

Congestion, Conflicts and Urban Politics; Understanding the 2017 Post-election Violence in Nairobi Slums.

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Abstract

This article examines the violence that marred the 2017 General elections. Within the post-colonial theoretical context, the article explores the more localized narratives that drive violent skirmishes with specific reference to Nairobi's sub-spaces, such as the Kawangware slum. Further, the article seeks to explain why the sub-space is vulnerable to violent skirmishes (often ethnic) that accompany divisive elections and the implications of these conflicts for the future of urban politics in Nairobi's post-colonial space. The overall survey approach and delivery process of this article drew heavily on goodwill data and information from various respondents, majorly slum dwellers, who were randomly sampled. The questionnaires were designed to capture qualitative data on aspects of identity politics, people's political attitudes and perceptions that drive them to engage in violence before, during and even after elections. In analysing the causes of violence during the electioneering period, it was concluded that political maturity is measured by the degree of public participation and, to be precise, their engagement in political processes. On the other hand, Nairobi's post-colonial space is plagued with a myriad of challenges, key among them poverty, unemployment and crime. This has precipitated identity politics as a blueprint for preferred politicians, thus making the electoral process a protracted one, exacerbating political uncertainty and endless unrests characterized by violence. This study recommends that urban violence be examined in view of the interactional effects between emerging issues and the existing power holders and governmental agents representing them.

Key Terms: Identity politics, politics, post-colony, violence.

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INTRODUCTION

The two vexing questions posed by the budding democratization and poverty reduction interventions in Kenya's urban spaces are; why does political violence spiral upwards, particularly in the informal urban settlements?; and why is there apparent neglect of the adverse effects of political violence by policy and programme interventions at the urban level? Understanding violence in Nairobi's post-colonial sub-spaces is vital if policy and development interventions are to remain relevant and successful. This article explores the nexus between urban conflict and the 2017 elections in Kenya. To achieve this, the research was conducted in *Kawangware* slum owing to the violence that erupted after the repeat of the presidential elections. Therefore, this study makes an essential step towards understanding how conflict generates political violence in urban spaces. *Kawangware* slum was chosen, as it is relatively less researched and easily accessible. The lack also informed the study of comprehensive records of urban conflict and its implication for urbanization.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The situation of *Kawangware* is towards the western side of Nairobi city. The informal settlement has an estimated population of two hundred and ten thousand residents (Government of Kenya, 2010). It is about seven kilometres from the city centre and neighbours to the east of the up-market Lavington precinct and to the west, Dagoretti. The predominant housing type in *Kawangware* is iron-sheet construction because it is cheap, and most of its residents can afford it. However, there are also more expensive brick houses. People living in *Kawangware* rely on the water supply Nairobi City provides. Although there are several schools in the region, most of them are run privately. Precious Girls Secondary School is the only public school.

Kawangware has few supermarkets and two open-air markets where people from up-country purchase farm produce. Two main roads are tarred, whereas the others are simply tracks. From the research, older residents

claimed that before 1950, this area was a forest where the *Maasai* community grazed their animals. However, upon establishing the Kenya colony, the *Maasai* were displaced by the white settler population and used the land for coffee farming. The white settlers 'owned' the land and employed Africans mainly from the *Kikuyu* tribe to work on the farms as labourers. According to the older informants, it was from 1956 that the *Kikuyu* alienated the land from the white settlers. However, Nairobi changed rapidly from being a colonial city that was initially controlled to the easily accessible capital of a young post-colonial state upon independence. As more Kenyans moved to the city rapidly in search of better employment opportunities, the *Luo*, *Kisii*, *Luhya*, and *Kamba* tribes settled in this area gradually. The rapid migration from rural to urban in the early 1970s was obvious from the acute housing shortage.

The *Kikuyu* started constructing rental houses in *Kawangware* to respond to housing shortages. The study also established that from about 1975, people from other tribes began buying land from the *Kikuyu* landowners thereafter constructed their own houses and homes. In accordance with the residents, *Kawangware* was notably peaceful. For example, the prominent politicians' assassinations such as John Kariuki and Tom Mboya or even the aborted *coup d'état* of 1982 and preceding elections did not trigger any form of violence. Instructively, the residents claim that since the 1992 general elections, political violence and tribalism were introduced into the daily life experiences of *the people of Kawangware*. They further noted that differences on the issues of politics and the perceived exclusion of other ethnic communities from government benefits had made the conflicts in *Kawangware* more intense and complicated, peaking during campaigns and general elections. In 2017, this violence was at its worst when it took a tribal dimension: the interviewees claim that non-*Kikuyu* residents mobilized and torched several houses belonging to the *Kikuyu*.

Nairobi was a marketplace for trade between the Kikuyu and the Maasai communities before the coming of the British. In around 1900, it developed into a travellers' camp. The construction of the Uganda railway brought Nairobi to prominence, previously as a construction camp and later became the capital of the Kenya colony. The exclusion of individuals and communities was colonialism's hallmark, especially those who resisted colonial rule. Selective exclusion of communities and individuals worsened as the colonists manipulated natural resources, practiced divide and rule, and emasculated the Kenyan people. Of natives, only a small minority, such as the 'home guards', enjoyed partial colonialism privileges. Historically, Kenya consisted of several ethnic-based states that fought over resources and had various degrees of organization (Lonsdale, 2008). Different levels of marginalization occurred during colonialism, both geographically, targeting individuals, and particular communities, segregating members of the similar community. Investment in infrastructure, social amenities and services was focused mostly on parts of the country where the British colonialists intended to exploit and/or lived. The colonialists concentrated on parts of the country with rich agricultural land and on parts offering strategic interests. This brought unease in areas that were neglected largely, like the northern parts of Kenya. Political representation and civil service in colonial times were along ethnic lines. People represented most small communities from the dominant tribes, who were initially just handpicked by the colonial administrators (Elkins, 2005).

The most prevalent type of violence in Nairobi is political violence. Nevertheless, cumulatively, other types of violence, namely landlord-tenant, economic, religious and domestic violence, are more significant. In this purview, the study concluded that emphasis on political violence makes other types of urban violence invisible. It was further established that political violence in Kenya is rooted in colonial times, alluding to historical inequity in resources accessibility, and perpetuated in post-colonial times through the mediation of ethnic identities.

In Kawangware slum, Congo, Kanungaga, and Gatina are the key hotspots. Tribal violence mostly prevails in the northern sections of this settlement. Route 56, the road traversing Kawangware from the north through the Mau Bridge to Gitanga road and finally to Naivasha road in the south, was identified as an essential site for violent expressions. Domestic, ethnic/tribal, and political violence in the Congo region were identified as the top three types of violence. In addition, the Congo area is the Kawangware commercial hub and serves as an essential public transport terminus. Predictably, the key land use of Congo and the ease with which politicians use Congo for campaigns predisposes it to political violence. There are two main streets in the south, namely, Naivasha and Gitanga roads. The Kanungaga and Gatina areas in the north were mainly residential. In Gatina, tribal violence prevailed the most. This related to differences between landlords and tenants where the former held the notion that they were being mistreated by the latter. There were also differences among businesspersons. However, Kanungaga was also uniquely characterized by pervasive drunkenness. Small a wonder that in Kawangware, bar brawls and violence associated with drunkenness were rampant in Kanungaga. Other violence included scuffles between the youths and police, bar brawls between neighbors, between tenants and landlords, and between traders and City of Nairobi police.

RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The 2017 Presidential Elections and Political Violence in Kawangware Slum

As the historic August 8th of 2017 elections got underway, it was evident that Nairobi was the epicentre of violence. The elections were a high-stake, fiercely contested affair evident in Nairobi, which was the centre of vigorous campaign efforts in the lead up to the election. Opposing political messages from across the political divide created a deeply divided electorate. The villages of Kawangware were balkanized along ethnic lines, with groups dominating

specific areas. Kawangware 56 had been a melting cauldron of ethnic tensions for three months. After the August election, problems started in the area. “The antagonism between Jubilee Party supporters and the Opposition National Super Alliance (NASA) had been palpable from the tense campaign period. When the presidential results began streaming in on the 9th of August 2017, they indicated that the incumbent President Uhuru Kenyatta of Jubilee was in the lead trailed in a distant second by the presidential candidate Raila Odinga who was the opposition leader, who in a press conference denounced the results. In his view, the Independent, Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) electronic system had been hacked into, and ‘a logarithm inputted into the system that retained the lead by Uhuru Kenyatta at a constant gap of eleven per cent. Raila Odinga went ahead to term the results that were being beamed to Kenyans as ‘... fake, fictitious and sham’ These utterances provoked demonstrations that later on turned violent in most of the informal settlements of Nairobi, including Kawangware. One youth who lives at Stage Two noted that; “when the Supreme Court of Kenya annulled Uhuru’s victory, there were wild celebrations in Kawangware 56”. Businesses owned by Kikuyus did not operate at all, especially on the main Macharia Road. The *Boda boda* (motorcycle) riders, largely Luhya, Luo and Kisii, spent the whole day riding up and down the road, shouting and yelling against the Kikuyu.

The country’s Supreme Court ordered fresh elections to be held within sixty days. The day of the fresh elections was declared as 17 October 2017, then, later on, moved to 26 October 2017. The NASA candidate, Raila Odinga, withdrew from the repeat election. He declared that he would not take part in a fresh presidential election without ‘legal and constitutional guarantees’ against alleged electoral fraud. According to him, Kenya had seen the worst ‘voter theft’ in its history. Therefore, the repeat elections did not meet the constitutional threshold for a free, fair and credible election. The turnout was down, and the opposition chose

to abstain, especially in their strongholds. After Odinga’s withdrawal, Kenyatta, as expected, won the most votes cast. A tally by the Daily Nation newspaper based on electoral commission results indicated that the incumbent received more than 96% of the vote, with 227 of 292 constituencies counted. Regardless of the dissenting opinion, the Supreme Court upheld the win of President-elect Uhuru Kenyatta, who was later on sworn in as the president of the Republic of Kenya for a second five-year term in office.

Another informant noted that no one particular trigger led up to the violence that eventually erupted on 27 October 2017, but a culmination of piled up anger and animosity. Issues came to a head on the eve 26 October 2017, when hoards of NASA supporters moved around in Kawangware 56 (which largely consists of Congo, Gatina and Stage Two areas) and vowed to chop off any finger, the next day,”... if found with the pink ink...” referring to the ineffaceable ink applied to the voters’ fingers during elections to prevent electoral fraud. David Mwere and Steel Cheron, who noted that violence started on a Thursday evening, hours after voting of the repeat presidential election ended, echoed these sentiments. Trouble started after a Jubilee Party (mostly Kikuyu) affiliated group took offence that their National Super Alliance (NASA) (mostly Luo and Luhya) counterparts had heeded their leader, Raila Odinga’s call to boycott the fresh elections. This marked the beginning of ethnic profiling on whether people voted or not. Those who were found to have gone against their political leaders’ interests were robbed, beaten and even hacked to death by their rivals. In due course, it was estimated that ten people lost their lives across the political divide, a report that was refuted by the Kenya police. It was also noted that the police demanded a bribe in cash to offer security to the affected persons. One of the informants indicated, “... when you want to go somewhere, you notify them (police), and they give you escort at a fee”. For the rival political groups, “... they check your index finger, and if they find that you have voted, they rob you....

others go to the extent of cutting your finger or even killing you”, said another resident.

It is with regard to the above sentiments that this research concludes that discrimination, especially along ethnic lines, was evident within Kawangware before, during and after the 2017 presidential elections, with most ethnic groups conglomerating in particular areas/sections of the slum. This type of victimization was such that those considered outsiders were viewed as not belonging and regarded with suspicion. Additionally, it is vital to note that in most cases, the names given to such areas indicate the dominance of the original communities’ ethnic background and the lifestyle of the area, for instance, Gatina, Kosovo, Musii, Kawangware 46 and Kawangware 56, among others. In some sections, this was associated with violent behaviour, which arose because of the difficulties slum dwellers face. However, as earlier noted, the Luhya and Kisiis of Kawangware 56 swore not to leave or be evicted. “We are not afraid of the Mungiki; we are ready for them any time, any day,” quoted one Kisii youngster from Gatina, which Kisii predominantly inhabits. On October 31, when the then Cabinet Secretary for Education, who was also as the acting Cabinet Secretary for Internal Security, Fred Matiang’i, Visited Gatina Primary School to inspect preparations of the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examinations which was to begin the next day, a band of marauding Kisii youth confronted Jim. The latter pelted his motorcade with stones forcing him to flee.

Influential politicians inciting their communities against their opposing communities form bad blood among communities living together in Kawangware slum and cause ethnic/tribal violence. Tribalism was said to have increased by influencing schoolchildren to the extent that they identify their classmates along with tribal blocks and even abuse each other. Residents of Kawangware were concerned that this situation was getting worse as stereotypical notions and negative attitudes of persons of diverse ethnic groups were being nurtured among children

in school. One of the informants sadly related an account of a pupil in lower primary school that was chiding the other thus: “...nyinyi wakikuyu ndiyo mliiba kura,” this literally means that the other child was from the tribe responsible for stole votes in the 2017 elections that resulted in the violence. This study, therefore, concluded that tribal-based politics where politicians draw on their filial and tribal relations to compete for political positions was another vital consideration in tribal and ethnic violence. By drawing on family and tribal relations, competitive politics sets different ethnic groups against one another invariably. Young people in Kanungaga have a strong believe that such politics results in political violence.

Youth Identity in Kawangware Slum

During the 2017 presidential elections, people were seen huddled in groups, discussing the unfolding events. Youths openly organized themselves for chaos to defend their communities. They positioned themselves in different areas and selected their leaders. The youth adopted extreme political, social and/or religious ideas and aspirations, undermining the status quo and expression of freedom of choice. The ‘zoning out’ practice was another challenge witnessed in Kawangware. This is whereby the leading political parties zoned out certain areas in the slum as their exclusive fiefdoms. Tension was still high in Kawangware 56 on Sunday as it entered the fourth day of deadly clashes between rival youth groups. Youth were profiled based on whether they voted or not. As indicated earlier, those found to have different interests against their leaders’ were robbed, beaten up and even hacked to death by their rivals. Not even the heavy police presence could calm down the situation after distress calls were made. At the same time, residents accused police officers of demanding cash from them for security. The most volatile area was in the Dagoretti North constituency, which is represented by Mr Simba Arati (NASA) in the National Assembly. It was the epicentre of violence as the youth, wielding machetes and other weapons went for each other’s throats, and the property was not spared either.

Businesses were looted and set aflame by the marauding youth as life came to a standstill.

Security was the top concern for the slum dwellers. Most of the people on the streets on Saturday the 28th of October 2017 were worried about repeating the violence from the previous night. However, many said they would not be caught off guard this time. “*We can have stones, we can have sticks, we can have pangas,*” said another one of the youths on the streets. Similarly, he insisted on using only his first name, fearing reprisal. “*Whatever it takes to defend ourselves,*” he said, “*we will use.*” The youth in Kawangware had embarked on a profiling mission, identifying ‘politically incorrect’ business premises and vandalizing them. The owners of those businesses had to run to the police for protection, and the police instead told them to sort out themselves, as they had been overwhelmed. As one civil society ambassador noted, “Kenya has one police officer for every 989 people. During the post-election violence, the police were thinly- spread on the ground in Kawangware to be able to mount a challenge to rowdy angry mobs of adequately armed youths, fully determined and ready to die. On the other hand, the police in Kwan ware were treated as aggressors by those they were meant to protect. Groups of youths with stones as their weapons engaged the police in battles. The police, on the other hand, dispensed teargas to disperse them but in vain. The gangs were said to be protesting against Thursday’s presidential election repeat attacked and seriously injured residents.

A police officer stated that they received reports of a few youths causing chaos in the area. They said that several youths took advantage of the situation and started looting shops and private residences as well as setting businesses ablaze. As the situation became worse, many businesses were razed down, including butcheries, hotels, and salons. “*We cannot allow hooligans to engage in illegal activities and pretend they are demonstrating,*” said another police officer. The officer further instructed the media to stop

taking photos, claiming the media was leaning towards demonstrators and did not report when police officers are injured or insulted by masquerades whose aim is to cause political instability in the country. “*Nobody would leave the station to come and attack innocent people. There is law, and it should be respected,*” said the officer. However, his statements were an open contradiction to the many voices that had been blaming the police for using unnecessary force. Opposition leaders blamed the government for profiling communities, some arguing that opposition to get sympathy votes and turn people against the government often peddles the narrative of police brutality. Overall, this study established that the police were no match for the combined force of the well-armed and prepared youth gangs; for instance, it was reported that “*ten policemen were caught in the ensuing battle and died,*” an intelligence officer operating at Central Police Station said, “*six died on the spot on Macharia Road.*” He added, “*Many were maimed and driven by ambulance vehicles that came to pick up the wounded officers that night who were treated at Defence Forces Memorial Hospital.*”

Residents, predominantly NASA supporters, noted that youth from neighbouring Waitakere in Dagoretti South constituency, which is represented by Mr John Ikaria (Jubilee) in the National Assembly, made periodic raids in the area. As a result, residents could not come out of their houses to do the shopping, and those who wanted to access their homes found difficulty in doing so. Others found it challenging to go to work. Boda boda riders and matatu owners counted losses (predominantly Kisiis). Schoolchildren were not spared either. Those caught in the standoff were stranded, unable to find their homes, whereas their parents were unable to go out to look for them for fear of being attacked. As the residents attempted to come to terms with the orgy of violence engulfed Kawangware 56, the area remained deserted on the 28th Sunday. Residents complained about the inability to access basic necessities as the available retail places had been razed or looted, or the owners did not want to open

them for fears of attacks. The shopping centre and social halls remained desolate, and signs of fires were visible everywhere, particularly on the roads that limited the vehicle's movement. People crowded in groups, perhaps discussing the occurrences, and with the mean-looking youth on guard and barricaded roads, even the goods suppliers could not venture into the area because they could be risking their lives. Mr Odinga, on Sunday, who prevailed on his supporters not to vote in the repeat elections, made a visit to the area and accused the government of using a proscribed gang, Mungiki, in attacking the residents. Mr Odinga also urged the residents to be peaceful, but immediately he left, a group of youth wielding machetes descended in Kawangware, disturbing the relative calm.

Militia gangs and Political Incitement

Mr Samba Arati, in 2013, was first elected as the MP of the area. He was considered in the ODM party ranks, a frontline foot soldier. He first got into competitive politics at the tender age of 22, when in 2003, and was made a nominated councillor by ODM. Five years later, he became an elected councillor. He is, therefore, in Kawangware 56, a household name and is reputed to have his own loyal youth gang, which he can mobilize in the twinkling of an eye. The gangs have economic, political and ethnic interests that are all intertwined, as detailed in Kagwanja (2001) 'Power to Uhuru: Youth identity and generational politics in Kenya's 2002 elections. Kagwanja (2001) traces the Mungiki origin of the Kikuyu community in the politico-cultural context long before independence and puts forward that the youth rebellion for a change in the generation was always part and parcel of the Kikuyu culture (Kagwanja, 2005: 61). He also notes that the *Mungiki* endorsement of the politician Uhuru Kenyatta for the presidency was more informed by this generational change agenda rather than ethnic politics *per se* (*ibid*: 63). It is precise that the gang was and is still linked with politicians.

On the Mungiki economic agenda, Kagwanja argues that politicians were the main source of *Mungiki* funds before the 2003 elections. After the elections, this stream of income declined, hence the need for the gang to explore other options for finances. Politicians financed *Mungiki*, and this was tailing off after the opposition, National Rainbow Coalition (NARC), came to power in 2003, thus the need for the group to diversify their sources of income. In Nairobi, for example, the sect controlled the *matatu* (public transport) routes to Huruma, Dandora, Kayole and Kariobangi. Also, controlled routes outside the city. The report by Kagwanja depicts that the sect made at least a daily fee of US\$2,500 from these routes (Kagwanja, 2005: 68). The sect also made additional cash by offering 'forced' security in such city estates as Kwa Teresa, Mlango Kubwa, Mathare, etc. He further argues that *Mungiki* were associated with high-level crimes of car jerking and bank robberies. This study echoes Peter Kagwanja's sentiments by arguing that the *Mungiki* equally play a role in escalating political violence in the Kawangware slum during the 2017 presidential elections.

Class and Ethnic Identities

It also emerged that land ownership was an emerging issue in the slum as evictions began to take ethnic lines. People were being confronted and asked the second name. According to multiple eyewitnesses, when hundreds of people with dreadlocks shouted "no peace", the police watched in despair. Subsequently, "even in the same tribes, the people grouped themselves based on which aspirants they supported", said Mr Matayo Mulagosa. As it was established, lack of security of tenure is a real threat to slum dwellers in Kawangware. Highly commercialized evictions, often violent, occurred at the whim of the structure owners. Defaults in rent payments resulted in evictions, and there were hardly negotiations by the highly commercialized structure owners who employed the services of militia groups such *mungiki*.

At this point, the youth commoditized violence to earn a living through looting. The unscrupulous structure owners also used arson to evict non-complying households or the residents of specific ethnic communities. This discrimination was evident at the ward level depending on your Member of County Assembly (MCA) and which ethnic group you come from. It was alleged that Mr Simba Arati was “the one who orchestrated all the chaos,” said a Kikuyu landlord from Gatina. The Member of Parliament is distrusted by the business class and Kikuyu landlords, accusing him of inciting trouble, in the ultimate hope of ejecting Kikuyus from Kawangware 56. According to the landlords, he was telling his people they cannot remain tenants forever and therefore must secure their space. The landlord said that there was vacant government land in Kawangware 56, “and he suspected Arati was ‘mark timing’ for the piece of land so that he could settle his people there as he planned on how to evict Kikuyus. There was concern that if the government did not intervene, then the Kikuyus could lose their land. These sentiments confirmed that the land problem’s dual manifestation in Nairobi is the insecurity of tenure and evictions. The challenges scope from people with stakes in private and public land, which they illegally use to their socio-economic advantage. There are perpetual squatters whose tenure has not been secured in terms of social reproduction on public land. This has led to cases where individuals have squatted on public land for more than a century without being able to secure their tenure.

Several houses had been blazed on Friday night, leaving the property of unknown value destroyed and tens of area residents homeless. Similar incidents were reported hours after the repeat presidential election on Thursday night. On 28 October 2017, police were said to be in pursuit of a politician based in Nairobi accused of financing and funding gangs to cause violence in the informal sector of Kawangware, around Congo and Area 56. The politician, according to detectives, was accused of holding meetings at night in one of the posh estates in Nairobi with the gang

leaders, where he not only paid them but also issued directives. “While in public, he is seen calling for peace but doing a different thing behind the scenes...,” said a senior detective. It started when a famous restaurant in the area was torched and adjacent shops burgled on Thursday night by youths whom victim’s state “took advantage of the situation. They are saying we only own the houses, but the land belongs to the Government.” However, Gerald Kenya narrated, Tension remained high as sharp political-tribal divisions continued to emerge. “It is politically instigated,” those were words firmly said by a resident of Kawangware for more than forty years, Pastor John Miring’s. He observed that the area was highly cosmopolitan, and all the residents have one thing in common: they are all humble live life. According to the respondent, politicians planned the violence, which started as a simple demonstration.

The pastor further narrated that prior to the repeat presidential elections, there was no animosity between communities, but the evil hand of politicians was to blame. “They want to create a sharp tribal division to gain what is not clear among locals”, he claimed. He appealed to the government to arrest those inciting youths to turn against each other. These were similar appeals by area residents, who urged police to tame politicians inciting them, saying, “we have co-existed in harmony for long.” Ms Beatrice Elachi, Nairobi County Assembly speaker, observed that there were several destructions in Gatina and Kabiru; this calls on local politicians to step in. “There is a lot of violence in these areas. A woman was raped yesterday, and shops were burnt. We need to go out and speak to our young people in these areas. We need to agree to live together peacefully,” Ms Elachi said.

Religious Identities

The interviews also revealed that youth groups play a crucial role in accelerating religious differences to a dangerous level of violence. In supporting the enormity of the essence of religious conflicts and violence, one of the critical informants told of the differences between

Christians and Muslims in *Kawangware*. Leadership struggles and disputes were the other dimensions of religious violence. The residents recognized the conflicts existence in church leadership. A Congo resident in *Kawangware* accredited this to individualism, stating, “...*If everyone wants to be a leader, how can there not be violence?*”

Society’s Perception of Unjust Decisions

Many of the informants from *Kawangware* identified a dysfunctional justice system that delivered unjust decisions as an essential factor in turning conflict into violence. Given the structure governing Nairobi’s informal settlements, the headmen, assistant chiefs, and Chief virtually handle all these areas’ disputes. While the Office of the President aspect significantly contributes to the access to and delivery of justice for the poor and marginalized, there is considerable unease on the perceived bias and views of injustice in the societies. It is these growing joint perceptions of injustice that political conflict tips over to violence when a dispute is perceived to have been poorly handled. For example, several participants in *Kawangware* argued that when there was a conflict involving a member of the Kikuyu community and another from the Luo, whenever there was intervention from the chiefs, because they, the chiefs they had no faith, this meant that the situation became violent as the aggrieved group members sought an alternative way of resolving the conflict. In different cases, the tenants simply defaulted on rent payments. While there were many causes of such payment default, a lot was accredited to incitement by politicians.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion: The study concludes that violence in *Kawangware* is spatially linked. Thus, identifying violence hotspots is crucial in dealing with violence, and spatial improvements like slum upgrading initiatives, considering hotspots, can go a long way in preventing conflict tipping into violence. This study also concluded that one area that has lacked middle-range theorizing is the political side of urban violence. Politics, and political values and interests, are intimately linked to the post-election violence of 2017. Therefore, the political nature of urban violence involves questioning the legitimacy of public authority and the demand for greater political participation. These political facts have been overlooked in much of the research on urban politics and theorizing about urban violence. The problem with most theoretical conceptualizations of urban violence is that they overlook the fact that urban conflict is a product of economic and demographic factors. This study also established that it is a product of a lack of political representation. Conceiving urban violence as politically meaningful acts in a struggle between power holding identities and the powerless masses on the urban scene appears to be a promising and suggestive framework for interpreting urban violence. Approaching urban violence from a political framework points out that the phenomenon is not one-sided.

Recommendations: Therefore, this study recommends that urban violence be examined in view of the interactional effects between emerging issues and the existing power holders and governmental agents representing them. Moreover, a political framework emphasizing groups with different and competing interests also provides a more satisfactory perspective on the role of electoral processes in fostering and channelling the emergency and development of violence.

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