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The Role of Political Decentralization in Conflict Prevention:
A Case Study of Kenya, 1990-2010

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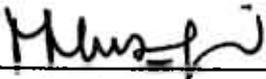
October 2011.

Declaration.

I, Njagi Samuel Mwiti, declare that this project is my original work and has not been submitted for the award of a degree in any other university.

Signed_____   Date___8|11|2011___

Njagi Samuel Mwiti.

This Project has been submitted for examination with my approval as a University Supervisor.

Signed_____   Date_08 November 2011_

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Dedication.

I dedicate this project to my parents: My father, James Njagi and my mother, Judith Ncuura for their unwavering love and support in my academic endeavors since my childhood.

Acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge and extend my sincere appreciation to the following persons who have made the completion of this research work possible: Professor Makumi Mwagiru for his wisdom and guidance as my supervisor; Mr. and Mrs. Wallace Kamau for their unconditional love and their assistance throughout this course; Rev. and Mrs. Oliver Konje for their financial support; all institute of Diplomacy and International Studies (IDIS) members and staff; my college mates, family and friends and lastly but not the least to the almighty God who made all things possible.

Abstract.

This project critically analyzes and builds an in-depth understanding on the role political decentralization plays in conflict prevention. Without the foundations for good political and economic governance, development will be sluggish or stalled and where there is no development, conflict is inevitable. Indeed, the study proceeds to assess the relationship between development and conflict prevention. To achieve this objective, primary data was collected through the interviews conducted and the secondary data has been compiled through rigorous research where journals, documents and books have been utilized. The major arguments is that efficient political decentralization needs strong, just, accessible and legitimate institutions which focus on service delivery, fighting corruption, improving transparency, increasing capacity and ensuring participation. Moreover, political decentralization requires a form of limited government; that is, political institutions that credibly commit the state to honor economic and political rights.

The research further contends that the efficiency and equity problems common in the delivery of social services in developing and developed countries which frequently leads to conflicts can be solved through political decentralization. Besides, political decentralization enhances accountability, integrity, fairness in the administration of justice and transparency among political leaders which helps in arresting conflicts. This research considers freedom, equality, justice, dignity, and respect for human rights and institutions that protects human rights to be the genesis of positive peace. To implement full political decentralization in Kenya, there is a need to create more avenues for citizens to participate in decision making concerning governance. The study further underscores the need to confront the underlying causes of violent conflicts through economic, political and social development. When there is an atmosphere of individual growth, peace is inevitable since people will concentrate in projects which enhance personal growth instead of getting involved in violent activities.

The theory of liberalism forms the basis on which the research analyses the efficacy of political decentralization in conflict prevention. This theory argues that individuals should be free from arbitrary state power, persecution and superstition. The proponents of this theory further believe that conflict is the outcome of minority rule. Besides, they say that states founded on individual rights and representative government would not have the same appetite for conflict and war as compared to the ones with a centralized government.

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Chapter One.

Introduction to the Study.

Introduction.

Grievances over perceived inequalities in political authority between the center and the periphery have caused intra-country separatist conflicts in many areas. As a result, decentralization of political powers seems to be an effective way in quelling such separatist's demands. Efficient political decentralization needs strong, just, accessible and legitimate institutions which focus on service delivery, fighting corruption, improving transparency, increasing capacity and ensuring participation.

The concept of 'centralized' authority means concentrating in a central or top authority, decision making on a wide range of matters, leaving only tightly programmed routine implementation to lower levels in the government or any organization. In such a system, people tend to scramble for power which results to many conflicts. Indeed, no conflict can occur without a cause nor can they persist for eternity. The struggle that results in a centralized system can be minimized when political power is decentralized hence giving the people at the grass root a room to be involved in decision making. There is substantial agreement in the literature which shows that mobilization of individuals and groups for political participation is the most important technique for gaining and exercising power.[1] Nevertheless, the ruling class in most cases does not willingly decentralize political power due to their vested interest. When political elite concentrate all the power on them while blocking the channels for political participation by the citizens, this leads to a state of structural violence which becomes physical violence if it is not addressed. When there is good political decentralization, political participation is encouraged

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[1] Scarritt, R, 'The Analysis of Social Class', *Political Participation and Public Policy in Zambia*, Vol. 30, No. 3, (1983), p.6

which enhances decision making by the majority. This leads to a condition where the public owns decisions made by the ruling class since they are involved in decision making process. When decisions are owned by the governed, implementation becomes very easy.

This study consequently serves as a foundation for investigating the nexus between political decentralization and conflict prevention. Without the foundations for good political and economic governance as depicted by World Bank, development will be sluggish or stalled and where there is no development, conflict is inevitable Although political instability and disorder are evident in parts of Africa for example, these manifest deep expressions in the struggle to expand the political space, renegotiate power relations, claim individual and group rights and reconstruct institutions and structures of the state and governance. Certainly, regimes are critical for structuring how state elites are likely to respond to societal demands. By setting parameters on various political institutions aimed at decentralizing political power, regimes can have a significant impact on prevention of future conflict.[2]

Statement of the research problem.

The gap between the political elite and the governed in terms of the control of power and resources is so wide especially in developing countries. This has led to uneven development especially where power is centralized in a certain region or if the people in power come from one ethnic group. Such inequalities create resentments among people and have fueled conflicts in different parts of the world. In Kenya for example, there has been political upheaval since independence. After independence, the first government that took power was characterized by highly centralized system where citizens were expected to implement what has already been formulated. This planted seeds of resentment among people due to the existing inequalities. Even

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[2] Rothchild, S, *Managing Ethnic Conflict in Africa: Pressures and Incentives for Cooperation* (Washington, D.C, 1997) p. 40.

after the second president took office, decentralization of power through political participation was not encouraged, a condition which worsened the already existing problem. Since political decentralization was not allowed, this caused some people to rebel hence resulting to conflicts in different times including the attempted 1982 coup, 1992,1997 crashes and also 2007/2008 post-election violence and many other demonstrations. The conflicts experienced during this time caused many people to loose their lives and other resourceful people went to exile.

This study examines how political decentralization could be instrumental in averting or preventing such conflicts. The problems associated with lack of political decentralization are very common in many countries including the conflict between the north and southern Sudan that has claimed many lives for a number of decades, Rwandan genocide, and the crises that was in Zimbabwe, Uganda and many other countries which have ruined economy due to various conflicts. In an environment of political decentralization where the creation and expansion of the political space for multiple actors to interact, negotiate, compete, and seek self-realization, within set and permissible rules is encouraged, the gap between the governed and the political leaders can be narrowed hence preventing future conflicts.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to engage all the Stakeholders in dealing with this problem. In particular, to ensure policy formulation is more inclusive. The challenge experienced by many policy makers however is the failure to link the concept of political decentralization to conflict prevention. This study examines whether political decentralization plays any role in conflict prevention and Kenya will be the focus of this study. Does political decentralization play any role in conflict alleviation?

Objectives of the Study.

The project objectives will be to:

1) Determine the relationship between political decentralization and conflict prevention.

2) Examine the correlation between development and conflict prevention.

Literature review.

This section presents and discusses the literature relevant to this study. It starts by discussing the two concepts in detail: Political decentralization and conflict prevention. It then proceeds to highlight the linkages between the two concepts giving more attention to the role political decentralization plays in conflict prevention. Moreover, a number of case studies on political decentralization are examined in this section.

Political decentralization.

Efficient delivery of public service in many developing countries has for a long time been hindered by highly centralized government bureaucracies. Moreover, thriving markets require not only an appropriately designed economic system, but a secure political foundation. It requires a form of limited government; that is, political institutions that help the state to honor economic and political rights.[3]The fundamental political dilemma of an economic system is this: A government that is strong enough to protect property rights and enforce contracts can confiscate the wealth of its citizens. Thriving markets require not only the appropriate system of property rights and law of contracts, but a secure political foundation that limits the ability of the state to confiscate wealth.[4] Such a secure political foundation is possible in an environment of political decentralization. However, many developing countries have after independence had policies for social and economic development which placed strong emphasis on central planning.

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[3] Weingast, R, 'The economic role of political institutions' *Market-preserving federalism and economic development*, Vol.11, No. 1,(April 1995), p1

[4] Ibid, p.2.

This is the legacy of colonial rule which had its needs both to control and to develop in order to meet the needs of colonial rule itself. This was followed by statism which was implied by nation building imperatives after independence. A part from such rationales, bureaucratic centralism is a pattern which tends to emerge when independently constituted local and regional government is weak to begin with, a condition common to many developing countries after independence.[5]

Governments are actually driven by latent conflict management motives when they adopt decentralization policies and that recent decentralization trends reflect the ubiquity of conflict in modern society, a proposition that also is a main theme in Lundgren's theorizing about decentralization.[6] There are three main values raised in the rationales for political decentralization, the first one is, a politically legitimate dispersal of authority, the other one is, the quality of services rendered and finally, the efficient use of resources. Arguments concerning political legitimacy, whether explicitly formulated as theories or ideologies or implicit in a country's political tradition, address the question 'who has a legitimate right (and duty) to decide or to take part in decision of different kinds.

Liberalism favors much individual freedom and the main current of liberalism favors a generally wide dispersal of authority. Liberalism is indeed characterized by much optimism about the value of education and the advancement of knowledge for the development of individuals and for social progress. This school of thought views the advancement and transmission of knowledge as a pre-condition for greater personal autonomy and for social advancement. Certainly, there is much general faith in the role of education in creating an environment of political decentralization. Liberalism militates against concentrating political power, it would rather contain it and divide it up among countervailing institutions and groups.

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[5] Lauglo, J, *Forms of decentralization and their implications for education* (Colorado: Taylor and Francis publishers 1995), p 6.
[6] Ibid, p. 8.

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As such, liberalism favors strong local government.[7] Liberalism has championed limited government and scientific rationality, believing that individuals should be free from arbitrary state power, persecution and superstition. It advocates political freedom, democracy and constitutionally guaranteed rights and privileged the liberty of the individual and equality before the law.[8] In 1990s, Fukuyama revived a long-held view among liberals that the spread of legitimate domestic political orders would eventually bring an end to conflicts especially international conflicts. The foundations of contemporary liberal internationalism were laid in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by liberals proposing preconditions for a peaceful world-order. In broad summary they concluded that the prospects for the elimination of war lay with a preference for democracy. Liberals believes that democratic processes and institutions can break the power of the ruling elites and curb their susceptibility for violence. For liberals such as Schumpeter, war is the product of the aggressive instincts of unrepresentative elites.[9]

In contrast to liberalism, rationality and state-centrism are the core realist premises. Realism emphasizes the constraints on politics imposed by human selfishness and the absence of international government. Scholars such as Hans Morgenthau, Reinhold Niebuhr, Kenneth Waltz, George Kennan and E.H Carr are the proponents of this realist way of thinking. Waltz defines political structures by their ordering principle, differentiation of functions and distribution of capabilities. How are units related to one another? How are political functions allocated? How is power distributed? In realism, force is the basic instrument of governance, hence believes that power must be concentrated in the central government.[10]

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[7] Ibid, p. 10.
[8] Burchill S, et al, *Theories of International Relations* (Washington: Doyle 1986) p.55.
[9] Ibid, p. 57.
[10] Ibid, p. 57.

At the time when the United States constitution was framed, federalism was philosophically articulated by Madison and Hamilton as a device to prevent tyrannical rule by advancing the idea of decentralization. This gave some checks and balances against excessive concentration of power in the central government. Thus federalism can find justification in the liberal tradition. However, federalism exists in many countries simply as a political compromise in the combination of member states which have striven to ensure considerable self government based on a degree of separate national identity. Federalism is a type of state formation that is established by devolution of power so that provinces or regions become member state in a country that previously was established within a more centralist framework. In such cases, federalism has typically been a concession to preserve unity in the face of strong separatist movement for example in Canada and Belgium.[11]

Crook and Manor argues that political decentralization may sabotage local democracy hence causing it not to function. When local democracy fails to function well, this limits accountability of local government officials or community leaders. Moreover, scholars such as Bardhan, Mathew and Nayak, posit that accountability, efficiency and equity in service delivery may worsen under political decentralization.[12]

The other debate on political decentralization is advanced by populist localism. Populist view implies that public officials should be public servants, accountable to the local community which they serve. Populism implies that local government should be based on small community-like population units, for example, the village and the small town and that such government close to the people should have extensive power. For education, populism means that schools should be local, community-based institutions run by local government in small population units. In

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[11] Lauglo, J, Forms of Decentralization and their implications for Education, op cit, p. 13.

[12] Bardhan, P, and Mookherjee, D, *Decentralization and Accountability in Infrastructure Delivery in Developing Countries,* (Oxford, Blackwell 2006) p. 102.

general, a common denominator of populism is rejection of the authoritativeness of technocratic and professional expertise.[13] The idea advanced by both populist localism and liberalism are almost similar and they both advocate for a strong local government.

It can be seen that local empowerment which has been sometimes credited to political decentralization has tended to be rather unauthentic. This is because political decentralization appears actually to reinforce existing inequalities.[14] The advocates of this line of thinking such as Susara J. Berkhout believe in centralized government since to them political decentralization means reinforcing already existing discrimination. This paradigm supports realism in its arguments as they both discourage political decentralization.

In a comparative study by Wielemans and Roth-Van-der Werf, decentralization was found to be among the agendas of most European Union countries as a way to promote quality control and greater efficiency. Moreover, Weiler argued that the notion of decentralization as redistribution of power seems largely incompatible with the manifest interests of the modern state in maintaining effective control and in discharging some of its key functions with regard to the system of economic production and capital accumulation.[15]

The structuralism assumption that the exercise of power relies on the use of 'resources' embedded in the structured characteristics of the social system implies that any redistribution of power or physical resources would be inadequate. The structure within which power is exercised is defined by prevailing patterns of thought and conduct, which may mean that, in spite of the redistribution of the rights to power and/or the allocation of physical resources, certain structured patterns of action may survive and differentially affect the exploitation of the resources or rights to power. As result, the term restructuring has more radical meaning than

[13] Lauglo, J, Forms of Decentralization and their Implications for Education, op cit, p. 13.
[14] Berkhout, J, 'The decentralization Debate' *Thinking about power*, Vol.51 No.4 (July, 2005), p.316.
[15] Ibid, p. 317

renewal or reform. This is because the term restructuring raises the question of unconscious patterns of thought or action that contribute to the affirmation of the existing structures of power. In this context, decentralization is seen by Weiler as a means for the state to deal with social conflict and the erosion of its own legitimacy.[16] The structuralism believes that political decentralization alone is not enough; instead the structure within which power is distributed is very crucial in enhancing efficient and effective distribution of power.

Political decentralization has been successfully tried in different countries. South Africa is one of the examples which depict how political decentralization contributes to conflict reduction. South Africa is a newly constituted democracy struggling to restructure a society of diverse cultural groups and historically entrenched racial inequalities. Decentralization of some powers to local levels in South Africa could be ascribed to a desire to prevent polarization as described by Lauglo. The South African constitution incorporates the bill of rights enshrining the rights to equality, human dignity, freedom and security of persons as well as various other freedoms and political and social rights. Governing bodies at school level are given some powers but the national government determines the policy with regard to virtually all fields; for example access to compulsory education, curricula and assessment. By contrast, the centralization-decentralization discourse in Flanders seems to be construed at the center in terms of clear chains of responsibility, division of labor and rule and regulations determining the specific rights and responsibilities of the various actors.

Another example is the United States constitution which granted the states the power to provide their citizens with various forms of public goods, and this contributed to the prosperity of this nation. For most of the last three hundred years, the richest nations in the world have had federal structure, nations such as the Netherlands from the late 16th through mid 17th century.

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[16] Ibid, p. 318.

England from the late 17th century through mid-19th century and United States from the late 19th century until late 20th century. In the United States, most citizens were deeply suspicious of the national government because of its potential to impose polices favored by other regions or interests. The "balance rule" or the equal representation of the north and the south in the senate served as the principle institution providing durability to the agreement between the regions.[17] In United States, the constitution and allied institutions provided the principle mechanisms of political decentralization inherent in federalism during the second party system. In Africa, some countries have faced weakening contest between the leaders and the public over the nature and form of state-societal relationship. This has led to conflicts in various states like Somalia, Sudan, Congo and many others.

In Somalia for example, under-development and conflicts is associated to its political foundations of centralization and dictatorship of brute force as in Somalia or intellectual and moral leadership. If a society is to go beyond a condition of perpetual chaos and disorder, tenaciously held together by the unmitigated force of the state, ruling elites must embark upon the creation of cognitive and effective structures that not only positively shape the external behavior of the majority but more crucially, facilitate the internal affirmation of the development direction and leadership regard. This leadership system can best be attained in an atmosphere of political decentralization. In Somalia, this leadership system has been missing and the situation has been aggravated by numerous changes various institutions have undergone and particularly the constitution.

The literature reviewed in this section brings out two broad schools of thought: One that supports the idea of strong local government like in liberalism and populist localism while the other support strong central government like realism. This study uses the idea of liberalism but

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[17] Weingast, R, The Economic Role of Political institutions, op cit, p. 18.

greater emphasis is given on the need for reliable institutions in enhancing full political decentralization.

Conflict prevention.

Is there any link between political decentralization and conflict prevention? Yes, decentralized governance can contribute to the efforts of transforming conflicts, power-sharing and inclusion incentives of the minority groups. According to Lund, conflict prevention refers to "any structural or intercessory means to keep intrastate or interstate tensions and disputes from escalating into significant violence and the use of armed forces, to strengthen the capabilities of potential parties to violent for resolving such disputes peacefully and to progressively reduce the underlying problems that produce the issues and the disputes.[18] The desire to prevent conflict and violent behavior is not a new concept; however it has changed shape since the end of cold war. Since 1990s, forums on the question of conflict prevention have increased dramatically and the subject has been discussed and debated by various people including politicians, secretary generals and by the heads of international organizations directed in large part by the United Nations. Academics, members of major private foundations have also addressed this issue as well as activists and members of civil society. Moreover, specialized institutions have emerged which have also conducted crucial studies on the same subject matter such as Carnegie commission on preventing deadly conflict or through the work led by international crisis group.[19] For example, in the late 1990s, the United States institute of peace developed a task force on conflict prevention and the council on foreign relations created a center for preventive action, all dedicated to the issue of conflict prevention.

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[18] Grasa, Rafael and Camps, *Conflict prevention and decentralized governance, paper No.18877, posted 26 November 2009/13:23.*
[19] Ibid, p. 22.

The former united nation's secretary general; Boutros Boutros-Ghali in his paper, agenda for peace introduces the idea of preventive diplomacy when defining conflict prevention. He defines conflict prevention as a policy that is aimed at preventing conflict from emerging or escalating into violence. Boutros sets the stage by giving five specific measures of preventive diplomacy which includes confidence-building, fact finding missions, early-warning networks, preventive deployment and demilitarized zones. He further argues that it is vital to confront the underlying causes of violent conflicts through economic and social development.[20]

The debate on conflict prevention is whether prevention should focus on eliminating the root or structural causes of conflict or should concentrate on more short term and medium terms goals. Deep rooted causes of conflicts must be addressed to achieve positive peace. However, in preventing the outbreak of violence, immediate causal factors must be given first priority and amicably addressed.

Some scholars depict that relative deprivation is a major cause of conflict. The concept of relative deprivation is very useful in explaining the origins of internal wars. Relative deprivation contends that, conflict a rise when there is a gap between value expectations and value capability. In this theory, the idea of reference group is very critical; this is where people compare themselves with other people or groups. The proponents of this school of thought argue that conflict can be prevented if the gap between value expectation and value capability is narrowed. When there is an atmosphere of individual growth. peace is inevitable since people will concentrate in projects which enhance personal growth. On the other hand, if political decentralization is not done genuinely, conflict is inevitable. This is because when power is concentrated in a particular region, the resources follows the same trend. People who are not represented in authority feel relatively deprived since the resources are concentrated in a

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[20] Ibid, p. 23.

particular region neglecting other regions. People who are marginalized compare themselves with others who are not. Hence, this breeds discontentment which is a potential source of conflict. This has been the cause of various conflicts that are prevalent in the north-eastern province of Kenya.

Some liberal theorists claim that increasing contact among traders and consumers of international community as well as the development of mutual respect and harmonious relations is one of the ways of preventing conflicts. Increasing levels of trade create more interaction, thus creating avenues that promote mutual co-existence. Stein 1993 labels this strand of theory sociological liberalism and notes that many of the early proponents of free trade proffered this line of thinking to link trade and cooperation. Thus, according to this school of thought, interdependence leads to qualitatively better relations, rather than simply the absence of bad relations. Liberal theorists make a number of claims concerning the prevention of international conflict, each of which draws upon a different causal logic. For instance, one of the set of claims asserts that economic trade replaces conquest as a means of exchange, thus lowering expected levels of conflict.[21] What would formally be gained through war can now be traded. This variant of liberalism holds that higher levels of trade can remove the economic based incentives for conflict, leading to a more peaceful international environment.

In contrast, realists do not view interdependence as a source of peace or a deterrent to conflict. Rather, increasing trade can serve as a potent source of stress and conflict between states. Hirschman 1945, has argued that the gains from trade may not be proportional a cross all states and that this disparity in relative gains can be a source of leverage of one state over

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[21] Pevehouse, C, 'Interdependence Theory', *Theory and Measurement of International Conflict Vol. 66 No. 1 (Feb. 2004) p.248.*

another.[22] If one partner depends on a trading relationship much more heavily than another partner, the taller state faces fewer costs associated with severing the relationship. Under these circumstances, trade may not be a deterrent to conflict, but rather a source of tension. Waltz 1970, for example argues that close interdependence means closeness of contact and raises the prospect of at least "occasional conflict".

Evidence linking political decentralization and conflict prevention is evident in many countries including Sudan. Colonial rule in Sudan concentrated all their power in the north. This uneven political representation continued in post-colonial time, heightening the conflict between the relatively advantaged northerners and the less advantaged southerners. This north-south inequality intensified the interregional tensions. This has led to conflict for many years and the only antidote to this difficulty is either making each of the two regions autonomous or decentralizing political power to enhance equitable development.[23]

This study is important since it will add to the body of knowledge on the subject of political decentralization and conflict prevention. The findings of the study will enhance a better understanding of the role political decentralization plays in conflict prevention. Secondly, the study will form a basis for future research, as the researcher will rely on the scholarly works of other scholars, this work will also be used by future scholars in the research work. The study findings will be crucial for policy makers on the subject of political decentralization in conflict prevention. Development agents such as NGOS, CBOS or other actors can use the findings of this study to draft policy papers which can tackle the issues of development and conflict prevention.

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[22] Ibid, p. 249.
[23] Rothchild, D, *Managing Ethnic Conflict in Africa: Pressures and Incentives for Cooperation* (Washington D.C: Donnelley, 1997), p78.

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The findings of the study may be used by government agencies to draft policies on the best way to battle security issues in different countries, so the insights from this study are vital in conflict prevention.

Theoretical Framework.

This study will be guided by the theory of liberalism. In this school of thought, its proponents argue that individuals should be free from arbitrary state power, persecution and superstition. The main current of liberalism favors a generally wide dispersal of political authority. Moreover this paradigm militates against concentrating political power, it would rather contain it and divide it up among countervailing institutions and groups. As such, liberalism favors strong local government.[24] For liberals, peace is the normal state of affairs: in Kant's words, peace can be perpetual. The laws of nature dictated harmony and cooperation between peoples. War is therefore both unnatural and irrational, an artificial plot and not a product of some peculiarity of human nature. Liberals have a belief in progress and perfectibility of the human condition. Through their faith in the power of human reason and the capacity of human beings to realize their inner potential, they remain confident that the stain of war can be removed from human experience.[25] For liberals such as Schumpeter, war is a product of the aggressive instinct of unrepresentative elite. Moreover, Kant and Schumpeter argue that conflict is the outcome of minority rule. They further say that states founded on individual rights and representative government would not have the same appetite for conflict and war as compared to the ones with a centralized government

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[24] Werlin, H, 'Poor Nations, Rich Nations' *A Theory of Governance, Public Administration Review*, Vol. 63, No.3, (2003), pp. 329-342.
[25] Ibid, pp. 359.

Some liberals emphasize the institutional constraints on liberal-democratic states, such as public opinion, the rule of law and representative government. Others stress the normative preference for compromise and conflict resolution which can be found in liberal democracies. A combination of both strengthens the argument that conflict prevention can best be achieved in an atmosphere of political liberalism.[26] Liberalism will be the best approach in this study since if conflicts are to be prevented; institutions have to be reformed to enhance decentralization of political power. Liberalism strongly believes in the decentralization of political authority and development can only be achieved in an environment of fair distribution of political authority with strong local government. Unless there is fair distribution of political power especially in a multiethnic society, there can be no social cohesion. This brings in the nexus between political decentralization and conflict prevention. Political decentralization which is the main subject of this study is only practical in a democratic system where the rule of law is adhered to. Thus liberalism is the most suitable way to address political decentralization, and conflict prevention.

Hypotheses.

The following are the hypotheses in this study;

1) Political decentralization alleviates conflicts and leads to development.

2) There is no relationship between development and conflict prevention.

Methodology

To achieve the objective of this study, various methods of data collection and analysis will be employed. The study will use both secondary and primary sources. The secondary data shall be

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[26] Burchill, S, Theories of international Relations, op cit, 61.

compiled through rigorous library research where various materials, journals and books shall be utilized. The research will be used to test the hypothesis developed. This will be achieved by analyzing and interpreting both secondary data and the one collected from the chosen case study. The independent variable is political decentralization while the dependent variable is conflict prevention.

Data Collection

The primary data will be obtained using open-ended interviews which will be conducted on various people from different regions. Questionnaires will also be used in gathering primary data. The data collection tools for the secondary data will be in-depth information gathering and document analysis. Interviews will be used to generate insights on the subject of political decentralization within the context of the Kenya case study. The type of interviews conducted will be structured so as every respondent will get identical questions which are in written form. The findings from these interviews can not be generalized but they pertain to the context that limits my study. The findings will be used to expand understanding and search for exceptions to the rule. With several other interviews, the data collected can be validated elsewhere. Judgment sampling technique will be employed to select those who will participate in the interview. Data collected will include: quotations, opinions and specific knowledge and background information.

Document analysis

This technique involves examination and critical analysis of various literatures that contains information on the subject of the study. This is because the study will have to analyze and understand many historical and current documents in the focus areas. Data collected in this procedure will include excerpts, quotations, correspondents and official reports.

Data analysis

Interpretatively, data will be analyzed and this will be done by synthesizing, categorizing and organizing the data into patterns that describe the phenomena. The data will also be analyzed by making connections to existing knowledge and integrating it with relevant concepts.

Chapter Outline.

The study has five chapters. The first chapter introduces the study by contextualizing the research problem and providing justification of the study. This chapter also presents literature review, theoretical framework, hypothesis and data collection methods.

Chapter two: Conflict and Decision making. The chapter begins by highlighting the utility of collective decision making and its role in conflict prevention, and then proceeds to address the need of formulation during decision making process. Moreover, the nexus between decision making and problem solving and also the need for a good decision making environment is discussed. The chapter concludes by looking at the inter-linkages between decision making and conflict management.

Chapter three: Political decentralization and conflict. This chapter discusses conflicts in decentralized system and then proceeds by showing ways of dealing with conflicts in such systems. Moreover, the chapter explores the nexus between political decentralization and conflict reduction. Finally, the chapter looks at conflict prevention in decentralized societies.

Chapter four: Political decentralization and conflict prevention in Kenya. This chapter contains a critical analysis of the impact of political decentralization in conflict prevention using Kenyan case study. Chapter five: contains conclusions of the study. This basically contains the reflections on the theme of political decentralization and conflict prevention from three dimensions, i.e. the past, the present and the future.

Chapter Two.

Conflict and Decision Making.

Introduction.

The rationale for involving both the political leaders and the citizens in decision making concerning governance in a country or a region is that our political leaders have, besides politics, their private affairs to attend to while our ordinary citizens, though occupied with the pursuits of industry, are still fair judges of public matters. Indeed, there is a need to create avenues that encourage collective decision making. For a long time, democracy by deliberation was viewed both positively and negatively. Some argued that discussion would improve decision making, while others believe that it would lead to bad decisions. However, the idea of deliberative democracy or government by discussion is further justified on grounds of human fallibility.[1]

The fact that a man may be an expert in one field does not mean that he is competent in another. This is also true for a group of people, regardless of what binds them together. Whether groups of people are bound by religion, tribe, level of education, profession, level of income etc, they possess some peculiar knowledge hence there is a need to be involved in decision making process. Decision making is therefore a delicate task of weighing the opinions of various groups against each other and coming up with a compromise which is mutually acceptable.[2] For instance, in policy making, economist tend to favor policies which have monetary value, politicians will consider policies which brings their popularity, religious leaders on the other hand tends to favor policies which are consistent with their creed or the ones that are ethical while various traditional leaders tends to judge policies on the basis of whether they are in the line with their culture or not.

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[1] Elster, J, *Deliberative democracy* (Cambridge university press: Adam Przeworskl, 1998) pp 1-12.

[2] Paarl berg, D, *American farm policy: A case Study of Centralized Decision Making* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc, 1964) pp.104-105.

The best way to learn about the nature of the decision making process in any country is to examine actual cases. When examining this process, the following questions are very crucial hence ought to be answered: who makes important decisions? What political or governmental bodies participate in one way or another in adopting the decisions? And what positions and attitudes do the major personalities involved in the formulation of policy assume? These questions depict the nature of decision-making process in a country or region. When decision making process is not inclusive, conflict is inevitable.[3]

Collective decision making.

Decision making must be studied at the individual level to include insight and aspiration, emotion and memory and at the collective level to include history, culture and context in the vast network of decision making that makes up every organization. Collective decision making by free, equal and rational individuals doesn't need to take the form of deliberation. There are other modes of collective decision making, which can be assessed and compared with deliberation in terms of efficiency, equity or intrinsic appropriateness.[4] When a group of equal individuals for instance are to make a decision on a matter that concerns them all and the initial distribution of opinion falls short of consensus, they can go about it in three different ways: arguing, bargaining and voting. In earlier times, decisions could also be reached by duels, tournaments and similar means, but these are not used today. Groups can reach a decision by using one of the three procedures, two of them in combination or all three.

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[3] Sidney I. *Conflict and decision making in Soviet Russia: A case Study of Agricultural Policy 1953-1963*, (Princeton university press: Ploss, 1965) p. 3.

[4] Langley, A, et al, 'Opening up Decision Making' *The view from the Black Stool, Organization science*, Vol. 6, No. 3(May-Jun.,1995) pp.260-279.

However, if the discussion involves parties who originally seek to challenge each other, it may lead to "intellectual war", hence escalating conflicts rather than resolving it. In such cases, one might want to ban discussion by imposing "gag rules" rather than stimulate discussion. Against the above skeptical claim, several of the contributors argue for the virtues of deliberation or rather discussion. The idea of collective decision making is very important due to the following reasons: It reveals private information which may be crucial in the process of decision making, lessens or overcomes the impact of bounded rationality; bounded rationality rests on the claim that deliberation can be creative since decision making is not only a process of choosing among given alternatives but also a process of generating new alternatives. Moreover, collective decision making improves the moral and intellectual qualities of the participant.[5] Due to the above reasons, collective decision making thus plays a crucial role in conflict prevention.

Moreover, free discussion of different views on a problem may produce a large number of correct answers to the problem if the discussion is effectively managed by a good leader. During the process of collective decision making, disagreement and conflict improves decision-making. This is because it leads to increased attention to diagnosis and evaluation hence high quality decisions. Besides, divergent views and conflict allows the implications of different group's views and goals to be made clear and to be taken into consideration if need be during decision-making process.[6] When these different group's views and goals are taken into consideration during collective decision making, it lessens tensions in various groups which would cause conflict if not addressed.

Collective decision making has various stages, these are: defining the issue, called orientation; listing feasible and desirable solutions, called evaluation; and eliminating the less

[5] Ibid, p.266.
[6] Schwenk, R, 'Conflict in Organizational Decision-making' *An Exploratory Study of its Effects in For-profit and Not-for-profit Organizations, Management Science*, Vol. 36, No.4 (April, 1990), pp.436-448.

useful solutions, deeply analyzing the more useful ones and choosing, called control. During this process, attention must also be paid to a post decision stage which is concerned with tension reduction. The activity during this final stage is socio-emotional and positive for example joking or praising which serves to repair the damage done to individual's self-esteem and group cohesion in the course of decision making. Political decisions do not always pass through a given set of stages; instead, processes are naturally interrupted and curtailed. Groups at one stage may repeatedly cycle back to an earlier stage before choosing a course of action. Besides, to the extent that policy making is cybernetic, the development of options will have healthy feedback effects. An unexpectedly creative solution, for instance, will cause members to revise their previous diagnosis of the issue and to regard it as an opportunity rather than as a problem, crisis or difficulties in evaluating a set of standard. Ready-made options may cause members to return to an earlier stage in their proceedings to custom-make solution and if this fails, to take still another step backward to re-diagnose the problem.[7]

An essential question which ought to be asked during collective decision making is: Are the costs of time and effort spent on analyzing decisions outweighed by benefits? This is a question that merits full attention during collective decision making. Besides, the above question speaks to the increasingly important problem of allocation of scarce attention to different decision making activities. It also raises many theoretical and methodological issues central to which is the lack of measure to regulate decision making performance in situations of any complexity.[8] Advantages of collective decision making far much outweighs its demerits, for instance: Collective decision making process can serve important functions of communication

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[7] Burnstein, E, and Berbaum, L, 'Stages in Group Decision Making' *The Decomposition of Historical Narratives, Political Psychology*, Vol. 4, No.3 (sep., 1983), pp.531-561.
[8] Hogarth, M, and Makridakis, S, 'The Value of Decision Making in a Complex Environment' *An Experimental Approach, Management Science*, Vol.27, No.1 (Jan., 1981), PP.93-107.

and coordination within a system as well as being used to motivate others and gain commitment. All these advantages of collective decision making as discussed in this paragraph points to the fact that collective decision making is a reliable approach of conflict prevention. For instance, when collective decision making plays a role of communication, it helps to reduce the suspicion and mistrust that builds up when there is poor communication. When suspicion and mistrust exists between groups which are antagonistic, conflict is likely, however if such groups are involved in collective decision making such mistrusts and suspicion is cleared up.

Experts in decision making have proposed that complex decision-making may benefit from use of the processes individuals should use in generating and evaluating decision alternatives. These experts suggests that decision makers require a more formalized or structured process to help them in examining the many dimensions, preferences and suspicions that are natural to complex decisions. Moreover, research has shown that careful use of these types of structured decision protocols improves a variety of outcomes related to profits, organizational image, internal coordination, capacity utilization and market penetration.[9]

Leaders in various circles, scholars and even managers are today in agreement that demographic diversity is a subject that can no longer be ignored hence needs full attention. For example today, women and minorities are the majority in the work force and as a result must be involved in decision making. Besides, widespread integrated manufacturing practices have increased the need for employees of different occupational backgrounds to work together. The dynamics and consequences of diversity are particularly significant at the group level, where individuals are in position to engage in face-to-face interactions more regularly than at the

[9] Kimberly, D. and Barr, S. 'The Effects of Mood on Individual's Use of Structured Decision Protocols', *Organization Science,* Vol.10, no.2 (March-April., 1999), pp181-198.

organizational level. This greater salience and because of the current prevalence of team-based approaches in organizations is the rationale of collective decision making.[10]

Collective decision making gives room for social equality in problem solving and it also encourages brainstorming. Moreover, it changes the strategic planning of group decision making from win/lose to a win/win scenario. When people involved in decision making are given a chance for brainstorming, the outcome of the process is owned by all the stakeholders involved in decision making. This mitigates conflict that could erupt if few individuals were involved in decision making. People tend to own a policy or a decision more easily if they were involved in the process of coming up with such policies or decisions. Likewise, democracy gives people an opportunity to air their views and when people's views are listened to, cordial relationships tends to develop even when their views are not fully implemented.[11]

In collective decision making, a group must choose an action whose payoff depends on the action taken and on the outcomes of certain events or variables. After the group payoff is received, it must be divided among the members of the group. The ultimate interest of the group is the benefit an individual member enjoys and not on the entire group. This is the reason why collective decision making is crucial in all areas including political leadership. Political leaders represent the interests of the citizens they represent. The ultimate interest of collective decision making in such cases centers on the vector of payoffs to the citizens of the various constituencies represented. This actually justifies the idea of collective decision making.[12] A government where there is collective decision making also called democratic government incorporates the views

[10] Pelled H, 'Demographic Diversity', *Conflict and Work Group Outcomes: An Intervening Process Theory*, *Organization Science* Vol.7, No.6 (Nov-Dec., 1996) pp.615-631.
[11] Xanthopulos, Z, et al, 'Interactive Multiobjective Group Decision Making with Internal Parameters', *Management Science*, Vol.46, No.12 (Dec., 2000), pp.1585-1601.
[12] Eliashberg, J, and Winkler, L,' Risk Sharing and Group Decision Making', *Management Science*, Vol.27, No.11 (Nov., 1981), pp.1221-1235.

and desires of its citizens and in such leadership, conflict is rare since there are many channels for airing complains. However, if this lacks then people result to conflict since that the only way they can be listened to.

Formulation and decision making.

Formulation is defined as a procedure carried out by a responsible agent that begins by responding to the claims made by key people and ends when an option or options have been targeted for development. Decision researchers agree that the early, formative steps in decision making are crucial because they guide the search for solutions. Good decision makers must be in a position to interpret signals and provide directions. This is because decision makers are exposed to many signals hence must determine which signals merits attention and which one does not. Failure to correctly interpret signals can lead to dire consequences which could otherwise be avoided if the signals are correctly interpreted.[13] In 2007 for example, there were enough signals that depicted a likely hood of post-election violence, however due to negligence, decision makers were not informed by these signals hence violence broke out. This is the reason why formulation plays a crucial role in decision making since this is the stage when decision makers interpret signals. When signals are properly interpreted, the future is well taken care of.

After sorting out claims based on the signals, a decision maker must give direction which can be expressed as problems to be overcome, boundaries that circumscribe what can be done, ideals to be met, strategies to be followed, issue agenda to be managed, idealized solution targets, a preferred solution and objectives. Qualifications can also be imposed such as stakeholders to be involved, urgency and core values to be preserved. Formulation process has three major stages, these are: intelligence, choice and development. At the intelligence stage, a

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[13] Nutt C. 'The formulation Processes', *Tactics Used in Organizational Decision Making, Organization Science*, Vol.4, No.2 (May, 1993), pp.226-251.

decision process is activated when key people make claims. This activism forces a decision maker to make diagnosis that assesses the importance of each claim and reconciles competing claims.[14] At the second stage, a choice is made among the many alternatives, which is subjected to the last stage of development where an option or options are considered for further screening and development.

As noted earlier, problem formulation often occurs in the early stages of decision making. As a result, it has the potential for affecting the direction of all succeeding stages. This is due to the strong relationship that exists between the representation of a problem and the domain of solutions and ideas that the representation can produce. For instance, when a problem is first discovered, it is rich in solution possibilities. As the process continues, however, assumptions and constraints are added in an effort to bring manageability and closure to the problem. These limit the scope of the problem and the range of possible solutions. Since the amount of information needed to change a decision is much greater than the amount needed to make it initially, reformation of the problem becomes less likely once a particular formulation is selected and pursued. This places pressure on decision makers to avoid premature closure and select "optimal" problem statements. One way out that a planner has is to devote more time and energy to the formulation process and to consider as many different perspectives on the problem as possible. This helps decision makers to avoid solving a wrong problem.[15]

During formulation process, actors gather appropriate information and develop a set of alternative actions. They then select the optimal alternative, this process actually increases the

[14] Mintz, A, 'Foreign Policy Decision Making in Familiar and Unfamiliar Settings: An Experimental Study of High-ranking Military Officers', *the poliheuristic theory of foreign policy decision* making, journal of conflict resolution, Vol.48, No. 1, (Feb., 2004), pp. 91-104.
[15] Volkema, J. 'Problem Formulation in Planning and Design', *Management Science*, Vol. 29, No.6 (Jun., 1983), pp 639-652.

quality of decisions made during the process of strategic decision making.[16] Despite environmental forces, strategic decision making processes influence decision success. For example, formulation which is a strategic decision making process is very crucial since it can determine the success or failure of decisions made. Formulation process ought to be inclusive for it to be effective. First, effective decision must be based on organizational goals. Political decision processes, however are organized around the self interests of individuals or groups. Second, effective decisions should be based on complete and accurate information about the likely relationship between choices made and the outcomes. Based on this criterion, political behavior has the potential to undermine effectiveness because it often involves distortion and restriction of information flow. Finally, effective decisions should be based on a recognition and understanding of environmental constraints. Political processes can undermine effectiveness in two ways: First, in political processes, attention is focused inside the organization, towards the mixture of interests, power-bases and positions rather than on what is feasible given the current environmental forces. Decisions that result from such processes are thus likely to be informed about environmental constraints. Second, political processes may introduce additional constraints on possible solutions. For example, a course of action that is promising in light of the environment may be eliminated because of the opposition of a powerful individual. Thus, political processes may rule out viable choices further reducing the likely success of the strategic decision they produce.[17] This is the rationale for involving citizens in decision making that concerns governance at the national level.

[16] Eisenhardt, M, and Zbaracki, J, 'Strategic Decision Making', special issue: Fundamental themes in strategy process Research, Vol. 13, No.3 (Winter, 1992), pp.17-37.
[17] Sharfman, P, et al, 'Does decision process matter'? A study of Strategic Decision-making Effectiveness, The Academy of Management Journal, Vol.39, No.2 (Apr., 1996), pp.368-396.

Good decision-making contradicts good action since good action needs strong commitment to a single course of action, whereas good decision-making implies carefully balancing several solutions before taking action. Leaders are faced with contradictions and competing demands from internal and external stakeholders. Hence, they use decisions as instruments to satisfy these demands and legitimize their organization, but these decisions are decoupled from real action which goes on unchanged. In any case, leaders reflective thought is only a minor and powerless component in the flow of events and fortunes that forms action.[18] The competing demands and contradictions which face leaders can best be addressed during collective decision making.

Decision making and problem solving.

The work that steers the course of any society and its economic and governmental organizations is largely the work of making decisions and solving problems. It is the work of choosing issues that require attention, setting goals, finding or designing suitable courses of action, and evaluating and choosing among alternatives actions. Problem solving normally encompass the first three tasks, that is, fixing agendas, setting goals and designing actions, while the last two: evaluating and choosing is actually called decision making. Nothing is more important for the well-being of a society than that this work be performed effectively and efficiently. For instance, addressing successfully the many problems requiring attention at the national level such as the budget and trade deficits, AIDS, national security etc or at the individual level for example choosing a career, choosing a life partner, buying a house etc.[19]

[18] Laroche, H, 'From Decision to Action in Organizations' *Decision-making As a Social Representation, Organization Science, Vol. 6, No.1, Focused issue: European perspective on organization theory* (Jan-feb., 1995), pp.62-75.
[19] Herbert, A, et al, 'Decision Making in Organizations' *Decision Making and Problem Solving, Interfaces,* Vol.17, No. 5 (Sep-Oct., 1987), pp.11-31.

Policy makers at all levels of decision making must use various criteria to analyze their complex problems. Multi criteria thinking are used formally to facilitate decision making. Through trade offs, it clarifies the advantages and disadvantages of policy options under circumstances of risk and uncertainty. It is also a tool vital in forming corporate strategies needed for effective competition. Just as described earlier, decision making and problem solving is just but two sides of the same coin. This is because just as in problem solving, to make a decision, one needs various kinds of knowledge, information and technical data. Decision making is seen as a process that involves a number of steps such as: Structure a problem with a model that shows the problem's key elements and their relationships, elicit judgment that reflect knowledge, feelings or emotions, represent those judgments with meaningful numbers, use these numbers to calculate the priorities of the elements of the hierarchy, synthesize these results to determine the overall outcome and then analyze sensitivity to changes in judgments. This form of decision making process is called analytic hierarchy process. Analytic hierarchy process is about breaking a problem down and then aggregating the solutions of all the sub problems into a conclusion. It facilitates decision making by organizing perceptions that exhibits the forces that influence a decision.[20] Analytic hierarchy process uses a similar principle like the one used during fractionation in mediation process. This is paramount when addressing conflict and it can be used in conflict prevention

However, in complex situations of decision making, special pathologies of decision making which alter behavior join in such as information pathologies, interaction pathologies and assessment pathologies. The decision task itself, the decision maker as a problem solver and specific conditions of problem handling are some of the causes of pathologies of decision-

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[20] Saaty, L., 'How to make a decision' *The Analytic Hierarchy Process, Interfaces*, Vol.24, No. 6 (Nov-Dec, 1994), pp 19-43.

making which normally occur individually or in causal overlap. With regard to the individual as a problem solver, cognitive abilities and motivational factors influence the handling of a decision, that is, from the perception and estimation of the present problem over the procedural development of a solution to the final resolution. Interactive abilities influence team work in a community and therefore the evaluations and processes during the handling of a problem[21]. Besides, decision makers must define particular area of the decision space on which he places particular emphasis during problem solving, and for which they have an understanding of the potential consequences of their courses of action.

Indeed, collective decision making process is a reliable method used in problem-solving. The decision-making process model provides a framework and guidelines for working through to a logical conclusion during problem-solving. This model has seven steps, these are: identifying the decision to be made, determining why such a decision is needed, identifying alternative choices for action, analyzing the information and hypothesizing about positive and negative consequences, evaluating desirability of various choices, estimating the practicality of behaviors and deciding on a conclusion for action. These steps are applicable to many decisions and are particularly supreme during problem-solving.[22] Since collective decision making leads to problem solving and problem solving is a way of addressing conflict, then it can be hypothesized that collective decision making averts conflicts.

Decision making environment.

Decision making environments vary greatly and highly affect the decision making behavior of individuals. Indeed, many scholars who have studied decision making environment have come

[21] Bronner, R, 'Pathologies of Decision-making' *Causes, Forms and Handling, Management International Review*, Vol.43, No.1 (2003), pp85-101.
[22] Harisingh, M, et al, 'The Decision Making Process Model' *Design and Use of Adolescent Sexual Decisions, Family Relations*, Vol.32, No.1 (Jan., 1983), pp.111-116.

up with a set of four conceptual models for portraying and interpreting societal decision environments. These are: rational model, the political/competitive model, the garbage can model and the program model. Studies have depicted that while in a given situation one model might be more valid than the others, in almost all important situations, all four models are equally important. Most of the decision making environments have their rational aspects, their political/competitive aspects, their chance or garbage can aspects, and their predictable program aspects. The rational model describes an environment where societal decisions are consequences of societal units which make choices on behalf of the society. Definitely rational model is an extremely important model since it is publicly ascribed to. On the other hand, political/competitive model portrays an environment where societal decisions are consequences of the application of strategies and tactics by units seeking to influence decision processes in directions that will result in choices favorable to themselves. There are a good many writings related to the model, although a combined model or theory is not yet available. Some of these writings concerns organizational power, particularly how such power is acquired. Others describe field studies where the decision processes and outcomes are interpreted as having political bases. The real meaning of the garbage can model is that societal decisions are consequences of connections of problems looking for solutions, solutions looking for problems and opportunities for making decisions. In many ways, the garbage can model describes the environment of the "unstructured" decision processes. Finally, the program model depicts a setting where organizational decisions are consequences of the programs and programming of the units involved.[23]

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[23] Huber, P, 'The nature of organizational Decision Making', The Design of Decision Support Systems, Mis Quarterly, Vol.5, No.2 (Jun., 1981), pp. 1-10.

At the community level, policy decisions are a result of several factors which includes the type of decision making structure, the composition of leadership and the characteristic of those who benefit.[24] This actually depicts how environment affects decision making process and the kind of decisions made. For instance, if the decision making structure does not allow all stake holders to participate in decision making process equally then the chances are decision will be made by few individuals hence making it very difficult to implement them. Moreover, the composition of leadership plays a crucial role in the kind of decisions made. A good decision making team must be representative, that is, if possible it should comprise of men, women, young people, people with disability and any other group present in that setting. This is because if the composition of leadership is not representative, then most likely decisions that doesn't address the interest of all people will emerge.

According to environmental determinism, strategic decisions and processes express adaptation to opportunities, threats, constraints and other characteristics of the environment. The role of leadership in this case is reduced to a facilitation of this adaptation. In the context of strategic decisions, the environmental determinism perspective basically addresses the question of how environmental factors such as dynamism, hostility etc influence strategic decision making processes. Companies, organizations or even governments operating in stable environments follow rational-comprehensive strategic decision making processes while those operating in highly dynamic environments may tend to employ less extensive search and less explicit analysis of alternatives during decision making process. There is a link between environmental heterogeneity and consistency in the making of strategic decisions. For instance, it has been verified that comprehensive processes led to better performance in rapidly changing

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[24] Magill, S. and Clark, N. 'Community Power and Decision Making' *Recent Research and its Policy Implications, the Social Service Review,* Vol.49, No.1 (March., 1975), pp33-45.

environments. Other scholars argue that environmental heterogeneity negatively influences problem-solving dissension. However, this is contrary to expectations of many since many scholars argue for an inverse relationship between environmental heterogeneity and consensus on goals, since complexity gives rise to more possible points of conflict among decision makers hence making consensus more difficult to achieve.[25]

The kind of environment determines the appropriateness of rational strategic decision processes. In a dynamic or uncertain environment, comprehensiveness is doomed to failure since the data are not available, relationships are not obvious and the future is unpredictable. Comprehensive processes are time consuming and in a fast-changing environment a slow decision-making process would be clearly inappropriate. The wisdom represented by the comprehensiveness of the planning process, is positively related to performance in an industry or government with a stable environment and negatively related to performance in a dynamic environment.

Moreover, successful decision-making in dynamic environments use more information, consider more alternatives and seek a greater amount of advice instead of departing from the analytical requirements of comprehensive decision-making, they accelerate their cognitive processes. The quick decisions resulting from comprehensive decision process lead to better performance. Environmental complexity actually requires decision makers to employ greater rationality in their analysis in order to understand the numerous environmental elements and their interconnectedness.[26] Research on cognitive processes suggests that high environmental complexity may lead to greater use of cognitive simplification processes such as selective

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[25] Papadakis, M., et al, 'Strategic Decision-Making Process', The role of Management and Context, Strategic Management Journal, Vol.19, No. 2(Feb., 1998), pp.115-147.
[26] Abdul M. and Rasheed , A, 'Rational Decision-Making and Firm Performance', The Moderating Role of Environment, Strategic Management Journal, Vol. 18, no.7 (Aug., 1997) pp.583-591.

perception and correlations which in turn may affect strategic decision processes by potentially restricting the range of alternatives considered and the information used to evaluate them. Similarly, in liberal environments, governments or organizations may have the resources needed to engage in comprehensive decision processes, but the decision-makers themselves may perceive less need to do so.

Indeed, in any society, decision-making environment plays a central role in the success or failure of decision process. For instance, when people feel their strategic decision-making processes are fair, they display a high level of voluntary cooperation based on their attitudes of trust and commitment. Conversely, when people feel that the processes are unfair, they refuse to cooperate by failing to give ideas and dragging their feet in conceiving and executing strategic decisions. Voluntary cooperation is crucial in the effective execution of strategic decisions. Without initiatives and actions of people, voluntary cooperation which is paramount in implementing strategic decisions is not likely to happen hence a high probability of conflict in a fast moving environment.[27] But, when there is voluntary cooperation based on the attitude of trust and commitment, conflict in such an environment is highly reduced. Decision making environment thus plays an important role in determining the behavior of the decision makers, which in turn affects the quality of the decisions made. Indeed, the probability of conflict is higher in an environment with poor decisions or of poor decision-making process. This is the reason why regime type plays a role in determining the likelihood of conflict or not. In an environment of political decentralization for instance, decision-making process is subjected to popular inputs hence leading to high quality decisions. However, in a centralized system, few

[27] Chan, W, and RaneeMauborgne, 'Procedural Justice', *Strategic Decision Making, and the Knowledge Economy, Strategic Management Journal,* Vol.19, No.4, Special Issue: Editors choice (April. 1998), pp.323-338.

individuals make decisions hence resulting to poor quality decisions, which may lead to conflicts.

According to political decision-making theorists, decision-making is not simply a matter of determining the policy with the greatest expected utility. Rather, the nature of the political context influences what a decision-maker can reasonably hope to accomplish and therefore ought to be taken into account in his calculations. For instance, in an autocratic political context, decision makers may be limited due to the lack of a democratic space which limits the scope of the decisions made. However, in a democratic political context, decision maker can relatively accomplish much due to popular inputs.[28] In conclusion, policy outcome of the political process reflects as much the necessities of the conditions in which it is forged, for example, what is required to obtain agreement.

Decision making and Conflict management.

Conflict always results whenever a group of people are living together. However, nonaggressive interactions after conflicts enable former opponents to settle disputes and restore peace. Nonaggressive interactions such as group decision-making play a crucial role in reducing tension between various groups. Thus, peaceful post conflict interactions are apparently effective in reconciling former opponents. Proximity maintenance through group decision-making also plays an important role in reconciliation. This is because peaceful contact among former opponents reduces stress level. In most cultures, reconciliation tends to involve certain common elements such as gift giving, payment of restitution, food sharing, physical contact or mediation

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[28] Farnham, B, 'Political Cognition and Decision-making', *Political Psychology*, Vol.11, No.1 (Mar., 1990), pp.83-111.

by the third parties. All these are types of nonaggressive interactions which involves decision making.[29]

On the other hand, if conflict is not appropriately managed, it can lead to hostility within the group and poor motivation and morale resulting in poorer decisions. Other consequences of poorly managed conflict are stress, misallocation of resources and diminished performance. All these consequences are the main deterrents of good decision making. For instance, in an environment where the levels of stress are high, decision makers ends up making poor decisions. This is because decision making process employs a lot of rationality which is highly inhibited in a stressful environment. Poor decisions leads to conflicts while conflicts can lead to poor decisions.

During conflict resolution, open and accurate communication tends to facilitate the use of an integrative conflict strategy, when there are shared goals, as participants become clear about opposing arguments and reasons for disagreement. An understanding of opposing frames reference will enable meeting participants to address disagreement and will foster the discovery of a mutually satisfying solution. Open communication during decision making also tends to inhibit avoidance behaviors. A cooperative climate which is habitually fostered by group decision making will promote group ownership of problems and solutions and the use of integrative rather than distributive behaviors.[30]

During decision making process, a number of problems are experienced which if they are not carefully handled can lead to severe consequences. The common problems experienced by

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[29] Silk, B, 'The Form and Function of Reconciliation in Primates', *Annual Review of Anthropology* Vol. 31(2002), pp 21-44.

[30] Miranda, M, and Bostrom, P, 'The Impact of Group Support Systems on Group Conflict and Conflict Management', *Journal of management information systems*, Vol.10, No.3, Organizational impact of group support systems, Expert systems and executive information systems (Winter, 1993/1994),pp. 63-95.

decision making groups include: Dominance of discussion by one or more members; extreme influence of high-status members and lack of acknowledgement of the ideas of low-status members; low tolerance of minority or controversial opinions; inability to access information that is down the hall or in the computer during the course of the group meeting; and undue attention to social activities relative to the task activities of the group. These problems are the main causes of conflict in most societies hence a decision making group must be conscious and willing to address or avoid these problems. For instance, inability to access information or failure to acknowledge the ideas of low-status members can give rise to resentments among segments of the society and if this is not well addressed, it can lead to conflict. Decision makers must be willing to acknowledge the ideas of low-status members and also tolerate minority or controversial opinions[31]. This is one way of demonstrating respect among group members which is crucial during peace building. If these problems are well addressed during decision making process, conflict in societies can be quenched. This is the nexus between conflict management and decision making.

Many countries' elections have been marred by opposition accusations of fraud or mismanagement hence they have been subject to opposition boycott of some kind. Examples of these includes Kenyan electoral process of 2007/2008, Zimbabwe, Uganda etc. In each case, formal electoral processes have been accompanied or followed by parallel, informal processes of elite negotiation which provides a safety valve for political dissatisfaction. These side negotiations have helped to lower the stakes of formal politics and reassure those on the losing side that politics need not be zero-sum.[32] However, before these negotiations bear fruits, a

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[31] Desanctis, G, and Gallupe, R, 'A Foundation for the Study of Group Decision Support Systems', *Management Science*, Vol, 33, No.5 (May, 1987), pp.589-609.
[32] Manning, C, 'Conflict management and Elite Habituation in Postwar Democracy' *The Case of Mozambique*, *Comparative Politics*, Vol.35, No.1 (Oct, 2002), pp.63-84.

number of deaths are normally witnessed. For instance, in Kenya over one thousand people and hundreds of thousands were killed and displaced respectively. These skirmishes have enormous impacts on economies and development in general. These problems can be mitigated if the government and opposition parties are genuinely involved in decision making before elections. Various parties should be involved in making decisions which concerns governance such as: who should be the chairperson of the electoral commission in question? How should the election be conducted to increase transparency?

One of the characteristics marking the end of the cold war has been an apparent explosion in the number of demands for full-fledged ethnic self determination, that is, independence. Several states have been broken into smaller ethnically based countries with consequences ranging from the peaceful interstate relations to the apparent ability of the division to end hostilities. The debate on secessionism has separated the scholarly community into two diametrically opposed camps: those who view the policy as a disastrous, unacceptable course of action that only leads to future violence and those who see it as the only policy that is able to prevent future armed conflict.[33] These two schools of thought can only be justified after examining the causes of the demands to secede. Most case studies depict that the root cause of these demands is marginalization, that is, failure to be involved in decision making pertaining governance and development. A good example is Sudan conflict between the north and south. The conflict that has been witnessed in this country for many decades is due to the North Sudan's failure to involve South Sudan in decision making particularly those that pertains governance and resources. If channels for collective decision-making were well established and respected in many countries, ethnic's demands for self-determination could be curbed.

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[33] Jaroslav Tir, 'Keeping the Peace after Secession' *Territorial Conflicts between Rump and Secessionist State, the Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol.49, No.5 (Oct.., 2005), PP.713-741.

When studying and managing conflicts, psychological, social-political and technological-structural issues should be explicitly considered and integrated. This is the reason why many scholars, in their studies, explicitly embrace a multidisciplinary approach when analyzing the causes, consequences and management of conflict. Since conflict management is a multidisciplinary field, it can best be studied and conducted in an environment which encourages collective decision making.[34] In such an environment, technocrats from various fields such as psychology, sociology, political science, law etc are involved. When experts from various fields are involved in decision making, issues that are psychological, social-political and technological-structural in nature that may lead to conflict are addressed due to their diverse expertise.

Decision making process sometimes may be an intensely emotional experience. As a result, most people give decision making careful thought: what are the options? What consequences might each lead to? How likely are they? How desirable are they? These and many related questions are so critical in conflict management process too. This without a doubt depict that decision-making and conflict management are interrelated processes hence it is impossible to divorce them.[35]

The other inter-linkage between conflict management and decision making is elucidated by the fact that in an environment of high threat, the policy choice tends to be more belligerent, likewise the lower the threat, the more pacific the policy choice. Although logic plays a role in decision making process, much of decision making is driven by emotions. Undeniably, when one or a group of decision makers feel threatened, the decision making process about policy is dominated by emotions rather than logic or rational considerations. On the other hand, under

[34] Pearson, M, and Clair, A, 'Reframing Crisis Management', The Academy of Management Review, Vol. 23, No.1 (Jan., 1998), pp. 59-76.
[35] Connolly, T, and Zeelenberg, M, 'Regret in Decision Making', Current Directions in Psychological Science, Vol.11, No.6 (Dec., 2002), pp.212-216.

conditions of low threat, both emotions and logic have a role in the process of coming up with a policy. The level of conflict in an environment determines the way decision making takes place. Moreover, decision making process has a bearing on conflict management. For instance, when decision making process is guided by both logic and emotions it tends to consider all the pros and cons of a policy used to mitigate conflict unlike when decision making process is dominated by emotions only.[36]

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[36] Gordon, C, and Arian, A, 'Threat and Decision Making', *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, Vol.45, No.2 (Apr., 2001), PP.196-215.

Chapter Three.

Political Decentralization and Conflict.

Introduction:

In the previous chapter on decision making and conflict, various themes which relates to the inter linkages between decision making and conflict have been discussed. From that chapter, it is evident that decision making must be studied at the individual level to include insight and aspiration, emotion and memory and at the collective level to include history, culture and context in the vast network of decision making that makes up every society.[1] Moreover, the need for formulation during decision making process has also been highlighted. Formulation is illustrated to be a crucial stage since it is a stage where decision makers weighs various alternatives and plans a course of action.[2] Decision making process has been described to be a vital process used in problem-solving. Further, it is clear that decision making environment affects decision making process. Finally the chapter is concluded by examining the nexus between conflict management and decision making.[3]

The discussion in this chapter will be centered on the role of political decentralization in conflict prevention. Various subtopics will be discussed under this chapter which includes: conflicts in decentralized system, how to deal with such conflicts, effects of political decentralization in conflict prevention and the chapter concludes by looking at conflict prevention in decentralized societies.

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[1] Sidney, I, *Conflict and Decision Making in Soviet Russia: A Case Study of Agricultural Policy 1953-1963*, (Princeton university press: Ploss, 1965) p.3.

[2] Nutt, C, 'The Formulation Processes and Tactics Used in Organizational Decision Making', *Organization Science*, Vol.4, No.2 (May, 1993), pp.226-251.

[3] Manning, C, 'Conflict Management and Elite Habituation in Postwar Democracy' *The Case of Mozambique*, *Comparative Politics*, Vol.35, No.1 (Oct, 2002), pp.63-84.

Political decentralization refers to a regime of civilian rule which is realized through representative institutions and public liberties. At the center of this regime is a legislative body periodically elected by universal suffrage.[4]

The concept of political decentralization has been adopted by some countries after a long period of struggle. But over the last 30years, decentralization reforms have swept across the world changing decades of centralized political and economic practices as well as the way people study politics. However, in some countries especially in the developing countries, the concept of political decentralization has been reluctantly adopted. This concept has evolved through various stages. Graziano has proposed three stages of development of this concept: traditional, transitional and mobilized stages where each stage has peculiar political characteristics.[5]The traditional stage is dominated by realism where all the political power is concentrated in the central government. On the other hand, a transitional society is characterized by organized political parties, electoral competition and external party relations. Finally the mobilized stage is characterized by good and well developed political system with a strong local government.

In an ideal case, decentralized systems of government have three different levels of government; these are national level, regional level and a local level. Each of these levels has an independent decision-making power. Independent decision-making powers refer to the fact that these different levels of government can legislate on certain matters. A country where the sub-national level of government administers decisions made at a higher level of government is not decentralized even though sub-national legislatures are elected in these counties.[6]

[4] Shils, E, *political development in the new states*: 11 vol.2 No. 4 (Jul 1960) p.382.
[5] Sharon Kettering, *The historical development of political clientelism*, Vol.18 No.3 (winter1988), p420.
[6] Tulia, G, 'A sequential Theory of Decentralization' *Latin America Cases in Comparative Perspective* Vol. 99 No. 3 (Aug 2005), p.327.

Both advocates and critics of decentralization assume that decentralization invariably increases the power of sub-national government. However, a closer examination of this subject illustrates that the magnitude of decentralization varies from substantial to insignificant. However, the sequencing of political decentralization is a key determinant of the evolution of intergovernmental balance of power.

Conflicts in decentralized systems.

Conflict arises when two or more parties have incompatible goals about something. Indeed, as it is depicted by various scholars, conflicts in societies in different levels have various causes. For instance political conflicts are mainly caused by issues such as illegitimacy of governments and regimes and conflicts of constitutionalism. In international level, so frequently conflicts arise from the search of resources, territory like that of Kenya-Uganda over Migingo Island and also the need for raw-materials. Therefore several explanations have been put forward in attempt to explain the causes of conflicts in different systems.[7] Here a lot of effort is devoted in analyzing conflicts in decentralized systems despite the fact that conflicts in different systems may have many similar characteristics.

The main focus of a decentralized government is how to reconcile the need of national government to extend their power into local areas with how agents react to local preferences for flexible enforcement. Spatial dispersion makes it difficult for leaders of the central government to monitor the unrestricted exercise of power for its consistency with national goals. This dispersion is a major cause of conflict between national government and local government. In an ideal situation, local managers tend to control whether agents act under particular circumstances,

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[7] Makumi Mwagiru, *Conflict in Africa, Theory, Processes and Institutions of Management* (Nairobi: Center for conflict research, 2000) pp. 3-6.

while national overseers orient on the extent of their actions. However, this is not always the case especially when the above need is not reconciled.[8]

There are two paradigms that attempts to discuss policy implementation in decentralized system. The first approach emphasizes the ability of decentralized, front-line employees to practice discretion-to express ownership over national policy by substantively shaping how it affects local areas; while the other argues for the ability of political overseers to constrain how local bureaucrats practice discretion and so stresses national oversight and control. So often, the local managers prefer the first approach while the national overseers embrace the second approach. This gives rise to conflict in many decentralized systems. This contrast in preferences is also evident in decentralized capital budgeting problems when decision objectives are not necessarily identical with those of corporate headquarters.[9]

Administrative reform often appears to be cyclical, that is, some reforms adopted are designed to address a particular set of problems, only to see a new set of problems emerge. The new problems, ironically, are often best addressed by the old way of doing things. For instance, decentralization is a policy adopted by many countries to address conflict; however, it has a number of draw backs. Reformers have identified human resource as a key ingredient in the better-government recipe because of its inextricable link with government performance. If the government can not recruit and hire talented individuals at the right place and at the right time and if they cannot motivate, develop and retain those individuals, then the performance of the government will suffer. In a decentralized government, the human resource systems are more prone to political abuse than centralized systems, especially when decentralization is

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[8] Whitford, B, 'Decentralized Policy Implementation', *Political research Quarterly*, Vol. 60, No.1 (Mar., 2007), pp.17-30.

[9] Borge, O, and Weide, J, 'On the Decentralized Capital Budgeting problem Under Uncertainty', *Management Science*, Vol.25, No. 9 (Sep., 1979), pp. 873-883.

accompanied by human resource deregulation. Primarily, centralized human resource systems usually labeled "Civil service systems" were put in place to combat the iniquities and corruption associated with political patronage. By centralizing human resource and practicing politically neutral human resource decision making, government's traditional approach to human resource offers employees greater protection against political coercion. Without this protection, conflict is inevitable in such systems.[10]

In a decentralized system where there are open societies with competing media and extensive press freedom, there is a likely hood of applying norms of impartiality. Whereas in countries with a low level of openness, the reporting is poorer.[11] However, if press freedom is not accompanied by some checks and balances, it can be used to propagate propaganda which may lead to conflicts in decentralized systems. For example, press freedom played a role in aggravating the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

In a decentralized system, the local groups and individuals who gain control over programs and the local advocates and interest groups who affect them have many motives and vulnerabilities that can compromise the effectiveness of a service delivery system. For example, local governments may be unable to resist local constituencies that are not sympathetic to public welfare clients. When service delivery system is compromised, conflict is likely in such a system. This is because when service delivery is tampered with, there is a probability of having unmet human needs which plays a role in fomenting resentment among the citizens. Such a system is so unstable hence it can result to conflict even under slightest provocation. Besides, in a decentralized system, local advocacy groups and agencies that receive funds may find it

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[10] Coggburn, D, 'The Benefits of Human Resource Centralization' *Insights from a Survey of Human Resource Directors in a Decentralized State, Public Administration Review*, Vol. 65, No.4 (Jul-Aug., 2005), pp.424-435.
[11] Mikael Ericksson and Peter Wallensteen, *Armed Conflict, 1989-2003, Journal of peace Research*, Vol.41, No.5 (Sep., 2004), pp. 625-636.

necessary to devote their energies to competing for government revenues rather than pursuing comprehensive long-term social aims. Certain local public agencies may lack the necessary resources to develop their long-term plans. Accordingly, while some states and counties may develop exemplary and creative systems, others are likely to settle for the selective, risk avoiding and routine service delivery pattern that is often found in government programs that encourage local control.[12] This uneven development is also a major cause of conflict in decentralized systems.

Moreover, political decentralization may lead to proliferation of oversees investments which have helped spur development in poor countries. However, this can lead to significant controversy particularly when the monies support large infrastructure projects with major environmental impacts. In an environment with many such projects, there is a probability of conflicts. Such conflicts in a decentralized system are due to environmental degradation.[13]

The major sources of conflict in most countries experiencing ethnic or minority conflicts, countries such as Chad, Spain, Sri-lanka, Sudan, the Philippines, China, Moldova, the UK, Pakistan, Yugoslavia, Indonesia and many others can be linked in the early periods to discriminatory practices in employment, education and other violations of minority rights as now understood in the UN declaration.[14] In a decentralized system where there are no standard policies and procedures such discriminatory practices which can lead to conflict may be manifest. Hence the proponents of centralization argue that centralized approaches seek to maximize instrumental values. For example, having a central human resource office that

[12]. Sosin, R, 'Decentralizing the Social Service System' A Reassessment, The Social Service Review, Vol.64, No.4 (Dec., 1990), pp.617-636.

[13] Salzman, J, Decentralized Administrative Law in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Law and Contemporary problems, Vol.68, No.3/4, The Emergence of Global Administrative Law (Summer-Autumn,2005),pp.189-224.

[14] Sinopoli, M, 'The archaeology of empires', Vol. 23(1994), pp 159-180.

promulgates and enforces standard policies and procedures offers efficiency gains through economies of scale. Such efficiency lacks in a decentralized system hence may be an avenue for future conflicts.

_Dealing with conflicts in decentralized systems.

Insecurity in Africa and many other developing countries has been linked to poor governance and lack of democracy. Democracy provides channels of conflict resolution by ensuring that all points of view are aired and reflected, whether at the ballot box, in parliament or through the media. When various groups are assured that their rights are protected and their economic interests can be fulfilled, the motivation to resort to conflict is greatly lowered. This in essence means that promotion and protection of human rights is fundamental in attaining positive peace in decentralized systems.[15]

In a decentralized system, people are likely to have many conflicts including those in a religious setting or with religious overtones. Due to the freedom granted to citizens for decision making and other freedoms such as freedom of worship, many religions normally emerge with contradicting belief system. For instance, Islamic religion believes in Mohamed while Christianity believes in Jesus. In such a system, conflicts may erupt due to these contrasting believes and particularly if these groups do not respect other people's belief system. Participants in such cases may resolve their conflicts by altering their minds and other people's perception through workshops and seminars. The same problem is witnessed in a multiethnic community where people perceive each other based on their predispositions. Conflict in such systems can best be addressed by changing people's perception and encouraging tolerance among various

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[15] Makumi Mwagiru, *Human security: 'Setting the Agenda for the Horn of Africa'. Africa peace forum* (Nairobi, 2008) page 37.

groups.[16] Respect among various groups also plays a crucial role in dealing with conflicts in such systems.

Socio-economic integration is another tool that can serve to mitigate conflicts in a decentralized system. The more integrated a society is economically or socially, the less the conflict. In an environment of social integration, people tend to respect other people's culture and in one way or the other leap some benefits of their cultural interaction. For instance, an environment with cultural integration tends to encourage intercultural competitions and entertainments. Through these competitions, people interact hence reducing the tensions that existed among various groups, as a result, social cohesion is strengthened hence bringing positive peace. Moreover, economic integration is paramount in promoting positive peace. In an environment of economic integration, economic activities such as trade between different groups are encouraged and this builds cordial relationships between various groups consequently promoting peace. A good example of economic integration is East Africa Community where trade is highly encouraged between member countries. The rationale of economic integration in conflict management is that when different groups are benefiting from their economic integration, this fosters peaceful coexistent since every party fears that a result to violence will jeopardize the integration thus destabilizing the economic system which result to dire losses to all the groups.[17]

The other method that has been put forward for dealing with conflict in a decentralized system is suppression. The persistence of international and civil wars shows that no matter how much we may dislike open brutality, no alternative to war has as yet proved to be always

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[16] Nielsen, E, 'An Assessment of Religious Conflicts and their Resolutions', *Journal for the scientific study of Religion*, Vol.37, No. 1(Mar., 1998), pp. 181-190.
[17] Maxime, A, et al, 'Reduction of Conflicts between Host Governments and Transnational Corporations' *A case Study of Brazil, Management International Review*, Vol.23, No.3 (1983), pp. 36-47.

available or satisfactory. Throughout history, a number of examples can be cited of the successful achievement of unity by deliberate and systematic suppression. For instance, paganism was suppressed in Christian lands and so were various forms of heresy. Spain got rid of Protestants as well as of Jews and moors, and France achieved unity by suppressing the Huguenots. There was a ruthless eradication of the Paris communard by the Versailles troops of Thiers, of socialist in Finland by the counterrevolutionaries and of all liberal and dissident parties by the Bolshevik, Fascist and Nazi government. However, total suppression by complete extermination or expulsion of any considerable number of people is generally so costly in life, wealth and our normal or customary routine. National unity is more often sought by suppressing and depressing an opposing group that it looses the power of revolt.[18] In a decentralized system, if a group poses some dangers of destabilizing a system through rebellions, it would be prudent to weaken the group such that it losses the power to cause skirmishes. Some groups such as Mungiki, Alshabaab and other illegal sects can pose great challenges to the system if their needs are not addressed. However, in some instance the needs may not be genuine as result suppression remains the best way.

The caste system is another way of dealing with conflicts in decentralized societies. A good example of the caste system if ever recognized as such is the system of quotas for diverse ethnic or political groups. In many communities, there is an unspoken understanding among the different element that certain offices or certain proportions of them should go to certain groups. In student organizations, certain offices are regularly allocated to certain fraternities. In New York City for instance, Tammany Hall seems committed to the proposition that the district Attorney should be a protestant and that certain proportion of the judges of the state Supreme

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[18] Cohen, R, 'Minimizing Social Conflicts,' *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 203, Refugees (May, 1939), pp.114-123.

Court should be Jews. There can be no question that this arrangement promotes a certain peaceful stability among groups that might otherwise be in conflict.[19] In a decentralized system with many diverse groups, for example ethnic groups or religious groups, caste system can be the best method where representatives for various groups are involved in decision making or are given posts whether in government or other areas of leadership. Caste system is particularly a crucial tool of conflict management in a decentralized system since it promotes fairness among various groups.

When dealing with conflicts in decentralized societies, the Cairo Declaration itself indicated a need to look more widely and consider root causes of conflict, noting that freedom, equality, justice and dignity cannot be achieved unless conditions for peace and security were established and maintained. According to 1993 Cairo Declaration, the best way of dealing with conflicts in societies is to strengthen respect for human rights and institutions that protects human rights.[20] Institutions such as the African commission on human people's rights. Article 23(2) affirmed by the commission's interpretation interestingly suggests that it is expected that most conflicts will come from inside the state rather than being external threats. The inclusion of people's rights within the charter offers the potential for preventing conflicts. Developing strong institutions that help to strengthen respect for human rights in a decentralized system is vital since through these institutions; people's grievances are aired hence resulting to conflict prevention.[21]

> " The prevalence of internal conflicts in Africa, most of which are accompanied by massive violations of human rights, suggests the need for strengthening human rights mechanism in Africa...However, the issue of providing a mechanism for non-state groups to voice their grievances regarding systematic discrimination and violations of

[19] Ibid, p.119.
[20] Murray, R, 'Preventing Conflicts In Africa', *The Need for a wider perspective* Vol.45 No.1 (2001), pp. 13-24.
[21] Schmiegelow, H, and Schmiegelow, M, 'How Japan Affects the International System', *International Organization*, vol.44, No.4 (autumn, 1990), pp. 553-588.

human rights remains critical. Recourse to a legitimate international mechanism where such grievances can be aired and pressures brought to bear upon the offending government to change its behavior will be an important development in the protection of human rights in Africa".[22]

Due to the draw backs of third party methods, many conflict managers are looking for more effective processes that people support and do not allow conflicts to escalate. Collaborative processes seem to work, though they may not be effective in all cases.[23] Collaborative processes increases the direct involvement of the participants and these participants have the opportunity to make decisions. This provides empowerment which is key ingredient in successful conflict management. However, the effectiveness of these processes need good communication and free sharing of information. This allows them to develop an understanding of and trust for each other. If communication, trust and empowerment cannot be established, then experience depicts that third party processes will have to be used. However, if communication, trust and empowerment are established, conflict management becomes easy particularly in decentralized systems. Collaborative processes as developed by Lincoln include Negotiation, facilitation and mediation.

Regimes play a key role in structuring the way individuals and groups participate in the political selection and decision making process. Broadly speaking, polyarchy involves relatively low state control over the political process and extensive societal participation through political parties, civil associations and decision making institutions of government.[24] This enhances the politics of constructive competition and sharing which generally involves establishing formal or informal norms of political negotiation and reciprocity that avoids adversarial behavior and instead channel group interactions along controlled yet cooperative lines. Politics of constructive

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[22] *OAU Report of the /IPA, No.* 5 pp 22-23.
[23] Rasmussen, G. and Brunson, W, *Strategies to manage conflicts among multiple users weed technology,* Vol.10, No.2 (Apr-Jun., 1996), pp447-450.
[24] Goulet, D, *Global Governance, Dam Conflicts and Participation, Human rights Quarterly,* Vol.27, No.3 (Aug., 2005) pp.881-907.

competition and sharing is a method that can be used in dealing with conflicts in decentralized societies.[25] Basically, the methods that can bear much more fruits in dealing with conflicts in decentralized systems are the ones that create conditions for positive peace.

The nexus between political decentralization and conflict reduction.

Political decentralization is a system that can be effective in dealing with conflicts in societies. While executive power sharing seeks to promote ethnic cooperation through inclusive decision-making, political decentralization attempts to achieve ethnic peace by means of partitioned decision-making. Political decentralization is a form of constitutional government that distributes the functions and power of the state among various tiers of government, with each competent in a limited sphere of activities. This type of a regime is highly complex, requiring the maintenance of a balanced relationship between the center and the regions.[26]

Political decentralization is a reliable and effective way of dealing with conflicts in societies. This is because for instance, uneven development and the biased delivery of social services which has been a cause of conflicts in various regions can efficiently be addressed through political decentralization. Efficient and equity problems common in the delivery of social services in developing and developed countries cannot be solved with "quick fixes" instead, they often require large institutional changes resulting in new roles for central government bureaucracies and changes in the way social services are financed and operated. Social services should be provided by entities that are closer to the beneficiaries than the central government, such as municipalities and the private sector. The role of the public sector is to

[25] Rothchild, D, *Managing ethnic conflict in Africa: Pressures and incentives for cooperation*(Washington D.C: Brookings institute,1997) pp14-15

[26] Hensel, R, '*Charting a Course to Conflict: Territorial issues and Interstate Conflict, Conflict Management and Peace studies*' (Cambridge university press, 1996) pp.255-260.

provide financing, issue norms and procedure and supervise and evaluate social programs.[27]

Hence ministries must be organized to assume the supervisory and evaluative roles, while the municipalities and private sectors must be strengthened to become key players in the delivery of social services. This restructuring is only possible in a system where political decentralization has been fully entrenched.

Growing inequalities in some countries has contributed to an environment where the benefits of growth are enjoyed mostly by elites. This is because in such an environment, elites skim development resources intended for legitimate development ends and define policies in a way that protects their interests. High levels of inequality in the growth patterns undermine the prospects for poverty reduction and in any case are unlikely to be politically sustainable over the long-run.[28]

> Inequality breeds inequality, facilitating a disproportionate capture of the benefits of growth by the "haves" including in situations where functioning democratic institutions exist. Naturally, income is not the only relevant issue in this context. Public policies in fundamental areas such as education and health often neglect the poor and favor the wealthy, with potentially far-reaching consequences for the achievement of human dignity and well being.[29]

The existing patterns of inequality in many countries are not something natural or inevitable. This is because the distribution of assets and capabilities does not occur by accident, but is the product of conscious policy choices and political and social struggle. In an environment where such inequalities exist, conflict is inevitable. This is the malady that political decentralization seeks to address by creating structures that promotes justice and fairness. Just as it is depicted above, it is very difficult to eradicate poverty in an environment where the benefits of

[27] Castaneda, T, *Combating poverty: Innovative social reforms in Chile during the 1980S,* (Washington 1992) PP 214.
[28] Mac Darrow and Amparo Tomas, 'Power, Capture and Conflict' *A call for Human Rights Accountability in Development Cooperation, Human Rights Quarterly,* Vol.27, No.2 (May.,2005) pp. 471-538.
[29]. Winckler, A, 'Political Anthropology', *Biennial Review of Anthropology,* Vol.6 (1969), pp.301-386.

development are enjoyed by elites only. This kind of an environment breeds resentments among the citizens hence conflicts.

Political freedom promotes private investment, particularly through the channel of improving human capital formation. A decentralized political system requires a broad-based support and consensus to make the political process efficient and secure. While an autocracy may give the appearance of government stability but generally lacks the fundamental social basis for regime stability. Investors prefer a politically decentralized system which at least institutionalizes the redistribution system which extends beyond an autocratic system. In other words, decentralization increases investment which in turn spurs economic growth. In addition to democracy and political freedom, regime stability is another important factor influencing private investment. Economic growth is sustained through savings and investment. When a political regime is unstable, consumers decrease savings and increase consumption since their savings may become worthless.[30] In such an environment, economic growth slows down or declines. However, in an environment of political stability, consumers increase savings and decrease consumption leading to economic growth. In such a setting, people will lack motivation to resort to violence since violence means disrupting the economic growth which benefits all the groups.

There has been many crisis and conflicts in various parts of the world and this has deterred development in many regions; however, the appearance and proliferation of forms of "popular participation" in Africa at the level of politics are one of the few positive products of this crisis. Popular participation is naturally related to the question of human needs on the one hand and the human rights on the other.[31] As depicted by Hernado:

[30] Feng, Y, 'Political Freedom, Political Instability and Political Uncertainty' *A study of political institutions and private Investment in developing countries*, International studies Quarterly, Vol. 45, No. 2 (Jun., 2001), pp.271-294.
[31] Shaw, M, 'Popular Participation in Non-governmental Structures in Africa' Implications for Democratic Development, approaches from below and above (3rd Qtr, 1990) Vol.37 No.3, p25.

...basic rights, individual freedom and democratic participation by the majority of the population are often lacking in Africa. This pervasive lack of democracy also makes mobilization and effective accountability difficult. This is one important sense in which Africa needs more democratic political structures in order to facilitate development.[32]

For leadership and development to be supported and sustained, it must continuously be subjected to popular inputs and decisions, otherwise division will enforce suspicion and opposition, hence averting and undermining even the well-intentioned development efforts. So, political decentralization as described above promotes accountability in leadership and it enhances resource mobilization hence promoting good leadership which is the foundation of national cohesion. Without accountability in leadership, leaders tend to misuse power, while ineffective resource mobilization tends to drain national cake. In such a system, conflict is unavoidable.

Once political decentralization is well implemented in a country, it gives rise to a deeper citizen participation in decision-making hence promoting consensus and democracy; this is actually one way of conflict reduction among various groups. Besides, political power goes hand-in-hand with economic power, so once political power is decentralized, it promotes economic regionalism which has the potential to affect the "we-they" identity and to modify if not transform geo-politically-driven security dynamics.[33] If successful, economic regionalism can enhance self-confidence and encourage greater self-reliance in matters of security. The "we-they" identity has been one of the root cause of conflict in many parts of the globe, especially ethnic-based conflicts.

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[32] Hernado de Soto, *The other path: the invisible revolution in the third world* (New York: Harper and Row, 1989) pp7.

[33] Muthiah Alagappa, *Regionalism and Conflict Management: A framework for Analysis*, Vol.21 No. 4(Oct., 1995) pp 359-387.

Conflict prevention in decentralized societies.

The world seems to be getting more dangerous each and every day. Trends such as environmental degradation, climate change, population growth, chronic poverty, globalization and increasing inequalities risk future conflicts. As a result of such threats, governments and international bodies ought to come up with strategies of preventing escalation of emerging tensions into wars, thus avoiding the immense human suffering and problems that war always cause, both for the countries involved and the rest of the world. Preventing an outbreak of a war is extremely cheap compared to the huge costs of managing once the war has broken, thus the idea of conflict prevention is worthwhile. Statistical research on third-party diplomacy also supports the believe that acting before high levels of conflict intensity is better than trying to end them. This is the reason why conflict prevention is now an official policy in the United Nations, the European Union, the G-8 and many other countries.[34]

The idea of conflict prevention is not new; it was the dominant theme at the congress of Vienna in 1815 which put into effect a number of measures including mutual consultations, the establishment of neutral states and demilitarized zones, and the peaceful settlement of conflicts. Moreover, conflict prevention is a central feature of the United Nations charter, authorizing the Security Council, the secretary-general and the general assembly in chapters VI and VII to settle disputes peacefully and to prevent the outbreak of wars and other forms of armed confrontation. Chapter VI for instance, contains a series of preventive devices such as fact-finding, negotiation, mediation, conciliation, judicial settlement and arbitration. All these methods can be used for conflict prevention in decentralized societies.[35]

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[34] Ibid, pp. 359-387.
[35] Ackermann, A, 'The Idea and Practice of Conflict Prevention', *A journal of peace research*, Vo. 40, No.3, (May, 2003), pp339-347.

In 1992, the UN secretary-general then, Boutros Boutros-Ghali explained conflict prevention in terms of preventive diplomacy. According to him, preventive diplomacy refers to a policy that is aimed at preventing conflicts from emerging and also from escalating into violence. He listed five specific measures: Confidence building, fact-finding missions, early warning networks, preventive deployment and demilitarized zones. He argued that underlying causes of conflict needed to be addressed through economic and social development. Moreover, conflict prevention must integrate structural prevention which is more long term in nature. Structural prevention incorporates measures that facilitate governance, adherence to human rights[36] and economic, political and societal stability as well as civil society building. These five specific measures listed above are particularly vital in preventing conflict in decentralized societies. For instance, preventing conflict in a multi-ethnic society where there is decentralization requires a lot of confidence building activities such as demonstration of respect among various groups. In addition, in a decentralized system, the root causes of conflict are best addressed through fair economic and social development. When development whether social or economic is even, resentment among the population is quenched hence resort to violence is remarkably reduced.

Respect for liberal democratic institutions and a fair balance between human rights and public security has been identified as the key pillars in doing conflict prevention in decentralized systems. Establishing peace in an environment of gross human rights violations is extremely difficult since these violations create bitterness among people which in turn leads to structural conflicts. If structural conflict is not addressed, it can lead to physical violence.[37]Conventionally, decentralization is thought to reduce ethnic conflict and secessionism in democracies by bringing

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[36] Mac Darrow and Amparo Tomas, *Power, Capture and conflict: A call for Human Rights Accountability in Development cooperation, Human rights Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (May, 2005) pp. 471-538.
[37] Marks, S, *'Civil liberties at the Margin', The UK Derogation and the European Court of Human Rights*, Oxford Journal of legal Studies, Vo.15, No.1 (spring, 1995) pp 69-95.

the government closer to the people, increasing opportunities to participate in government and giving groups control over their political, social and economic affairs.[38]

Political decentralization enables regions as well as ethnic groups clustered in regions to pass legislation protecting their various interests and concerns at the regional level of government. These interests and concerns include: language protection, economic development, environmental policy, security and so forth. By enabling groups to protect their interests and concerns, decentralization prevents ethnic groups from fighting each other over what they perceive as unfair treatment by another group and reduces incentives for regions to seek their own independence.[39]

Much scholarly work has been done on the topics of civil society and conflict, but no systematic attempt has been made to connect the two. Does civil engagement between different ethnic communities serve to contain ethnic conflict? This and many other questions need to be addressed so as to examine the relationship between these two terms. There is an important link between the structure of civic life in a multiethnic society on the one hand and the presence or absence of ethnic violence on the other. Interethnic and intra-ethnic networks of civic engagement play very different roles in ethnic conflict. Because they build bridges and manage tensions, interethnic networks are agents of peace. Thus in a decentralized system, civil society organizations play a central role in conflict prevention through their networks that help to manage tensions.[40] This is one of the ways through which conflict is reduced in decentralized systems.

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[38] Brancati, D, 'Decentralization' *Fuelling the Fire or Dampening the Flames of Ethnic Conflict and Secessionism?*, Vol. 60. No.3 (summer, 2006), pp651-685.

[39] Ibid p. 670

[40] Varshney, A, 'Ethnic Conflict and Civil society', *India and beyond, World politics*, Vol. 53, No. 3 (Apr., 2001) pp. 362-398.

Third-party enforcement is equally a way of doing conflict prevention in decentralized systems. Third-party actors ranging from individual nation states to regional organizations to international organizations can play a role in reducing the security concerns of antagonists following a civil conflict and thus enhance the likelihood of short-term durability of the peace. These actors seek to alter the perceptions of opponents by bringing pressure to bear on them and by using a combination of incentives, including financial inducements, recognition and legitimation and economic sanctions.[41] Recognition particularly plays a central role in conflict prevention in decentralized societies. If peace building efforts are to bear fruits in decentralized system for instance, it is paramount to deliberately recognize and appreciate various ethnic groups or stake holders in that particular region. Centralized planning may fail to provide adequate mechanism for stakeholders to negotiate over alternatives and to seek common grounds. When participation and consultation is limited, institutions or governments come up with policies which are not consistent with the people's needs hence leading to conflicts. The best antidote to this woe is political decentralization which enhances participation and consultations.[42]

Conflict is endemic in societies, as a result there is a need to be proactive when it comes to conflict. Just as Boutros Boutros-Ghali illustrated, it is always wise to prevent conflict than to resolve once it has broken. This is because of its cost both in terms of human life and also its financial implications. Political decentralization is a reliable method that can be used in conflict prevention. However, this concept has not been put into practice in many countries and the ones

[41] Hartzell, C, et al, 'Stabilizing the Peace after Civil war', *An Investigation of Some key Variables International organization*, Vol. 55, No. 1 (Winter, 2001), pp. 183-208.
[42] Rothchild, D, Managing *Ethnic Conflict in Africa: Pressures and Incentives for Cooperation* (Washington D.C: Donnelley, 1997) p. 78.

who have tried it have not been genuine. The various conflicts which have been witnessed in different times in this country all have their roots on lack of political decentralization.

Chapter Four.

Political Decentralization and Conflict Prevention in Kenya.

Introduction.

In Chapter Three, various concepts on political decentralization and conflicts have been discussed. Themes such as conflicts in decentralized systems, dealing with conflicts in decentralized systems, the nexus between political decentralization and conflict reduction and conflict prevention in decentralized societies have been underscored.

In this chapter, the discussion rotates on political decentralization and conflict prevention in Kenya. The chapter examines key aspects of political decentralization such as political decentralization and conflict in Kenya, political decentralization, service delivery and conflict in Kenya, political power, resource acquisition and conflict in Kenya, development and conflict in Kenya, collective decision making and conflict in Kenya and political decentralization in Kenya today. Moreover, this chapter presents the findings of the interviews conducted and the questionnaires administered during the research work. Hence, both the primary and secondary data is analyzed and interpreted in line with the objectives of the study, that is, to determine the relationship between political decentralization and conflict prevention and also to examine the correlation between development and conflict prevention. A total of 50 questionnaires were sent out but 40 responses were received back, representing a return rate of 80% with a default rate of 20%. Moreover, 15 interviews were conducted whereby most of the interviewees were leaders of provincial administration. The discussion presented in this chapter therefore stems from both primary and secondary data and it provides a context for a normative analysis.

The theory of liberalism which guides this study argues that conflict is the outcome of minority rule. Besides, liberalism contends that individuals should be free from arbitrary state

power, persecution and superstition. They favor strong local government since to them; war is a product of the aggressive instinct of unrepresentative elite. This theory is characterized by much optimism about the value of education and the advancement of knowledge for development of individuals and for social progress. This indeed forms the rationale for political decentralization in conflict prevention.

Political decentralization and conflict in Kenya.

Kenyan history has been dominated by a highly centralized system of governance which has been the root cause of conflict in Kenya. This system of governance was entrenched by colonialist. However, even after Kenya became independent, the centralized system of governance that had already been introduced by colonialist wasn't abolished; instead the indigenous bourgeoisie used state power to propel its own interest. For instance, the government consolidated an immense amount of power in its hands by strengthening the executive at the expense of other political institutions.[1] A number of changes were put in place to assert full administrative control. These changes included, the division of services that had accompanied the policy of regionalism in 1962 was abandoned and all ministries resumed full control of their activities in the province, the entire provincial administration came under control of the office of the president and the executive to maintain a tight hold over district affairs, the constitution was gradually altered to confirm the concentration of power in the hands of the Kenyan ruling class; for instance constitutional amendments ensured that the president could detain opponents without trial and all members of the electoral commission were to be nominated by the president instead of being elected. This has led to many skirmishes in Kenya including the recent 2007/2008 post-election violence. Mrs. Ogolla linked the various post-election skirmishes

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[1] Swainson, N, 'State and Economy in post-colonial Kenya', *Canadian Journal of African studies* Vol. 12, No.3 (1978), pp.357-381.

experienced in Kenya to the unfair constitution which encouraged centralized government by giving the president a lot of power including that to nominate members of the electoral commission instead of being elected.[2] The highly centralized and autocratic leadership which has been practiced in Kenya for decades has led to intense civil unrest causing deaths of many people, maiming and detention of many including Ngugi wa Thiong'o who was detained along with some politicians in early 1978. For leadership and development to be supported and sustained, it must continuously be subjected to popular inputs and decisions, otherwise division will enforce suspicion and opposition, hence averting and undermining even the well-intentioned development efforts.[3]

There has been a protracted struggle in Kenya between the Presidency and those seeking to pry open the political system[4]. In January 1992 for instance, Maathai was arrested for "rumor-mongering" with other FORD leaders who had called a press conference to accuse the government of plans to hand over power to the military.[5] Demands for change came from both disaffected elites and ordinally citizens, however, these calls fell on deaf ears. Due to these concerns, international donors suspended 250 million dollars in aid to Kenya in November 1991. This compelled the president to amend the constitution within a month to allow the return of multi party politics. After Kibaki took office in Jan 2003, the authoritarian rule that was practiced by president Moi was slightly discarded but no commendable reforms were made to ensure full political decentralization where there is deliberative democracy or government by discussion. Conflicts are rare in an environment where there is deliberative democracy. This is

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[2] Jennifer Ogolla-Head teacher Mathare Family Hope Center-Huruma, Interview conducted on 3rd June 2011 at the school(Head teacher's office) next to Huruma social hall from 8:00-9:00am.
[3] See Chapter Three.
[4] Barkan, D, Kenya *after Moi*, Vol.83, No.1 (2004), pp. 87-100.
[5] Michaelson, M, '*Wangari Maathai and Kenya's Green Belt movement*', *Exploring the Evolution and Potentialities of Consensus Movement Mobilization, Social Problems*, Vol.41, No.4 (Nov., 1994), pp. 540-561.

because in such an environment, various demands made by different stake holders including the opposition are addressed.[6]

Despite some efforts to "impose" democratic transition on Kenya, little preparation was given to the post-independence period. The stakes for power were highest, the likelihood of democratic consolidation lowest, and the existence of democracy most fragile in the turbulent 1960s.[7] Kenya has witnessed many conflicts due to what I call "political disease" whose symptoms manifest themselves in improper policies, weak bureaucracies, the illegitimacy of laws and regulations and the lack of independent spheres of power. In other words, governance has been the root cause of the problems we have experienced in Kenya in the past.[8] Maina Kiai 1992, Executive Director of Kenya Human rights commission, comments:

> Kenya's human rights records have been dismal. Political assassinations, deaths in police custody, detentions without trial and police brutality have been prevalent in Kenya ever since the reign of the Kenya's first president, Jomo Kenyatta...and when Daniel Moi assumed the presidency in 1978, government critics were harassed and intimidated through brief arrests and interrogations. By 1980, however, the regime had severely circumscribed freedom of expression and a culture of silence and fear began to permeate society.[9]

All the above was due to the fact that political power was in the hands of very few political elite, especially the members of the executive and this has been a cause of conflict in Kenya for many decades. Freedom, equality, justice and dignity cannot be achieved unless conditions for peace

[6] See Chapter Two.
[7] Loughlin, J, et al, 'The diffusion of democracy, 1946-1994', Annals of the Association of American Geographers, Vol.88, No. 4(Dec., 1998), pp.545-574.
[8] Werlin, H, 'Poor Nations, Rich Nations', A Theory of Governance, public Administration Review, Vol. 63, No. 3(May-Jun., 2003), pp.329-342.
[9] Michaelson, M, Wangari Maathai and Kenya's Green Belt Movement, op cit, p. 547.

and security were established and maintained. Cairo declaration, asserts that the best way of dealing with conflicts in societies is to strengthen respect for human rights and institutions that protects human rights.[10] Liberalism contends that, individuals should be free from arbitrary state power, persecution and superstition if positive peace is anticipated.[11] The numerous skirmishes that have been experienced in Kenya all have roots on human rights and arbitrary state power.

The success of political system in maintaining political support depends on political structures' capacity to perform various functions such as: interest articulation, interest aggregation, rule making, rule application, rule adjudication and communication as depicted by structural-functional theory.[12] The above functions can best be performed in a system of political decentralization; otherwise in a system of centralized political system, the above functions can not be well articulated. One social worker linked the ability of the government to perform the above functions with the promotion of equity, transparency and accountability in leadership. In other words, a government that is able to perform the above functions well creates an atmosphere where equity, transparency and accountability are fully exercised.[13] When a government creates an atmosphere where equity, transparency and accountability are exercised, conflict is remarkably reduced. This is because without accountability in leadership, leaders tend to misuse power, while ineffective resource mobilization tends to drain the national cake.[14] Political decentralization has not been fully implemented in Kenya. This is because the political system in Kenya has been ineffective in articulating the above functions. Moreover, the kind of decentralization that has taken place so far is not carefully designed sequence of reforms aimed

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[10] Chapter Three.
[11] See Chapter One.
[12] Chapter One.
[13] *Stephen Karanja Social worker in charge of Kasarani division, interview conducted on 30th July 2011 in his office Kasarani social hall from 8:00-9:00am.*
[14] Chapter Three.

at improving public sector performance. Rather it has taken the form of a reluctant and disorderly series of concessions by central government attempting to maintain political stability by relinquishing some political power but retaining most of it.[15] Due to the highly centralized system of governance in Kenya, a lot of conflicts have been witnessed and this has been the reason for under development in various parts of this country. Many respondents who took part in this research repeated this sentiment.

Political decentralization, service delivery and conflict in Kenya.

Problems in service delivery in the government in part arise from the perverse relationship between political leaders at the central and local levels and their constituents. On the other hand, when a good relationship exists between the political leaders in the central and local level leadership, service delivery becomes efficient due to good coordination between service providers at grass root level and the central governance. Centralized system of governance is not capable of allowing good service delivery. This is because the quality of information about local conditions becomes increasingly distorted as it moves from field officers to central administration.[16] Additionally, the Chief linked political decentralization to timely service delivery since in such a system service providers are close to the beneficiaries. However, some people who took part in the interview felt that political decentralization compromises service delivery. One journalist argued that when the local constituents are the main service providers, service delivery is compromised due to their different motives and interest.[17] In a decentralized system, the local groups and individuals who gain control over programs and the local advocates and interest groups who affect them have many motives and vulnerabilities that can compromise

[15] Dillinger, W, Decentralization *and its Implications for Service Delivery, UNDP/UNCHS/world Bank, Urban Management and Municipal Finance,* (The world Bank, Washington DC, 1951) page 8-9.
[16] *Mr. Vata- Chief-in-charge of Mathare Location, Interview conducted on 13th July in chief's camp in Mathare next to D.O's office, from 4:15-4:45pm.*
[17] *George Obongo- Journalist, Interview conducted on 5th July 2011 in his home in Huruma from 7:00pm-8:00pm.*

the effectiveness of a service delivery system.[18] This clearly depicts that there are two schools of thought, while one believes that decentralization ensures efficient service, the other holds that political decentralization may lead to poor service delivery especially when the local groups and individuals have competing interests.

As states consolidated themselves including Kenya in the post-independence period, there was a widespread loss of democratic rights such as elimination or control of elections, restrictions on political party organization, weakening of legislatures, the proliferation of preventive detention laws, and a tendency to either eliminate or bring under a state umbrella, autonomous mass-based political organizations like trade union and cooperatives. This had adverse effects on the governed especially the peasants due to their political weakness. In Kenya for instance, peasant have suffered economic exploitation for many decades due to their political weakness, and this has manifested itself through the poor services peasants get such as low prices for peasant-produced commodities, coupled with high prices for manufactured products and a preference for urban over rural investment. This poor service delivery among peasant is as a result of highly centralized systems of governance in Kenya. In such a system, conflict is inevitable. The underlying causes of conflict in Kenya need to be addressed through economic and social development.[19]

Moreover, social infrastructure such as health centers, water supplies, local roads, cattle dips cooperatives and women groups that pursue a variety of income-earning activities have been unevenly distributed in the post-independence Kenya. Most of the above and other social service providers are found in regions with political power especially those that have produced senior people mainly in the executive. This has caused many regions to lag behind in development

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[18] See Chapter Three.
[19] See Chapter Three.

especially those that have not managed to produce a senior person in the government.[20] In Kenya, during the first president's reign, most of the social service providers were concentrated in his region which was characterized by very good road network, health centers and other service providers. When the second president took office, he concentrated these services in his region. This is the imbalance political decentralization try to deal with by distributing service providers evenly to all regions. The growing inequalities in Kenya have contributed to an environment where the benefits of growth are enjoyed mostly by elites.[21] This has led to high levels of poverty in some regions and also conflicts in other areas.

Kenyan government, especially the central government has lost the confidence of the people, particularly the poor people. This is because markets are reserved for those who command purchasing power hence do not serve the poor well unless assets are fairly distributed, and even then, the disabled and excluded poor cannot benefit. As a result, many hopes have been placed in nongovernmental organizations, nonprofit seeking organizations, voluntary associations and other grassroots organizations. These organizations are best known for their relief activities and their educational, publicity and lobbying efforts. In Kenya, these organizations have been advocates of human rights and women's empowerment. These organizations are good at reaching and mobilizing the poor and remote communities, they are more innovative, flexible and experimental than governments, they carry out projects at lower costs and more efficiently, they promote sustainable development, and they also use participatory, bottom-up, grassroots processes of project implementation hence empowering poor people to gain control of their lives. In other words, these organizations are good at delivering services compared to the government. In a system of political decentralization, these

[20] Holmquist, F, *Self-Help: The state and peasant Leverage in Kenya, Journal of the international African institute*, Vol.54, No.3, interventions of the state (1984), pp.72-91.
[21] See chapter three.

organizations flourish hence improving service delivery to the citizens unlike in a centralized system where everything is state controlled.[22]

Besides, in a decentralized system, rulers are the stewards of the national cake and they must be accountable to the citizens for the conduct of their stewardships. Such accountability can be secured by means of fair and free elections for a fixed term. In addition, rulers are held accountable for their actions by the rule of law. When rulers are held accountable to the governed, this enhances efficient service delivery.[23] Due to their immense political power, Kenyan political leaders especially members of the executive have not been accountable to the citizens; as a result the national cake has been squandered for many decades since independence.[24] This is the problem NARC government sought to address by establishing CDF and Latif fund. Though these funds were set up, citizens have no voice on how these funds are managed. Hence there is a need to decentralize the management of these funds since both the CDF and Latif funds are under a very powerful politicians i.e. M.P and Counselor respectively.

In the post-independence Kenya, political power was highly centralized to the extent that local government was largely reduced to local administration. This has been a stumbling block to efficient service delivery in Kenya for many decades. This is because efficient delivery of services to ordinary people is unlikely to be achieved without more representative local government. The local government must have genuinely effective powers and a reasonable degree of autonomy for it to execute its duties effectively and efficiently. Under both the first and the second president, a number of reforms were done in the Kenyan government which

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[22] Streeten, P, *Nongovernmental organizations and Development, Annals of the American Academy of political and social science*, Vol.554, The Role of NGOS: Charity and empowerment (Nov.,1997),pp.193-210.
[23] Sklar, L, 'Developmental Democracy', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, Vol. 29, No. 4 (Oct., 1987), pp. 686-714.
[24]Mr. Juma-Area Chief- Huruma Location, Interview Conducted on 2nd July 2011 at Huruma Social Hall between 3:00 -3:30Pm.

ensured that the local authorities were totally subjected to the central government[25]. Due to these reforms, local government in Kenya was reduced to a state of crisis and it was rendered impotent. This led to the decay of public buildings and facilities such as roads and the near collapse of numerous services such as water supply, sewerage, refuse collection, public health and housing, parks and gardens, and social services which were the formal responsibility of local authorities. The delivery and extension of such services was severely constrained by tightening national budget and massive informal urban growth. Isaac attributed the various conflicts and demonstrations that have been experienced in Kenya especially from early 1990s to date to poor service delivery by the government.[26] The antidote to this problem is that ministries in Kenya must be organized to assume the supervisory and evaluative roles, while the municipalities and private sector must be strengthened to become key players in the delivery of social services[27].

Political power, resource acquisition and conflict in Kenya.

The relationship between political power, resource acquisition and conflict is so evident in Kenyan history. From 1963 to 1978, Kenyatta's Kenya had one basic flaw: most of its prosperity was concentrated among the members of Kenyatta's ethnic group, the Kikuyu. The Kikuyu formed the core of Kenyan's nationalist movement and dominated the civil service and private sector during the 1960s and 1970s. This created a lot of displeasure among other communities, as a result a number of scholars and politicians criticized the Kenyatta's administration. Moi sought to redress this imbalance when he came to power by pursuing a set of redistributive policies that favored his own ethnic group-the Kalenjin and other disadvantaged tribes in the Rift valley. During his 24 year reign, President Moi had replaced Kikuyu in most sectors with Kalenjin and

[25] Southall, R, and Wood, G, 'Local Government and the Return to Multi-partyism in Kenya', African Affairs, Vol.95, No. 381 (Oct., 1996), pp.501-527.
[26] Isaac Owino-I.T manager, Stinners and Stinners Co. Ltd, Interview conducted on 8th July 2011 from 8:00-9:00pm.
[27] See Chapter Three.

other disadvantaged communities from the Rift valley[28]. This clearly shows that those with political power determine how resources are distributed and when the pattern of resource distribution is not even, development follows the same trend hence conflicts. It was evident from the research that political elites are the main decision makers even on decisions pertaining resource distribution. This in essence means that resources are controlled by politics, hence where there is political decentralization resources are decentralized to the same extent and this lessens pressure on central government hence averting conflicts.[29]

In addition to its immediate economic importance as a source of food and cash income for rural people, land is an important social asset in Kenya. This is because access to rural land is often a symbol of membership in a descent group or rural polity. Access to rural land is one of the ways by which rural residents as well as seasonal and longer-term migrants, maintain local and descent group affiliation. Hence, land tenure itself draws attention not so much to man-land relationship as to the man-man relations which create and determine power in land-based societies.[30] In Kenya, most of the fertile land has been in the hands of political elite. During the colonial period, the colonialists who had political power took most of the fertile land from the Africans. Indeed, land alienation was one of the major grievances from the Africans during this period. After the independence, the Kenyan government transferred most of the land owned by settlers to a few political elites, disregarding people who fought for the independence. This led many to remain landless in Kenya and this has been a major cause of conflict. Moreover, other politicians used their political authority to grab land in various places in Kenya and particularly the most fertile places causing people to be refugees in their own country. There is nothing

[28] Barkan, D, Kenya after Moi, op cit, p. 89.
[29] Rev. Oliver Konje-General Overseer-Outreach hope churches in Kenya / Commercial attaché in German, Interview conducted on 12th July 2011, in Missions of hope international-social work office from 2:30-3:10pm.
[30] Angelique Haugerud, Land Tenure and Agrarian Change in Kenya, Africa: Journal of the international African institute, Vol.59, No.1, (Access, Control and use of Resources) in African Agriculture (1989), pp. 61-90.

natural or inevitable in existing patterns of inequality. The distribution of assets and capabilities does not happen by accident, but is the product of conscious policy choices and political and social struggle[31]. In regions where this kind of inequalities exists, conflict is inevitable. Landlessness in Kenya has led to increased poverty, development of many slums where many conflicts emanate from, the formation of many illegal sects like Mungiki hence increasing crime rates.[32]

According to the "limited good theory", societies will tolerate extreme inequalities only for a certain time period after they are instituted, after which revolutionary bahaviours is to be expected if benefits do not accrue to the worst-off in society. Centralized political regime may contribute to an environment in which the benefits of growth are "Captured" by elites. Captured here means the process by which elites skim development resources intended for legitimate development ends and define policies in a way that protects their interests[33]. Kenya has experienced this challenge for over two decades, where those in authority defined policies that only protect their interest especially those that concerns resource allocation. Political power places an individual in a position to determine how resources are allocated or distributed. If such an individual lacks integrity, he may squander the resources entrusted to him before they reach the intended destination.[34] Due to the fact that political power places an individual in a position to determine how resources are allocated, the centralized political system in Kenya has encouraged uneven resource distribution since political power was in the hands of a few political elites. This led to irregular development in Kenya since the people who benefited were the ones

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[31] See Chapter Three.
[32] Pastor Stephen Onyango-Outreach hope Church-Panganl, interview conducted on 4th July 2011 in his office from 11:00-12:00 noon.
[33] See Chapter Three.
[34] Mr. Xavier Kioko, Center manager-missions of hope international, interview conducted on 6th July 2011 at missions of hope headquarters-Pangani, from 2:00-2:45pm.

with political power or those who were in good terms with them. The limited good theory forms the rationale for the number of skirmishes experienced in Kenya.

The discussion presented in this section illustrate that political power affects resource acquisition and distribution. In Kenya, due to highly centralized system, political power has been in the hands of a few political elites and as a result resource acquisition has followed the same pattern. Due to this uneven resource acquisition and distribution, conflict has been so prevalent in Kenya. The best way to address this problem is to decentralize political power. When political power is decentralized, people in the grass root have some political authority hence participate in decision making that concerns resource acquisition. When people are involved in such decision making, their interests are taken care of and this remarkably reduces conflicts. The data presented in this section shows that political power determines the patterns of development in a country or a region. Besides, where there is development, conflict is highly reduced, hence the data in this section tests the second hypothesis, since it can be deduced that there is a relationship between development and conflict prevention.

Development and conflict in Kenya.

Development refers to the process of increasing the welfare and productivity of all people in the society.[35] It leads to independence and creativity and this process enables individual members of the society to be self-reliant. Development and conflict are the two sides of the same coin. This is because development averts conflicts while conflicts retard development, besides, uneven development can fuel conflicts as shown above. Ever since the second development plan, 1970-1974, Kenya has been committed to giving priority to rural development. The current emphasis on the alleviation of poverty by providing basic services to all Kenyans and creating income-

generating opportunities depicts the commitment to this development plan since over 80% of Kenyans live in rural areas. However, trends in towns and in the countryside are closely interdependent because of the rural-urban migration. The urban settlement patterns especially at the lower levels influences what services the rural population receives and may play a key role in holding population in the rural areas. Besides, there are multitudes of poor people in the towns, especially Nairobi and Mombasa and policies are needed to aid this targets group in terms of development.

In many countries including Kenya, industries tends to be located in urban centers due to the pull of agglomeration economies and market demand factors, while even agricultural development relies on the urban hierarchy as a marketing channel.[36] This uneven development in Kenya has led to increased rural-urban migration. Due to increased urban population, a lot of conflicts are today witnessed in urban areas in Kenya. Development in any country has some merits and demerits and especially if it is uneven. Uneven development can lead to conflicts while even development reduces conflicts. From this study, it was evident that there is a relationship between development and conflicts as described above. Nyaboke attributes dysfunctional conflicts to poor development. This is because when there are dysfunctional conflicts, a lot of property is destroyed, many people are killed and others go to exile and many resources are not utilized in a war torn environment. However, she maintained that conflicts can lead to development when it is not dysfunctional.[37] The various conflicts experienced in Kenya particularly as from early 1990s bore fruits since they helped in destabilizing the autocratic leadership practiced in Kenya then

[36] Harry, W, 'An urban development strategy for Kenya', The Journal of Developing Areas, Vol.15, No.1 (Oct., 1980), pp.97-118.
[37] Jane Nyaboke, Area education officer-Mathare, Interview conducted on 9th July 2011 at Kiboro primary school as from 3:20-4:00pm.

Development is characterized by expansion of modern industries, growth of towns and cities, expansion of modern forms of agriculture, development of infrastructure and many others. These developments sometimes can lead to conflicts and one of the forms of such conflicts that have been common in Kenya is human-wildlife conflict. This type of conflict results whenever development of infrastructure and social amenities are next to a game reserve or national park like the case of Shimba hills conflicts. Moreover, development can also lead to environmental conflict as a result of proliferation of industries which emit poisonous gases in the atmosphere. However, though there are these side effects of development, development is meant for the good of every member of the society. For instance, the expansion of modern methods of agriculture in Kenya has helped in meeting human basic needs especially among farmers. From the human needs theory, conflicts sometimes erupts when there are unmet basic human needs.[38] This shows that when basic human needs are met in the society, conflict is reduced. Since meeting human needs helps to mitigate conflicts and development helps to meet these needs, then development can be a tool used in conflict alleviation.[39]

On the other hand, development can lead to the establishment of institutions and commissions which helps to manage conflict and in Kenya such institutions are numerous. These institutions includes National cohesion and integration commission, Truth Justice and reconciliation commission, institutions of higher learning where peace studies has been established, Kenya national commission of human rights and many other organizations that play a role in conflict management.[40] In developed countries, these and many other bodies functions very well and plays a critical role in peace building. This is unlike in under-developed countries

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[38] See Chapter Three.
[39] Francis Ndegwa Gichuki, 'Threats and opportunities for Mountain Area Development in Kenya', Ambio, Vol.28, No.5, Research for mountain Area Development: Africa and Asia (Aug., 1999), pp. 430-435.
[40] Giordano, F, et al, 'International Resource conflict and Mitigation', Journal of peace Research, Vol. 42, No. 1(Jan., 2005), pp.47-65.

where some of these institutions do not exist and in other times they are not respected. In an environment where such institutions are well established, respect for human rights which forms the basis of positive peace is adhered to.[41]

Health and education used to be the domains of missionaries in colonial Kenya. Upon independence, the Kenyan government sought to appropriate these sectors and integrate them into a state managed welfare system. These attempts failed in Kenya in the long-run due to insufficient capital reserves. This is because the first president used state resources and government assets to deliver to his own constituency and to bribe his political opponents rather than developing a social welfare system that could suit the country's needs and abilities. This led to uneven development which is the genesis of most conflicts in Kenya. This situation deteriorated under Moi administration hence leading to the emergency of private sector in education, health and many other areas.[42] Expansion of private sector in education has led to the development of many colleges and universities in Kenya today. Today, besides the public universities there are over 10 private universities which are producing many graduates who are very instrumental in building our economy. Intellectual empowerment is one of the best ways of developing a society and liberating people especially the youth from unnecessary violent acts. This was evident in Kenyan 2007/2008 post-election violence where most of the people who were involved in the violence either had no job, were uneducated or both. Intellectual empowerment as represented by liberalism theory which steers this study is crucial in liberating people from the yoke of violence.[43]

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[41] See Chapter Three.

[42] Katharina Hofer, 'The role of Evangelical NGOs in International development' *A comparative case study of Kenya and Uganda, African spectrum*, Vol. 38, No. 1(2003), pp. 375-398.

[43] See chapter One.

After the donor community became increasingly suspicious of government corruption in Kenya in early 1990s, all major donor countries changed their aid distribution policies. This led to a dramatic increase of NGOs in numbers and budgets, since they were the alternative channels of aid distribution. Both corruption and political repression were so rampant in Kenya during this time, hence causing western donors to channel more aid through the informal sector whilst implementing financial sanctions to put pressure on the Moi government. During this period, the NGOs in Kenya became the main instrument of development and this compelled the government to adopt many political reforms, including the introduction of multi-party system in 1992 and constitutional review process with broad public participation. In a nutshell, development that was initiated in Kenya by the private sector during this period compelled the government to undertake many political reforms hence creating an atmosphere of positive peace to some extent. In a society or a nation which is well developed, the system distributes many benefits of development to their members hence making the maintenance of law and order easy. The benefits of development tend to hold people together and the desire for conflict is highly reduced. For example, development leads to the increase of social amenities, food supply, infrastructure trade and income generating activities in a society. These benefit community members and hold them together hence reducing the likelihood of a conflict[44]. In Kenya, these development projects have been lacking in many areas hence causing many people to live desperately since their basic needs were not met.[45] Mr. Mbiko correlates development with very low likelihood of conflict among people. This is because people fear that conflicts may jeopardize the development projects in the area. People who are benefiting from these projects can not engage in conflicts since conflict to them means losses. He further contends that

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[44] See Chapter Three.
[45] Howard, R, *A cross-cultural Theory of political Conflict and Violence, Political Psychology*, Vol. 7, No.3 (Sep., 1986), pp.427-469.

development empowers people making them self reliant. To him, the people who are most likely to be manipulated by political elites to engage in conflict are the poor, jobless people who have nothing to do. Engaging such people in development projects means preoccupying them in productive activities hence lacks the motivation for conflicts.[46]

Collective decision making and conflicts in Kenya.

Collective decision making is an act of encouraging decision making by the majority members of the society or community, especially key leaders. In colonial Kenya, the relationship that existed between the ruled and the rulers was that of master-slave relationship. The ruling class, that is, the colonialist owned both political and economic power while the natives who were mostly Africans owned nothing. Indeed, even the land they formally owned was taken away from them. Besides, the master had the task of coming up with decisions and policies whereby the ruled were expected to implement without much questioning. This points out to the fact that lack of collective decision making was entrenched in Kenyan government way back before independence.[47]

Even after the independence in 1963, collective decision making has not been fully embraced in the government of Kenya. As a result, many conflicts have been witnessed and the levels of poverty have gone high. In Kenya, lack of collective decision making is manifest in many areas, for instance between the rulers especially political leaders and the ruled, that is the citizens, between the industrial sector and the educational sector and also between the various political parties. Failure to involve all stake holders in decision making leads to decisions that

[46] Mr. Mblko-Assistant Secretary, ministry of trade, interview conducted on 5th July 2011 at Nyayo house 22nd floor as from 3:00-4:00pm.
[47] Anderson, M, 'Master and servant in colonial Kenya', The Journal of African History, Vol. 41, No.3 (2000), pp. 459-485.

lacks the virtues of collective decision making as discussed in chapter two[48]. Moreover, failure to involve all parties in decision making makes the process of implementing these decisions very difficult. Collective decision making thus plays a very crucial role in any society since it helps in harmonizing differences.[49]

In collective decision making, there is a need to involve various technocrats from different fields. This is due to the fact a man may be an expert in one field but so incompetent in another, so on the grounds of human fallibility collective decision making is paramount.[50] This has however been lacking in the government of Kenya. Instead of involving these technocrats in collective decision making, a number of high skilled people ended up in exile and others lost their lives especially in early 1990s since they were seen as threat to the government. Collective decision making gives room for decision makers to tap knowledge from experts in different fields. For example, some scholars argue that ozone depletion and global warming constitutes threats to national security. Others point to non-renewable resources such as petroleum or minerals, while still others place their bets that the scarcity of renewable resources like crop-land is increasingly the source of violent inter-state and intra-state conflicts. All these debates need to be integrated and harmonized during collective decision making to enhance national security. This is because the concept of national security is today viewed from a broad perspective. Lucy pointed out that collective decision making brings out various views and ideas in the decision making table. This process leads to solutions that are acceptable to all the parties involved in decision making. When such solutions which are acceptable to all parties are arrived at, the

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[48] See Chapter Two.
[49] Timura, T, 'Environmental Conflict and the Social Life of environmental Security Discourse', Anthropological Quarterly, Vol.74, No.3 (Jul., 2001), pp.104-113.
[50] See Chapter Two.

motivation for conflict is highly reduced since people's interests are captured during decision making process.[51]

From the time Kenya became independent to date, there has been a lack of collective decision making between the ruling party and both the formal and the informal opposition parties. This has fuelled many conflicts in different parts of this country for many decades. History depicts that Kenyatta administration was quite autocratic whereby most decisions were made by the executive in the ruling party without involving the opposition party. Kenya people's union which was the main opposition party was disregarded and wasn't involved in any form of decision making until 1969 when it was banned. Kenyatta and his government for instance had adopted the European interpretation of the Mau Mau myth, whose historical memory has divided both the Kikuyu and the Kenyan society at large, thus turning this memory into an extremely dangerous and sensitive subject. This was unlike the Kenya people's union members who never adopted that perception hence fully supported the Mau Mau freedom fighters. This disregard of the opposition party continued during Moi era where most of the opposition party leaders were tortured and some lost their lives or was maimed. The hysterical reaction of Moi's government to the ideas of Mwakenya which included the redistribution of land was a clear indication of this continued lack of collective decision making. The end of 1989 and the begging of 1990 saw the rise of a strong political opposition to Moi's government; opposition was also voiced by various circles such as intellectual community, members of the law society of Kenya, the central province farmers union, the church and many other organizations. However, these groups were neither listened to nor involved in government's decision making.[52] Lack of collective decision

[51] Ms. Lucy- Human resource manager Ministry of trade, interview conducted on 5th July 2011, 4:00-4:30pm, Nyayo house 22nd floor.
[52] Galia Sabar-Friedman, The Mau Mau myth: Kenyan political Discourse in search of Democracy, Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines, Vol. 35, Cahier 137, La democratie decline (1995), pp. 101-131.

making in the government has been widespread even in Kibaki administration whereby many decisions were made without involving the opposition party. After the NARC government disagreed on the issue of the constitution in 2005, Kibaki took radical steps and sucked all those who opposed the constitution. This led to the formation of orange democratic movement. Since then, the ODM were not involved in any decision concerning governance including the selection of the ECK boss, Mr. Kibuitu which led to the skirmishes in 2007/2008. Besides many appointments were made without consultations including the recent appointment of the chief justice which spurred conflict between the PNU and ODM members and the general public. Most respondents interviewed said that collective decision making is paramount in any institution. Musau argues that collective decision making brings collective responsibility. This is the reason why it's crucial that ruling party involve opposition party in decision making concerning governance. When this is done, both the ruling and opposition party takes collective responsibility in ensuring the implementation of such decisions. Otherwise, when the opposition party is not involved, they tend to oppose such decisions made by the ruling party. This is the reason why the ODM party opposed the appointments made by the president since that party wasn't involved in that decision. He further added that collective decision making brings out people's feelings hence resulting to decisions that cater for diverse feelings among people. When people's feelings are addressed, conflict is greatly prevented[53]. Just as it is discussed in chapter two, collective decision making process can serve important functions of communication and coordination within a system as well as being used to motivate others and gain commitment. When communication and coordination is improved, conflict is remarkably reduced.[54]

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[53] Mr. Musau-Assistant chief Mathare sub-location, interview conducted on 1st July 2011 at his office near Thayu petro station from 8:30-9:15 am
[54] See Chapter Two.

In Kenyan politics, perceptions dictate behaviour and reality actually weighs less than beliefs, myths and obsessions. In other words, the state actions are a function of the way state actors perceive each other rather than any objective situational factors. Elite images and beliefs set the ambience within which a whole range of interactions are conducted. Indeed, they form the basis for peaceful or conflictual inter-state or intra-state relationships. These images and beliefs influence decision making. Collective decision making helps to address the diverse perceptions of political elites from various ethnic groups. This has been missing in Kenya due to lack of a good framework that encourages collective decision making. Failure to involve leaders from various ethnic communities in decision making has led to a lot of resentment and tensions in Kenya for many decades. When the first president of Kenya was in power, some communities particularly from western part of Kenya felt sidelined. The same perception continued when the second president took power since some communities who were not well represented in the government were not involved in decision making. Even today, a good framework that encourages collective decision making has not been fully developed in Kenya, as a result most decisions arrived at by the government is not easily accepted by those who were not involved in decision making. This is the cause of the many demonstrations we see in Kenya today.[55] The same idea of the need to address people's perception during decision making was echoed by the majority of the people who participated in this research. Mwangi's opinion was that collective decision making creates confidence among people consequently help to avoid the build up of resentments which endanger peace in most cases. He argued that when people are involved in collective decision making, they feel appreciated but when they are not involved, they feel

[55]Kum, M, 'African interstate conflict', *A perceptual Approach, Journal of peace Research*, Vol. 27, No. 4(Nov., 1990), pp.445-460.

ignored and this can spark conflict.[56] This is one way of addressing people's perception to ensure that people have the right attitude towards the decisions made.

This research examined the relationship between political decentralization and conflict prevention. Moreover, it aimed at examining the correlation between development and conflict prevention. Through the analysis discussed in this chapter, it is clear political decentralization plays a central role in conflict prevention. This is because for leadership and development to be supported and sustained, it must continuously be subjected to popular inputs and decisions; otherwise lack of popular inputs enforces suspicion and opposition hence leading to conflict. Moreover, political decentralization increases investments which in turn spur economic growth and in such an environment of economic growth, development is inevitable hence basic human needs are met and this remarkably reduces conflicts. Besides, when power is centralized in the hands of a few political elites, more often than not, there is no respect for human rights hence leading to conflicts. As the theory of liberalism contends, skirmishes arise whenever there is arbitrary state power, persecution and superstition. These findings clearly show that the objectives of this study were fully met.

The theoretical framework used in this study has been so instrumental in the analysis of the findings of this study. The main theory used in this study is that of liberalism which argues that conflict is the outcome of minority rule; moreover, this theory favors strong local government depicting that war is a product of the aggressive instinct of unrepresentative elite. The need of popular participation which is the main idea of liberalism is brought out very well in chapter two on the role of collective decision making and also on the idea of deliberative democracy.

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[56] Mr. Mwangi community leader in Muungano for development (Mashimoni area) and also a member of Pamoja trust, interview conducted on 1st July 2011 from 3:00-4:00pm at Missions of hope Mabatini center office.

Moreover, the findings and the analysis in this section carefully and logically tests the hypothesis used in this study. From the analysis, it is certain that political decentralization alleviates conflicts and leads to development. This shows that there is a correlation between development and conflict prevention. For instance, this study has clearly depicted that political power determines the patterns of development in a country or a region. Development on the other hand helps in meeting basic human needs hence reducing conflicts. This is because people with political power have access to various resources including what many call "national cake".

The gap between the political elite and the governed in terms of the control of political power and resources can be narrowed in Kenya if full political decentralization is embraced. This is because political decentralization in essence means distributing political power to the local government and ensuring that there is popular participation or what some scholars call deliberative democracy. The findings of this research show that political decentralization is the best way of addressing this problem that has been persistent in Kenya for many decades. The analysis shows that genuine political decentralization leads to even development and enhances efficiency and effectiveness in resource distribution and service delivery. The research findings show that political decentralization is instrumental in averting or preventing conflicts. A system of political decentralization helps in creating and expanding political space for multiple actors to interact, negotiate, compete and seek self-realization. In such a system, conflict is remarkably reduced.

Chapter Five.

Conclusions.

As stated in Chapter Four, the research endeavored to study the relationship between political decentralization and conflict prevention. Besides, it aimed at examining the correlation between development and conflict prevention. Both the secondary and the primary data used in this research were therefore interpreted in line with the above objectives. The main theme of this study: "The role of political decentralization in conflict prevention" has gone through various stages in its evolution. This is because the way political decentralization was viewed in 1960s is different from the way it is viewed today.

Despite the fact that there have been some efforts to entrench democracy in Kenya, little preparation was given to the post-independence period. The stakes for power were highest, the likelihood of democratic consolidation lowest, and the existence of democracy most fragile in the turbulent 1960s. Moreover, even after the independence absolutely nothing was done to ensure that there is political decentralization in Kenya. The first government that was formed after the independence underscored the need to have a strong central government with the fear that if this doesn't happen, then the government might be overthrown. As a result, most efforts were devoted to ensure that the central government is not only strong but also dictatorial. The rationale for this kind of reasoning was that suppression was the best and the only way of dealing with conflicts.

After the second government took office under Moi regime, nothing commendable was done to ensure that there was political decentralization in Kenya. If anything, president Moi sought some redistributive policies which enabled him to favor his ethnic community and other disadvantaged communities in the Rift valley. This compelled some government critics to raise

their voice which in turn attracted stern consequences. This is the reason why the executive director of Kenya human rights in 1992 said, "Kenya's human rights records have been dismal. Political assassinations, deaths in police custody, detentions without trial and police brutality have been prevalent in Kenya ever since the reign of the Kenya's first president, Jomo Kenyatta. When Daniel Moi assumed the presidency in 1978, government critics were harassed and intimidated through brief arrests and interrogations. By 1980, however, the regime had severely circumscribed freedom of expression and a culture of silence and fear began to permeate the society". This clearly shows that political decentralization was not given any space during this period of time.

Kenya's transition from the centralized dictatorial government to embracing the policy of political decentralization began in early 1990s. However, this transition was marked by a protracted struggle between the government and those seeking to pry open the political system. To date, the idea of political decentralization has not been fully implemented in Kenya and that is why there has been some number of conflicts in Kenya. The idea of political decentralization is worthwhile and must be given full attention. As shown in this study, political decentralization plays a crucial role in conflict prevention. For example, efficiency and equity problems common in the delivery of social services in developing and developed countries can be solved through political decentralization. In Kenya for instance ministries must be organized to assume the supervisory and evaluative roles, while the municipalities and private sector must be strengthened to become key players in the delivery of social services. When service delivery system is compromised, conflict is certain. However, when service delivery is efficient and effective, a number of conflicts can be avoided. A number of conflicts in Kenya results due to poor service delivery by the government. There are three main values called upon in the

rationales for political decentralization, these are, a politically legitimate dispersal of authority, the quality of services rendered and the efficient use of resources. This is because these three so frequently causes conflicts but in an environment of political decentralization, their impact in causing conflicts is remarkably reduced.

Just as it is demonstrated by structuralism theory, political decentralization alone is not enough; instead the structure within which power is distributed is very crucial in enhancing efficient and effective distribution of power. After Kenya became independent, the government consolidated a lot of power in its hands by strengthening the executive at the expense of other political institutions. For instance, the constitution was gradually altered to confirm the concentration of power in the hands of the Kenyan ruling class as described in chapter four[1]. These changes rendered many institutions ineffective. Indeed, efficient political decentralization needs strong, just, accessible and legitimate institutions which focus on service delivery, fighting corruption, improving transparency, increasing capacity and ensuring participation. Without good institutions that encourage political decentralization, there is no framework within which to reconcile divergent interests or views. In a system where such divergent views are not reconciled and amicably addressed, conflict is inevitable. The step that the Kenyan government ought to take to ensure full political decentralization is institutional reforms. Once these reforms are put in place, some of the conflicts we face today in Kenya can be history.

Lack of good independent institutions that promote political decentralization has been the major cause of the problems Kenya has experienced for many decades[2]. For instance, electoral commission, judiciary, various commissions that have been formed, police, and many other

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[1] Nicola Swainson, *State and economy in post-colonial Kenya, Canadian Journal of African Studies Vol.12, No. 3,* (1978), pp.357-381.

[2] Mark F. Giordano, Meredith A. Giordano, Aaron T. Wolf, *International Resource conflict and mitigation, Journal of peace Research, Vol.42, No. 1(Jan., 2005), pp. 47-65.*

institutions in Kenya have been under the powerful control of executive arm of the government. This malady was diagnosed even by the chief mediator, Dr. Kofi Annan, in Kenya during the Kenyan 2007/08 post-election violence where he recommended a number of reforms as shown in agenda four.

Lack of political decentralization in Kenya has crippled development for many decades. Certainly, in a society or a nation which is well developed, the system distributes many benefits of development to their members hence making the maintenance of law and order easy. The benefits of development enhance cohesion in a society hence remarkably reducing the desire for conflict. For instance, development leads to the proliferation of social amenities, food supply, infrastructure, income generating activities and NGOs which benefit community members. All these play a role in helping meet human needs. When human needs are met to some extent, conflict is reduced as discussed by human needs theory. In Kenya, a different scenario has been witnessed where development benefits do not trickle down to the common citizens. This has led many poor people believe that there are two main tribes in Kenya: the rich and the poor. The poor people in many cases believe that development benefits are enjoyed by the rich and this has led to a lot of resentment among the poor hence causing many conflicts. This conviction has caused the outbreak of many demonstrations in Kenya which leads to poor service delivery and in other cases death. Development benefits can only trickle down in a system with good political decentralization where well developed channels are in place which enhances the flow of these benefits to the common citizen. Since Kenya is not fully decentralized politically, it lacks this system which ensures development benefits are transported from the central government to the local government so that the common citizen may benefit. In a system where individuals do not

benefit, conflict can erupt any time even under the slightest provocation since conflict in such a system doesn't jeopardize any development benefits.

The future of this country lies in a genuinely political decentralized system. Though political decentralization has not been fully implemented in Kenya, there is a need to implement it by creating more avenues for citizens to participate in decision making concerning governance. This is because the Kenyan ordinary citizens though pre-occupied with the pursuit of industry, are still fair judges of public matters while our political leaders have besides politics, their private affairs to attend to. Hence, on the ground of human fallibility, political decentralization is justified. The Kenyan government needs to open as many avenues as possible for citizens to participate in governance. Avenues where citizens can air their interests, their demands, opinions and generally the shape they want governance to take. If this is achieved in Kenya, many conflicts that have been experienced could not be there.

In a system of political decentralization, there is freedom since governance is not in the hands of a few political elites who manipulate people the way they want and equality is exercised through collective decision making. Through collective decision making, justice is achieved since decisions are made by the majority. In such a system, there is respect for human rights and dignity since the government is by the people and for the people. Respect for human rights and institutions that protects human rights has lacked in Kenya since independence. The Kenyan government so far has been characterized by gross violations of human rights and failure to respect institutions that protect human rights as discussed in this study. This is another reason why Kenya has experienced many conflicts in the past. This could be avoided and can be avoided in the future if political decentralization is fully implemented in Kenya which boosts respect for human rights, grants freedoms and rights.

In a system of political decentralization, the political leaders who are the stewards of the national cake are compelled to be accountable to the citizens. Such accountability can be secured by means of fair and free elections for a fixed term. In addition, rulers are held accountable for their actions by the rule of law. When such accountability is secured, this promotes integrity in leadership, transparency, efficiency in service delivery and fairness in administration of justice. However, due to their immense political power, Kenyan political leaders especially members of the executive have not been accountable to the citizens; as a result, Kenyan governance has lacked integrity, transparency, efficiency in service delivery and fairness when administering justice. These are some of the reasons why there have been many conflicts in Kenya. In future, full political decentralization in Kenya means good governance which in turn mitigates conflicts.

This study has revealed that development can lead to conflicts especially if it's uneven. However, a lot of the data analyzed in this study shows that development plays a crucial role in arresting conflict. Indeed, this study can be summed up as follows: political decentralization plays a central role in conflict prevention but Kenya is not fully politically decentralized and that is why there have been many conflicts. If political power in Kenya could be genuinely decentralized, many conflicts could be avoided. Moreover, development averts conflicts and it can also help to create an atmosphere that favors political decentralization.

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George Obongo- Journalist, interview conducted on 5th July 2011 in his home in Huruma from 7:00pm-8:00pmoffice Kasarani social hall from 8:00-9:00am.

Isaac Owino-I.T manager, Stinners and Stinners Co. Ltd, Interview conducted on 8th July 2011 from 8:00-9:00pm.

Jane Nyaboke, Area education officer-Mathare, interview conducted on 9th July 2011 at Kiboro primary school as from 3:20-4:00pm.
Jennifer Ogolla-Head teacher Mathare Family Hope Center-Huruma, Interview conducted on 3rd June 2011 at the school(Head teacher's office) next to Huruma social hall from 8:00-9:00am.

Mr. Juma-Area Chief- Huruma Location, Interview Conducted on 2nd July 2011 at Huruma Social Hall between 3:00 -3:30Pm.

Mr. Mbiko-Assistant Secretary, ministry of trade, interview conducted on 5th July 2011 at Nyayo house 22nd floor as from 3:00-4:00pm.

Mr. Musau-Assistant chief Mathare sub-location, interview conducted on 1st July 2011 at his office near Thayu petro station from 8:30-9:15 am

Mr. Mwangi community leader in Muungano for development (Mashimoni area) and also a member of Pamoja trust, interview conducted on 1st July 2011 from 3:00-4:00pm at Missions of hope Mabatini center office.

Mr. Vata- Chief-in-charge of Mathare Location, Interview conducted on 13th July in chief's camp in Mathare next to D.O's office, from 4:15-4:45pm.

Mr. Xavier Kioko, Center manager-missions of hope international, interview conducted on 6th July 2011 at missions of hope headquarters-Pangani, from 2:00-2:45pm.

Ms. Lucy- Human resource manager Ministry of trade, interview conducted on 5th July 2011, 4:00-4:30pm, Nyayo house 22nd floor.

Pastor Stephen Onyango-Outreach hope Church-Pangani, interview conducted on 4th July 2011 in his office from 11:00-12:00 noon.

Rev. Oliver Konje-General Overseer-Outreach hope churches in Kenya / Commercial attaché in German, interview conducted on 12th July 2011, in Missions of hope international-social work office from 2:30-3:10pm.

Stephen Karanja Social worker in charge of Kasarani division, interview conducted on 30th July 2011 in his Office.