

Promoting Post-conflict Peaceful Co-existence in Multi-ethnic Communities: Lessons from Internally Displaced Persons in Kenya

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Abstract

This paper explores ways of achieving national cohesion among ethnically diverse people who inhabit a national territory, even where they have competition. Drawing from an ongoing PhD research on the 'Discursive Construction of Self-Identity Among the Internally Displaced Persons in Kenya's 2007 Post- Election Violence', the paper examines the relationship between ethnicity and conflict and attempts to identify factors that instigate conflict along ethnic lines and ways in which harmonious co-existence can be achieved among diverse ethnic groups. It takes the Kenyan experience with over forty ethnic groups and considers the challenges and achievements in building a cohesive nation. By examining the county's history of periodic ethnic-related violence from 1992 to 2007, the paper also explores the opportunities available to establish a stable and peaceful ethnically diverse community even where there is stiff competition by looking at what prevails in times of unity, and what causes divisions and suspicion among the communities, and how divisive factors can be eliminated. The data for the study was collected by means face to face interviews with Internally Displaced Persons. The study was underpinned by the Critical Discourse Analysis theoretical framework which works as both theory and method. Thus, data was analysed using Thematic Content Analysis to identify the responses of the displaced persons and issues that appear to promote national cohesion with issues that militate against it, particularly with regard to the communities that were involved in the conflict. The findings of this study indicate that ethnic violence in Kenya is not attributable to the natural characteristics of the ethnic communities (primordial), but by human interaction (instrumental and constructivist) factors. Thus, this study proposes that the deliberate cultivation of a harmonious relationship between the various ethnic communities, and creation of strong government institutions to enforce the law and administer justice is a possible solution in ending the conflicts.

Key words: national cohesion, conflict, ethnic identity, ethnic diversity, critical discourse analysis.

Introduction

The world has witnessed many conflicts that are perpetrated along ethnic lines. The Rwanda genocide that shocked the world to the core was one such conflict. Sudan has recently been a theatre of similar violence and many others continue to be witnessed in a smaller scale an example being Uganda's with a militant rebel group. Such conflicts do not just erupt but have their underlying causes that can be diagnosed way before the threat of violence becomes an event.

Discourse is seen as part of social practice (Dijk, 1998) and it can therefore be used as mirror the society. It can be used to describe various aspects of the society among them the relationships between various individuals and groups. Such relationships may be characterised by competition and tension or co-operation and harmony. The paper considers discourse a useful tool to express both cordial and hostile relationships that exist between the various communities and the interpretations of the causes of such relationships. Conflicts between different groups are some of the possible manifestations of competitive relationships. In this pursuit the paper ponders the following questions:

Is there an inherent relationship between ethnicity and violence?

Is ethnic conflict preventable?

Can the communities which have been engaged in conflict live harmoniously?

What are the long term solutions to the violence?

Using the discourse of the communities which have been involved in violence in Kenya specifically the Internally Displaced Persons in Kenya's 2007 post-election violence the paper seeks evidence of possible causes of the violence in the basic characteristics of the different ethnic communities and in man-made factors. By use of interviews, the paper has elicited descriptions of the relationship that obtains between the communities in non-conflict periods and considered the possible means in which these can be sustained even in the face of situations that engender competition.

Background to Kenya's Ethnic Related Violence

At the end of 2007 Kenya held general elections to elect the president and members of parliament. The presidential elections had been the most hotly contested yet in the history of the country and predictably attracted the highest voter turnout recorded so far. The two leading contenders for the presidency were Raila Odinga of Orange Democratic Party (ODM) and Mwai Kibaki of Party of National Unity (PNU). In the electioneering period the public had been treated to claims and counterclaims of plans to rig the elections and some violence characterized the campaigns.

Various pollsters differed markedly on who held the lead between the two principal contesters in the close race although a great majority of them pointed to a possible Raila victory (IFRA, 2008). When the elections were held, Mwai Kibaki was announced the winner beating Raila Odinga by a narrow margin of 3% with 47% of the votes against Raila's 44% (Dagne 2008). The results were fiercely disputed and ODM supporters launched violent protests in the party strongholds such as Kisumu, Eldoret, Mombasa and in some parts of the capital city Nairobi. The violence was mainly targeted at those who were believed on the basis of either ethnic or party affiliations to have supported Mr. Kibaki. According to Dagne (2008) in a report to the United States Congress, the violence was perpetrated mostly by the Kalenjins and Luo on Kikuyu and Kisii communities. Soon after, the targeted communities launched retaliatory attacks against the communities perceived to have voted for the ODM. The violence by the two sides involved looting, arson, assault, raping, maiming and killing. Members of the targeted ethnic communities living in the areas that were affected by the violence fled their homes for safety. The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, KNCHR (2008) estimates that at least 1,162 people were killed, about 3,561 were injured (Waki Report 2008) and about 350,000 others were displaced from their homes in the post-election violence (PEV). According to the KNCHR (2008) most analysts agreed that the violence was a consequence of both the faulty tallying process, as well as underlying issues that predated the 2007 elections. Some of the underlying issues can be understood by looking at the country's history of ethnic related violence.

Violence between different ethnic communities in Kenya can be traced back to the pre-colonial period. The Akiwumi report (1999) says that before colonialism in Kenya in the early nineteenth century, the Rift Valley where most of the ethnic related violence has occurred was occupied mainly by the Kalenjin, the Maasai, the Turkana, the Samburu, the Pokot communities and sections of the Luhya who all held land communally. The report notes that at the time the pressure on land was not as great as it is today but even so, inter-clan and sometimes inter-ethnic conflict was common. According to Yieke (2010), the violence was however, never of the large-scale type. The colonial period with the white settlers' demand for fertile land saw some communities forced to leave their land for the settlers' occupation. The areas affected were mainly the Central region and the Rift Valley which were described as white highlands. This made members of some of the affected ethnic communities to move to some areas that were perceived as belonging to some other communities, thus creating discontent among the perceived owners and setting the stage for possible conflict. Signs of tension between the communities involved over use of land were manifest in the colonial period as the following statement cited in Akiwumi report (ibid) from the Annual Report for Nakuru of 1961 indicates:

... inter-tribal tensions increased markedly as the year wore on. The Kalenjin make no secret of the fact that they are stock-piling native arms against the inevitable day probably after independence when they will have to fight the Kikuyu and perhaps the Luo for control of their own areas including the upper and Middle Rift' p 43.

When the settlers relinquished the land after independence in 1963, there was a feeling that the land did not always revert to the original owners but some was acquired by other communities. This is partly as a result of the government policies. The KNCHR (2008) report describes the independence government policies as having opened doors to land buyers in Rift Valley without prioritizing those who some communities perceived as indigenous dwellers of the regions. It was also felt that corruption in the resettlement schemes also saw senior individuals in the immediate post- independence government allocating themselves large tracts of land giving rise to persistent complaints. Complaints about this issue, commonly termed historical injustices, endured to the era of the third post-independence president in 2002 Mwai Kibaki.

Kenya has experienced ethnic violence during election periods from the end of 1991. There have been ethnic clashes in the Western part of the country between the Sabaot and the non-Sabaot communities which occurred in 1991 just before the first multiparty elections in 1992 during which the Bukusu, Teso and Kikuyu were brutally attacked. The Akiwumi report (1999) says this was done to drive these ethnic communities away for they were poised to vote for the opposition in the 1992 general elections. There was also ethnic-related violence in 1992 whereby illegal occupation of forest land was cited as justification to evict non-Maasai from parts of Narok.

In 1997, ethnic violence rocked the coastal region of Kenya where the local communities targeted the non-indigenous communities who lived in the area blaming them for the poor conditions faced by their indigenous ethnic groups in their search for jobs, land, and educational opportunities. The Coastal people especially the Digo attacked mainly the Kikuyu, Luo, Kamba and Luhya (KNCHR 2008). Ethnic conflict has also been known to occur in the North Eastern region involving Somali clans and the Borana and at times also the Orma, Burji and the Garre.

In the 2007 post-election violence, party affiliation along ethnic lines led to a situation where some communities which had been attacked by others in the previous elections this time fought on the same side of the conflict. For example the Luo who were targeted by the coastal people in 1997 are reported to have fought alongside these people in the 2007 (KNCHR 2008) for they were both in ODM. They targeted Kikuyu, Meru, Embu, Kisii and later Kamba.

Constitution Vis-avis Ethnic Communities' Position on Land Ownership and Settlement

Many Kenyan ethnic communities perceive the regions in which they form a majority as exclusively their own. They therefore consider their ethnic communities as having the right to determine who can or cannot live in those areas which they perceive as 'ancestral land' (Ogola forthcoming: 85) and those who do not have ancestral roots there are 'interloping strangers' (Marshall-Fratani 2007; Mbembe 2000 in Berman 2010:27). They also feel that membership to an ethnic community is what entitles one to own land where the community lives.

Therefore although the Kenyan constitution recognizes the right to own land and live anywhere in the country, the ‘host’ community feels that the buyers are indebted to them for allowing them to settle there and they owe the community loyalty. One area in which the loyalty is demanded is on political issues where the buyers of land are expected to toe the line of their ‘hosts’ and not to be seen to contest their political choices.

The Kilgoris Parliamentary election in 2007 was a classic example of this kind of reasoning. In this constituency in Rift valley a member of the Kalenjin community appeared to be leading in vote count in an area dominated by the Maasai community. Members of the Maasai community stopped the counting midway saying that they could not give both land and leadership to the Kalenjin (KNCHR 2008).

Cultural and Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity is defined by one’s culture of origin and is often associated with specific cultural values, attitudes and behaviours (Phinney 1996 in Schwartz 2010). Cultures are wider than ethnicity as they can include ethnic groups as well as other groups of people whose membership is based on geography and other shared traits, interests, knowledge, beliefs, norms or behaviours (Greetz 1973 in Schwartz et al 2010). Some examples of cultures have been identified as gay culture, deaf culture, hip-hop culture . Each individual has a number of cultural identities arising from the different groups that they belong to. Ethnicity refers to a person’s ancestral geographic origin. According to Fearon and Laitin (2000) the other cultural attributes that constitute ethnicity are religion, language, customs, and shared historical myths. This study treats a common language as the most important attribute. Kenya has over 40 ethnic groups with different proportions of representation in the total population. The five biggest ethnic communities account for over 50% of the population .The major ethnic groups and their proportion are shown in the table below.

Table 1 **Kenya’s Ethnic Communities by Proportion**

| Ethnic Group | Share of Total Population (in Percent) |
|----------------------------|---|
| Kikuyu | 21 |
| Luhya | 14 |
| Luo | 12 |
| Kalenjin | 12 |
| Kamba | 11 |
| Kisii | 6 |
| Meru | 5 |
| Mijikenda | 5 |
| Masai | 2 |
| Others/smaller Communities | 12 |

Source: Elischer 2008 in Ogechi (n.d :7)

As the table above shows, of the forty ethnic groups in the country the first five major Kikuyu, Luhya, Luo, Kalenjin and Kamba make up about 70% of the country's population. The other thirty-five ethnic communities account for about 30% of the population. Many of the conflicts have involved at least one of the major ethnic groups and come almost always at election times which can be related to the potential of the groups to influence election outcomes due to their numeric strength. The Kikuyu are a people who speak a Bantu language and can be found throughout Kenya (Mukhwana & Kibiru, 2014) but the heaviest concentration is in Central Province, known as the traditional Kikuyu homeland. They are capitalistic and are believed to be good in money management. They have had keen interest in politics and played an active part in Kenya's independence struggle as members of the Mau Mau rebellion having lost their land to colonialists. They have also fielded candidates in the presidential elections since independence and the first president of the country came from the community. The Luhya the second biggest ethnic community in Kenya and also speak a Bantu language with about 18 dialects including Maragoli, Bukusu, Samia, Banyala, Banyore, Wanga, Kabrasi Batsotso, Gisu, Idakho, Isukha, Kabras, Khayo, Kisa, Marachi, Marama, Masaaba, Samia, Tachoni and Tiriki (KenyaInformationGuide.com). They live in the western region of the country north of Lake Victoria (Jenkins 2009). They are among some of the Kenyan communities that lost their most fertile land to the colonialists during the British colonial rule of Kenya. Most of them especially the Bukusu, strongly resisted colonial rule and fought to regain their land.

The Luo are a Nilotic people who live in the western part of Kenya around Lake Victoria. The Luo community have had a keen interest in the politics of Kenya with Oginga Odinga a member of the community having been a key figure in the quest for Kenya's independence in the 1950's and 1960's. He rose to become the first vice-president of Kenya. His son Raila Odinga in 2008 became the second Prime Minister of Kenya and remains a powerful politician. The Kalenjin community is the fourth largest ethnic group in Kenya. Their present-day homeland is Kenya's western highlands and the Rift Valley. The community belongs to the Nilotic ethnic group and consists of eight culturally and linguistically related groups: the Kipsigis, Nandi, Tugen, Keiyo, Marakwet, Pokot, Sabaot and the Terik. The Kalenjin community is the fourth largest ethnic group in Kenya. Their present-day homeland is Kenya's western highlands and the Rift Valley. The community belongs to the Nilotic ethnic group and consists of eight culturally and linguistically related groups: the Kipsigis, Nandi, Tugen, Keiyo, Marakwet, Pokot, Sabaot and the Terik. The community traditionally initiates its young men into adulthood and then a period of warriorhood. Members of the community are famous for their athletic prowess that has won the country many awards at the international level.

The 2007 post election violence as seen earlier pitted the Luo and the Kalenjins against the Kikuyu, the Kamba and Kisii with other smaller ethnic communities getting involved marginally on either side. The 2013 general elections however were not characterized by violence save for a little that preceded it ((Halakhe, 2013) and can be described as the most peaceful in the multiparty era. But what explains this peace after the deep wounds of 2007 violence? It has been argued that the fact some two communities the Kikuyu and Kalenjins which have had many violent encounters had common candidates for the topmost seats, the presidency and the deputy presidency eliminated competition which could have been potentially violent (Halakhe, 2013).

The election also took place under a much anticipated new constitution which offered more positions of leadership in the devolved government and laws that prohibited 'hate speech' which had been rampant in the 2007 elections (Halakhe 2013) as well as a reformed judiciary. The elections also took place while high profile prosecutions in the International Criminal Court of some suspected masterminds of the 2007 post-election violence were underway.

The above description of the patterns of the violence reveals the following:

1. There had been ethnic tensions and violence even before colonialism in Kenya over land
2. The violence was first experienced on a large scale in Riftvalley in the run up to the first multiparty elections in 1992 when the two warring communities in the region supported competing parties and candidates for the presidency.
3. The violence in the post-independence period almost always occurs during elections
4. The violence ends after the elections

The violence did not occur in 2013 and notably, some of major antagonists in the previous elections were supporting common candidates for the presidency and the deputy presidency.

IDPs Position on Ethnic Relations and Prospects for Peace

The authors conducted a research from 24 IDPs in Kenya who were displaced following the 2007 general elections. The respondents were drawn from most of the communities that were involved in the conflict namely Kikuyu,Luo,Kalejin,Luhya ,Kisii,Kamba and one of mixed parentage , a father from Tanzania and a Kikuyu mother. This diversity is in line with Lincoln and Guba (2000) cited in Ritchie and Lewis (2003) who emphasize the need for authenticity of findings through fairness which denotes inclusion of different voices. IDPs were chosen for their evident experience of the violence and subsequent displacement.

The study looked at the various communities' relationship in times of peace and sought views on the actions that would satisfy the displaced and enable them to live in peace with their attackers .The respondents were asked how they had lived with the communities that displaced them and what they considered necessary for them to co-exist harmoniously. The displaced persons generally rated their relationship with the attackers very positively in non-election times and generally asked for restitution. The following table below from left to right indicates: serial number, category, sex, age, ethnicity, place/district, re-conflict relationship, possibility c0-existance after violence, and the conditions of harmony.

Table 2 IDPs' Views on Pre-conflict Relationship and Peaceful Post-conflict

| | | | | | | | | |
|----|------------|---|-------|----------|--------------------|-------------|-----|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | Resettled | M | 56 | Kisii | Trans-Nzoia | Very good | Yes | Restitution |
| 2 | Camp | F | 78 | Kikuyu | Pipeline Nakuru | Very good | Yes | Restitution |
| 3 | Camp | F | 26 | Turkana | Pipeline Nakuru | Very good | Yes | Restitution |
| 4 | Camp | F | 27 | Luo | Pipeline Nakuru | Very good | Yes | Restitution |
| 5 | Camp | F | 20-30 | Tugen | Rongai | Very good | Yes | Restitution |
| 6 | Camp | M | 49 | Luhya | Pipeline Nakuru | Very good | Yes | Restitution |
| 7 | Camp | M | 29 | Kamba | Mai-mahiu | Very good | Yes | Restitution |
| 8 | Resettled | M | 18 | Kikuyu | Trans-Nzoia | Very good | Yes | Restitution |
| 9 | Resettled | F | 17 | Kisii | Trans-Nzoia | Very good | Yes | Restitution |
| 10 | Camp | F | 20 | Kikuyu | Mawingu Nyandaru a | Very good | Yes | Restitution |
| 11 | Camp | M | 21 | Kisii | Mawingu | Very good | Yes | Restitution |
| 12 | Integrated | M | 62 | Luo | Kisumu East | Very good | Yes | Restitution |
| 13 | Camp | M | 22 | Kikuyu | Kianda Foundation | Very good | Yes | Restitution |
| 14 | Integrated | M | 53 | Kisii | Kisumu East | Very good | Yes | Restitution |
| 15 | Integrated | F | 60 | Kisii | Kisumu East | Very good | Yes | Restitution |
| 16 | Integrated | F | 34 | Luo | Kisumu East | good | Yes | Restitution |
| 17 | Integrated | F | 47 | Kikuyu | Kieni East | Fairly good | Yes | Restitution |
| 18 | Integrated | M | 60 | Kikuyu | Kieni East | good | Yes | Restitution |
| 19 | Integrated | F | 26 | Luhya | Rongai | Very good | Yes | Restitution |
| 20 | Integrated | M | 58 | Kikuyu | Nyeri | Very good | Yes | Restitution |
| 21 | Resettled | M | 57 | Kikuyu | Chiptiri | Very good | Yes | Restitution/ Strong government |
| 22 | Resettled | F | 26 | Kipsigis | Rongai | Very good | Yes | Restitution |
| 23 | Resettled | F | 50 | Kisii | Rongai | Very good | Yes | Restitution |
| 24 | Resettled | M | 29 | Un known | Rongai | Very good | Yes | Restitution |

The categories in the table above are ‘Camp’ for the IDPs who were in camps at the time of the interview, ‘Integrated’ for the IDPs who were living with their relatives or friends or in rented accommodation and ‘Resettled’ were those who had either returned to their former living places or had been resettled by the government. ‘M’ and ‘F’ are for male and female respondents respectively. The respondents varied greatly in age and were aged between 18 and 78 years to capture a wide diversity of experiences and opinions. There were equal numbers of males and females and single as well as married respondent to accommodate their possible differences.

As seen from Table 2 above, 23 out of 24 respondents said that they had enjoyed a cordial relationship with the communities among whom they had lived before the violence that led to displacement in 2007. Those who had been displaced before like respondent 18 and 20 said that the relationship was always harmonious in non-election periods and that they were very good friends. The only respondent who reported a fairly good relationship said that they would occasionally find leaflets warning her community to leave but this would not lead to violence. Only two respondents out of the 24 said that given a chance they would not wish to go back where they used to live citing fear as the cause.

Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by Critical Discourse Analysis. In this tradition, discourse is seen as a social practice and social practices may have major ideological effects – ‘that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people’. (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997: 258).

The study will be particularly interested in discourse as reproducing the relationships between people and examine relationship that will be evident between the communities before times of violence during violence and after. This will shed light on the possible causes of the conflict and provide clues to the solutions.

The words that the respondents choose to describe the other communities and the kind of life they led among those communities will be studied.

This paper will examine possible causes of the ethnic related violence in Kenya by analysing the discourse of the IDPs who were affected during the violence. It will consider the displaced persons’ views on the causes of the violence and what they think could be done to enable them to live together with the communities that they were in conflict with and to end this cycle of violence. In addition the paper will assess the factors at play in the 2013 general elections which were not characterized by hostilities. The study will also examine the various views on the nature of an ethnic group to determine to what extent ethnic differences can be seen to predispose communities to violence. The data for the paper was collected from 24 respondents who were displaced in the 2007-2008 post-election violence. The respondents were chosen by random sampling.

Analysis and Discussion

In the following section the responses of five of the respondents number 18,16 ,23,20 and 14 are analysed in that order (labelled TI18 and TI16,TR23,TI20 and TI14 respectively).The interviewer's is identified as 'I' and the respondent as 'R'.

The following is an excerpt from respondent number 18. He was a man of 60 years from the Kikuyu community who was married with some grown up children and a few of school going age. He had been displaced twice first from Olenguruini and Molo both in RiftValley in 1992 and in 2007 respectively. In the two cases, he was displaced by the Kalenjin community. He described the relationship between the two communities in non-election times as cordial;

Excerpt 1:

I: *Hindi iria gutari na uhoru wa: ithuranori- gutiri ithurano*
[migayaniko ya] my tribe ino kana ino ingi

R: *[gutiri thina thina] gutiri thina/ thina/ na niguo waigua ndakwira nituikaraga*
wega
muno . No gwakinya githirano [gia kuhiriria]

I: *[Hindi io] mukoragwo muri Akenya maigananie*

R: *Ai -tu- tuiiganaine na tutari na thina. Na turiaga mburi na ng'ombe/ tukenete*

I: *ee hamwe*

R: *na tunyuaga nginya iria. Nginya ngima itagwo kimiet .Tukaria (laugh)*

I: *Riu githurano gioka (xxx)[gugatuika]*

R: *[Riu onata riu] ndathii-ndathii he Mukalenjini ... ndimwiraga 'boiyo! ngonu kimieti' .Nganengerwo ngima Ee? Riu ngakiria.*

R: *nginya onaku- ona -ona andu makahikania/*

I: In non-election times are there [divisions along] tribal lines

R: [there is usually no problem] there is no problem and that's why I have told you that we live very well/But when elections come [when they approach]

I: [Are you usually] Kenyans then who are equal

R: Oh- we- we are equal and without problems. And we feast on goats and cows/ in happiness

I: yes together

R: and we drink even milk. Even ugali is called *kimiet*. We eat (laugh)

I: Then when elections come (xxx) [... it happens]

R: [Even now] when I go to a Kalenjin...I tell him '*boiyo! ngonu kimieti*' (Sir,give me Ugali) I am handed ugali. Ee? Then I eat.....

R: People even used to intermarry TI18P8-9

The respondent describes a harmonious relationship between the two communities in non-election periods and he says that they normally have no issues with each other as different ethnic communities. He uses the words 'there is no problem' which he stresses' and he further says they live 'very well' all which give a picture of people who enjoy peace and tranquillity. When asked whether the two communities live together as equal citizens of Kenya he responds: 'Oh- we- we are equal and without problems'. He begins his statement with a discourse marker 'oh' which has the effect of focusing attention on the next utterance and increasing his expressed certainty on what he is about to say (Rowling 2002) that is they are usually equal and they have no problems meaning they do not quarrel along ethnic lines at such times. He also describes the dominant community as a good people, a point which he also emphasizes by putting stress on it. To validate his point he supplies the evidence that they normally feast on cows and goats happily together. They also drink together and they receive gestures of hospitality from the dominant community such as being served with food when one visits them. They also intermarry showing mutual trust and building of a strong and long lasting bond between themselves. However, when elections time comes the relationship between the ethnic communities suddenly goes sour as the same respondent TI18 further explains;

Excerpt 2:

R: *...No ningi githurano giokari ukaigua ai! ni harehe undu ungi . Okaihu na kwao. Riu tugagithii.*

I: *Riu hindi io ni -mwikabira burani?*

R: *Ni-ni watuika mukabira burani na ni wa- awa ni warengwo maguru/ na ungithakari/ nginya muoyo ni wathii. TI18P8-9*

R:..But when the elections come you realize wow! There is a change. Every mongoose off to its home. Then we leave.

I: At that time do you become members of different tribes?

R: It-it you have become a tribesman and you have been limited/ and if you don't take care /even your life can be lost (TI18P8-9).

Elections cause sharp divisions along ethnic lines and the respondent says they notice a change and 'every mongoose' should go back to its home that is their 'ancestral land' meaning that is the only place where they can freely vote and lay claim to ownership of property. At such times one becomes a member of an ethnic community not a Kenyan who is equal or like the others who belong to different ethnic communities. This shows an elevation of one's ethnicity above the other attributes in defining one's identity. Then one is undercut and should they not leave fast enough, they risk losing their lives. The issue of what is seen as one's home is interesting. One is expected to go back to their ancestor's region even if they have built a home or were even born in the region that is perceived to belong to the hostile community and any resistance can be lead to death.

TI23 a lady from the Kisii community who was displaced from Molo where she had been living among members of the Kalenjin community describes the relationship between the two communities as cordial in the following excerpt

Excerpt 3:

R: *Tulikuwa na uhusiano mzuri/Walikuwa wanatuita kamama.*

I: *Kamama*

R: *Ee hata hatukujua kama wataweza geuka sisi,Mm*

I: *mlikuwa sasa wakiwaita kamama wanamaanisha nini?*

R: *...walikuwa wanasemaga msichana wa Mkale na Mkisii ni kama ndugu na dada.Ee.*

I: *Na nyinyi mlikuwa mnawaita ?*

R: *Wengi sasa sisi ni mashemeji.Ee kwa maana wameoa wasichana Wakisii wengi.Ee*

R: We had a good relationship. They even used to call us *Kamama*

I: *Kamama*

R: Yes. We even never knew that they could turn against us.

I: When they would call you *kamama* what did they mean?

R: They meant a Kalejin girl and Kisii one are like siblings. Yes

I: And for you, you would call them?

R: Many were in-laws. yes because they have married many Kisii girls. Yes

The fact that the dominant community would call the Kisii community *kamama* meaning a sister bespeaks close ties between the two communities and as she says they never expected the dominant community to turn against them thus emphasizing their longstanding friendship and the mutual trust the communities had built.

Respondent 16 is a single lady of about 34 years of age and a member of the Luo community who was displaced from Naivasha following violence from the Kikuyu members of the community. She similarly says that the two communities enjoyed a warm relationship before the elections

Excerpt 4:

R: ... nilikua tu na tulipendana sana / hata kama unatoka unawachia jirani watoto / na chakula, atawalinda vizuri sana TI16P8-9

R: ... we loved each other so much./Even if you were leaving you would leave your children with your neighbor with the food/ they would take very good care over them. (TI16P8-9)

The use of the words 'loved each other very much,' is testimony of a strong bond that is beyond mere acquaintance that was shared between the two communities. They loved each other meaning that there was a strong emotional attachment between them. The 'we' used here refers to the two communities. The strong bond was evidenced by their mutual trust and assistance where one could be left to take care of each other's children. The fact that one could leave their children with the neighbour bespoke readiness to shoulder one another's sensitive burdens and they would 'take very good care of them' which depicts them as having had genuine concern for each other. However, when the violence started, she says she saw ethnic sectarianism (ethno-sectarianism) at work where one would be defined in terms of their ethnic community and people who had previously lived together would turn against each other on the grounds of ethnicity.

Excerpt 5:

R: Ee ndio nilitambua kumbe mimi ninakuwanga kabila fulani na nilikua tu na tulipendana sana / hata kama unatoka unawachia jirani watoto / na chakula, atawalinda vizuri sana. Sasa saa hiyo jirani amekugeukia / anakuchoma /. Ee

R: Yes it was then that I realized I have been of a particular tribe and I was-and we loved each other so much. Even if you were leaving you would leave your children with your neighbor with the food/ they would take very good care over them / then at that time they have turned against you/ they burn you.

In the period of the violence the use of ethnic differences to define a friend and a foe lead to a situation where the same person who had loved you would be against you and now burns you. The burning involved setting one's house on fire and went hand in hand with other acts of violence such as assault and hacking people to death. A sharp contrast is depicted here of a friend who has been so precious but suddenly turns to be one's bitter enemy.

The respondents also described their relationship with the communities after displacement and offered what they thought was necessary for them to live normally again with the communities that had perpetrated violence against them. TI16 says she relates well with members of the community which attacked her out of lack of an alternative but they never feel comfortable with them. She however offers a prescription to her pain in the following excerpt:

Excerpt 6:

I: Na saa hii mnasikizana na wao? Wakati- kama mnakutana ama mnapigiana simu?

R: Sasa inatubidi tu kwa sababu tuko pamoja lakini siwezi danganya /, kama hatujapewa haki yetu kama venye wengine wamepewa lakini a siwezi- hatuwezi kaa vizuri sana / kusema ukweli.

I: Na mnaweza, hayo machungu yanaweza isha?

R: Ee tukifanyiwa chocho- kila kitu haki yetu kabisa, tutarudi tu sawa.

I: And are you in good terms today? When- if you meet or call each other?

R: Now we just have to because we are together / but I can't lie/ as long as we have not been given our right as others have been given - but – a I can't – we can't live well/ to be honest

I: And can you – can that bitterness go?

R: Yes when we have been given everything/ our right we are going to be okey (TI16P5).

The respondent agrees that she has a friendly relationship with the community that displaced her and they can therefore talk on phone. But she also explains that it is the fact that they live together that has forced them to behave in friendly way towards each other. This reveals some tension and bespeaks some disquiet. She says she 'can't lie' that they can't be alright as long as they have not been accorded their 'right' and she adds that this she says in order 'to be honest' showing that on the surface she may appear to be satisfied while bitterness simmers within her. She expects to be accorded her rights like the others which she perceives as her entitlement and what others have already been accorded.

The respondent described the rights that she deemed necessary as follows:

Excerpt 7:

R: Anapewa haki yake kwa sababu /kuna IDP wengine wamejengewa manyumba / wengine wamepewa ng'ombe / watoto wao serikali inajua wanakula aje / wanaenda shule aje/Wewe unateseka /, mtoto saa ingine anakaa wiki mbili kwa nyumba /hata mwezi kwa nyumba

R: They are given their right because there some other IDPs who have had houses constructed for them / others have been given cattle / the government sees how their children can be fed /and how they can go to school. / For you /you suffer / the child sometimes takes two weeks in the house/ even a month in the house (TI16P5).

She explains that the other IDPs have had houses build for them by the government, and others have been given cows and the government finances their children's education. She avers that the cordial relationship with members of the ethnic community cannot be restored in the present situation. She says that what can restore a genuinely cordial relationship can only be justice in form aid by the government to enable her life get back to where it was before economically that is to be restored to her earlier economic situation. She sees this as likely to help her warm to that community and have a real peaceful co-existence with them. TI18 further said the government shouldn't allow a situation where people lose their property and are displaced;

Excerpt 8:

R: *Riu hena kindu kimwe njuragia ngoria atiriri , ta riu thirikari? tondu njuu niyo muciaru wakwa niundu wa security/ na thirikari ni yagirirwo ni kurangira indo ciakwa/ na kumenyerera kumenya ati indo ciakwa itirathukio na nii ingithii kuu ee ona ringi ndingicoka /riu ngona ona haha ona thirikari nayori ee no ngona ta: itaratunyita wega turi IDP TI18P3*

R: Now there is one question that I usually ask/ and I ask this/ now for the government/ Since I know it to be my parent regarding security / and the government ought to protect my property/ and to take care and see that my property is not being damaged and yet if I go back there / I feel may be I would not come back alive/ now I see here even the government/ I feel like: it is not taking us as it should be as IDPs (TI18P3).

The respondent calls the government his 'parent' regarding security. This places the government in a position of power and responsibility where it can make decisions affecting the respondent and the rest of Kenyans and implement them to safeguard the interests of all. The description however places a huge responsibility on the government of ensuring the security of its citizens and their property. He wonders then how it allows the prevailing situation where he has been dispossessed of his land and he cannot 'come back alive' if he dares visit his own land. This means that the law is not enforced to assert his right to use his own property and commitment to the rule of law.

TI20 a 58 year old married man with some young children feels that the solution to the phenomenon of displacement following ethnic violence could be sorted out by establishing strong legal institutions;

Excerpt 9:

R: *..Niundu wa thirikari gukorwo iri weak/ tondu korwo mari na hinya ri ona marikia kuhurwori/ thirikari niingiacokire imaresettle oku?*

I: *Okuo.*

R: *Okuo/ ne marugamirire/ no riu niundu wa reluctance na uhuthu wa thirikari/ reke njugeri/tondu nginya thirikari iyo aria mekuo/ they don't mind people/TI20P9-10*

R: ...but because the government is weak/for that is what I believe and I know/ for if they were powerful/after the violence/ the government would have resettled them where?

I: Right there.

R: Right there/and protected them/but due weakness of the government let me put it that way for even those in that government don't mind about people (TI20P9-10).

He felt that being displaced from one's place of work or of living was one thing but with a strong government one could have been facilitated to go back and live there if there were grounds to do so. One would then be protected against any invaders. He however blamed a weak government for the obtaining situation where even when one is displaced unjustifiably the government seemed unable to make a way for them to return to their place and continue with their economic life thus encouraging lawlessness.

TI14 a man from the Kalenjin community who was displaced from Subukia by members of the Kikuyu community says he had enjoyed a harmonious relationship with this community and that the relationship had been restored after displacement. Excerpt 10 illustrates this;

Excerpt 10:

I: *Na sasa hao neighbours mlikuwa mnasikilizana?*

R: *Hata saa hii tunazikilizana/hata nikienda/maana-hawakuwa na shida /nafikiri ni wageni ambao [walitoka mbali mbali]*

I: And were you in good terms with those neighbours?

R: Even now we are in good terms/ even if I go there/ for they never had problems/ I think it is people from another area [who came from far] TI14P9

The respondent says that his ethnic community was in good terms with the community that evicted him. He adds that it was not his real neighbours but strangers from far who attacked them. For his neighbours, he says they were in good terms even after the violence.

He also says for a peaceful relationship with them, they need to co-operate for unity and once settled they will have no bitterness in the following excerpt:

Excerpt 11:

I: *Na ukiangalia/nini inawezafanya Wakenya washikane kusiwe na mambo kama hayo?*

R: *Ni ushirikiano/kushirikiana pamoja*

I: *Ok/kwa hivyo tuseme ati wakati kama nyinyi mtasettle vizuri/mmepata shamba/mambo ya kuona unachukia mtu fulani kwa sababu hao watu ndio waliwapiga haitakuwa.*

R: *Hiyo haistahili/*

I: And when you look at it /what can make Kenyans unite so that we do not have such things?

R: It is cooperation/working together

I: Ok/so we can say that when you settle / having got land/ there will be no issue of hating someone because they are the community that attacked you?

I: That should not be there TI14P14

The respondent says it is not right to keep grudges and does not see the violence as likely to have a lasting negative effect on the relationship between the communities involved.

Conclusion

As seen from the data above, the ethnic groups that took arms against each other in 2007 had lived together for many years without engaging in hostilities with each other. Some had lived together for over twenty years. Some had however experienced violence and displacement before in 1992.

The violence between the communities has almost always occurred at election times and the communities live in harmony all the other time. However as noted above, the actual antagonists in the conflict have been changing with different communities being involved at different times. The change in the players is seen to be consistent with a pattern of political competition while a pattern of political co-operation has been in tandem with taking common sides in the conflict.

The above discussions lead to the conclusions that the inter-ethnic violence that has been witnessed from time to time in Kenya results from factors within human control (constructionist) and is not a function of the natural factors that distinguish one ethnic group from another and are not amenable to human control (primordial). This explains why when communities do not compete on the choice of candidates for political offices their relationship is good and inter-ethnic violence is not experienced preceding or following elections. It also explains the phenomena of ethnic communities forming political camps with different members at different times. Since the causes of the conflict are manmade they can be addressed and solved.

And moreover, there is a real possibility of harmonious co-existence between different ethnic communities even after they have been involved in conflict. From the responses of the displaced persons, the study suggests that for such a situation to prevail, justice needs to be done to the victims of the violence particularly in form of restitution and not necessarily punishment of the offenders to alleviate feelings of bitterness on the part of those who have suffered losses as a result of ethnic violence. This will enable them resume normal lives and feel like they are equal to the other Kenyans. There needs to be institutions and mechanisms that can effectively protect the right of the individual to which those aggrieved can turn to and get justice. This will prevent the development of a perception that it is possible for some communities to launch attacks against others causing injuries, deaths and illegally dispossess them of their property and get away with it. Such a scenario has the effect of causing pain that could breed acts of retaliation in future. The justice system would also effectively address any historical grievances that could prompt any community to launch violent acts on another.

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