoughts, feelings and actions in the light of his/her nature and nurture factors. It's the process of constructing our version of social reality.

Since the self is constructed by personal experiences, the economic crisis and landlessness that have for long been social realities in Kenya have had a psychological

⁶¹ Cf. I. A. HOROWITZ – K. S. BORDENS, *Social Psychology*, 50

effect on the individuals especially in their self identity and consequently this shaped their mode of action. The inability to afford reasonable lives for themselves and their families due to endless economic constrains, unemployment and landlessness have resulted to some individuals perceiving themselves as failures, useless and worthless people who do not deserve recognition. As we explained in Chapter 1 perceiving oneself as worthless leads to shame and the loss of self image.

We can argue with probability that this act of perceiving the self as a failure, useless and unrecognized made some individuals to struggle to redeem their lost self image by trying to deny, expel or push aside the negative feelings of frustration and shame in order to reassert themselves in the society and feel recognized. The process of self reassertion could take various dimensions and violence appeared as one of the ways in which the frustrated section of Kenyans sought to reassert themselves in the society and expel their feelings of frustration due to the prevailing social hardships.

The individual feelings that resulted from their process of categorizing reality in the social environment could be expressed externally and through social interaction and influence; they would become the feelings of the group. The process by which we classify items, objects, concepts and people placing them together in groupings on the basis of their similarities with each other is called categorization.⁶² In Kenya some of the factors that have aided categorization of people are economy, tribe, age, education, gender and race.

Taking economy for example, Kenyans have developed in their minds the categories of the poor and the rich and attributed certain characteristics to each category. The poor people having suffered so much due to economic difficulties in Kenya retreated

⁶² Cf. I. A. HOROWITZ – K. S. BORDENS, *Social Psychology*, 91

back to their 'in-group' of the poor and created another 'out-group' of the rich whom they perceived as the wealthy and comfortable ones who despite their predicament as the poor cannot share out with them what they have.

With these categories in mind, the poor created an impression about themselves as failures and economically incapacitated individuals who need to fight for their dignity and self image while they perceived the rich as those who are enjoying life and making use of the resources that could be used by all communally. Possibly, the masses opted for violence due to this perceived version of social reality as consisting of few too rich people whose economic status is causing economic frustration to too many poor people.

Therefore in relation to the economic factor, it could be possible that the Post Election Violence was an act of repossessing through violence what the poor believed belonged to all and that which could help them overcome their economic hardships. Such an idea could explain why angry youths went to loot at Ukwala Supermarket in Kisumu. There was no significant connection between the alleged rigged votes and the personal goods in a supermarket which neither belonged to the government of the day nor the group of people that were associated with the alleged stolen victory.

Kenyan society is characterized by strong interdependence especially within the social groups. Therefore the way an individual perceives himself or herself can easily become the way members of a social group perceives themselves due to influence.

2.3.2. Group Processes

“A group can be defined as two or more people who interact with each other and are interdependent in the sense that their needs and goals cause them to influence each

other.”⁶³ As shown by the definition, members of a group live in interdependence and share a lot in common and this commonality and interdependence greatly enhance social influence in terms of the behaviour of group members. From the definition of a group, we can infer the definition of group process as the pattern of operation and behaviour by members of a group and what influences this behaviour.

Groups as we described in Chapter 1 are characterized by some commonality among members. If we have a first group, it implies that there is a second or more groups with each having its own structures which distinguish it from the other groups. Therefore group processes are patterned in a way that there is an ‘in-group’ i.e. those who dominantly share a lot in common and the ‘out-group’ i.e. those who are considered by members of the ‘in-group’ as strangers sharing no or insignificant commonality with members of the ‘in-group’. In the Kenyan situation we have groups based on social factors like ethnicity, political alignment and economy.

In the first instance, Kenya is a country that has for long been sharply divided along tribal lines with each of the 42 tribes in the country dominantly living in certain regions of the country which act as their bases.

Since each tribe takes a region as its own, there is a belief that the resources and opportunities available in that region rightfully belong to them and so any other tribe members that come to operate in the region that is not ancestrally theirs are considered intruders. “The rationalization of political eviction through *Majimbo* was that the Kikuyu

⁶³Cf. E. ARONSON – T. D. WILSON – R. M. AKERT, *Social Psychology*, 4th ed., 301

(and/or such other political enemies) controlled land and business opportunities outside their indigenous homeland at the expense of the indigenous communities.”⁶⁴

Secondly political parties have for long been formed along tribal lines with almost each tribe leaning towards a given political party and so even voting has widely been done along tribal lines. Therefore only the parties made up of major tribes in Kenya are able to ascend to power. For instance from the election results of 2007, the Kikuyu dominantly voted for PNU. The Luo, the Kalenjin and the Luhya all dominantly voted for ODM. This might imply that tribal loyalty is deep into the minds of most members of Kenyan tribes that whatever is said by the leader in ones tribe is almost undisputable.

Thirdly economic situation of Kenyans is another aspect of group systems. Taking Nairobi as an example, the designs of the estates clearly indicate a society that is classified into groups of the rich and the poor. The poor dominantly live in the dilapidated slum estates e.g. Kibera, Mathari, Dandora and Mukuru while the rich live in upscale estates like Karen, Lavington, Runda and Muthaiga. Each group has developed an attitude towards themselves first as the poor and the rich and secondly as the unwanted ones and the privileged blessed ones respectively. In this case socialization becomes easier only within the groups and so the poor (‘in-group’ in this case) consider the rich as the ‘out-group’ and they direct their feelings of hatred and resentment towards them while the rich (‘in-group’ in this case) consider the poor as an ‘out-group’ and develop the feeling of fear towards them since the rich consider them as a threat to their security.

Some factors that have cemented more the group mentality in Kenya include culture, favoritism in resource allocation necessitated by political loyalty and tribal

⁶⁴ Cf. Kenya Thabiti Taskforce 2008, Commission by the Interreligious Forum, *Root Causes and Implications of the Post Election Violence of 2007*, 22

affiliation and historical injustices e.g. political assassinations and tortures due to political disloyalty.

In the first place, culturally we can say that members of a tribe believe in a common ancestry and this makes them believe that they are bonded by blood. Cultural practices are shared by members of an ethnic group and this commonality based on origin and style of life cements even more the bond between members. One cultural aspect that characterizes majority Kenyan tribes is the communitarianism or brotherhood given the belief that members of a tribe share a common ancestry. As earlier explained, there exists a very strong bond between members of a given ethnic group and less regard towards members of another ethnic group.

This aspect of brotherhood is so strong in the culture of most ethnic groups that whenever an evil is committed against a member of ones ethnic group, the person feels as if the wrong is committed against him or her as well. The report by PeaceNet Kenya on the Post Election Violence explains the rift between the Luo and the Kikuyu as having originated from tribal hatred that emerged after the assassination of Hon. Tom Mboya. This assassination led to the rift between the Luo (the ethnic community of the late Mboya) and the Kikuyu (where the then President Kenyatta belonged) to date.⁶⁵ ✓

Favoritism in terms of resource allocation based on tribal and political affiliation can make the favoured tribal or political group develop superiority and hence stick to their favoured group even stronger due to their social perception as the favored ones. The despised group on the other hand retreats back to their group since they consider themselves as the hated ones and they get united in developing resentment and hate towards those they consider as the loved ones.

⁶⁵ Cf. PeaceNet Kenya, *Post Election Violence in Kenya, Facts and Figures*, 66

The result is multiple opposing groups on different sides with each group having very strong bonds among its members. Due to such strong bonds, any attacks directed towards any member of one's group whether justified or unjustified are countered with fierce counterattacks in order to defend the interests of one's group. This is how negative ethnicity is developed.

One of the most detrimental effects that the group process has had on some individual Kenyans over the years was the effect of being lost in the group and forgetting that one is an individual who is distinct from his or her tribal, political, economic and violent group. This is the process that we referred to as de-individuation under violence and culture (Refer page 20). Due to de-individuation, the ideologies of the group that one associates himself or herself with have overshadowed the values which are supposed to govern good human interactions.

This could explain why members of a given tribe could persecute those people who belonged to another tribe just because of difference in their tribes. Some members of one political party could also just vote for that party's candidate not because they knew or even liked the ideologies of that party but just because other members of his/her group were all there and so voting otherwise could be seen as betrayal. The violent gangs could also kill, maim and destroy property just because of the motivation they got because of the presence of a group that accelerated their action.

When individuals get lost in the group, it is the group which rules and this leads to an aspect of social influence called conformity. "Conformity occurs when we modify our behaviour in response to real or imagined pressure from others."⁶⁶ Conformity causes an individual within the group to act according to the feeling of the group whether privately

⁶⁶ Cf. I. A. HOROWITZ – K. S. BORDENS, *Social Psychology*, 317

he or she knows and feels that such form of action is wrong. When acting in conformity, “the behaviors of people are guided not only by rational consideration of the issue at hand but also by the discomfort that we experience when in disagreement with others. We are motivated to conform to norms and to the implicit expectations of others in order to gain social acceptance and to avoid appearing different or being rejected.”⁶⁷

The major factor that seems to be facilitating conformity in Kenya is the de-individuation into ones group to the point of not being able to dispute anything that is suggested by ones group but rather to comply with anything that the group suggests. For instance loosing in a political game is perceived as dangerous in Kenya and so politicians together with their supporters try as much as they can to identify themselves with a certain political or tribal group so that they can be on the side of the winners irrespective of whether the ideologies of that group are favorable. Members of the militia gangs like *Mungiki* know that brutality against fellow human beings is evil but since they have vowed to be loyal to their group through an oath, they are bound to conform to what the group does. This is how conformity enhanced the effectiveness of the groups that unleashed the atrocities that were experienced in the Post Election Violence.

Once a group is strongly bonded as we have them in Kenya, there is creation of an image followed by a projection of that image first in reference to the ‘in-group’ and secondly in reference to the ‘out-group’. Across the ethnic groups in Kenya, there can be noticed creations of images referring to fellow ethnic group members and images referring to members of other ethnic groups. This process of image creation is called stereotyping. Stereotyping must have played a role in causing the violence because according to the report by the Kenya Thabiti taskforce 2008:

⁶⁷ Cf. I. A. HOROWITZ – K. S. BORDENS, *Social Psychology*, 317

The Kikuyu stereotyped the Luo and Kalenjin as Lazy people who wouldn't see opportunities around them and as ethnic chauvinists. The Kikuyu stereotyped themselves as industrious and argued that other ethnic communities out of jealousy were victimizing them. The Luo and the Kalenjin stereotyped the Kikuyu as arrogant, selfish, pilfers and as ethnic chauvinists.⁶⁸

These stereotypes were characterized with generalizations that rendered their objectivity questionable and so basing on such subjective perceptions of one community by the other, communities got set to fight against each other.

2.3.3. Habit

Habit is a behaviour which results from repeated action. One factor that has enhanced the habit tending towards violence in Kenya is the exposure to violence and violent scenes that has characterized the Kenyan environment in certain regions and instances. It is on the basis of this frequent involvement in violence enhanced by the closeness to violence scenes that some people have argued in support of the culture of violence as a reality among some Kenyan communities.

Culture of Violence can be referred to as a condition whereby a certain section of the population have gotten so much accustomed to violence that they take the act as part of their social system. The debate on whether a culture of violence is manifested in Kenya is not yet conclusive though some people believe that certain communities are more prone to violence than others (Cf. Appendix 6 showing the tribes associated with violence in Kenya as per the findings of the research interviews done by the author).

There are certain phenomena in Kenya which seem to be pointing at a society of people who have developed the habit of violence. In the first instance, certain

⁶⁸ Cf. Kenya Thabiti Taskforce 2008, Commission by the Interreligious Forum, *Root Causes and Implications of the Post Election Violence of 2007*, 23

communities in Kenya especially the major ones have militia groups whose task is among others to defend the interests of the community against attacks by outsiders. The notable ones are *Mungiki* for the Kikuyu, *Taliban* for the Luo, *Chinkororo* for the Kisii and Sabaot Land Defense Force (SLDF) for the Saboti. The probability is that some members in these communities have perceived violence as part of human existence and part of their existence as a community and so they always live in readiness for it by initiating some of their youths into these groups. Secondly, certain communities seem to be advocating for violence as an aspect of gaining fame or pride. For instance the Pokots of Kenya believe that cattle rustling is a heroic act.

The habit to violence has been accelerated by factors like culture, historical usage of violence to solve social issues and exposure to violence in our environment. From history, Kenya has had a history of usage of violence especially by the political leaders to retain power. The Waki commission report gives an account of how violence has been used by governments ever since the first government of Kenyatta then Moi and the present day Kibaki government saying:

Violence was part and parcel of the colonial state which used it to ensure control. After independence president Jomo Kenyatta used both the carrot and the stick to maintain power with the use of violence mainly concentrated in the hands of the state...repression under Kenya's second president Daniel arap Moi became more draconian...violence including detentions without trial and the routine torture of perceived and real dissenters became institutionalized early on under Moi's rule...Gangs and militias continued to proliferate all over the country thereby increasing the presence of institutionalized extra-state violence both during and after elections, a pattern that continued up through 2007 elections even after president Mwai Kibaki took over power in 2002...As extra state violent gangs began to proliferate, violence trickled down into daily life. Extra state violence existed all over the country where it could be called and tapped at anytime including being used to arbitrate over elections as it has been doing since early 1990s.⁶⁹

The other avenues through which most Kenyans have been exposed to violence include the frequent land clashes, frequent cattle rustling especially between pastoralist

⁶⁹ Cf. Government of Kenya, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Post Election Violence*, from http://www.communication.go.ke/Documents/CIPEV_FINAL_REPORT.pdf, 06/11/2009, 27

communities, inter-ethnic or inter-clan fighting for instance as it frequently happens in Marsabit and finally exposure of people to violent scenes in the media.

Such usage of violence and exposure to violence for a long time could have had a psychological effect on people's perception of social reality especially their perception of their environment of dwelling. Having been in close proximity to violence for some time as evidenced by the various instances in which violence has been used in Kenya, A section of Kenyans seem to have been affected in their sensitivity, sympathy and empathy towards victims of violence since violence is viewed as part of daily life.

A habit is developed and perfected through repeated experience and action and so the more the people get exposed to violence the more they get accustomed to it. Therefore the atrocities committed could be explained as a result of people's numbness towards the negative effects of violence due to the perception that violence has been traditionally part of Kenya's election process and so its perceived normality overshadowed its negative dimensions.

The process of internalizing the habit of violence and going ahead to put the habit into action could be explained in terms of cognition, emotion and motivation. Violence is an act that poses a security threat to the people and brings into a person the feelings of anxiety and the fear of becoming nothing. Therefore people who have been accustomed to violence for sometime may associate their environment with danger and unfriendliness, a situation which may be true or false. Normally, the human person seeks to defend himself or herself against anything or situation which poses a threat to his or her security. This intellectual formulation of the reality in the environment (Cognition) was in this case the first step towards the actual act of violence which was experienced.

Given the cognitive perceptions of environment as dangerous and unfriendly, individuals developed emotions of fear, anger and anxiety. This is due to the threat of non-existence and of becoming nothing that was posed to people by the violent environment. Feelings are in most cases followed by the desire for self expression and therefore those who were dominantly affected by this phenomenon of violence sought to express their feelings in order to seek some relief.

Therefore we could explain the motivation to violence as having resulted from this situation of fear, anger and anxiety posed by the violent environment and unprotective social systems that majority Kenyans have lived in for long as earlier shown in our analysis of Kenya's socio-political and economic situation. A section of people might have been motivated to violence due to the desire to deny or expel these emotional feelings and to restore personal and social security which was perceived to be lacking.

2.3.4. Conclusion

The Post Election Violence as explained here largely originated from individual perceptions based on how the Kenyan society socialized her individuals. This self perception, social perception and social influence within the various groups enhanced the possibility of any action coming from the 'in-group' towards the 'out-group'.

From our psychological analysis, the process that led to this violence could be summarized in the mental and emotional processes called cognition, emotion and motivation

First, the process of cognition enabled the individuals to think about what in their opinion they perceived to be right. Secondly, out of the feeling that something wrong was

happening in the society people developed a reaction which was expressed in terms of feelings of frustration, sympathy towards fellow oppressed people and hate towards the perceived oppressors.

Thirdly, people began developing intentions to act in a certain manner as a means of expressing their inner feelings. For instance a section of Kenyans laid strategy to vote against the government of the day. Finally people sought to put this intention into action through actions like joining public demonstrations to protest against favoritism and corruption and some opting to vote for the opposition which some people felt was the hope for better things. Violence resulted when the people's desired goals were not met.

(Cf. Appendix 7)

CHAPTER 3

3.1: Theological Reflections on Violence

In order to pastorally respond to the problem of violence, we ought to establish an understanding of the vice in the context of God's relationship with humans as well as our own interpersonal relationships. Since we belong to the human race which is a product of God's act of creation, violence as an act of the human being ought to be theologically reflected upon in the light of how God created the human person and how he expects the human person to act and relate with fellow human beings.

3.1.1. The Problem of Violence in the Hebrew Scriptures

The conflict brought in by violence in the Hebrew Scriptures is that on one side people seem to perceive God as so good, compassionate and merciful especially in His relationship with the Jews. On the other hand the picture that meets the human eye is of a God who is powerful, violent, punishing, threatening and deadly especially in His relationship with the enemies of the Jews and those who disobey His covenant.

Pallmeyer comments that the bible and the *Quran* speak of God as compassionate and merciful but they depict God's power in overwhelmingly male terms that is as violent, coercive, punishing, threatening and deadly.⁷⁰ For instance God drives away other nations from their land and gives it to the Jews. (Deut. 7: 1-2, Gen 15: 18-21). In the exodus event. God orders the killing of all first born sons of the Egyptians; a sign to Pharaoh that he should let the Jews out of oppression and set them free (Ex. 11). After the Israelites had left for the Promised Land and Pharaoh's army began pursuing them, God

⁷⁰ Cf. J. N. PALLMEYER, *Is Religion Killing Us? Violence in the Bible and the Quran*, 28

in His action through Moses submerged the army of Pharaoh into the sea and all of them died. God always fought battles for the Jews even if it meant massive killing.

In the face of violence and suffering experienced today, this situation always prompts humans to ask themselves the question, “Where is God when we suffer violence?” Some wonder whether God voluntarily allows violence and some even tend to justify their violent acts basing their argument on the violence in the Hebrew Scriptures. The following section tends to respond to these questions.

3.1.2. Violence of a brother against a brother (Gen. 4: 1-16)

The story of Cain and his brother Abel in Gen. 4 can help us reflect on violence as a phenomenon characterizing human relationships as well as give a response to the questions raised above in reference to God and violence.

The two brothers, Cain and Abel were blessed each with a gift of vocation from God. Cain the eldest brother was a tiller of Soil while Abel was a keeper of flocks. One day the two went to present the fruits of their vocation to God in form of gifts. Cain offered the fruits of his farming while Abel brought one of the best of his flocks. The scriptures say that the Lord looked with favor on Abel and his offering but not Cain.

From Cain’s point of view, God appeared to be a God of favors who preferred his brother Abel. McEntire argues that the reversal of names of Cain and Abel and instead starting with Abel in 14: 4b-5a is a show of God’s favor to the young Abel.”⁷¹ Given the attitude that he had developed that God favored his brother, Cain became resentful, angry and jealous towards his brother. By acting out of these feelings he opted to kill Abel. The evil of Violence happened due to Cain’s attitude towards life. His attitude appeared

⁷¹Cf. M. McENTIRE, *The Blood of Abel, The Violent plot in the Hebrew Bible*, 20

negative as seen from the bad gifts he presented to God and how distorted his perception of God's action towards him and his brother was.

Humans fail when they question God's presence in the face of voluntarily caused suffering. God has endowed humans with all the capabilities of self development and peaceful existence ranging from his intellectual and emotional abilities to the resources available in his or her environment of dwelling. However human attitude towards life e.g. the tendency towards selfishness blocks him or her from putting these endowments into good use and therefore evil acts like greed, envy and violence are opted for due to the distorted apprehension of social reality occasioned by one's own stereotypes and biases.

After Cain's resentment there follows a monologue whereby God is addressing Cain but Cain does not answer. Instead of talking to God, Cain talks to Abel in secret only to deceive him so that he can take him out and kill him. McEntire points out that the absence of conversation between Yahweh and Cain shows that violence is anti relation and it pounces destructively when human relationships are destructed.⁷²

Violence involves deception and broken relationships especially when the I-Thou relationship is reduced to the I-It relationship. People who have co-existed for long fail to recognize the dignity of fellow human beings and treat them as if they were animals meant for sacrifice. Since his brother does not matter to him anymore, Cain says that he does not know his whereabouts and he is not his brother's keeper. Once violence crops in, human relationships are destroyed. Therefore the interventions to violence should be those that seek to mend broken human relationships and enhance perception and recognition of human dignity. If Cain would have listened to God and related well with

⁷²Cf. M. McENTIRE, *The Blood of Abel, The Violent plot in the Hebrew Bible*, 26

Abel as his brother, the violence wouldn't have occurred. The evil of separation from God through disregarding human relationships is the cause of violence.

Violence destroys human identity on the face of the earth. Cain loses the nature of brotherhood which God bestowed upon him. By being condemned to be a wanderer he loses connection with the ground from which he came and through which he earned a living. Human identity is not identified with violence and once a person engages in violent atrocities, his status of relationship with people and even things change. We should embrace peace and avoid evil in order to uphold the human identity of brotherhood which God bestowed on us at creation.

The story of Abel presents us with the undeserved suffering of an innocent person just like the story of the innocent victims of the Post Election Violence. Abel remains silent throughout the episode until he silently disappears from the scene after he is killed. Just like Abel, Job too was a just man who underwent innumerable suffering⁷³ Eventually Job emerged a changed man when he confessed, "I had heard of you by word of mouth but now my eye has seen you." (Job 42:5).

The story of violence and suffering ought to orient us to have an experience of life. Violence and other social evils should be seen as occasions helping us to foster humility just like Job's experience of suffering made him humble before God denouncing all the complains he had put against God and accepted his place in creation as well as his little wisdom as a human person.⁷⁴

It is on the basis of such experience of violence that Kenyans underwent in 2007 that we should develop humility enough to help us contemplate solutions to the mystery

⁷³ He loses his possessions, his sons and daughters and finally he himself is afflicted by grave sickness. Cf. J. Paul II, *The Christian Meaning of Human suffering*, 12

⁷⁴ Cf A. MAGNANTE, *Why Suffering, The Mystery of Suffering in the Bible*, 128

of human suffering by looking at our human abilities as a gift from God that we should use to promote social harmony and thus dedicate our whole selves to God.

In seeking to reflect upon the violence of God, Pallmeyer argues that “we ought to take into account both the Old Testament and the New Testament as one single unit since the violence of God traditions interact and overlap with each other so thoroughly throughout both the Old and New Testament that it is difficult to isolate one from another”⁷⁵ and the events narrated in the Scriptures are part of God’s plan of salvation.

God’s plan of Salvation began with His act of creation, liberation of the Jews from their bondage in Egypt, the preaching of the prophets to the Jews concerning their social evils and all this culminated in the birth, ministry, suffering, death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is because of God’s profound love for humanity that he gave his only son to the world so that those who believe in him might have eternal life. This idea is captured in Jn. 3: 16.

Since it is out of love for humanity that God sent His son Jesus Christ, the violence suffered by Jesus was salvific and was not just violence for the sake of it, neither was Jesus used by the Father as a scapegoat to suffer on behalf of humans and their sin. This shows that suffering in the form of violence is not a punishment from God for any wrong/evil done by humans but it should be taken as an occasion for conversion, that is, for the rebuilding of goodness.⁷⁶ Violence should teach us the lesson of avoiding evil and building strong human relationships among us as well as enhancing a strong relationship with God by keeping the various covenants that we have made with him through the various commitments in our life as people created in His image and likeness. As John

⁷⁵ Cf. J. N. PALLMEYER, *Is Religion Killing Us? Violence in the Bible and the Quran*, 59

⁷⁶ Cf. J. PAUL II, *The Christian Meaning of Human suffering*, 15

Paul II says, Jesus Christ conquered suffering by love and therefore love is also the fullest source of the answer to the question of the meaning of suffering.⁷⁷

3.1.3. Violence and Human Dignity (Gen. 1: 26 – 27)

Gen. 1: 26-27 says God created man in His own image. The first implication of this statement is that all human beings, being the work of God's hands are equal in dignity and so there is no reason why another human being should dominate fellow human beings. Misuse of public resources, favoritism, killing and destruction of people's property portray humans as attempting to dominate. God gave us humans a great dignity and honor by creating us in His own image and likeness, and so it is an act of injustice and an interference with God's order of creation when people are deprived of this dignity and honor through evil acts like exploitation and violence.

God, after He created everything including man gave an order to him saying, "See I give you all seed bearing plants that are upon the whole earth and all trees with seed bearing fruit; this shall be your food (Gen. 1: 29). This implies that all the resources in the world are created by God and entrusted to humans so that they can share them together. Nobody should have more access to resources than others since God meant them to be shared equally among humans.

The aspect of stewardship that is highlighted here does not imply domination but rather implies responsibility towards upholding the well being of all that God has created. As those put in charge of God's creation, the human persons should show responsibility towards up holding the dignity among themselves by not acting in domination "If the fruits of the earth have been given by God so that all would have enough to live, it

⁷⁷ Cf. J. PAUL II, *The Christian Meaning of Human suffering*, 16

follows that each and every person has the right to life, food, clothing, work, shelter and possessions.”⁷⁸ This theology basically calls for respect to human rights for the sake of equality and harmony.

The Father, Son and the Spirit exist in a relationship of love and incarnation is a product of God’s love for man. God is love and so anything that comes from Him is a product of love. Man therefore is a product of God’s self communication in love. Since we are created in the image of God and God is the architect of love and is Himself love, it follows that man is endowed by God with the capacity to reciprocate this divine love by loving God and fellow Human beings. This shows that the dignity of man as well lies in his capability to love unlike other creatures. We can only exercise this God given gift of love by respecting the dignity that God has put in fellow human beings.

We can summarize this theology in Tony Byrne’s words as follows: “Because God made all people in God’s own image and likeness all people are obliged to treat each other with dignity and honor. This obligation applies not only to individual citizens but also to those in authority.”⁷⁹ Violence will only be a thing of the past if the human race can show respect and honor to the dignity bestowed on the humans by God when He fashioned them in His own image and likeness.

3.1.4. The Church on Violence.

The Catholic Social teaching on Violence stresses on the concept of Social Justice (Inclusive Justice). The theses for Justice imply the notions of equality, solidarity, preferential option for the poor and service of the common good while the antithesis

⁷⁸ Cf. T. BYRNE, *Working for Justice and Peace. A Practical Guide*, 7

⁷⁹ Cf. T. BYRNE, *Working for Justice and Peace. A Practical Guide*, 7

implies social inequality, intolerance, misappropriation of common resources and socio-economic and political exclusion which lie at the root of most violent conflicts in Africa.⁸⁰

Human acts related to politics oriented violence should be illumined by the church's idea of justice. Justice ensures people's progress in their various aspects of life e.g. economic, social and even political and it is this situation that brings psychological contentment among the people and reducing their likelihood to opt for violence. Basing on Catholic Social Teaching on Justice, Orobator states that people are not content to live in situations of want, deprivation, marginalization and inequality and as long as such situations exist, people will be prone to adopt a variety of means including violence in order to overcome them and attain a state of development and therefore one of the ways of reducing conflict is to actively promote the development of the people.⁸¹

The three concepts widely referred to by the church in her response to violence and promotion of peace is the principle of solidarity, forgiveness and non-violence.

The Pontifical Council of Justice and Peace defines solidarity as "that which highlights in a particular way the intrinsic social nature of the human person, the equality of all in dignity and rights and the common path of individuals and people's towards an ever more committed unity."⁸² Solidarity therefore underlies the interrelatedness between human beings basing on the fact that we are all equal in dignity. The church states in the *lineamenta* that the principle of solidarity is closely bound to the principle of the universal destination of goods which calls for everyone's efforts to ensure that every

⁸⁰ Cf. E.O, OPONGO, *Peace Weavers, Methodologies of Peace Building in Africa*, 36

⁸¹ Cf. E.O, OPONGO, *Peace Weavers, Methodologies of Peace Building in Africa*, 37

⁸² Cf. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social doctrine of the Church*, 109

human person and all peoples will have the necessary conditions for their integral development.⁸³ Since human development in all its spheres is a remedy to political violence, human acts should be based on the principle of solidarity in order to avoid exploitation and oppression and instead let everyone access all goods necessary for ones development because we all share in one humanity.

Within the social evils and violence that characterize our society today, the church urges us to embrace the spirit of forgiveness. Pope John Paul II in his 2002 world day of peace message described forgiveness as above all a personal choice, a decision of the heart to go against the natural instinct to pay back evil with evil.⁸⁴ The basis for forgiveness as Christians and human beings is that God in His mercy is able to embrace us again despite our sins and Jesus at the point of his death asked his Father to forgive his executioners. (Lk. 23: 34)

Forgiveness calls for great humility and swallowing of ones pride both in giving and receiving it. For true forgiveness to be achieved people should be guided to make personal resolves to drop their stereotypes, negative attitudes e.g. hatred, negative social influences and all forms of oppression so that as John Paul II says they may not remain forever shut up in their own mistakes and guilt but raise their eyes to the future and discover new possibilities of trust and commitment.⁸⁵

The Church as well puts emphasis on non-violence as an ideology to embrace in situations threatened by violence. Non Violence can be defined by paraphrasing the

⁸³ Cf. Synod of Bishops, *Lineamenta, The Church in Africa in Service to Reconciliation, Justice and Peace.* 37

⁸⁴ Cf.< http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20011211_xxxv-world-day-for-peace_en.html>, 13/9/2009, 1-5

⁸⁵ Cf.< http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/john_paul_ii/messages/peace/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_20011211_xxxv-world-day-for-peace_en.html>, 13/9/2009, 1-5

message of Vatican II council in *Gaudium et Spes* 78 as “renouncing the use of force and resorting to methods of defense which are otherwise available to weaker parties.”⁸⁶ Non violence calls for enduring the sufferings we undergo and opt for peaceful means that will equally drive our message of the need for justice home just as Christ silently and humbly suffered violence, ridicule and pain up to the point of death on the cross.

“It is by uniting his own sufferings for the sake of truth and freedom to the sufferings of Christ on the cross that man is able to accomplish the miracle of peace and be in a position to discern the often narrow path between cowardice which gives in to evil and the violence which under the illusion of fighting evil only makes it worse.”⁸⁷ The life we live always has hopes for a better future and human beings should always patiently gear towards this hope non violently since violence only destroys our state of life.

We summarize our theological reflections on violence in these words of Pope John Paul II.

It must not be forgotten that at the root of war there are usually real and serious grievances: injustices suffered, legitimate aspirations frustrated, poverty and exploitation of desperate people who see no real possibility of improving their lot by peaceful means...just as there is a collective responsibility for avoiding war so too there is a collective responsibility for promoting development... War prevention entails a concerted worldwide effort to promote development.⁸⁸

Human beings should always try to heed to the call of Jesus in Mt. 5:9 when he said happy are the peacemakers for they will be called children of God. In so doing, we will live peaceably in the covenant relationship without oppression, injustice and conflict.

⁸⁶ Cf. CHRISTIANSEN, “Catholic Teaching on Peace and War”, 36

⁸⁷ Cf. CHRISTIANSEN, “Catholic Teaching on Peace and War”, 37

⁸⁸ Cf. CHRISTIANSEN, “Catholic Teaching on Peace and War”, 37

3.2. Interventions and Recommendations

3.2.1 Formation on Social and Religious morals

This should be considered as first priority since informing the minds and hearts of people assist better in behaviour formation. Some of the institutions that can help in this process of formation include the church, the family and the school.

The first institution which should be involved in this formation is the Church. Pope John XXIII in his encyclical letter *Pacem in Terris* number 36 says that we must think of human society as being primarily a spiritual reality and it is these spiritual values which put a guiding influence on culture, economics, social institutions, political movements and laws.⁸⁹ The materialistic world of today has lost the transcendental dimension in life. The acts of exploitation and brutality against humans that we experience today have obscured the divine image in man. This calls for the need to bridge the gap between humanity and God through re-equipping the human society with values.

One of the ways in which the Church can act is by encouraging the formation of small church institutions that access people in their homes and villages for the sake of common gatherings to pray and discuss social issues in the light of the message of the scriptures with the aim of charting the way forward. Small Christian Communities that is the smallest institution in the Catholic Church is a good example of a church institution that encourages prayer, bible study as well as responding to physical needs of the people. The Scriptures is a tool for social transformation because of its richness in teaching moral values and it can be useful if put into good use by evangelizers and if taken seriously by those being evangelized. In the Small Christian Communities, the human behaviors that

⁸⁹ Cf. M. WALSH – B. DAVIES, eds., *Proclaiming Justice and Peace, Documents from John XXIII – John Paul II*, 53

lead to this social evil of violence can be reflected upon in the light of the message of the scriptures especially concerning love and human dignity with the aim of orienting people to opt for healthy behaviors that promote good social living.

In his contribution on how Small Christian Communities have lit up the neighborhoods in Kisumu, Father Alphonse Omolo, a priest of the Kisumu Archdiocese in Kenya exposes how the Christian Communities in the neighborhoods of Kisumu came together in the spirit of solidarity and began realizing the commonality of the hardships that afflicted them. They started acting as counselors in one another's physical, mental and spiritual life and this became the framework for one another to speak, listen, understand and take action having realized their own power to change their living conditions.⁹⁰

Small Christian Communities in this environment have been a tool for self initiated development and an instrument for attaining social justice through making real the teaching of the scriptures with regard to human life today. This has been realized through acts like charity towards the poor in their neighborhoods and offering care and support to the needy.

The problem of violence in Kenya can as well be addressed at such levels of church groups because such groups offer social support in the face of human suffering and help in devising healthier means of response as shown in the above case.

The Church being prophetic in her role is called to action against social evils. Therefore on the basis of moral values which they are convinced of, the Church should condemn the evils that bedevil our society and speak without any bias or compromise. If

⁹⁰ Cf. J. G. HEALEY, - J. HINTON, *Small Christian Communities Today, Capturing the New Moment*, 110

the Muslims, Hindus and all Christian denominations can share a platform and condemn evils like social inequality, corruption and violence and even be ready to mobilize their followers to act against these evils, the initiators can feel threatened and possibly consider initiating change. The society will also be made aware of the evil activities happening and the means available for initiating social transformation. In the process people may adopt alternative positive behaviors required by the society.

The second institution should be the school. A curriculum should be designed for all schools comprising of a compulsory subject on moral values and religious education and subjects like patriotism should be made compulsory for all students both in primary and secondary schools. The school sponsors i.e. Churches should be more involved with the student welfare and each school should have a teacher or a social worker whose work should be to monitor the moral performance of the pupils/students and recommend necessary corrections.

College chaplaincies should be more organized and be taken seriously. All Colleges should put as part of their rules that a student ought to join at least one of the religious groups that the college may provide e.g. Young Christian Students and Christian Union. These groups should make programmes for religious instruction and moral education for their members.

The third institution should be the family. Violent tendencies begin to develop right from childhood and the very initial institution that is responsible for a child's socialization skills is the family. If one has any antisocial behaviour, the family ought to be held accountable to some extent. Therefore the family should be the first agent of civilization in the society. The parents should be trained on how to bring up people who

will be flexible enough to the various stressors of life and they should be guided so that they acquire better and productive parenting skills. “Parents should be reminded to identify and reinforce desired behaviour in children, put time outs for undesired behaviour and encourage pro-social behaviour in children by encouraging them to adopt the spirit of helping, cooperation and sharing.”⁹¹

In order to avoid the character of shame and encourage pro-social behaviour, parents and guardians should show love especially by avoiding severe and frequent punishments without explanation, rewarding children for the good done, being available to them and providing their basic needs. Giving attention to a child will show love to him or her and he/she will learn to love in return. Parents can use corrective feedback e.g. by explaining to children that behaviors like violence are unacceptable and why. Parents can give children the opportunity to help others as per their age e.g. through setting table, cooking, fetching water or firewood. Parents should also learn to complement children’s good works and they should as well be role models to their children. The aim of all this will be to make a child develop love hence improving a child’s socialization skills so that he or she can see fellow human beings as deserving the best and not the worst.

The traditional family unit based on man and woman structure should be protected to give the children an opportunity to interact with both the sexes so that the child can be wholly integrated as either a male or female. Archbishop Emeritus John Njenga in his contribution to peace in Africa said, “Families should be modeled on the foundation of the holy family of Joseph, Mary and Jesus and on the basis of God’s act of creating man and woman to complement each other and endowing them with the

⁹¹ Cf. I. A. HOROWITZ – K. S., BORDENS, *Social Psychology*, 508

responsibility of upbringing their children.”⁹² To ensure this, proper instruction on family life should be ensured before a marital union and ‘come we stay’ engagements should be discouraged. The media, the church and the state can ensure this instruction by making use of marriage counselors and successfully married models to ensure that people are ready for marital duties especially child upbringing.

3.2.2. Counseling

Counseling should first focus on the formation of the cognitive process. “Cognitive intervention involves non-confrontational behaviour management or teaching on how to manage social behaviour.”⁹³ Rational emotive and cognitive behaviour interventions can help in behaviour re-orientation among Kenyans. This involves informing the conscience of people to evaluate the rationality and irrationality of their beliefs and actions with the aim of encouraging them to opt for rational beliefs and avoid irrational ones that they have held however long this has been.

For instance it was irrational to opt for violence just because people felt frustrated and had anxiety due to an environment that was perceived to be hostile and unfriendly. It is not rational to cling to the idea of tribal preference to the point of denying people of other tribes access to resources necessary for their development as human persons and even launching violence against people of another tribe just because they belong to a tribe that is not ours. Using Rational behaviour interventions will help people to re-inform their cognitive process so that they can learn and adopt better and harmless yet effective options to cope under various social situations.

⁹² Cf. J. NJENGA, “Family is answer to World Peace”, 7 & 16

⁹³ Cf. I. A. HOROWITZ – K. S., BORDENS, *Social Psychology*, 509

When we are angry we tend to process information quickly and improperly and this tampers with our ability to think and evaluate the consequences of our actions. Because of this, people ought to be taught how to process new information before acting. People should be helped to adopt listening skills before action so that they can be able to compare their own points of view to others' point of view. It seems people were overwhelmed by their feelings and acted in a hasty manner without judging the consequences of their actions and the results were disastrous instead of being helpful. Violence directed to the innocent victims was not the best action because it caused more harm than good.

Secondly, counseling should act on anger Management. Violence is an act that results from feelings of anger which degenerate into rage then violence. We should note that anger is normal under appropriate circumstances but expressing it in inappropriate ways like violence is abnormal. "Anger can be disabled from degenerating into violence through making clear and simple statements indicating that one is angry as well as expressing what the other person did that brought the anger so as to assert oneself and relieve tension."⁹⁴ Self expression offers an opportunity for mutual understanding and allows one to think so as not to blindly justify ones behaviour. Sharing ones feelings of anger is freeing and initiates self awareness. In order to reduce the likelihood of electoral violence again, those who felt offended should be given forums in which they can express their frustrations and anger through talking so that they can be helped using counseling skills to process their pain appropriately.

Physical presence among the victims of the violence through activities like sharing both materially and emotionally can also create again a sense of belonging and

⁹⁴ Cf. E. ARONSON – T. D. WILSON, – R. M. AKERT, *Social Psychology*, 4th ed., 467

love. For this matter pastoral work in prisons, IDP camps and visiting families which were gravely affected should be initiated by the Church and other well wishers since this can create in people a sense that they are still recognized and cared for.

3.2.3. Limiting exposure to scenes of violence

“Researches have shown that there is a possibility that continued exposure to violent scenes will undermine feelings of empathy, concern and sympathy that people would have towards victims of actual violence.”⁹⁵ The first agent of exposure is the media. Since the media today has a lot of influence among the youth and it is trusted, it ought to play a responsible role in reducing violence. It ought to be careful in what it exposes to people lest they cause incitement and numbness towards effects of violence.

The second agent of exposure is the society. The government should initiate an operation to disarm all militia groups and armed communities of the war materials in their possession like guns, spears and arrows. Disarmament will be effective in two ways.

First, it will reduce exposure to appliances of violence which have a triggering effect on the people’s cognitive process hence they will have reduced motivation to violence due to the absence of the appliances that motivate people to violence. Secondly, reducing offensive weapons reduces incentives for war. “When the offensive weapons are unable to destroy the defensive response, the likely retaliatory response will be perceived to be simply too enormous to risk.”⁹⁶ This means that if the communities are disarmed they will fear to initiate violent attacks given the fact that they may be countered and

⁹⁵ Cf. J. H. GENTRY – P. SCHLEGEL, *Reason to Hope, A Psychosocial Perspective on Violence and youth*, 237

⁹⁶ Cf. G. STASSEN, *Just Peacemaking, Ten Practices for Abolishing War*, 156

overpowered by their opponents. Without arms or appliances for war, people become a little powerless.

Therefore the media and the society at large should avoid exposing young people to violent models since this exposure acts as an occasion to learn then get the motivation to go to violence. People who feel violence and killings at their proximity may develop resistance towards empathizing or sympathizing with the victims. To build empathy and sympathy it's advisable to keep violent scenes out of our societies.

3.2.4. Punishment and Substitution

“Punishment refers to procedures in which aversive consequences are delivered to individuals when they engage in specific actions mostly antisocial thereby decreasing the likelihood or strength of that action.”⁹⁷ Punishment in most cases is unpleasant and brings pain to recipients and this is why it at times deters people from acting anti socially.

In the Kenyan situation, punishment should be carefully considered so that its usage may not result to negative consequences instead of reducing people's involvement in violence which it should aim at. For punishment to be more effective in controlling violence, it must be prompt, must be strong enough to be highly unpleasant to recipients and it must be perceived by recipients as deserved/justified. In the Kenyan case, punishment in the form of imprisonment may not be effective as per now in reducing the violent behaviour since much time has passed since the violence occurred and the recipients may not feel that they deserve to be punished basing on some people's argument that punishment should as well involve bringing into judgment even those who were indirectly involved in the violence and not just those who went out to fight.

⁹⁷ Cf. R. A. BARON – D. BYRNE, *Social Psychology*, 463

Furthermore, some people have argued that “Physical punishment also tends to increase violent behaviour while incarceration drives the punished person into the very social subgroup (the prison culture) where violence is maximally reinforced.”⁹⁸

The violence in Kenya can to a great extent be termed as an addiction because “as an individual’s participation in violence increases so does reinforcement of ~~the~~ violent behaviour largely due to the presence in society of factors that reinforce existing patterns of violence and membership in violence reinforcing subgroups.”⁹⁹ Dealing with violence as an addictive behaviour in the Kenyan situation may call for using more positive reinforcements rather than pain inflicting mechanisms like imprisonment which may only lead to resentment.

Though punishment can control people’s behaviour in some cases, a more positive approach to the evil such as substitution ought to be adopted. Substitution refers to offering alternative activities that can work in place of situations that drive people to violence. Instead of interventions which may cause hopelessness and possibly make people to commit more crime in future, people especially the youths should be provided with employment through enhancing better and transparent means of job recruitment, better education, vocational and social skill training and recreation through enhancing art and sports starting from the grassroots level.

⁹⁸ Cf. Kenya Thabiti Taskforce 2008, Commission by the Interreligious Forum, *Root Causes and Implications of the Post Election Violence, 2007*, 45

⁹⁹ Cf. Kenya Thabiti Taskforce 2008, Commission by the Interreligious Forum, *Root Causes and Implications of the Post Election Violence of 2007*, 45.

3.2.5. Reconciliation and Forgiveness

Social psychologists propose reconciliation as a possible solution to cases of violence since it calls for the perpetrators to swallow their pride, take responsibility for their actions, apologize to the public and indicate that it is unlikely to happen again.¹⁰⁰ The path to reconciliation will only be aided by establishing the truth however bitter it will be concerning what transpired in the elections and truth regarding our social systems that reinforce violence for instance tribalism, economic disparities and cultural practices that encourage violence with an aim of denouncing the irrational beliefs that have been associated with these phenomena for years.

The past injustices that have been committed in the Kenyan society for instance corruptions and political assassinations will have to be unearthed not with an aim of victimizing the perpetrators but with an aim of providing the victims and the perpetrators with an opportunity to confront the bitter truth as a tool for forgiveness.

Initiating reforms that will enhance development of the people is necessary for attaining a positive path towards reconciliation. This is because reconciliation often involves a show of commitment towards attaining a socially just society that gives opportunities for development of individuals. These reforms include constitution review, land reforms and creating employment for the youths. Such reforms will provide opportunities for development of the people thus address frustration and resultant feelings of shame, anxiety and bitterness towards the political class hence enhance social integration and reduce the motivation to violence and its effects.

South Africa is a perfect model for reconciliation especially on how they dealt with the perpetrators of violence during apartheid. Their interim constitution of 1993

¹⁰⁰ Cf. E. ARONSON – T. D. WILSON, – R. M. AKERT, *Social Psychology*, 4th ed., 466

stated, “There is need for understanding but not for vengeance, a need for reparation but not for retaliation, a need for compassion but not for victimization.”¹⁰¹ For the sake of reconciliation, they established the nature and extent of the atrocities committed which they declared publicly. The victims, their families and perpetrators had to express publicly their testimonies.¹⁰² This system needed great humility in order to testify and also to accept to forgive murderous but eventually it bore fruit since the masterminds of apartheid were forgiven and people resolved to live as one society never to commit of such atrocities again.

If Kenya can follow the example of South Africa there is need for establishing the truth concerning what led Kenyans to violence then those who are mentioned to have participated either directly or indirectly should come out publicly and account for their actions. This can bring psychological comfort to the rest of the public that at least they have admitted wrongdoing and have shown readiness to change. ✓

3.2.6. Conclusion

The intervention strategies mentioned address the economic aspects of life, ensures justice and accountability and imparts values and morals thus shaping the character of individuals. All these intervention strategies mentioned cannot effectively work each in isolation. Therefore there is need to embrace all of them together in the process of modeling individuals who are anti-violence and there is need for considering the situations in a given region and choose the options that will be best fitting.

¹⁰¹ Cf. M.K. DUFFEY, *Sowing Justice Reaping Peace*, 69

¹⁰² Cf. M.K. DUFFEY, *Sowing Justice Reaping Peace*, 69

GENERAL CONCLUSION

Violence and political violence just like any other addiction is not an act chosen by an individual without any negative factors surrounding the choice. Violence is proscribed in all spheres of life in spite of the various understandable factors that may surround it. For an individual or group individuals to opt for violence there is an interplay between biological, social and psychological factors that impact on him or her thus subjecting him or her to a condition which can easily trigger a violent outburst.

This essay has shown especially in Chapter 1 that for violence to occur such as it occurred in Kenya there has to be interplay between human nature that tends towards self defense and fighting for survival amidst scarce resources and the situations in one's social environment. These may include issues surrounding economy, group systems that foster inclusion by members of the 'in-group' and exclusion of members of the 'out-group' and exposure to social evils like violence through social medium like TV and society that is violence prone. Finally these socio-biological factors create psychological feelings in an individual such as frustration, shame, fear, anger, rage and anxiety which motivate individuals to act so as to relieve themselves of these negative feelings. In the process of acting in order to express their inner selves, violence erupts.

In relation to Kenya's Post Election Violence, this essay has proved that, the alleged rigging was just an occasion for people to express what they had kept within themselves for years. There was much connection between the violence and the prevailing socio-political situations which had characterized Kenya for the years since

independence. The violence was a reaction based on the prevailing factors like tribal hatred, economic crises and political marginalization. These resulted into feelings of resentment, anxiety, anger and frustration among sections of Kenyan Population and it is this that resulted into the violent out burst which was the Post Election Violence.

As far as political violence is concerned our social systems should carefully observe the various socio-psychological factors and how these may be impacting on character formation of the individuals. This is because most cases of politics oriented violence result from a lack of concern with the socio-psychological life of the people and this in turn may make them to be less concerned with life and even think of destroying it. The self is a very important component of the individual psychical operations because it highly determines people's mode of action.

Social systems should promote in individuals a positive self image by promoting values of good social living, providing opportunities for development of individuals and encouraging social integration and not division. This is because a distorted self image is a risk towards an individual disregarding the value of human life because if one loses the essence of his or her own life through an endlessly frustrating social environment then he or she may not see the value of respecting life in itself be it his or hers or others'

Difficulties, suffering, frustration and all forms of social evils are realities which though unpleasant can sometimes bedevil our society. Indeed suffering is a reality that characterizes human life and coping with suffering greatly calls for social support and not just individual isolated struggles. A Socially integrated society will provide the people with an opportunity to discuss social problems and devise healthy means of coping with them. Peace calls for collective responsibility and despite the difficulties we are

undergoing irrespective of whether they are justified or not, there is need to opt for more rational approaches. For instance through social support, society members can come together and initiate social support endeavors such as self help projects, micro finances, Mary go round initiatives, women and men groups and Community Savings and Credit Banks to uplift their economic standards at the grassroots.

Despite all the various social stressors and factors that individuals are exposed to it is always worthy to remember the value of human life and enrich it. People ought to always remember that in our joys and difficulties we are still a unity enjoying a dignity that we have acquired in our creation in the image and likeness of God. Despite our diversity in the various spheres of social life we are united under the supreme law of love and service to one another.

I sign out by this message from the Pontifical Commission for Justice and peace:

Ones neighbor is not only a human being with his or her own rights and a fundamental equality with everyone else but becomes the living image of God the Father redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ and placed under the permanent action of the holy Spirit. Ones neighbor must therefore be loved even if an enemy with the same love with which the Lord loves him or her; and for that persons sake one must be ready for sacrifice even the ultimate: to lay down ones life for the brethren. (1 Jn. 3: 16)¹⁰³

¹⁰³ Cf. Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social doctrine of the Church*, 113

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Map of Kenya showing the administrative provinces and borders.

PROVINCES OF KENYA

EASTERN PROVINCE

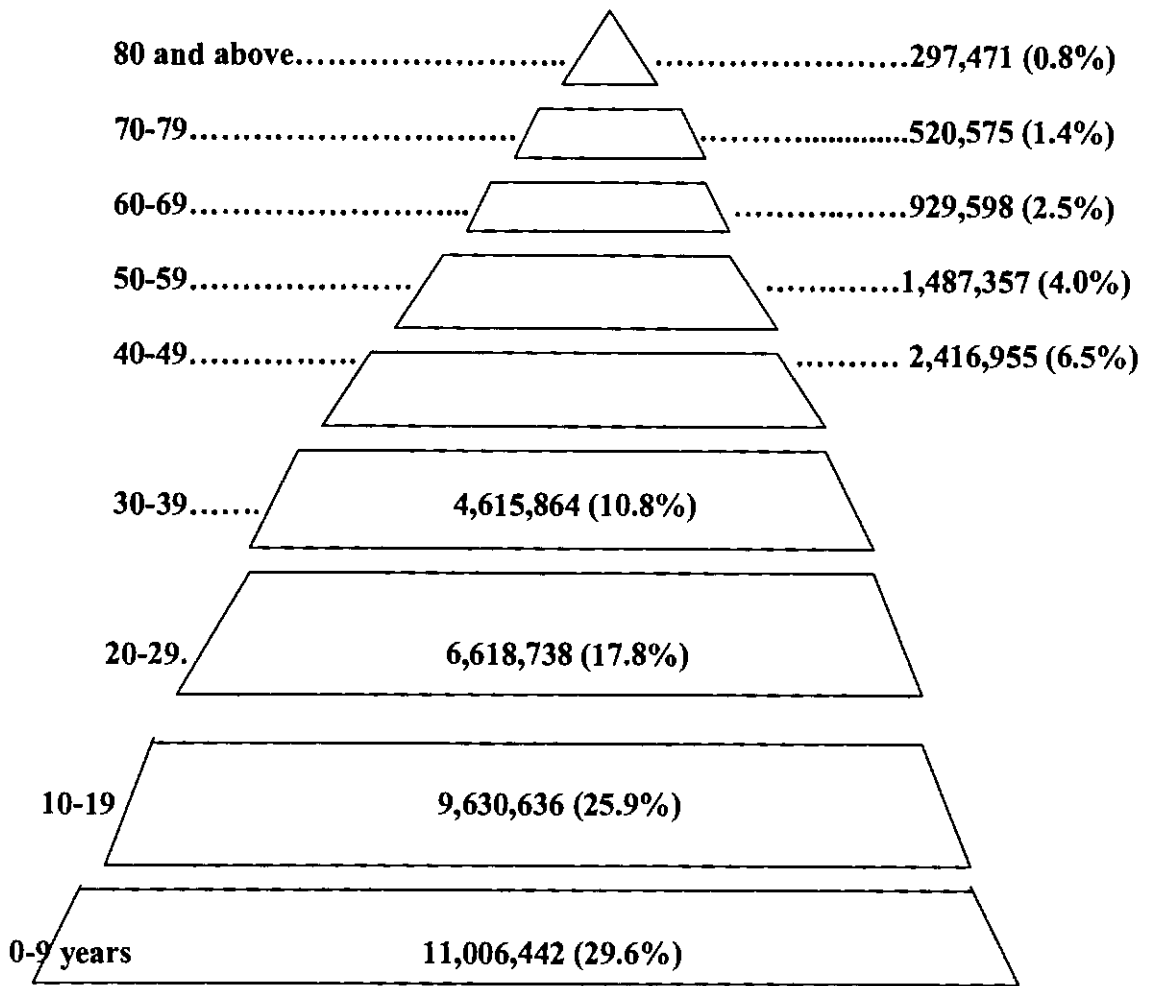
WESTERN PROVINCE

CENTRAL PROVINCE

SIYOTI PROVINCE

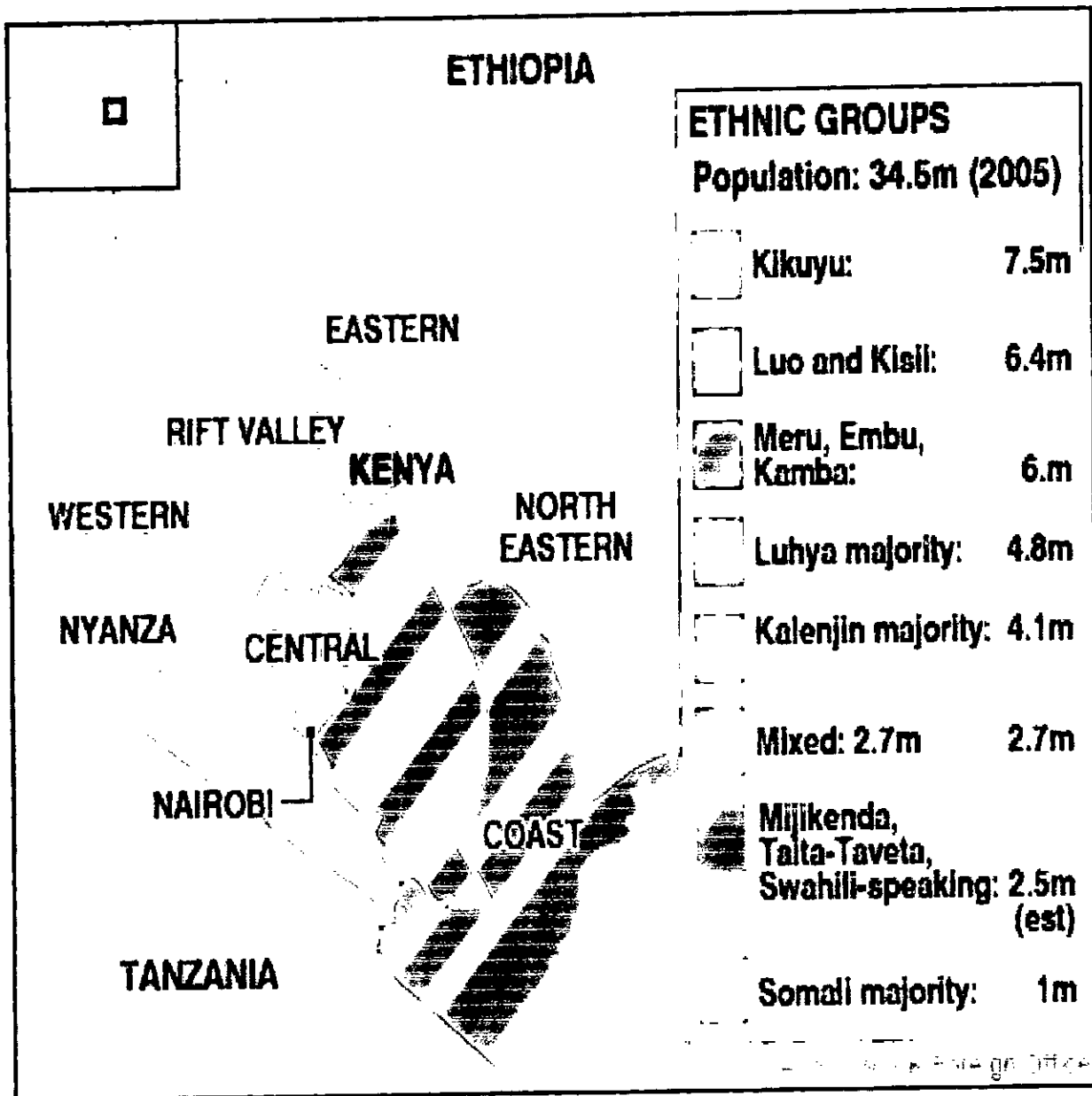
Source: Kenya Book of Records

Appendix 2: Kenya Population Pyramid by age



Source: Kenya Book of Records: Extrapolated from 1999 figures from the Central Bureau of Statistics

Appendix 3: Map of Kenya showing the distribution of major ethnic groups



SOURCE: <http://ferociouspixie.blogspot.com/2008/01/map-of-kenyas-ethnic-divisions.html>, 26th Aug. 2009.

Appendix 4a: Research Questionnaire

Dear respondent, my name is Godfrey Okoth Onyango, a fourth year student at Tangaza College (Catholic University of Eastern Africa), School of Theology. I am in the field to collect data for my research paper as a partial fulfillment for the requirements of Bachelor of Arts in Theology. This questionnaire has been designed to help in a research study on the psychosocial factors related to Political Violence and an application of these factors to Kenya's 2007/2008 Post Election Violence. The aim of carrying out this research is to devise a way of building peace and understanding among Kenyan people through seeking to understand from a psychosocial point of view why people engage in violence and particularly politically initiated violence.

I am kindly requesting you to contribute towards the fulfillment of this work by sharing with me your thoughts, experiences, observations, recommendations and any other relevant information from your own point of view regarding this topic by filling in this questionnaire. All information will be used for the purpose of the study and will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Personal Details

Name..... (Optional)

Gender.....Male Female

Age Bracket...18-24 25-30 31-40 41-55 55 and above

Ethnic Group.....Optional

Occupation.....

Level of Education.....1) Informal 2) Primary 3) Secondary 4) Tertiary

Research Questions

1. How would you define political violence?
2. What were the causes of the violence that broke out after the announcement of the 2007 election results in Kenya?
3. Do you think there was a relationship between socioeconomic inequality and the violence? How?
4. Do you think ethnicity is a factor contributing to violence in Kenya? How?
5. What do you think are some of the measures that can be taken in Kenya today to curb subsequent political violence?
6. Which institutions in our society should assist in the campaign against violence in Kenya? Very briefly state some roles that these institutions should perform.
7. Do you believe certain communities in Kenya have a culture of Violence? Example? How can such communities be helped to stop violence?

**Appendix 4b: A presentation of the Respondents' views regarding the question,
 "What were the causes of the violence that broke out after the announcement
 of the 2007 election results in Kenya?"**

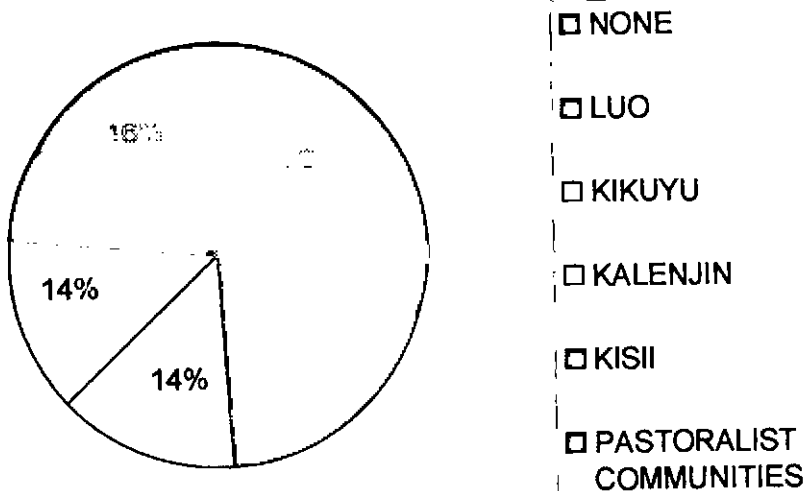
The issues raised by the respondents regarding what caused the violence could be classified into 3 broad categories. They were Political, Ethnic and Economic.

Political Reasons	Economic Reasons	Ethnic Reasons
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychological victories even before elections • Feeling among some Kenyans that the victory they voted for was stolen (Rigging) • Delayed announcement of Presidential results which amounted to anxiety, tension and suspicion • The fear of looming suffering incase the government of the day retains power due to the winner takes it all mentality. • Greed for power and control of Government • Political influence by leaders. • Bitterness from political assassinations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hard economic times causing (poverty) • Economic inequality. The rich continue growing richer while the poor wallow in poverty • Unemployment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incitement led by political leaders against certain tribes • Bitterness caused by historical injustices committed towards certain ethnic groups e.g. malicious killings of people (assassinations), land deprivation and partial distribution of national resources • Dominance by certain tribes such that one tribe stereotyped themselves as the rightful owners of the presidential seat while others felt it was the turn of another tribe. • Retaliation against members of the tribes who were fighting the Kikuyu in other regions • A feeling that one tribe wanted one of their own to be president.

Appendix 5: Table demonstrating how frustration could develop from economic factors, land issue and rigging in the Kenyan situation

	Economic Factors	Land issue	Rigging
Instigator	-Inability to cater for basic needs like food due to poverty and little salary	-Living as squatters -Lack of enough land for agriculture and settlement	-Unilateral election of ECK commissioners by the President -Lack of some names in voters register -Delay of results from some regions
Goal Response	-Looking for employment and better sources of income	-Trying to access land by buying and forceful acquisition -Call for land redistribution	-Call for consultation on the membership of ECK -Verification of form 16A -The public's attempt to Access the tallying center at KICC
Interference	-Corruption, -Tribalism -Nepotism -Illiteracy	-Police action against those who encroach in public and private land -Lack of money to buy land	-Cordoning off of KICC by police rendering people unable to access it -Police brutality on demonstrators -Media blackout
F R	U S T	R A T	I O N
Substitute Response	-Public demonstrations -Robbery -Looting -Violence	-Internal displacements -Land clashes	-Violence in the public away from KICC -Displaced action against those who were seen to be associated with the party that was rigged in

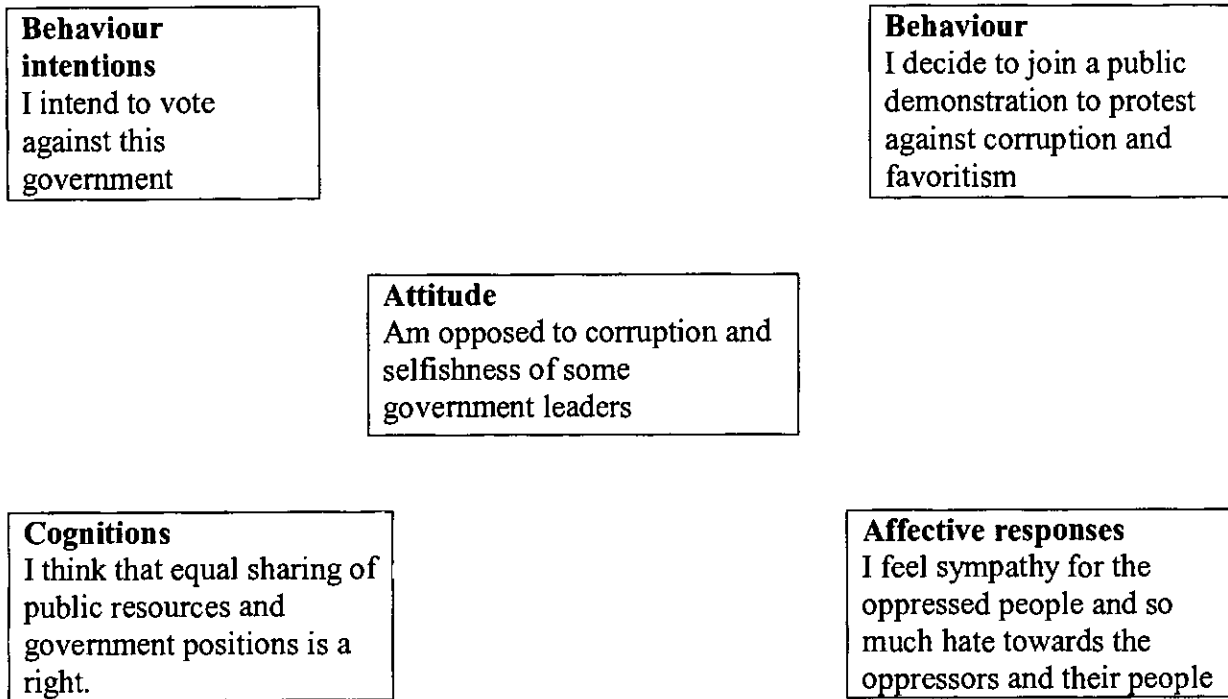
Appendix 6: A Pie chart showing the number of Respondents in percentage that associate some Kenyan Tribes with the Culture of violence



Source: Data collected by the researcher through interviews and questionnaires.

Out of the 200 respondents interviewed by the researcher using the interviews and the questionnaires, the pie chart shows that majority of those interviewed (30%) felt that no tribe in Kenya exhibit the culture of violence. 20% of those interviewed felt that the Luo exhibit the culture of violence. 16% of those interviewed felt that the pastoralist communities exhibit the culture of violence. Some of them mentioned were the Pokot, Turkana, Samburu, Somali and the Maasai. 14% of those interviewed felt that the Kikuyu and the Kalenjin exhibit the same degree in their tendencies towards violence. Among the tribes mentioned, Kisii appeared least with only 6% of the respondents mentioning them.

Appendix 7: Diagram representation of attitude development: Kenyan Case.



Adapted from HOROWITZ, I. A. – BORDENS, K. S., *Social Psychology*, California: Mayfield Publishing Company, 1995, page 231