

**FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR VIOLENT CRIMINAL OFFENCES: A STUDY OF
KAMITI AND LANGATA PRISONS**

BY

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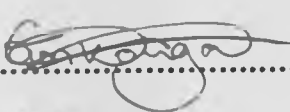
DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university

SIGNATURE

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents Mr. and Mrs. D. Njeru.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost my gratitude goes to the University of Nairobi for awarding me a scholarship to pursue a Masters degree in Sociology. The tireless and critical assessment of this work by Dr. Chepkonga and Dr. Wairire is an invaluable input, which has made me to run the extra mile so as to bring it to a successful conclusion.

Special acknowledgement goes to my classmates and my parents who encouraged me when the completion of this work seemed unimaginable. I am also indebted to the prison staff and the study's respondents who willingly gave information on various issues of interest in this study. Other persons who facilitated the completion of this work in various capacities include; Gladys, Mueni, Tabitha, Mwanzo, Jack, Njue, Purity, Mary among others. However, I am responsible for all the shortcomings in this study.

ABSTRACT

This study sought to explore factors responsible for violent criminal offences in Nairobi. This was prompted by the high levels of violent crimes in the country. Additionally, the social and economic implications of violent crimes both to the individual victims and the social at large warranted this study. The objectives of this study were to find out the socio-economic factors responsible for violent crimes, to establish the victim-offender relationship, to ascertain the social setting of violent crime and to assess the violent offenders' views regarding the use of violence.

Respondents for this study were persons who had committed violent criminal offences and were serving prison terms either in Kamiti maximum prison for men, or Langata women prison. Primary data was collected from a total of 150 respondents from the two prisons, and eight key informants, mainly prison staff from different departments. Secondary data was also utilized to strengthen and compliment the study. A standard questionnaire was used to collect information from violent criminal offenders while an interview guide was used to gather information from the key informants. Data was collected through face to face interview while some respondents requested to answer the questionnaires. Quantitative data was analyzed using Statistical package for Social Sciences.

The study findings indicate that engagement in violent crime is more of a reaction to a need rather than a deliberate decision to cause harm/pain to human life. The need to make ends meet, alongside a desire to attain a better standard of living predisposes individuals to violent crime. The findings points out that violent crimes are generally carried out by persons in low socio-economic strata as manifested by the offenders' unskilled and semi-skilled occupations and low incomes. Secondly, that persons brought up in violent backgrounds are likely to engage in violent crime later in life. Thirdly, that violent crime occurs between persons that are acquainted to each other as well as among strangers. Regarding the social setting of crime, the study findings indicate that homes and streets are the main hunting grounds for violent criminals. The

results showed that the offenders engaged in violent crime for various reasons; however, the need for money was the outstanding reason. Other respondents attributed their engagement in violent crime to anger and influence of drugs. The study concludes that most respondents due to relative deprivation. Individuals with low incomes are likely to experience relative deprivation. Relative deprivation is not the simple situation of having nothing. Rather, it is the injustice to which it gives rise to, when an individual compares him/herself with others. Therefore the study concludes that it is relative deprivation that has led many individuals to turn to violent crimes not only to make a living but also to access a better standard of living accessed by others in the society

The study recommendations were that: the government should employ every effort to create employment for its citizens. This is because engagement in violent crime is not a personality problem. In deed, engagement in violent crime is a result of the offenders' struggle for survival. To bring violent crime down, preventive as opposed to curative measures are more plausible. Engagement in gainful employment will facilitate increased incomes alongside an improved standard of living, thereby limiting opportunities for idleness and frustration. This will not only boost the economy but also decrease government's expenses of maintaining congested prisons. In addition, the gap between the rich and poor should be checked. This is because the poor who may not afford their basic needs and wants may engage in violent crimes to get them from those who have in this case the rich.

Further, the government should concentrate more on rural development in a bid to create more employment opportunities in the rural areas. This will in turn reduce rural urban migration by the youth who seek employment opportunities in urban areas. Additionally, the government should intensify community policing among its citizens. The police in turn should maintain high confidentiality, in order to encourage citizens to volunteer information to the police. Finally, the government should also intensify highway/street patrols and lighting to discourage violent crime along the highways as the study found that highways are prone to violent crime.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background information

One of the major problems affecting our contemporary society is the persistence of violent crimes. This is because violent crimes point to an even larger and worse problem of insecurity in the country in which they occur. However, there is little agreement among researchers and scholars on the definition of violent acts. According to Priestland as, quoted by Webber, R; Judith, B; Rob, W (2003:247), violence is physical power that is deliberately employed with the ultimate sanction of physical pain. Alan Chesnais, in Caffrey and Mundy (1955:223) asserts that, the only violence that is measurable and indisputable is physical violence, it causes direct injury to persons and has three characteristics, i.e it is brutal, external and painful. It is also defined by the material use of force. In the context of this study, violent crimes refers to the use of a threat, force and/ or physical pain, to inflict injury (both physical and emotional) or death on a victim by another person. Violent crime generally manifests itself in form of simple assault, aggravated assault, rape, robbery with violence, manslaughter and murder.

Although a society without crime is inconceivable Durkheim in (Phillipson, 1971:56), the escalation of violent crime poses a great challenge to governments and individual citizens globally. In fact, available statistics indicate that persistence of violent crimes is a problem in developed as well as in developing nations. In England and Wales, for instance, violent crimes known to the police in 1955 were 23,949; 43,707 in 1965 and 250,000 in 1992 (McClintock, 1968: 107; Caffrey and Mundy, 1995:32).

Similar trends have also been reported in America where incidences of violent crimes is reported to exceed those in any other developed nation (Siegel, 1995:293). In 1993, 1.9 million violent crimes were reported to the police, however a survey of victims found that the actual number of violent crimes was 10.8 million (The State of crime in America, 1996). The report further observed that the American people are correct in their perception that

most violent crimes go unreported. The report further noted that violent crime in America continues to be a serious problem despite reports of a decline in the overall crime rates.

The continent of Africa is similarly affected by the problem of increasing violent crimes. Albert, in Gimode (2001:295) observes that Cairo, Lagos and Johannesburg are cities that feature prominently in literature on violent crime in Africa. In South Africa, 618,000 cases of violent crimes were recorded in the year 1994 and 751,000 in 1999 (Schonteich, M, and Antoinette, L, 2001:10). According to the 2002 global attitudes survey, 96% of South Africans regard crime as a very big problem (Los Angeles Times, 2004). In fact, three quarters of those reporting felt unsafe walking near their houses even during the day. The fact that close to 20,000 South Africans are slain each year, underscores the perception that the country has a run-away crime problem (Los Angeles Times, 2004).

The crime situation in Kenya is not different. However, for a period of 5 years (1999-2003), violent crimes have been fluctuating. In the year 1999, 26,782 violent crimes were reported to the police. In 2000 the number rose to 29,023. In 2001 and 2002 the numbers dropped to 28,494 and 27,868, respectively. However in the year 2003 and 2004 the number of reported violent crimes rose to 29,336 and 34,064 respectively. In 2005 the numbers dropped to 27,196 and in 2006 cases of violent crime reported rose to 29,572. (see, police records; police headquarters for the years 1999-2006).

A study conducted in Nairobi by Safer Cities Program reported that 52% of all residents worry about crime all the time, 35% worry sometimes, 7% seldom worry while 5% never worry at all. At least 54% of the residents feel unsafe during the day and 94% feel unsafe at night especially those living within the city center (Muchai, 2002:137). The Kenya crime survey 2002, reported that of the 826 crime incidences reported in the dailies for the year 2002, a total of 731 people were killed while a total of 696 persons were injured (Muchai, 2002:147).

A United Nations report on crime states that, among other things, crime impairs the overall development of nations, undermines spiritual and material well being, compromises human dignity; creates a climate of fear and violence, endangers personal security and erodes the quality of life (see, Gimode, 2001:295).

Although certain features are consistent in all the identified countries, available information shows that different countries have different explanations for violent crimes. In the United States the recurrence of violent crimes is attributed to the influence of the mass media; breakdown of community groups, single parenthood, status consciousness of young males and availability of guns (Kumar, R; Mac, G; Marcal, R, 1994:245). In South Africa, the prevalence of violent crimes is attributed to racial hatred, culture of violence, proliferation of firearms, youthful population, unemployment, poor education and inadequate crime measures (Loss Angeles Times, 2004). It has been observed that inadequate crime control measures and unemployment in Kenya are responsible for the escalation of violent crimes (Daily Nation, 9th march 2004). These are anecdotal evidence which need to be verified with empirical data.

This study sought to investigate factors that are responsible for violent crimes in Kenya, with the aim of establishing whether explanations advanced for violent crimes in other countries also apply to the Kenyan situation. Further the study sought to establish the relationship between the possible factors and violent crimes, with the ultimate objective of ascertaining factors that predispose individuals to commit violent crimes.

1.2 Problem Statement

One of the clearest indications that a particular type of crime is prevalent is when it receives major coverage in the mass media. Kenyan newspapers are filled with worrying headlines and coverage of brutal violence incidents throughout the country. Hardly a day goes without the press carrying reports on grisly murders or injuries resulting from such incidents. Such media coverage of violent crimes evokes well founded fear among citizens

that they may be the next victims, or that their relatives may sooner or later fall prey to violent criminals.

Consequently, violent crimes merit close attention due to the social and economic implications they pose to the individual victims and the society at large. The occurrence of violent crimes results in untold physical and emotional suffering. Besides, the victims suffer additional costs in terms of seeking medical care and counseling services when crimes result in physical and/or psychological injuries. Whenever violent crimes result in death, the deceased dependants suffer loss of breadwinners; children's education is disrupted while the society suffers loss of productive members. As far as perpetrators of violent crimes are concerned, their dependants also suffer emotionally and materially as a result of imprisonment or execution of their violent relatives.

The upsurge of violent crimes is a manifestation of insecurity in the respective country. Insecurity affects the economy in several ways: To begin with, both local and foreign investors are hesitant to invest in a place characterized by physical and economic insecurity. Tourists for instance, are reluctant to tour unsafe areas, towns and cities. These in turn, result in low levels of investment and limited foreign earnings, hence slow national economic growth and underdevelopment. According to a report by the Kenya Institute for Public Policy and Research Analysis (KIPPRA) (2004:11), a total of 934 firms interviewed reported that there were lags in investment in Kenya. This was attributed to reluctance by investors to invest in local businesses due to the perceived high level of insecurity. The report further noted that Kenya has in the recent past lost close to 44% of foreign investment due to insecurity. Conversely, public safety, law and order are key to providing tranquility, peaceful and enabling environment necessary for economic growth (Government of Kenya, 2002). Understandably, the fact that the high rate of violent crimes in Kenya is scaring away investors and tourists is an issue of concern that needs immediate action. It is, therefore, hoped in this study that if the factors responsible for violent crimes were identified, the root cause of the problem could be understood, thus providing a basis

for addressing the insecurity problem. Hence the much anticipated increased investment and economic growth.

That the Kenyan government is fighting violent crimes and crime in general is a fact. This is evidenced by such measures as increase of police salaries to boost their morale, community policing, purchase of more vehicles for the law enforcers, sensitizing of the public on crime and collaboration with other stakeholders like the Nairobi Central Business District Association (NCBDA) in reporting crime in the central business district of Nairobi city; purchase of bulletproof vests for the police and cell phones for receiving tip-offs from the public; frequent reshuffling of police personnel; among others (Daily Nation, 2nd march 2004). However, these efforts notwithstanding, violent crimes continue to soar as indicated by recent empirical studies (Muchai, 2002; KIPPRA 2004).

It is evident that the government has been taking control measures against violent crimes. Besides, these reforms have resulted in increased security related expenses without a corresponding decline in the reported number of crimes. This is because crimes reported to the police seem to fluctuate over the years. It is also important to note that there are violent crimes that are never reported. The (UNCHS) United Nations Center for Human Settlements (Editorial, 1998) notes that crime cripples the government particularly in developing countries which spend up to 10% of the national budget on crime control. This could be because the root cause of crime has not been identified and addressed. It is in light of this conjecture that this study seeks to establish the factors responsible for violent crimes.

Empirical literature reviewed on crime in Kenya shows that there are a number of studies on crime in general. However, specific studies on violent crimes are few and inadequate. The few available include those by Muga (1977), Nganga (1991) and Mungai (1979). Besides being an old study, Muga (1977) focused on only one type of violent crime (i.e. the nature and extent of robbery with violence in Kenya). Nganga's (1991) study is limited since it

concentrated on one type of violent crime, (i.e. nature and extent of robbery with violence in Kenya and how the violent robbers are distributed in the socio-economic strata). Mungai (1979) focused on the differences between property and violent offenders. He did not, however, show the relationship between the possible factors and violent offences. Besides, this is an old study in need of replication. Over and above that, Mungai's 1979, study was carried out in a rural area. Owing to the limitations of the above studies, the present study seeks a fresh and a holistic investigation of factors responsible for violent crimes.

The view of this study is that an investigation focusing on offenders from both the rural as well as the urban areas, has the advantage of capturing different views on factors responsible for violent crimes (the study sites, Kamiti and Langata prisons house inmates from both the rural and urban areas). The study further assessed the relationship between the possible factors and violent crimes. This would help in establishing the root cause of violent crime in Kenya.

1.3 Research questions

The study was guided by the following questions;

1. What socio-economic factors are responsible for violent crimes?
2. What is the victim-offender relationship in violent crimes?
3. What is the social setting of violent crimes?
4. What are the views of violent offenders towards the use of violence?

1.4 General objective

The study's general objective was to establish the socio-economic determinants of violent crimes, which in turn lead to a state of insecurity in Kenya. Its specific objectives were:

1. To investigate the socio-economic factors responsible for violent crimes.
2. To establish the victim-offender relationship in violent crimes.
3. To ascertain the social setting in which violent crimes occur.
4. To assess the violent offender's views towards the use of violence.

1.5 Justification for the study

The establishment of causal factors in violent criminal offences is likely to offer some solid basis for relevant understanding and potential redress for criminality. It is also hoped that the study's findings would be useful to policy makers who are vested with the responsibility of crime control and prevention. The data and information generated by this study should, hopefully, help them in devising strategies and programs that would help in curbing violent crimes.

The escalation of violent crimes in any society is a manifestation of insecurity. Unfortunately, insecurity is detrimental to individuals and the society at large since it instills fear among citizens thus resulting in reduced investment and low economic growth. It was hoped that through this study the key explanatory factors would be identified thus enabling the policy makers formulate policies for the purpose of enhancing security in the country.

This study also seeks to know situation factors that favour violent crime such as scene of crime, victim offender relationship and relationship between drugs and violent crimes. Understanding of these factors even at individual level allows individuals take precautionary measures and may avoid being victims of violent crimes.

The lack of comprehensive empirical data on violent crimes warrants a study of this nature, hence the need to identify key explanatory factors responsible for violent crimes. Presently the government's efforts in combating violent crimes are mainly control oriented as discussed in the problem statement section 1.2 of this report. This approach is perhaps necessitated by the inadequacy of the police force to employ preventive measures, due to a limited grasp of causal factors. There is need therefore to carry out a study to identify the causal factors so as to thwart the factors and hence deal with violent crime at its root cause.

Finally police statistics which depict the general state of crime in the country, need to be supplemented with other concrete studies, since they only show the type of crime committed but not the root cause of the crime. Knowing the root causes would help in the fight against violent crime as the government would attack the root cause of crime and not the outcome. The present study intends to fill this gap by identifying factors responsible for violent crimes

1.6: Scope and limitation of the study

The study's main focus is violent criminal offences. In particular, the study set out to investigate factors that are responsible for violent crimes. It focused on the socio-economic factors responsible for violent crimes, victim-offender relationship, social setting of crime and the respondent's views on the use of violence. One major limitation of the study is the fact that, views of violent offenders who are not imprisoned and violent juveniles could not be captured since the study focused on violent offenders serving their term at Kamiti and Langata prisons in Nairobi. The views of non imprisoned violent offenders are equally important since they are possibly the majority violent offenders. However, due to time, budgetary and logistical constraints, they were not interviewed.

There are varied aspects of violent crimes, however they will not be investigated as this study seeks to understand factors that predispose individuals to commit violent crimes.

1.7 List of key terms and concepts

Aging out -this is a period where by as individuals advance in age their engagement in crime decreases

Relative deprivation is not the simple situation of having nothing. It is the injustice to which it gives rise to, when an individual compares him/herself with others in the society

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the concept of violent crimes and its broad determinants. To do this, various studies were reviewed in an attempt to identify the factors responsible for violent crimes. In addition, four theories were used to guide the study. These theories are differential association theory, sub-culture of violence, frustration aggression theory and the differential opportunity theory. At the close of the chapter, a conceptual framework and the study hypotheses are presented.

2.2 Violent crimes.

As noted in chapter one, there are many definitions of violent crimes. According to the Kenyan penal code, violent crimes include murder, manslaughter, robbery with violence, rape, assault and other offences against the person (GOK, 2003). Kumar et al (1994:46), define violence as a physical, biological or spiritual pressure directly or indirectly exercised by a person on someone else, which when exceeding a threshold reduces or annuls that person's potential for performance, both at the individual, group or societal level. In America violent crimes against the person refer to criminal homicide (murder and manslaughter), rape, aggravated assault and simple assault (Elmer, 1974:26). In England and Wales, violent crimes include; attempted homicide, homicide, malicious wounding, homosexual offences, robbery, heterosexual offences, felonious wounding and rape (McClintock, 1968:38).

It is therefore evident that different countries define violent crime slightly different. Schur (1969:52) argues that, the problems of classifying offenses and offenders have plagued criminologists for some time. He asserts that given both the diversity in the context of criminal offences, the various levels of individual involvement in criminality, it seems most unlikely that any one classification system can realistically be expected, to put together the bits and pieces of our understanding of crime problems.

However, the common denominator in the various definitions of violent crime is the element of physical injury and pain experienced by the victim. Owing to a lack of a universal definition of violence crimes, this study defines violent crimes as the use of a threat, force and or physical pain to inflict injury (both physical and emotional) or death on a victim by another person. Violent crimes manifests in form of simple assault, aggravated assault, rape, robbery with violence, manslaughter and murder.

2.3 Factors responsible for violent crimes

This section presents a critical review of literature on factors responsible for violent crimes.

2.3.1: Age and violent crime

Age as a factor is outstanding in criminal statistics. It has been generally concluded by many researchers that, young people in their twenties are over represented in criminal statistics. Clinard, M and Abbot, D (1973:27) points out that, the urban populations are increasing rapidly in many countries and crimes tend to be perpetrated among young male migrants. Adams (1977:23) says that in the United States, juveniles account for more than their share of arrest in violent crimes. However Adams (1997) does not tell us what their share should be.

McClintock (1968:171) reports that in the period 1954-1955 in England and Wales, the proportion of adult offenders who are 21 years and above, has remained high, with increase of violence among those aged 17 to 21 years. Mungai (1979:62) writing on differences between violent and property offenders found that almost 49% of the 78 violent offenders studied were aged between 20 - 24 years. This suggests that crime is a youthful phenomenon. The present study seeks to interview violent offenders from both rural and urban areas. This is based on the assumption that Kamiti and Langata prisons (which are hereby denoted as the study sites) house inmates from all over the country since they are the largest prisons in Kenya. In addition, this study sought to determine the ages that are significant in violent offences almost three decades after Mungai's study. Nganga's

(1991:58) study on robbery with violence found that 59% of the 200 respondents were aged between (25–30years). The present study seeks to interview all types of violent offenders as defined in this study. Siegel (1995:68) points out that probably young people have energy and strength and are involved with peers who are vigorous and frustrated. Siegel (1995) further adds that, young people are becoming more independent from parents and other adults who enforce conventional standards. A study by Webber et al (2003:247) points out that the reason why youth involve themselves in violence was linked to anger, revenge, frustration and defending the family against abuse.

In 1970; the United Nations congress on the prevention of crime and the treatment of offenders concluded that “as a country begins to open up, outgrow its traditionalism and respond to outside influences or new ideas by modernizing and concentrating people in certain areas, its people and particularly its younger generation seize the many new opportunities and in doing so, a small but progressively increasing number of them succumb to temptations to seek illegal satisfaction through crime (Clinard & Abbot, 1973:11). Thus crime is a negative consequence of initial stages of development. The critical issue is that many people in ages 20 and above in developing countries are trying to make ends meet and settle in life. This study sought to find out if the reasons given for violence by the youth in America by Siegel (1995) and by Webber et al (2003) in Austria are relevant to the Kenyan situation.

2.3.2 Gender and violent crime

Criminality has some gender implications. Researchers have found that more men are involved in violent crimes than women. For instance, Mushanga’s (1974) study on homicide in Uganda found that of the 103 murderers studied only 7 (6.7%) were women. Mungai’s (1979:59) study on differences between property and violent offenders, found out that of the 78 violent offenders only one (1.2%) was a woman. According to Elmer (1974:86), physical strength and pugnacity are emphasized in both maleness and crimes such as assault and violent homicide. However, Pollak in Smart (1976:19) noted that, there

is a masked nature of female criminality. He argued that women are more able than men to disguise the extent of their criminality because of their position in society. He maintains that because of the privatized existence of most women, their crimes are unlikely to come to light. Nevertheless, Pollak's argument is unlikely to be valid for the Kenyan society since a significant number of women are no longer 'caged' in the home and, are likely to be exposed whenever they commit crimes.

Pollak in Gibbon (1972:112) found that, the victims of crimes committed by women are likely to be drawn from those with whom they have the most frequent contact such as family members and lovers. Elmer (1974) however argued that, comparisons of male and female offenses reflect the operations of the criminal justice system, and not the relative probability that either sex will engage in law violations. Mungai (1979) points out that the reason men engage in violence crimes is because of their social expectations. They are for instance, expected to defend the community from invasion and guard against livestock theft. The men therefore internalize their expected roles by the society and thus their violent behaviour is dictated by the social role expectations.

According to Babcock, J; Miller, S; Cheryl, S; (2003:153), motivations for violent crimes that are common to both genders are desire to control, expression of anger and coercive communication. Babcock et al (2003) further add that women also engage in violent crimes for self-defense. From the discussion above, it seems that women engage more in violent crimes for defense, while socialization of men to be more aggressive is key in predisposing them to commit violent crimes.

2.3.3 Education level and violent crime

One's level of education is significant especially in the modern society where ascribed status has largely been replaced by achieved status. A point worth noting is that, one's level of education has a bearing on the type of occupation one will pursue. Glaser (1972:34) asserted that, persons who are well educated are less likely to commit murder (which is a

violent crime), compared to those who are not educated. He argued that, education teaches verbal alternatives to physical violence or at any rate 'snide remarks and snubs are more the norms of aggression among the educated than physical assaults. Mushanga (1974) did not highlight the relationship between education and homicide. Similarly, the theory on sub-culture of violence did not adduce the relationship between education and violence (Wolfgang, M and Franco, F, 1967:262). Wolfgang and Franco (1967:140) advanced the thesis of a sub-culture of violence as an already existing complex of norms, values, attitudes, material traits, etc. The sub-culture norms are separate from the society's central dominant value system. In this sub-culture of violence, a potent theme of violence influences the lifestyles, socialization process and the interpersonal relationship of individuals living in similar conditions. The expectation is that members will use violence to solve social conflicts and dilemmas.

On his part, Mungai (1979:74) found that of the 78 violent offenders studied, 50% had no education (i.e had no formal education at all). This study seeks to ascertain the relationship between educational level and violent crimes. The reason is that 29 years since Mungai's study was done this relationship could be different. Besides, many people in Kenya are educated but unemployed, hence the search for the means of survival may tempt some youths to engage in acts that are defined as violent crimes.

2.3.4 Income levels and violent crime

One's occupation determines the income levels attained. Further more, income levels determine a person's placement in the socio-economic status. It is likely that people in the low-income levels with access to (less than Kshs 10,000) per month do not have adequate means to cater for their basic needs given the high cost of living especially in urban areas. The Kenya Economic survey (2002:68) by the central bureau of statistics classifies low income group as comprising of households with a monthly earnings of below Kshs 10,000. Middle income and upper income groups are classified as comprising of households with monthly earnings ranging from Kshs 10,000 and above. Wolfgang (1968:262) found that in

Philadelphia, representatives of the blue-collar (unskilled group) had committed all homicides. This group earned low incomes as compared to those in the higher social class.

Wolfgang (1968) further argues that before a member of the upper class acts, he reasons that he has a considerable portion of his ego-involvement and investment in social life to lose, should his violent act become detected. However, he does not explain why the unskilled group commits most homicides. Rather he explains that whenever upper class people commit homicide, the likelihood is that they are suffering from a major psychopathology. However, the reason given for persons in upper class committing homicide may not be the only one. Probably, they may commit homicide out of provocation. Mungai (1979:78) found that 24.4% of violent offenders studied had no income or had an income of less than one hundred shillings per month. Evidently, the study does not suggest a direct relationship between low incomes and violent crimes. However, competition for scarce resources may lead to conflict that may culminate in violent crimes. Hence, individuals in low socio-economic status are likely to be involved in violent crimes and the study sought to ascertain this assumption.

The theory that basically articulates the relationship between income levels and violence is the differential opportunity theory, which points out that delinquency and crime are likely to result from a contradiction between the goals everyone is supposed to achieve and the means that the social structure provides for achieving them. The theory explains that individuals who cannot legitimately achieve their societal goals may turn to (adaptation) alternative illegitimate means of achieving the goals and may involve themselves in violent incidences. However, the theory does not explain why some people are attacked, injured and the perpetrator doesn't take away any material things.

2.3.5 Employment opportunities and violent crime

The relationship between unemployment and crime is unclear. This is especially so since not all poor people turn to crime. Yet, high unemployment levels may have crime-

producing effects in some neighbourhoods. According to Siegel (1995:184), neighbourhoods that provide few employment opportunities for youths and adults are more vulnerable to predatory crimes. He further observes that, unemployment destabilizes households and unstable families are more likely to raise children who put a premium on violence as a means of dealing with limited opportunity. From the foregoing it is evident that, the association between violence and unemployment is not direct. Fifty six percent of violent offenders studied by Mungai (1979) were farmers, hence the assumption that violent crimes is likely to be perpetrated by persons in low socio-economic strata. However, three decades down the line, the situation may be different owing to mass unemployment being experienced in Kenya currently. This study desires to establish the relationship between employment and violent crimes especially at an individual level. Employment denotes one's means of livelihood. The quest for employment has led to an influx of thousands of people to the city only to be frustrated by high levels of unemployment. This frustration coupled with the need to make ends meet, may predispose individuals to engage in violent crime.

2.3.6 Residential area and violent crime

One's residence is bound to predispose an individual to factors that favour the occurrence of violent crimes through interactions (i.e. relations formed). It is also likely that one's residential area may alternatively shield one from criminogenic experiences. However, many individual adults have moved to the urban areas in search of employment and/or education opportunities. In urban areas most youths are far away from their parents, thus implying a limited parental control in terms of socialization.

Kumar et al (1994:247) writing on American violence point out that, as the traditional society began to industrialize, society experienced a breakdown of a sense of community among the urban groups. They further argue that in earlier years, the family, church and neighborhood served to keep individual behaviour in line with community standards. However, with the coming of the vast industrial and commercial changes, mobility and the

growth of a rather transient population has led to a sense of uprootedness among urban migrants. As a result, individuals who lack community ties were more likely to become involved in crime. This is due to lack of community checks on behaviour. These arguments explain why people in urban areas in America commit crime. The argument may also be true of Kenya, where many young adults have severed their ties with the rural community where norms and sanctions work almost perfectly to regulate behaviour. This study will be keen to find out whether the rural or urban residence predisposes people to violent crimes. In the urban areas, a clash of values and norms has literally set individuals either free or confused them concerning behaviour guidelines. In addition, most urban people do not have strong community and/or family ties through which behaviour of individuals is closely sanctioned, as is the case in rural areas. In urban areas, peer influence probably plays a major role in predisposing individuals to violent crimes since family checks on behaviour are limited. Hence violent criminals are likely to be more common among the urban dwellers.

2.3.7 Family background and violent crime

Persons who grow up in households characterized by conflict and tension alongside little parental support, are susceptible to crime producing force in the environment. Lang and Klinteberg (2002:92) argue that, in both humans and non human primates, aggressive violent behaviour can be stimulated by prolonged stress in the immediate environment, such as being victims of child abuse and poor rearing in everyday life. In addition, they argue that, the connection between children being the victims of abuse and later showing patterns of violent behaviour as juveniles and adults has been recognized over the years (Lang and Klinteberg, 2002:92).

Abraham cited by Hagan and Peterson (1995:6) points out that, violence is a learned phenomenon whereby children learn violent behaviour from parents who are role models, and they model this role when they themselves become adults. Gibbon (1972:358) seems to disagree with the above scholar on the influence of family background on violent

offenders. He argues that, there is no specific family background of parent-child interaction, which leads to a violent prone personality type. He says that, the early family backgrounds of violent offenders are quite varied. Gibbon (1972) further argues that, the adult family situation is more involved in the illegal behaviour of the person. According to Gibbon (1972), cases of violence normally develop out of a marital situation, in which tensions have existed for a long time between the victim and the offender. This study therefore seeks to ascertain the association between suffering abuse and or witnessing violence during childhood and involvement in violent crimes. The study will test the following hypothesis: a violent background is likely to expose an individual to violent crime commission in adulthood.

2.3.8 Drug abuse and violent crime

It is tempting to link violent crimes to drug abuse. Siegel (1995:297) say that drug abuse influences violence in three ways:

- Experimental evidence shows that acute doses of drug use may produce violent and aggressive behaviour;
- Alcohol abuse reduces cognitive ability in addition to limiting the capacity for rational dialogue; and
- Drug ingestion may result in compulsive economic behaviour, in which drug users may resort to violence to gain funds to support their habit;

Drug Use Forecasting (DUF) surveys in America have consistently shown that people who make up the criminal population are also heavily involved in drug abuse. In addition, 60% of all people arrested for violent crimes tested positively for drugs (Siegel 1995:297). In fact, Wolfgang (1967:190) found that alcohol had been used by the assailant, the victim or both in two-thirds 66% of the study population in Philadelphia. Mushanga (1974:95) argues differently. He says that a person who gives alcohol as an excuse for his violent deed may also have nursed a grudge for sometimes or even for years. From the above views, it seems that drug abuse may not cause violence directly. However, it is evident that drug abuse distorts judgments hence situations that could be solved amicably end up being solved violently. It may therefore be proposed that the effects of drug use may increase tendencies

for anti-social and violent behaviour. Although this study cannot test the offenders for drugs since it is not a clinical study, effort was made to establish whether the offenders had used drugs before committing the violent offence. This is to ascertain whether drug use is related to violence.

2.4 Victim-offender relationship

This study also sought to know the relationship between the offender and his/her victim. Quinney (1970:249) suggests that violent criminal offenders do not identify themselves as criminals, or regard crime as part of their life. Hence, their actions tend to be the consequence of social encounters, in which two or more parties conceive violence as an appropriate solution to interpersonal problems. Because of interactions, the victim is a crucial agent in the violent action. In other words, victims tend to precipitate their own victimization. Quinney (1970) observes that 75% of the assaults studied were preceded by either a verbal argument, family disagreements and or public disputes. According to Quinney (1970) the victim is either to blame or had played a role in violent offences.

Mushanga (1974:91) pointed out that people in general, do not kill strangers except in cases of robbery with violence where material gain is the prime motive. Mushanga (1974), comments that his study respondents (who were not violent criminals) were afraid and suspicious of strangers. Thus, they feared strangers and thought that they were safer with those they knew and even safer with those they are related biologically. He noted that it is ironically, through these intimate interpersonal relations that one is more likely to meet his slayer. Mungai (1979:93) found that, 52% of the violent offenders he studied were related to the victim. Although the victim-offender relationship highlighted above explains homicides to a certain extent, it fails to explain many violent crimes that take place on the streets, for example carjacking where people are threatened, injured and brutally murdered. In such circumstances it cannot be argued that the victim is to blame. In light of this, the present study will be keen to test the hypothesis that the violent offender is likely to be related to the victim of his/her violent acts.

2.5 Motivational factors

Cohen et al (1976:3) asserts that, one obstacle to a better understanding of violence is the common assumption that it is abnormal and pathological. The foregoing authors notes that, whether one goes about things in a violent or peaceful way is often the result of some calculation. Webber et al (2003:247) quote Stanko who claims that, the motive for violence and ways of coping with violence are multi-dimensional. Gibbon (1972:361) observes that, the offender's private motives are always difficult to determine particularly when police reports of motives are relied on instead of interviews with culprits.

Mungai (1979:86) found that 3.9% of violent offenders wanted to marry the victim, 28.2% gave drunkenness as the reason for acting violently while 19.2% gave land disputes as the reason. The motive behind using violence may be either instrumental or reaction to external situation like in self-defense. Probably motives for violent crimes are likely to be instrumental than in self-defense however, the study seeks to find out whether the motives for violent crimes are instrumental or in self defense.

2.6 Situational factors

According to Merton and Broom (1959:519), contemporary criminological theory needs to give more consideration to immediate situations in which delinquency and criminal acts arise. This is especially important in as far as violent crimes are concerned. Merton and Broom note that most criminals act violently without premeditation and probably on the basis of situational circumstances such as anger, ridicule, disagreements and frustration, among others.

Katz cited by Siegel (1995:115) found that situational inducement arising from emotional upheavals could also structure the decision to commit crime. When an individual is faced with humiliation, arrogance and ridicule, violent reaction seems a natural response. Mushanga (1974:93) asserted that homicide, which is a violent crime, is in general a

phenomenon that tends to result from interpersonal relationship. He further argues that interpersonal relations and interactions are a day-to-day human experience. People interact in very many ways, situations, places and for all sorts of reasons. In so doing disputes, disagreements, hatreds, jealousies and conflicts in general develop but fortunately most of these animosities get solved without violence.

Mushanga (1974:49) further observed that social gatherings such as hunting, drinking and working groups are more prone to criminal behaviour or actions. According to him, in urban areas situations that give rise to violent crimes may be somewhat different, and may not involve disputes growing out of traditional situations for example hunting, drinking e.t.c. The traditional setting put forward by Mushanga (1974) can explain violent crimes at present to a certain extent. This is because such gatherings like hunting, drinking and working groups have ceased to be important with time because occupations have moved to the office set up e.t.c. In addition, the working arrangements and /or relations have also become structured and unequal. This calls for the need, to find out the interpersonal relations or circumstances that precede violent crimes. Probably the urban social settings that are more prone to violent crimes are the home, office, factory, street and drinking parties/bars, among others.

2.7 Recidivism in violent crimes

This study also sought to know whether violent offenders are recidivists. Quinney (1970:249) says that, violent offenders do not identify themselves as criminals and do not regard crime as part of their life. Wolfgang as quoted by Gibbon (1972) seems to disagree with Quinney (1970) since his study found that, 64% of the homicide offenders had prior criminal records and 66% of the offenders had been implicated in crimes against the person (violent crimes). A survey in America found that about one third of all persons arrested for violent crimes were already on probation, parole or pre-trial release (Council on crime, 1996). Mungai (1979:100) found that 28.2% of the 78 violent offenders studied had been convicted for a crime previously. This study sought to find out if violent offenders were

recidivist (had committed an offence there before and or if they had served an earlier prison sentence).

2.8 Hiring of murderers

Clifford (1974:120) quotes Wyden who suggested that the hiring of persons to commit murders, which is a violent criminal offence, is probably more widespread than is generally thought. Wyden adds that it is reasonably easy to escape detection for this kind of offence and that we all have the make-up of hired killers. He pointed that the hirer, the hired and their victim are rarely the only people who know about the murder. This implies that probably a section of the public know but are not likely to volunteer such information to the police officers mainly due to fear. The current study sought to investigate the possibility of hired murderers in Kenya in a bid to find out the reasons as to why they are hired.

2.9: Theoretical framework

Various disciplines have shown interest in the field of criminology. It is perhaps the concern and complexity of crime as a social problem that has attracted scholars from different disciplines in an attempt to explain the subject of crime. On the one hand, are scholars who have singled out one factor in explaining crime. On the other, we have scholars who hold the view that crime is caused by many factors and cannot be explained by one factor. This study is guided by four theories namely: the frustration aggression model, differential association theory, subculture of violence and differential opportunity theory.

2.9.1: Frustration Aggression theory

The theory argues that aggression is always a consequence of frustration. Abraham cited by Hagan and Peterson (1995:6) argues that this theory views the expression of aggression as a response to the emotion, that an individual feels when some goal is blocked or as a response to frustration being the product of learning. According to this theory people are

driven to attack others when they are frustrated, that is when they fail to attain their goal (s). He adds that violence is highly related to social stress caused by factors such as poverty and job loss. Unmet socio-economic needs leads to Frustration (emotional disturbance), which breeds aggression and hence violent crimes. Violent crime is aggressive behavior. According to Berkowitz (in Wolfgang 1967:143) frustration produces an emotional state (anger) which heightens the probability of occurrence of drive specific behaviours namely aggression. Frustration is the thwarting or interference with the attainment of goals, aspirations and expectations (Muga, 1977:6). The frustration-tolerance concept assumes that, aggression is produced by frustration and that everyone can tolerate frustration only up to a certain point, beyond which one will commit a violent crime.

In Kenya today many people are faced with unemployment and low incomes. As a result these people fail to meet their daily needs adequately and many feel quite frustrated. Human beings react on the basis of their immediate situation. Failure by some people to achieve life's basic necessities may be a source of frustration that may eventually lead to violent crimes. This is because frustrated persons when faced with disputes or disagreements are likely to react violently than persons who are not frustrated. This study argues that frustration induced by the social system creates the social strain and discontent, which in turn are the preconditions of violence. The theory assumes that frustration is a result of unmet socio-economic needs. Other sources of frustration include unjust treatment by employers and parents among others. The theory asserts that every frustrated individual is likely to turn to violence. However, individuals will resort to violence only if they see it as a legitimate means for example as a last resort or in self defense. The theory does not explain why not everyone who fails to meet their basic needs become violent offenders. This means that the frustration and aggression theory does not explain violent crime adequately. Hence, the study turns to differential association theory to explain violent crime.

2.9.2 Differential Association Theory

Culture conflict is the basic principle in explanation of crime. This theory states that criminal behaviour is developed by normal social processes common to all learning (Gibbon, 1972:212). The main argument is that, an individual comes into contacts with persons who define the legal codes as rules to be observed while at other times, they associate with persons whose definition are favourable to the violation of the legal codes. A person becomes a criminal due to an excess of definitions favourable to violations of law over definitions unfavourable to violations of the law. Differential association may vary in frequency, duration and intensity. A person becomes a criminal as a result of intimate associations with others, who present favourable definitions of criminal behaviour and these associations are in excess of and are of a quality different from ones experiences with non-criminal activity. The content of this learning includes the techniques of committing the offence, specific rationalizations and motivations.

According to this theory, individuals who grow up in families where violent acts are common are likely to learn to use violence later in life; this is because they are more in contact with definitions that violate the law than with definitions that favour obeying the law. This applies to those who reside in areas where violence is prevalent. Gibbon (1972) notes that, the sociological view is that primary groups to which individuals belong (intimate personal groups) exert the strongest influence. The main argument by Sutherland (in Gibbon, 1972), is that criminal behaviour is developed by normal social process involved in all learning. Like all behaviour, crime is learned from friends and associates and is often influenced by the area in which one lives.

On the same note it means that, if one associates with persons who are criminals one is likely to become a criminal. It follows that if one is a violent criminal offender his close associates like friends and family members are also been involved in such kind of crimes. However, this is not always the case. We have situations in which one or more members of the family is/are implicated in violent crimes but the other family members are not

criminals at all. This theory may explain violent crimes to a certain extent; that is, individuals may band together in criminal gangs like robbery with violence. However, it cannot explain why individuals act violently when deals get sour. Hence, motivations for violent crimes are varied and is therefore not always true to say that, people learn motivations for crime and will commit violent crimes for the same motive in different circumstances. In addition, the ratio of an excess of definition favorable to violations of law over definitions unfavorable to the violations of the law is not something that can easily be measured. This is because of the relativity of the argument of an excess of definition favorable to violations of law over definitions unfavorable to the violations of the law. Due to the inadequacies of the theory, the need to turn to another theory to seek further explanation for violent crime is important.

2.9.3 The sub-culture of violence

Just like culture, subcultures indicate to those who belong to them, the kind of behaviour, dress and ideas, which are fashionable and acceptable, and those types of conduct which are frowned upon. Acceptance in the group depends upon conformity to these ideas. Clifford (1974:48) maintains that, people with similar problems or peculiarities form sub-cultures in a complex society. Wolfgang and Franco (1967:140) advanced the thesis of a sub-culture of violence as an already existing complex of norms, values, attitudes, material traits, etc. The sub-culture norms are separate from the society's central dominant value system. In this sub-culture of violence, a potent theme of violence influences the lifestyles, socialization process and the interpersonal relationship of individuals living in similar conditions. The expectation is that members will use violence to solve social conflicts and dilemmas.

Clinard and Abbot (1973:59) reports that studies in both Puerto Rico and Argentina found that an important element in violence is the desire of the average male to prove his machismo' or manliness. Schur (1969:126) maintains that, with respect to humans, there is a great deal of evidence showing that the tendency towards violence in an individual is

learned in specific social context. It varies according to position in the social order, and is in large measure a response to pressures generated by particular kinds of social conditions, especially those giving rise to intense feelings of frustration. Schur (1969) further points out that lower class cultures embodies certain focal concerns including toughness, which may have among their consequences the generation of certain crime patterns. Schur (1969:126) quoted Henry and Short who found that there is a lower class value system under which frustration induced aggression is likely to be directed outwards, whereas dominant values among the middle and upper classes tend to direct such aggression inwards, for example the tendency of individuals in these classes to engage in self directed crimes as self mutilation and/or suicide.

These arguments reveal that violent criminal offences are related to one's immediate social background (i.e. if one's background supports violence as a way of solving problems, then a member of such a family or peer group is likely to engage in violent criminal offences). This is because the person learns and internalizes the values and norms of his group as an acceptable way of life. However, this is not always the case otherwise people who engage in violent crimes could be drawn from specific clans, sub-groups or tribes. Therefore, the study turns to an economic explanation of violent crime.

2.9.4 Differential opportunity model/Merton Anomie theory

According to Clifford (1974:176), Merton the pioneer of this theory maintains that, social structures exert a definite pressure upon certain persons in the society to engage in non-conformist rather than conformist conduct. Consequently, crime is the result of a social structure that holds out the same goals to all its members without giving them equal means to achieve them. He observes that society strongly emphasizes certain goals to all members, and also prescribes the means to reach those goals. The goals include material wealth while the means of achieving them include education and hard work. However, not everyone has equal access to the legitimate means to attain these goals. It is this lack of integration

between what the society calls for, in terms of goals to be achieved and what the social structure permits (legitimate means to achieve the goals) that leads to crime.

Kenya as a society is on transition since it's neither traditional nor modern. New goals and values continue to emerge. The mass media also plays a role in making sure that these goals are appreciated and internalized by the citizens. Everyone is expected and encouraged to be successful. Working hard in school in order to open opportunities of achieved status through job placement and hence, material rewards and prestige. However, the reality is that the social structure does not allow every person to achieve these goals through legitimate means. With widespread unemployment, underemployment and the associated effects of poverty, many individuals find themselves restricted from achieving these goals legitimately at a large scale. Those who fail to achieve these goals by legitimate means are therefore likely to turn to various adaptations as designated by Merton. Unfortunately, some of these adaptations (i.e innovation) may be accompanied by acts of violence.

According to Merton in Clifford (1974:176), there are five modes of adapting to the strain caused by the restricted access to socially approved goals and means namely: conformity, ritualism, retreatism, innovation and rebellion. Conformity is whereby individuals appreciate the cultural goals and the institutionalized means of achieving them. Individuals in this category accept the goals and means of achieving them. It is probably the most common mode of adaptation since the majority of individuals in the society have embraced the values of hard work. In ritualism, individuals abandon the goals they once believed to be within their reach and thus dedicate themselves to their current lifestyles. In addition, they adhere to social norms. Ritualism potentially leads to suppressed frustration and anxiety neurosis and guilty feelings among the lower class individuals (Clifford, 1973:176). Ritualism may manifest in persons devoting their time to religious beliefs and movements. In retreatism, individuals give up not only the goal but also the prescribed means of achieving them. Those involved are in the society but not of it. Hence they

engage in a form of resignation manifested in escape mechanisms which ultimately leads the individual to escape from the requirement of the society. Such people stop trying to be successful and even reject the value of goals that they had previously internalized. Retreatism manifests itself in various forms of anti-social behaviour like drunkenness, chronic alcoholism, and drug addiction, among others (Clifford, 1974)

Innovation is whereby the individuals have embraced the cultural goals but the institutionalized means of achieving them are rejected in favour of illegitimate means. The illegitimate means could be through violence, for example robbery with violence, rape, muggings, assaults that occur on the streets as people are robbed of their personal effects and murder. In rebellion type of adaptation, individuals reject conventional cultural goals and seek to establish a new or radically alter the social structure (Clifford, 1974:176). Therefore, they reject the prevailing social values i.e (cultural goals) with a desire to substitute new values. They see their problem as being in the structure of society rather than themselves. In short, they seek a change in the social structure. Examples of rebellion are protests in a bid to overhaul the social structure. This theory explains why individuals engage in crime, however, a critique of this theory is that, there are individuals that are so poor yet they do not engage in crime. In addition, the rich also engage in crime. It is also not always true that hard work will result in success.

There is no one theory that can explain violent crimes adequately, thus resulting in the conclusion that violent crime is not caused by one single factor but many.

2.10 Conceptual framework

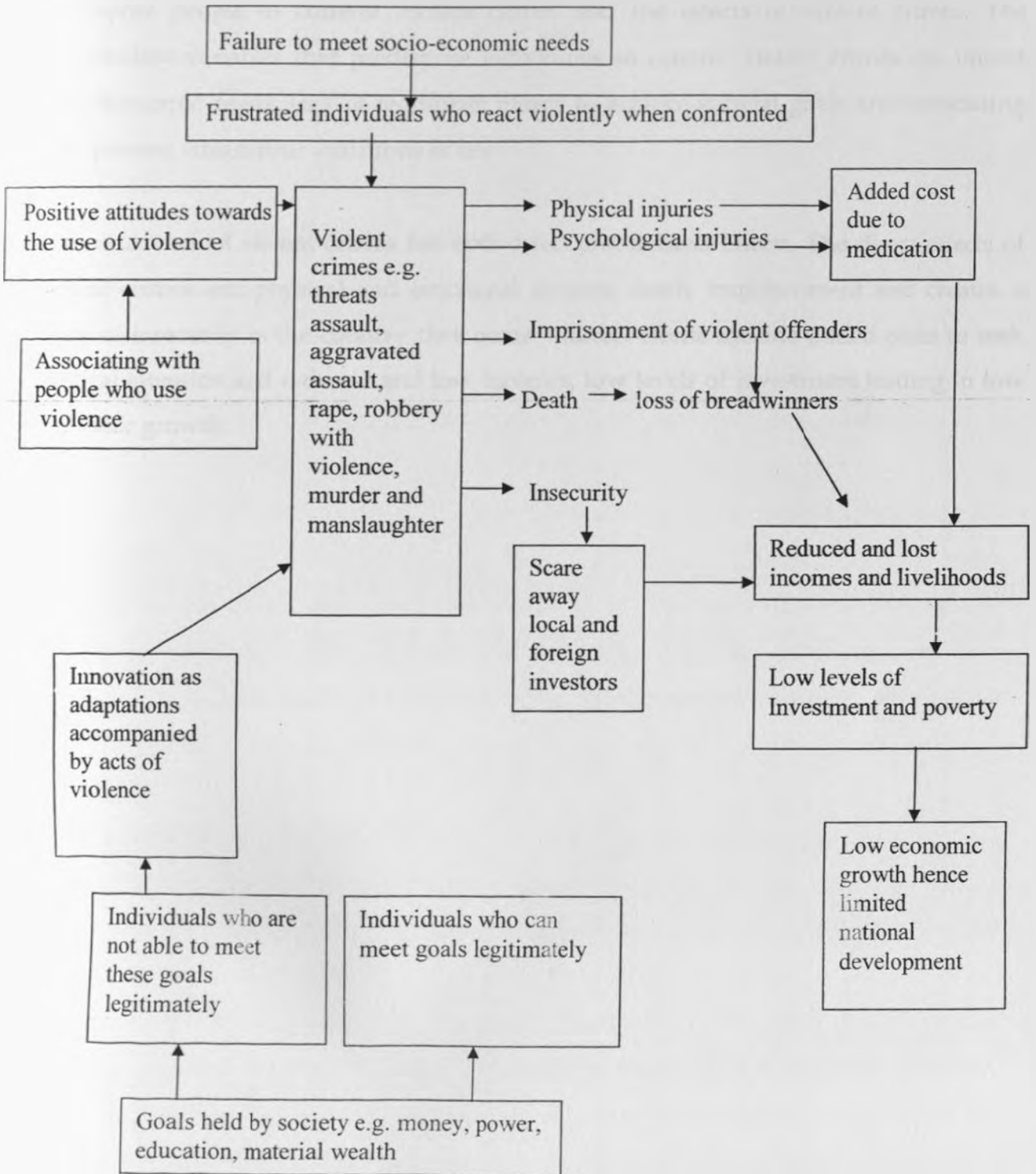


Figure 1: Conceptual frame work

The conceptual framework gives a diagrammatic presentation of the different factors that predispose people to commit violent crimes and the effects of violent crimes. The independent variables that predispose individuals to commit violent crimes are unmet socio-economic needs, lack of legitimate means to achieve societal goals and associating with persons who favour violations of law.

The occurrence of violent crimes has both direct and indirect effects. The direct effects of violent crimes are; physical and emotional injuries, death, imprisonment and creates a sense of insecurity in the country they occur. Indirect effects include added costs to seek medical attention and reduced and lose incomes, low levels of investment leading in low economic growth.

2.11 Hypotheses

From the foregoing literature review and theoretical framework, the following hypotheses were proposed for testing.

1. The lower the socio-economic status of an individual, the higher the chances for his/her involvement in violent crimes.
2. Violent drug users are likely to be recidivists
3. A violent family background is likely to predispose an individual to violent crime commission in adulthood.
4. The violent offender is likely to be related to the victim of his/her violent acts

2.12 Operationalization of terms and variables

Violent crimes; this refers to the use of, or a threat of force and/or physical pain to inflict injury (both physical and emotional) or death on a victim by another person. The nature of violent crime will be indicated by the level of harm/damage caused to the victim. Harm was categorized into three categories; simple assault, aggravated assault and murder. The nature of violent crime was also indicated by the duration of imprisonment in months. This is based on the assumption that the longer the period of imprisonment, the more severe the violent crime committed, and vice versa.

Simple assault includes uttering of threatening words, threatening one with an object, e.g. a knife, stick, violent gesture, toy gun and a gun, among others. This also includes beatings that do not cause serious body injury, indecent assault, threatened violence and attempted rape

Aggravated assault refers to a situation whereby the victim suffers serious body injuries that warrant medical attention. Included in this category is rape and robbery with violence. Robbery with violence refers to a situation where a person uses actual force against another in order to rob property. Rape refers to carnal knowledge of any person against their will.

Murder refers to the unlawful killing of another including manslaughter.

Violent criminal offenders refer to persons who have used threats or force to inflict emotional pain, physical injury and/or death against another. The violent criminal offenders targeted in this study are those that have been convicted in a court of law and have been imprisoned. Specifically, the violent offenders were drawn from Langata women prison and Kamiti prison.

Victims refer to persons who have fallen prey to acts of violent criminal offenders. In other words, persons who have been injured emotionally and/or physically by violent offenders.

Victim offender relationship refers to the association or affiliations between the injured person (victim) and the person who inflicted the injury (violent offender). These affiliations are based on birth, marriage, and/or business partnership. The affiliation ranges from the victim being a spouse, parent, friend, relative, business partner or a stranger (i.e. unrelated to the violent offender). Victim-offender relationship is also indicated by the duration of relationship (i.e the length of time the offender had known the victim). The duration of relationship was categorized into: previously unknown/stranger, briefly acquainted (offender had known the victim for less than six months), fairly acquainted (offender had known the victim for more than six months to one year), well acquainted (offender had known the victim for a period of one to three years), very well acquainted (offender had known the victim for a period of three years and above).

Social setting refers to the social environment or the interactions which precede violent crimes for instance beer parties, street, office, parks and home.

View refers to one's opinion towards an issue and in this case the offenders views towards the use of violence. These views range from an inclination to use violence in self-defense and to use violence intentionally (that is with an ill motive).

Socio economic status refers to the level of prestige accorded to someone by others as a result of the position held or skill(s) attained. This is indicated by a respondent's level of income, education level, type of occupation pursued and/or ownership of property, for instance, land, real estate e.t.c. Income is measured by actual earnings. Occupation has been categorized into four categories namely: unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled, and professional. Education level is measured in terms of years of schooling.

Violent family background; this refers to violent situations or surroundings under which individuals were brought up. This is indicated by frequency of fights/beatings among parent(s)/guardian and among immediate relatives. Immediate relatives refer to close family members like brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts. Violent family background is also indicated by instances of abuse experienced by respondents during childhood and by fights /brawls/quarrels witnessed within the neighbourhood during childhood per week. Abuse therefore refers to being battered by parent(s)/guardian and /or by immediate relatives.

Drug use refers to the use of any mind-altering substance in a way that differs from generally approved medical practices. In this study, focus was on the use of common drugs like alcohol, tobacco, bhang, miraa and cocaine. Drug use is measured by frequency of drug taking/use per week. Frequency of drug use is categorized as: low drug use (one to two times per week, average drug use (three to five times per week), high drug use (six to eight times per week and very high drug use (eight times and above per week).

Recidivists refer to violent offenders who have engaged in violent acts and have been convicted and imprisoned on two or more occasions. Recidivism will be indicated by the number of times one has been committed to a rehabilitation school, (formally called approved school), a borstal institution, youth correction training centre, or a probation hostel. Recidivism will also be indicated by the number of times one has been imprisoned and type of crime(s) committed previously.

According to the Kenyan law, child offenders aged 14-15 years are sent to rehabilitation schools where they attend secondary school until they attain the majority age (18years). Hardened child offenders aged 15-17 years old are sent to borstal institutions. First time youth offenders aged 17-21 years are sent to youth correctional and training centres. Probation hostels are for child offenders who attend primary school up to standard eight.

Type of crime(s) committed previously falls under the eight index crimes, i.e. violent personal behaviour (murder and rape), occasional property crime (auto theft and shoplifting), occupational crimes (embezzlement and white collar crime), political crimes (treason and military violations), public order crimes (vagrancy, addiction and prostitution), conventional crimes (robbery and burglary), organized crime (racketeering, organized gambling and drug trafficking) and professional crime (counterfeiting and forgery).

Table 1: Specification of hypothesis and variable indicators

Hypothesis	Type of variable	Study variable	Variable indicators
H1	Independent	Low socio-economic status	-Actual earnings per month -Type of occupation (unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled and professional) -Years of schooling -property owned (land owned in hectares, rental houses)
	Dependent	Nature of Violent crime(s) committed	-Duration of imprisonment in months -Severity of harm/damage inflicted on the victim (simple assault, aggravated assault, murder/manslaughter).
H2	Independent	Drug(s) use	-Frequency of drug taking per week -Type of drug(s) taken/used
	Dependent	Recidivism in violent crimes	-Number of times one has been committed to a rehabilitation school/borstal institution/youth correction and training centers and or probation hostels -Number of times imprisoned -Type of crime(s) committed previously (violent personal behaviour, occasional property crime, occupational crime, political crime, public order crime, conventional crime, organized crime, professional crime)
H3	Independent	Violent family background	-Frequency of abuse (beaten) during childhood per week - Frequency of parent(s)/ guardian fighting/being battered per week -Number of fights /brawls/quarrels witnessed within the neighbourhood during childhood per week
	Dependent	Nature of violent crime(s) committed	-Duration of imprisonment in months -Severity of harm/damage inflicted on the victim (simple assault, aggravated assault and murder/manslaughter)

Hypothesis	Type of variable	Study variable	Variable indicators
H4	Independent	Victim-offender relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -A spouse (female/ male) -A parent (mother/ father) -A friend -A relative (cousin, brothers, sisters, uncles and aunts) -A business partner -A stranger -Duration of relationship/acquaintance in months or years
	Dependent	Nature of violent crimes committed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Duration of imprisonment in months -Severity of harm/ damage inflicted on the victim (simple assault, aggravated assault and murder/ manslaughter)

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a discussion of the research design. Kerlinger (1964:275) defines the research design 'as the plan, structure and strategy of investigation conceived so as to obtain answers to research questions and to control variance'. In this chapter the following will be discussed; site description, sources of data, unit of analysis, unit of observation, sampling procedure, techniques of data collection, instrument for collecting data and data analysis.

3.2 Site description

The study was carried out within Nairobi Province. There are four prisons in Nairobi these are Kamiti maximum and medium prisons, Langata women and Nairobi West prisons. Two of these prisons (i.e. Langata for women and Kamiti maximum prison for men) were purposively selected using non probability sampling. The choice of these two prisons is based on the fact that, they are the largest prisons in Kenya in terms of capacity and houses inmates from all over the country. Criminals commit crimes in different parts of the country and they will be found in any prison depending on where they committed the crime. Thus, a single prison is likely to have inmates from every part of the country. The study respondents were chosen because they have first hand information the study was seeking. The two prisons are outside the Nairobi central business district

3.3 Unit of analysis

The unit of analysis denotes the phenomenon being investigated. This is the subject matter of the study. This study sought to investigate factors that are responsible for violent crimes. Possible factors investigated include; age, sex, education, occupation, income, family background, past record of crime, marital status, peer influence, drug intake, victim-

offender relationship, attitude towards the use of violence and the social setting in which violent crimes takes place.

3.4 Unit of observation

Unit of observation refers to the source(s) of primary data about the issue under investigation. In other words, the study respondents. In the case of this study respondents are; persons who have used threats and/ or force to inflict injury or death against another person. In particular, the study respondents were imprisoned violent criminals.

3.5 Sources of data

The study utilized both primary and secondary data. Primary data involved first hand information that the proposed study sought from a total of 150 prison inmates and 8 key informants. The respondents were violent criminal offenders drawn from Kamiti and Langata Prisons. Secondary data involved information that the study obtained from published and unpublished literature. These included prison files, books, journals, internet material and print media. Information and data recorded in prison files was obtained from the specific prisons. While books, journals and print media were obtained from various libraries, statistics on crime was obtained from the police headquarters.

3.6 Sampling procedure

This study is a survey, since data was collected from a few respondents to represent the study population. As indicated in the site description section of the study, respondents were drawn from Langata prison (for women), and Kamiti maximum (for men). The choice of these two prisons is based on the fact that, they are the largest prisons in Kenya in terms of capacity and houses inmates from all over the country. The sampling frame was the prison registers from the two prisons. These were obtained with the assistance of the relevant prison administrators. Sampling procedure refers to the process of selecting cases to be studied. Budget constraint did not allow the study to interview all violent offenders from the two prisons. Rather, a representative sample of 150 respondents was drawn using

proportionate stratified random sampling to increase efficiency and to ensure that every respondent had an equal chance of being selected.

The two prisons mentioned above formed the strata. The number of respondents selected from each stratum (prison) was pegged on the total number of inmates within each stratum. It emerged that at the time of study, there were 2,119 persons convicted for violent crime in Kamiti maximum prison and only 26 in Langata women prison, thus bringing all of them to a total of 2,145. Based on proportionate sampling, 148 men and 2 women were selected from the two prisons respectively.

Proportionate sampling was further employed in Kamiti prison as the inmates reside in different blocks. These were block A, B, C, Condemned A, Condemned G and Isolation. The number of inmates selected from each block depended on the total number of inmates in each block. Block A had 539 inmates, B had 453, C had 183, condemned A had 99, condemned G 675 and isolation block 170. Using stratified random sampling 37 respondents were selected from block A, from B 32, from C 13, from G 47, from condemn A 7 and isolation 12. Simple random sampling was employed to draw the final sample. This involved writing names of all the respondents from each block on pieces of paper which were folded and put in a paper bag. Next, the specified number for each block was picked at random. The same procedure was repeated for all the blocks. In total 148 respondents were interviewed from Kamiti prison.

In Langata women prison, names of all the 26 violent inmates were written down on pieces of paper and folded. Next two pieces of paper denoting two respondents were picked randomly and the two were interviewed. In total, 150 respondents were interviewed.

Eight key informants were also interviewed to help complement the prisoner's responses on the explanatory factors responsible for violent crimes. These key informants were drawn from different prison departments. These included two prison officers, two welfare officers, two counselors and two prison chaplains; one from each department in the two prisons making a total of eight from both prisons.

3.7 Data collection methods

Data was obtained from the respondents through face-to-face interview, in which the researcher asked questions and recorded the answers promptly. The justification of this method is that, it has the advantage of ensuring a high response rate. This method also allowed the researcher to clarify questions for better understanding by respondents. The method also facilitated probing of answers from respondents for clarity. In Kamiti, some respondents expressed the view that they could understand the English language well and requested to be allowed to fill the questionnaires. This was allowed but the researcher made sure the responses were filled properly and clarifications were sought before leaving the interview venue.

3.8 Problems encountered in the field

There were no major problems encountered in the field except for the waiting period before getting a permit to access the prisons for data collection.

3.9 Data collection Instruments

A standard questionnaire (see appendix 1) was used to collect data. The questionnaire contained both open ended and closed-ended questions on factors that are responsible for violent crimes. In closed-ended questions, respondents were offered a set of answers from which they choose. The open-ended questions allowed respondents to communicate their views without being forced to comply with the preconceived answers. Preference of a standard questionnaire was justified owing to the fact that, in a prison setting, respondents

are not allowed as much time as the researcher may wish to interview them. An interview schedule (in annex 2) was used to elicit responses from the key informants.

3.10 Data analysis

Data from the field was cleaned to ascertain that all entries had been properly done. This was done at the interview venue. Quantitative data was coded and analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics like percentages were used to summarize the data. These data is presented in form of frequency tables in chapter four. Inferential statistics, in this case the chi-square, was used to test the hypotheses (i.e to measure the association between variables). The qualitative content of data was used to compliment the quantitative data.

3.11 Research Ethics

Before engaging in data collection, the researcher took time to explain to the respondents the purpose of the study and assured them that the information would be held in confidentiality and be used for academic purposes only. No material benefits were promised to the respondents. The researcher carried out personal interviews with some respondents face to face while others answered the questionnaire on their own.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter largely focuses on the description, analysis and presentation of data collected from the field. Data is hereby presented in form of descriptive statistics, mainly frequency tables and percentages. To assess the relationship between violent crime (dependent variable) and various independent variables, cross tabulations was utilized while the chi square test was employed to verify the significance of the study hypotheses.

As earlier specified, the objectives of this study were; to find out the socio-economic factors responsible for violent crimes, to establish the victim-offender relationship, to ascertain the social setting of violent crime and to assess the violent offenders' views regarding the use of violence. Data presentation involves demographic characteristics of respondents, socio-economic status, past involvement in crime, drug abuse, family background, friends' involvement in crime and victim-offender relationship, among others.

4.2 Factors responsible for violent crime

At the time of study, there were 2119 violent offenders in Kamiti and only 26 violent offenders in Langata totaling to 2,145 violent offenders. Selection of respondents was done using proportionate stratified sampling to eradicate any bias and also to ensure that all cases had equal chances of being selected. A total of 150 respondents (violent offenders) were sampled and interviewed as the study had proposed. In Kamiti Maximum prison 148 (98.7%) respondents were interviewed, while only 2 (1.3%) women were interviewed from Langata women prison.

4.2.1 Gender bias

This highly skewed interviewed sample is not strange owing to the type of crime under investigation since violent crimes are committed mainly by men. These finding concur with empirical findings by Mushanga (1970) in Uganda which found out that, of the 103

murders (violent crimes) studied, only 6.7% were committed by women. The finding also agrees with Mungai's (1979:59) who found that out of the 78 violent offenders interviewed in Kisii Kenya, 1.2% were women. In fact, Adler, F; Gerhard, M; Williams, L (1995:40) argues that except for such crimes as prostitution, shoplifting and welfare fraud, males traditionally commit more crimes than females at all ages.

However, this data does not support our earlier assumption that females are increasingly taking to violent crimes. It seems to affirm that violent crime is predominantly male. This is perhaps due to the risks (death, injury, imprisonment) involved in executing violent crimes. Therefore most of the analysis in this chapter describes male violent offenders.

4.2.2 Marital status

From the findings, most of the respondents (62.7%) were married, 30.7% were single, while only 6.7% were separated. It therefore follows that a majority of them had dependants to support. Thus, the implications of imprisonment are not difficult to see. It means that a breadwinner has been lost for a long or short period of time, or even for ever as in the case of a life or death sentence. Dependents also suffer emotionally and materially thus facilitating the problem of delinquency among them.

4.2.3 Religion

Majority, (77%) of the respondents were Christians, 18% were Muslims while 4.1% comprised of others, (i.e. Mungiki sect followers and those not affiliated to either Christian or Muslim faith). Ordinarily, the role of religion as a major social institution is to promote social cohesion and conformity alongside conferring meaning and purpose on peoples' lives Durkheim in (Macionis, J 2001:491). However, these findings seem to suggest that religion especially Christianity need to step up it efforts in promoting social cohesion amidst challenging economic times. This is because the pressure to meet one's basic necessities while the legitimate means to do so are limited may incline some individuals to involve themselves in violent crimes.

4.2.4: Age

The study findings indicate that 42.7% were aged between 30 and 39 years. This category was followed by 19-29 years age category which comprised 32.7%. The 40-49 and 50 years and above age categories comprised 12% and 11.3% respectively. Those aged below 18 (children) years comprised 1.3%. Table two presents the distribution of the respondents by age group.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by age

Age	Frequency	Percent
Below 18	2	1.3
19-29	49	32.7
30-39	64	42.7
40-49	18	12
50 and above	17	11.3
Total	150	100

These findings seem to support the statement that violent crime is a youthful phenomenon. This is because 75.4% of the respondents were in the 19-39 age categories. According to a study by KIPPRA (2004:53), respondents held the view that crime had increased in magnitude and that the offenders were executing it more ruthlessly. If this is the trend, it is unlikely that the very young and the very old will be involved in violent criminal activities. This is because resistance from the victims is expected, hence use of force and strength, which the youth are more endowed with, (compared to old people) are crucial in violent crime commission.

According to Freda, et al (1995:38), crime decreases with age. Thus, as individuals advance in age whether they are men or women, their engagement in crime decreases. Freda, et al (1995:38) argues that, the aging-out phenomenon is a natural part of the life cycle. They

added that teenagers may become increasingly independent of the parents yet lack the resources to support themselves. As a result, they are likely to band together with other young people who are equally frustrated in the search for legitimate ways to get money, sex, alcohol and status. Together they find illegitimate sources of obtaining their basic needs and wants, but with adulthood the small gains from criminal behaviour no longer seem attractive and/or legitimate means may open up for some of them.

This study seem to support the above argument on aging out because the number of those who had committed violent crime increased till 30-39 age category after which drastic decrease was observed as the respondents ages increased. Freda, et al (1995:38) argues that all offenders commit fewer crimes as they grow older because they have less strength, less mobility and so on. However, this aging-out phenomenon, as argued by Freda et al (1995) is not universal since career criminals do no necessarily follow the trend of aging-out.

4.2.5 Residential area

Majority of the respondents (62%) resided in the urban areas while 38% were rural residents prior to imprisonment. From the findings, majority of the violent offenders were from the urban areas. Kumar et al (1994:247) noted that industrialization has brought about a breakdown of a sense of community among urban groups in America. In addition, the family, church and the neighbourhood are no longer able to keep individual behaviour in line with community standards. Simmel in Hale, (1990) noted that urban life is essentially rational with only weak emotional attachments. He was pessimistic that this weakening of community solidarity in urban areas would lead to a collapse of stable social order. Kenya being a developing nation is still experiencing rural to urban migration. Lack of employment opportunities in the rural areas and a perception of more opportunities in urban areas has led to an influx of many people in the urban areas. However, the economy is not vibrant enough to absorb all in either the formal or informal sectors. This situation leaves many migrants from the rural areas stranded and coping with the relatively more

individualistic life in urban settings is likely to push individuals to violent crime commission in a bid to make ends meet.

According to Spate and Macionis (1982), most crime that is not white collar or organized is a response by the society's have-nots to a wider economic situation that they cannot control. They further add that, prevented by lack of training or prejudice from getting a good job, and unable to survive on welfare or other aid, many poor or near poor people seek to supplement their incomes by turning to crime. Six key informants out of eight interviewed in the present study felt that urban areas predispose individuals to violent crimes due to high population, the resident's diverse cultural backgrounds and existence of extreme socio-economic inequalities that are not as pronounced in rural areas, are likely to push many individuals with (little or no means of achieving the societal goals) into criminal behaviour which may be accompanied by acts of violence.

In urban areas, there is anonymity due to high population, thus rendering it difficult for informal controls to regulate social behaviour. In addition, the congested slum areas act as hideouts for criminals and most of them hold the view that it is difficult to be apprehended. According to Rempel (1981:1), there is attraction of job opportunities in Kenyan urban areas. The reality, however, is that not all persons who move to the urban areas find employment. Besides, it is in the urban areas where extreme economic inequalities are more pronounced compared to the rural areas. A combination of these factors is likely to push individuals to experience relative deprivation as they see their urban counterparts enjoying a high standard of living which they themselves cannot afford because of their unemployed status. Hence some of these unemployed individuals turn to illegitimate ways to cater for their needs. Most of these illegitimate ways tend to be accompanied by acts of violence.

4.2.6 Education level

The findings presented in table three indicate that violent crimes are not a preserve of the uneducated. On the contrary, 42.7% of the respondents had secondary level education. This was followed closely by respondents with upper primary education, who comprised 32%, lower primary respondents were 11.3%, college/university 8% and 6% had no education at all.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents by Education Level

Education level	Frequency	Percentage
Never been to school	9	6
Lower primary (1-4)	17	11.3
Upper primary (5-8)	48	32
Secondary	64	42.7
College/University	12	8
Total	150	100

The present study seems to indicate that violent crime is lower among the highly educated (college level). This can be attributed to the assumption that such individuals are able to find job placements easily as compared to the lowly educated. It is assumed that higher education places an individual on a higher social status in society. Once in the aforementioned status, a person's values and techniques of dealing with limited opportunity are different from those of people with low and/ or no education. The later category is seen to be in low social status. Persons with high education are likely to shy away from violent crime to protect their status while the lowly educated are likely to engage in violent crime since they do not hold a high status in society. In addition, highly educated persons are more adept at committing and concealing their involvement in crime. Majority of them also commit the less reported and rarely punished like white collar crimes.

These findings are consistent with those of KIPPRA (2004:53) whereby victim-respondents indicated that the criminals who had attacked them were educated, at least with secondary education. In our contemporary society, education is valued by the majority if not all, because it is one of the key factors that determines an individual's upward mobility. This role has also been recognized by Peil and Oyeneeye (1998: 128) who argue that, while a few students are interested in knowledge for its own sake, the majority pursue education because it provides opportunities for an improved standard of living. On the contrary, the benefits of education have not been realized by many educated Kenyans. Most unemployed Kenyans who have gone through the education system but cannot find employment are frustrated. The eight key informants interviewed in this study further reported that educated (secondary level) individuals are more involved in violent crime. They further point out that despite the fact that such individuals are ambitious, knowledgeable and with many aspirations, the levels of unemployment in Kenya have rendered most of them jobless and hence frustrated. This frustration, they argued, has led many to engage in violent crimes in a bid to survive and to achieve a good standard of living enjoyed by others in the society.

4.2.7 Average income

Over half (55.3%) of the respondents had an average monthly income of Kenyan shillings 0- 9,000 prior to imprisonment while 44.7% had an income of Kshs. 9,000-15,000. Although 44.7% of the respondents seemed to earn the highest income among the respondents, the prevailing inflation and high cost of living dictates that many of them cannot adequately meet their basic and other needs. The inflation level in urban areas outside Nairobi was 10.6% while in Nairobi it was 14.4% in the year 2004 (Economic Survey 2005: 82). This has the implication of pushing prices higher and increasing the cost of living. This means decreased buying power, and may result in some individuals being unable to procure their basic needs. Some of these individuals may look for alternative (illegal) means to make up

for the deficit. The illegal means may be accompanied by acts of violence. Table four presents distribution of respondents by average level of incomes per month.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents by average income per month

Average income	Frequency	Percentage
Ksh.0-3,00	29	19.3
Ksh.6,001-9,000	16	10.7
Above Ksh. 9,001	67	44.7
Total	150	100

The findings of this study points to the view that majority of the respondents either had no employment or they were underemployed. Such incomes (Ksh.0-9000 per month) where majority 53.3% of the respondents fall, are a pointer that many of them were earning inadequate incomes. The Economic survey (2002:68) classifies low income group as comprising households with a monthly earnings of below Kshs 10,000. Middle income and upper income groups are classified as comprising households with monthly earnings above Kshs 10,000. In a capitalist economy like Kenya, where almost every good and service is priced, nine thousand shillings per month is not likely to meet ones basic needs adequately. Limited access to money seems to be related to violent crimes. This is because individuals with little incomes may turn to violent crime as an alternative way of survival. This assumption is also supported by the fact that, a good number 34.6% of the respondents gave need for money as the reason for engaging in violent crime.

However, low incomes do not automatically predispose individuals to engage in violent behaviour. On the contrary, Williams (2001: 472) argues that it is the individual's own subjective assessment of his or her position which dictates whether one will engage in crime

or not. It is more a result of the perceived state of relative deprivation. This occurs more in a society where individuals are educated and are more exposed to affluent lifestyles. This may lead some individuals desiring more money to get rich in order to be able to enjoy the affluent lifestyles. Where some individuals are not in a position to finance such lifestyles legitimately, they may engage in violent crime to acquire the finances. According to Merton, Broom and Cottrell (1959:464), anti-social behavior occurs where some groups of people in the society cannot achieve the socially prescribed cultural values/goals through the legitimate means. Such individuals turn to illegitimate means in a bid to achieve the cultural values and so engage in violent crime.

4.2.8 Occupation

The study findings seem to indicate that violent crime is more common among the semi-skilled and unskilled occupational groups. More specifically, 42% of the criminals were semi-skilled, 32.7% were unskilled while the skilled and professional comprised 21.3% and 4% respectively. These findings though not identical seem to concur with Mungai's study (1979) in Kisii-Kenya in which 56% of the violent offenders interviewed were farmers which is an unskilled type of occupation. Table five presents distribution of respondents by occupation.

Table 5: Distribution of respondents by occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percent
Unskilled	49	32.7
Semiskilled	63	42
Skilled	32	21.3
Professional	6	4
Total	150	100

Occupation is for many in Kenya a source of income. However, the nature of occupation matters because of different rates of returns (G.O.K, 2004:10). Unskilled and semi-skilled types of occupations do not attract high returns/earnings as compared to skilled and professional occupations.

Occupation is key to survival because it determines one's level of income. Lack of employment has led many individuals to informal businesses and farming, which many respondents classified as unskilled. However, majority of unskilled and semi-skilled respondents did not regard themselves as fully employed, since they were not assured of a regular flow of income. Besides the incomes received could not match the living standards in the country.

The key informants interviewed felt that one's occupation predisposes one to violent crime commission. The argument is that one's occupation determines the incomes earned and that the incomes determine one's standard of living. Failure to meet one's needs, they argued, could lead an individual to engage in violent crime.

4.2.9 Land ownership

The findings indicate that half (50.7%) of the respondents did not own any land on which they would do any farming. Fifty four respondents (36%) owned 1-5 acres while 6% owned 5-10 acres. Only 2% owned over 30 acres. Kenya's main economic activities are basically agricultural. This means that ownership of land is crucial to many citizens putting in mind the unemployment rates in the country.

Although land ownership is a general indicator of one's socio-economic status, what matters most is how productive the land is. For instance, ownership of 30 acres of land in marginally productive agro-ecological zones may not mean much. The implication here is that majority of the respondents relied basically on wage employment, hence the limited opportunities (incomes) to cater for their basic needs. This further implies that, they had

limited, or experienced unmet socio-economic needs, which according to frustration-aggression theory raise feelings of frustration (Hagan and Peterson, 1995). These feelings may lead some individuals to turn to other illegal means in a bid to make ends meet. The illegal means may be accompanied by acts of violence.

4.2.10 Past imprisonment

The study sought to find out if the respondents had ever been imprisoned. The findings indicate that 88% of the respondents had not been imprisoned in the past, whereas only 12% had been previously imprisoned. However, this does not mean that they had not engaged in criminal activities in the past. As a matter of fact, the majority indicated that it was just unfortunate that this time round they came into contact with the law enforcers. The implication here is that official crime statistics are largely unreliable. Hence, official crime statistics should not be the only yardstick to gauge the level of crime in any country. The realistic situation is that many violent and other criminals walk free in the society and that, law enforcers should redouble their efforts to identify and apprehend them. The findings points to the fact that more violent criminals walk scot free in the society. Additionally, official statistics on crime do not give the actual picture on the level of crime. Governments should also embark on perception surveys to measure violent crime.

4.3 Drugs and substance abuse

Substance abuse is a global problem, which poses a great danger to the health of the individual; to the social fabric, and even in some cases, to political stability and security in many countries (UN, 1998). Nevertheless, alcohol and milder drugs, e.g. tobacco and miraa were traditionally used and consumed as part of the cultural practices of most African communities. However, consumption of hard drugs, for example cocaine and heroine has more recently been linked to violent crime, due to their effects of lowering the users' capacity for rational dialogue.

According to Mwamwenda (2004:378) drug abuse refers to use of drugs for purposes other than for medical and therapeutic reasons (i.e they are used for the purpose of generating pleasure, euphoria, excitement etc). Table six indicates that tobacco, miraa and alcohol were the most abused drugs among the respondents. This is partly because these drugs are not illegal in Kenya. However consumption of hard drugs like heroine, mandrax and cocaine are a recent phenomenon in Kenya.

Table 6: Distribution of respondents by drug abuse

Drugs	Yes		No		Total	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Inhaling cocaine	2	1.3	148	98.7	150	100
Bhang Smoking	23	15.3	127	84.7	150	100
Miraa consumption	41	27.3	109	72.7	150	100
Cigarette /tobacco smoking	70	46.7	80	53.3	150	100
Beer consumption	90	60	60	40	150	100

4.3.1 Beer consumption

The relationship between alcohol and violent crime seems evident over the years. The study found that 60% of the respondents drank alcohol compared to 40% who reported not to have used it prior to their imprisonment. This finding is in agreement with Wolfgang's study (1967:190) on violent crimes, which found that 66% of the violent offenders had used alcohol. Alcohol distorts the individual's judgment such that a situation that would have

been solved amicably is likely to end up in a violent confrontation. A victim survey by NCBD (2001:57) showed that over half 52% of the perpetrators were described by respondents as having been under the influence of either alcohol or drugs.

The above findings also concur with American surveys of inmates in jails and prisons which indicated that, almost half of the convicted offenders incarcerated for violent crimes had used alcohol just before committing the crime (Freda et al 1995: 33). The American survey further notes that 34-45% of the inmates convicted for homicide, assault, rape and robbery described themselves as heavy drinkers. Freda et al (1995:33) therefore argued that alcohol consumption reduces restraint on aggression and awareness of its consequences.

Mwamwenda (2004: 383) argues that a drunkard has a "who cares" attitude. In addition, such individuals become less sensitive to personal and social standards and expectations as well as deviations from them. As a result, drunkards are less likely to experience self-criticism and/or feelings of guilt and shame for behaviour that they would not accept when sober. Mwamwenda (2004) further argues that, there is frequent violence towards innocent members of the family when the alcoholic partner returns home. This means that an individual who is drunk when confronted is likely to turn to violence than one who is not drunk; alcohol affects/distorts judgement. Other individuals take beer to gather courage to commit violent crimes.

4.3.2 Cigarette/tobacco use

The findings indicate that 46.7% of the respondents were tobacco users prior to their imprisonment compared to 53.3% who did not use tobacco. The researcher was nevertheless informed by some inmates that cigarette smoking takes place in the very confines of prison. Although the issue of drug taking in prison is very sensitive, the findings indicate that violent criminals are also likely to be tobacco users.

4.3.4 Chewing miraa

Out of the 150 respondents, 41 (27.3%) chewed miraa while 109 (72.7%) reported not having used miraa prior to their imprisonment. In the past miraa has not been a common drug. However, its consumption has become common as more communities take to growing miraa as a cash crop. This has resulted in more consumption of the drug especially among the youth. The findings show that only a few inmates 27.3% had chewed miraa prior to imprisonment. This finding shows that miraa is not likely to be related to violent crime, nevertheless more focused studies are warranted to validate this assumption.

4.3.4 Smoking bhang

A majority (84.7%) of the respondents indicated that they were not bhang smokers while only 15.4% confirmed that they were bhang smokers before imprisonment. According to Lewitus (1936), bhang is often used by petty criminals to bolster the courage for contemplating crimes. Bhang also gives the illusion of increased physical strength. Those who had used it argued that one feels relaxed and tends to forget problems, alongside improving courage for committing violent crime. It also creates an illusion that, inhaling it brings relief from stressful conditions, but the reality is that when the person is sober the problems are real and it becomes a vicious circle that is hard to break. Respondents also noted that bhang is rather expensive and one needs money to continue smoking it, hence some smokers are likely to engage in violent crime to earn money in order to support their habits.

4.3.5 Inhaling of cocaine

Inhaling cocaine seemed a new concept to the respondents. This is because the bulk (98.7%) of the respondents, had not inhaled cocaine compared to only 1.3% who had done so prior to imprisonment. This is probably because cocaine is an expensive drug and given the low economic status of the majority respondents, many could not afford it. On the other hand, cocaine is illegal and its sale is highly secretive such that it is difficult to identify its users and sellers.

4.4 Parents/guardian fights/violence

The findings indicate that 68% of respondents had never witnessed their parents' fight while 32% had witnessed their parents fighting. Although a small percentage (32%), these findings seem to support Abraham's observation in Hagan and Peterson (1995:6) that violence is a learned behaviour from parents who act as role models. In addition the sub-culture of violence advanced by Wolfgang & Franco (1967: 140) argues that the sub-culture of violent norms is separate from the society's central dominant value system. In this sub-culture of violence, a potent theme of violence influences the life styles, socialization process and the interpersonal relationship of individuals living in similar conditions. This explains why individuals brought up in families where parents/ guardians use violence are likely to use violence later in life.

The key informants interviewed observed that the family background is important in predisposing individuals to violent crime commission. They argued that children observe the parents behaviour and in most cases model their own behaviour after that of their parents. Exposure to fights and other forms of violent behaviour has a bearing on socialization. It is likely that children brought up in family backgrounds where values associated with violence are practiced or experienced are likely to internalize these values and it becomes part and parcel of their life. They are not likely to view violence as illegal and antisocial since they have seen it practiced in their families. Such values tend to shape their lives as they grow up and engagement in violent crime is a possible event. The same values are likely to be passed on from one generation to another generation.

4.5 Neighborhoods fights/violence

A majority (72.7%) of the respondents said that they had witnessed fights within their neighbourhood as they grew up. While only 27.3% reported not having witnessed such fights. These findings concur with those of Abraham cited by Hagan and Peterson (1995:6) that, violent behavior is learned in childhood either from ones parents, neighbours or the

society at large and that the same behaviour is practiced in adulthood. Lungren (1992) argues that, at the minimum, children who witness traumatic events in their homes or in their neighborhoods are ill prepared to function well at school or in the community. They frequently vent their anger through violence. Such individuals also suffer post traumatic stress disorders (PTSD) and/or related personality disorders. According to Lungren (1992), further argues that effects of such traumatic exposures accumulate rendering such individuals highly vulnerable to provocation and may result in behaviour that is highly disruptive. Such individuals are capable of committing the most outrageous violations against other people.

Neighbourhood fights have the same implications as parents/guardian fights. If children grow up experiencing violence in their families, neighborhoods or communities, their norms and values are influenced to embrace use of violence as something that is normal and legal. Hence, engagement in violent crime and other forms of violence is not viewed by such individuals to be illegal. This is in line with the theory of differential association which asserts that an individual comes into contacts with persons who define the legal codes as rules to be observed while at other times, they associate with persons whose definition are favourable to the violation of the legal codes (Gibbon, 1972:212). According to the theory, a person becomes a criminal due to an excess of definitions favourable to violations of law over definitions unfavourable to violations of the law. Individuals who grow up in families where violent acts are common are likely to learn to use violence later in life; this is because they are more in contact with definitions that violate the law than with definitions that favour obeying the law. This applies to those who reside in areas where violence is prevalent.

4.6 Imprisonment of friends

The study was keen to find out whether respondents had friends who had ever been imprisoned. This was determined by inquiring whether a respondent knew of any friend who had been imprisoned. Half (50%) of the respondents had friends who had been

imprisoned at the time of interview, while the other half 50% did not have friends who had ever been imprisoned.

The findings support Sutherland's theory of differential association, which argues that criminal behaviour is learnt just like any other behaviour (Sutherland, in Gibbon 1972: 212). The main argument according to Sutherland that, individuals come into contacts with persons who define the legal codes as rules to be observed while at other times they associate with persons whose definition are favourable to the violation of the legal codes. This argument implies that an individual becomes a criminal due to an excess of definition favorable to violations of law over definitions unfavorable to violations of the law.

According to the present study, half of the respondents had interacted with friends who also had embraced criminal values. Interaction with criminals means that the individual not only learns ways of committing crime but also rationalizations for criminal actions (Mushanga, 1974). These findings are also in agreement with Hirschi's study on delinquent children which reported that boys with delinquent friends are more likely to become delinquent (see; Freda, Gerhard and Laufer, 1995:125).

The results showed that out of the 75 respondents whose friends had been imprisoned, 54.7% of them had been imprisoned for violent crimes. Although it is difficult to measure the degree of influence, it seems that ones relation's with criminals is likely to expose one to become a criminal. Twelve (16%) had been imprisoned for creating disturbance while 14.7% had been imprisoned for property offences. These findings shed some light on the view that 54.7% of the 75 friends who had criminal records had committed violent crime. There is a possibility that the respondents had committed the violent crimes together with their friends. Additionally, interacting with persons who violate the law is likely to influence an individual to violate the law. This is because during interactions an individual's values and behaviour is likely to be influenced in favour of crime commission.

Table seven presents the distribution of respondents by reasons of their friend's imprisonment.

Table 7: Distribution of respondents by reasons of friends/acquaintance imprisonment

Reasons for friends/acquaintance imprisonment	Frequency	Percentage
Selling illicit brew	1	1.3
Failure to pay debts	3	4
Creating disturbance	12	16
Property offence	11	14.7
Possession of drugs	6	8
Political offence	1	1.3
Violent crime	41	54.7
Total	75	100

4.8 Common crime patterns

Whereas 48% of the respondents consented to having committed violent crime with some other people, 52% said that they had committed the crime on their own. The above findings are a pointer that violent crimes are likely to be committed by the individual with the support of others. This support is likely to take the following form; giving inside information (spying on the victim), handling the stolen property, providing suitable fire arms e.g guns and spying on the law enforcers.

4.9 Victim-offender relationship

More than half (54%), of the respondents were strangers to the victim. However, the offender and the victim were related in 24 cases (16%). They were friends in 17 cases (11.3%) and business partners in 16 cases (10.7%). Eight percent (8%) represented a relationship where the victim and the offender were neighbours. Table eight presents the distribution of offender's relationship with the victims. About half (46%) of the offences

occurred between persons who were either related or know each other in some way. The findings show that violent crime occurs mostly between persons who are not related. Nevertheless, the fact that close to half 69 (46%) of the respondents knew the victim would seem to somewhat concur with Mushanga's (1974:91) finding in Uganda that violent crimes occur between persons who are acquainted with one another.

Table 8: Distribution of respondents by victim-offender relationship

Victim-offender relationship	Frequency	Percent
Relative	24	16
Friend	17	11.3
Business partner	16	10.6
Stranger	81	54
Neighbour	12	8
Total	150	100

These findings also concur with those of a study in South Africa by Mark, S and Louw, A (1998) on violent crime. The two found out that in Johannesburg townships 50%-60% of all violence was described as intimate or "acquaintance" violence, which occurred most often in homes or private settings. Key informants in this study reported that majority of violent crimes that occur between family members/relatives are solved within the family, and are less likely to find their way to the criminal courts. It also means that this category (46%) is under reported. This may, therefore, imply that the traditional justice system in Kenya is still effective in dealing with crime in the society. Additionally, it is also possible that crimes between persons known to each other are rarely reported due to ignorance and male dominance especially in the case of domestic violence.

The fact that 54% of the respondents were strangers to the victim of their actions is a finding that demands attention. This implies that there is increase of violent crime among

strangers. This finding could be attributed to the fact that as the country modernizes, interactions with non-relatives and /or acquaintances is on the increase. This is especially so with the growth of urban centers. Hence, it would be safe to conclude here that violent offences between strangers are on the increase.

4.10 Scene of crime

The scene of crime denotes the place where the violent act took place. The study findings indicate that homes and streets are the main hunting grounds for violent criminals. Whereas 40.7% of the respondents confirmed that they carried the violent crimes at home, 35.3% reported having committed the act on the highways/streets. Another 10.7% said they carried the violent act in shops, 5.3% in beer parties/halls, 4.7% in offices, 2% in banks and 1.3% in forests. Table nine presents distribution of respondents by crime scene.

Table 9: Distribution of respondents by Crime scene

Crime scene	Frequency	Percentage
Beer party/bar	8	5.3
Street/highway	53	35.3
Homes	61	40.7
Office	7	4.7
Forest	2	1.3
Shop	16	10.7
Bank	3	2
Total	150	100

The above findings differ with those by Mushanga (1974:49) that indicate that violent crimes took place more in social functions (i.e during drinking parties and hunting grounds). The home seems to dominate the scene of violent crimes. This partly supports the finding that violent crime is likely to occur between persons acquainted to each other.

However, we have many individuals who are attacked by persons they do not know at all. Ordinarily, individuals would feel relatively secure at home, but the study shows that insecurity has invaded even our very privacy. The streets would also seem to have attracted their fair share of violent crime. The urban streets are an attractive scene of violent criminals (i.e snatchers, pick pocketers, muggers, and carjackers) due to such factors as: congestion, display of affluent life styles, poor lighting and anonymity of criminal elements. The present findings indicate that to show that no place is safe as far as violent crime is concerned.

4.12 Respondents' views on the use of violence

The respondents' views on the use of violence were varied. Of those interviewed, 24% were of the view that use of violence has led to their lives being wasted in prison. They felt that the gains expected had translated into a total loss of their most productive years. They were sorry that they had to be separated from their families; friends and productive assets e.g land, job, businesses, among others. Generally, it seems that the government's immediate response to violent crime is both custodial and non-custodial sentences. Nevertheless, crime researchers remain skeptical as to whether imprisonment will adequately solve the problem at hand. This is because engagement in violent crime is not purely a personality problem. On the contrary, engagement in violent crime is a result of the social environment and to be specific the struggle for survival. To bring violent crime down, preventive measures are more plausible. The government should employ every effort and machinery to create employment for the citizens. Engagement in gainful employment will lead to increased incomes alongside an improved standard of living, thereby limiting opportunities for idleness and frustration. This will not only boost the economy but also reduce government's expenses of maintaining congested prisons.

Of the respondents, 22% held the view that using violence is inhuman while 18.6% felt that it is unlawful to use violence. These findings show that the offenders are well conversant with what they were doing. A number of them (17.3%) held the view that violence is as a

result of the gap between the rich and the poor. This gives rise to differences in the society and is likely to breed feelings of frustration among the less fortunate. A few (8%) of the respondents felt that violence leads to death/trauma while 4% said violence is important to make victims comply. The remaining 6% of the respondents held the view that ingestion of drugs can lead to violence, that violence can be used in self-defense and the government should establish the root cause of violence. The findings imply that there are divergent views on why individuals use violence. Table ten presents the distribution of offenders by their views on violent.

Table 10: Distribution of respondents by views on the use of violence

Views	Frequency	Percentage
Unlawful	28	18.6
Caused by gap between the rich and poor	26	17.3
Inhuman	33	22
Offenders life is wasted in prison	36	24
Can lead to trauma and death	12	8
Necessary to make victims comply	6	4
Other (Drugs lead to violence/ Self defense Government should establish the cause of violence)	9	6
Total	150	100

4.11 Reasons for engaging in violence

The study probed the reasons that predispose offenders to commit violent crimes. The results are summarized in table eleven. The table shows that offenders are engaged in violent crime for various reasons. Of all the respondents 36.6%, said that their being in prison was as a result of mistaken identity and frame-ups. Without being overly skeptical, it is worth noting here that probably respondents complained that crimes were framed up against them in a bid to appear innocent. Apart from frame-ups, 34.6% of the respondents

admitted that need for money was the reason for engaging in violent crimes. Twenty four (16%) gave anger/revenge as the reason while (6.6%) reported to have committed the crimes under the influence of drugs. A few (4.6%) reported to have engaged in violence in self-defense while 1.3% engaged in violent crime due to passion/extreme anger or provocation.

Table 11: Distribution of respondents by reasons for engaging in violent crimes

Reasons for engaging in violent crimes	Frequency	Percentage
Influenced by drugs	10	6.6
Anger/revenge	24	16
Need for money	52	34.6
Framed up case/ Mistaken identity	55	36.6
Passion	2	1.3
Self defense	7	4.6
Total	150	100

The above findings support Stanko's (cited in Webber et al, 2003:247) observation that the motives for violence are multi-dimensional. The results of this study show that the motives for violence are more in favour of instrumental than self-defense motives. Need for money was the main reason for engaging in violence without taking mistaken identity into account. This points to a larger problem in the society namely; failure by a majority to meet their basic needs due to lack of adequate income hence engaging in violent crime as an alternative. This finding seems/appears to support the rational theory of crime which asserts that, before committing a crime, an individual weighs the chances of getting caught, the severity of expected penalty, the value to be gained by committing the act and his/her immediate need for that value (Cornish and Clarke 1986). According to the key informants interviewed, poverty as manifested by lack of jobs, poor pay and failure to get life's necessities can lead individuals to commit violent crimes. This is likely to be the case

especially among the unemployed poor youths. This occurs despite the fact that poverty is no justification for engaging in violent crime.

Summary

In conclusion, the key chapter findings may be recouped here as follows: that violent crime occurs more among the youth and in urban areas. That violent crime occurs more among persons in the low socio-economic strata characterized by low incomes, poor employment (i.e unskilled and semi-skilled) and low education. On the victim-offender relationship, the study revealed that violent crime occurs both among persons acquainted to one another and among strangers. Most of the respondents had grown up witnessing violence either in the immediate family or neighbourhood. Asked why they used violence, respondents had different reasons but the need for money was prominent. From the foregoing, desire for money is the main predisposing factor to violent crime commission. The money is necessary for meeting daily basic needs and also for supporting a better standard of living.

CHAPTER FIVE: HYPOTHESES' TESTING AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

In this section the four study hypotheses are tested. This was done to establish if there is a statistical relationship between the variables under investigation. The chi-square test was used for this purpose. This is a statistical technique which attempts to establish relationship between two variables both of which are categorical in nature, (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003:134). If the probability of the computed chi-square value is less than the level of significance set (0.05) we conclude that there is a relationship between the two variables and that the relationship is not a chance event.

5.2 Hypothesis one: The lower the socio-economic status of an individual, the higher the chances of his/her involvement in violent crimes.

This hypothesis has been tested thrice by use of three different indicators of socio-economic status; namely: one's occupation, education and income levels of the respondent per month. Occupation was measured by the skills one had attained. Skill denotes ability to do something well usually as a result of experience and training. Skills were categorized into four ranging from the lowest to the highest namely: unskilled, semi-skilled, skilled and professional. An unskilled worker is a person who does a job that does not require education, training or experience for example a farmer. A semi-skilled worker is one who does a job that needs some basic skills for example a painter. A skilled worker is a person that has special knowledge and ability to do some work for example an accountant. A professional is a person who does a job that requires special skill and qualification gained through extensive academic and practical training for example a doctor and an engineer. Education level was measured by the highest level of schooling an individual had attained at the time of interview. Education level ranged from those who had never attained any formal education (never been to school) to those who had attained university education. Income level was measured by income (in Kenya shillings) earned per month.

5.2.1 Level of skills

One's occupation was indicated by levels of skill. Occupation denotes one's means of livelihood. Lack of occupation destabilizes households and, unfortunately, unstable families are more likely to raise children who put a premium on violence as a means of dealing with limited opportunity. Table twelve presents the respondent's level of skill by nature of violent crime committed.

Table 12: Level of skill by violent crimes

Level of skill	Nature of violent crime			Total
	Simple assault	Aggravated assault	Murder/manslaughter	
Unskilled	5	45	2	52
Semi-skilled	5	51	3	59
Skilled	3	28	1	32
Professional		3	3	6
Total	13	127	10	150

Pearson chi-square = 21.85 df=6 p=0.016

The Chi-square value is 21.85 with a significance level of 0.016 at 6 degrees of freedom. The p value 0.016 is smaller than the significance level of 0.05. This means that a relationship exist between occupation and involvement in violent crime. The fact that skilled and professional types of occupation attract higher returns than unskilled and semi-skilled occupations is largely indisputable. It is evident from the findings that a majority of the respondents (74.7%) were in unskilled and semi-skilled occupations. Skilled persons included teachers, accountants, doctors among others while the unskilled includes farmers, hawkers and public service vehicle' conductors, among others. Respondents in unskilled and semi-skilled types of employment noted that their employment was unstable with no surety of a regular flow of income. They also maintained that one could be laid off anytime.

Failure to secure stable employment due to lack of skill is likely to produce feelings of frustrations and the need to overcome economic frustrations may lead some individuals to engage in violent crimes. The key informants also noted that individuals who are underemployed experience frustration, as the society seems to deny them an opportunity to achieve their goals in life. Such individuals therefore drift to innovation as denoted by Merton's theory of differential opportunity According to Merton (1959:464), innovation is a situation whereby the individuals who cannot acquire the goals set by the society legitimately, turn to illegitimate means to achieve their goals. The illegitimate means that are outright criminal may be accompanied by acts of violence.

5.2.2 Level of income

One's occupation determines the income levels attained. Furthermore, income levels determine a person's placement in the socio-economic status. It is likely that people in the low-income levels with access to (less than Kshs 9,000) per month do not have adequate means to cater for their basic needs given the high cost of living especially in urban areas and are likely to turn to crime to meet their needs. The respondent's income levels per month are presented in table thirteen.

Table 13: Income levels per month by nature of violent crimes

Income per month in Kenyan Shillings	Nature of violent crime			Total
	Simple assault	Aggravated assault	Murder/ Manslaughter	
Kshs. 0-9000	6	73	4	83
Kshs. Above 9000	7	54	6	67
Total	13	127	10	150

Pearson chi-square = 1.631 df=2 p=0.442

The chi-square value is 1.63 at two degrees of freedom with a 0.44 level of significance. The p value 0.44 is greater than the conventional 0.05 level of significance. Consequently the

study's findings do not support the hypothesis. However, other studies have shown that income level is related to violent crime. For instance, Nganga (1991:74) found that robbery with violence is related to low incomes. In his study 68% of the violent robbers earned between Kshs. 0-200 shillings while 32% earned between Kshs. 2,100-5,000. Low incomes mean insufficiency in relation to a certain standard of living and inability to achieve certain personal aspirations (Clinard & Abbot, 1973:175). Williams (2001: 375) further argues that money is necessary for what it can obtain; hence the desire to obtain money is certainly a major stimulus towards criminality. However, the discrepancy in this study can be attributed to the nature of the variable. Questions regarding income raises feelings of tension and in many occasions are answered with difficulties. Respondents are either unwilling to reveal their incomes and in some instances, can give wrong figures. In addition, some find it difficult to estimate their incomes.

Statistics in Kenya indicate that income is heavily skewed in favour of the rich and against the poor. The country's 10% of the total household's control 42% of the total income while the rest 90 % households control less than 10% (Society for International Development 2004:5). This implies that for every one shilling earned by the poorest 10% households, the richest 10% earns more than Ksh. 56. This shows high levels of inequality in Kenya, which has been increasing over the years (GOK, 2004:5). Statistics indicate that a majority Kenyans (56%) live below the poverty line. Having this in mind it is plausible to conclude that many people in Kenya cannot achieve legitimately the goals set by society e.g wealth, high education and power due to their disadvantaged position of unemployment, under-employment and poor incomes. A fact that cannot be disputed is that the legitimate means of achieving the set goals are not equally distributed among all the citizens. While some individuals may choose to live at the subsistence level and obey the laws, others may desire to achieve the societal goals by whatever means, including engaging in violent crimes.

Key informants felt that individuals do not engage in violent crimes because they do not have an income. One of them noted that 'persons in low income groups are likely to engage in violent crime because their earnings cannot meet their needs, this group also has a large

number of dependents and they live in crime prone (slums) areas characterized by large populations and poverty'. Their argument is that the incomes earned do not match the high cost of living experienced in Kenya presently. Another key informant noted that the middle income groups are also likely to commit violent crimes because 'they are ambitious and have an idea of a better standard of living which they aspire to achieve but their incomes cannot allow'. Williams (2001:472), points out that low income do not automatically predispose individuals to violent crime commission. He argues that it is the individual's own subjective assessment of his or her position in relation to others which motivate the individual to engage in crime. In other words, it is a state of relative deprivation experienced by the individuals in relation to others that is more likely to predispose them to engage in violent crime rather than their level of income.

5.2.3 Level of education

One's level of education is significant especially in the modern society where ascribed status has largely been replaced by achieved status. A point worth noting is that, one's level of education has a bearing on the type of occupation one will pursue. Many people in Kenya are educated but unemployed; hence the search for the means of survival may tempt some individuals to engage in acts that are defined as violent crimes. Table fourteen presents distribution of respondent's level of education by nature of violent crime.

Table 14: Level of education by nature of violent crime

Education level	Nature of violent crime			Total
	Simple assault	Aggravated assault	Murder/man slaughter	
Never been to school	1	8		9
Primary (1-4)	2	15		17
Primary (5-8)	6	38	4	48
Secondary	4	53	4	61
College/University		13	2	15
Total	13	127	10	150

Pearson chi-square = 5.87 df=8 p=0.66

The chi-square value is 5.87 with 8 degrees of freedom and a 0.66 level of significance. The p value 0.66 is more than the conventional 0.05 level of significance. This means that there is no relationship between education level and involvement in violent crime according to the study findings. In spite of this, the study does not rule out Glaser's (1972:32) argument that well educated persons are less likely to commit violent crimes. He argues that education teaches verbal alternatives to physical violence or at any rate snide remarks and snubs are more the norms of aggression among the educated than physical assault. This is probably due to the fact that the term well educated is subjective. The findings indicate that violent crime occur more among the secondary educated followed by the primary educated. Thus, low education does not directly predispose individuals to violent crime commission.

Persons with higher education (post secondary) are more likely to secure good jobs and in most cases they engage in white-collar crimes like corruption as opposed to violent crimes. With only secondary education, chances of getting stable employment are minimal hence some individuals may turn to illegitimate means, which may constitute violent acts. Hence the relationship between violent crime commission and education is seen in light of an

individual's probability of securing stable employment. In addition, persons with secondary education have an idea of a better standard of living enjoyed by others in the society, which they cannot enjoy probably due to under employment or unemployment. To echo the words of Williams (2001:472), it is these individuals who are likely to experience relative deprivation. Such individuals are likely to engage in violent crime in a bid to earn money and be like others, enjoying a high standard of living. A majority of the respondents also noted that if they had some college training probably they would have secured good employment and hence good incomes. The higher the education level of an individual, the higher the chances of getting a stable job and the less the likelihood of engaging in violent crimes.

In conclusion, the study found weak support for its first hypothesis. Of the three factors, occupation was significant. Income and education were not found to be significant. However no attempt is made here to rule out the relationship between education, income and violent crime.

5.3 Hypothesis two: Violent drug users are likely to be recidivists.

Recidivists refer to violent offenders who have engaged in violent acts and have been convicted and imprisoned on more than one occasion. Recidivism was indicated by whether the respondent had served an earlier prison term except the one at the time of interview. Drug use refers to the use of a mind-altering substance in a way that differs from generally approved medical practices. Drug use is measured by whether the respondent had used drugs (beer and cigarettes) before imprisonment.

5.3.1 Beer/Alcohol consumption

Table fifteen presents distribution of beer/alcohol by recidivism.

Table 15: Beer/alcohol consumption by recidivism

Beer/alcohol consumption	Prior imprisonment		Total
	Yes	No	
Yes	16	74	90
No	6	54	60
Total	22	128	150

Pearson chi-square = 1.74 df=1 p=0.187

The chi-square value is 1.74 with a level of significance of 0.187 at 1 degree of freedom. The p value of 0.187 is greater than 0.05 the conventional level of significance. This means that the findings do not support the hypothesis. However, Table 6 of this study shows that (60%) of the respondent's had consumed alcohol/beer prior to their imprisonment. The argument here is that alcohol does not cause violent crime, however, its effects are related to violent crime. Freda (1995:33) argues that alcohol reduces resistance on aggression alongside reducing awareness of its consequences. Siegel (1995:297) further points out that alcohol abuse reduces cognitive ability, in addition to limiting the capacity for rational dialogue. The contention is that effects of alcohol distorts judgment thus drunkards, are therefore more likely to turn to violence in various situations than those who are sober. This is because their resistance to aggression reduces with the intake of alcohol. Nevertheless, the above chi square test does not show a relationship between recidivism and intake of alcohol. Probably the sensitivity of the question and the fact that the interview was in a prison setting might have affected the responses.

5.2.2 Cigarette smoking

Table sixteen presents distribution of cigarettes smoking by recidivism.

Table 16: Cigarettes smoking by recidivism

Cigarette smoking	Prior imprisonment		Total
	Yes	No	
Yes	14	56	70
No	8	72	80
Total	22	128	150

Pearson chi-square = 2.98 df=1 p=0.082

The chi-square value is 2.98 with a 0.082 significance level at 1 degree of freedom. The p value of 0.082 is greater than the 0.05 significance level. Therefore the rejection of the hypothesis that cigarette smoking is related to recidivism. Siegel (1995:297) argues that drug ingestion may result in compulsive behavior in which drug users may resort to violence to gain funds to support their habit. Nevertheless, the above findings do not support the proposition that drugs are related to recidivism. This can be attributed to sensitivity of the question and the setting in which the study was carried out. However, a clinical study on the relationship between drugs and violent crime may shed light and hence concrete result on this issue.

5.4 Hypothesis 3: A violent family background is likely to expose an individual to violent crime commission in adulthood.

Violent family background refers to violent situations or surroundings in which the individuals were brought up. Violent family background was indicated by whether the respondents had witnessed fights between their parents and other people during their childhood. Distribution of parental fights with other people by nature of violent crimes.

Table 17: Parental/guardian fights with other people by nature of violent crimes

Ever witnessed parent/guardian fight with other people	Nature of violent crime			Total
	Simple assault	Aggravated assault	Murder/manslaughter	
Yes	7	32	1	40
No	6	95	9	110
Total	13	127	10	150

pearson chi-square = 6.472 df=2 p=0.039

The chi-square value is 6.47 with 0.03 level of significance at 2 degrees of freedom. The p value of 0.03 is less than the 0.05 which means that there is a relationship between violent family background and involvement in violent crime. The findings therefore support the hypothesis that a violent family background is likely to expose a child to violent crime commission in adulthood.

According to Sutherland in (Gibbon, 1972:212), a person becomes a criminal through intimate associations with others who present favorable definitions of criminal behavior and these associations are in excess of, and are of a quality different from one's experiences with non-criminal activity. Children who grow up witnessing violence in their environment are likely to become violent later on in life. This is because the violence witnessed is internalized just like any other behavior. This shows that the more a child is exposed to violence, the more the chances of him/her engaging in violent acts later on in life.

This finding concurs with Abraham's (1995:6) argument that violence is a learned phenomenon whereby children learn violent behavior from parents who are role models and they model this behaviour when they become adults. The finding also agrees with Sutherland's theory of differential association which argues that criminal behavior is

developed by normal processes common to all learning (Gibbon, 1972:212). Hence, the higher the exposure to violent situations in childhood, the higher the chance of engaging in violent acts later on in life.

5.5 Hypothesis 4: The violent offender is likely to be related to the victim of his/her violent acts.

A victim refers to a person who has fallen prey to acts of violent criminal offenders. Victim offender relationship refers to the association or affiliations between the injured person (victim) and the person who inflicted the injury (violent offender). The affiliation was measured by whether the respondent was related or had knowledge of the victim or not. Table eighteen presents victim-offender relationship by nature of violent crime.

Table 18: victim-offender relationship by violent crime

Victim-offender relationship	current offence			Total
	simple assault	Aggravated assault	Murder/ manslaughter	
Relative(brother/sister/uncle/aunt/cousin)	5	17	2	24
Friend	1	13	3	17
Business partner	2	12	2	16
Stranger	2	77	2	81
Neighbour	3	8	1	12
Total	13	127	10	150

Pearson chi-square = 20.3 df=8 p=0.009

The chi-square value is 20.3 with a 0.009 level of significance at 8 degrees of freedom. The p value is smaller than the conventional 0.05 level of significance. The hypothesis is supported. The findings concur with Mushanga (1974:91) that homicides occur mostly among related persons. In addition, the findings concur with those of Mark and Louw (1998) in Johannesburg South Africa, which found that, 50-60% of all violence occurred in

homes or private settings. The study acknowledges that violent crime occurs among related persons, however this findings point to the fact that violent crime is increasingly occurring between strangers. This is probably due to the fact that Kenya as a society is going through the modernization process. Education and the quest for white-collar jobs has resulted in rural-urban migration and hence growth of urban centers. Interactions in the urban centers are not necessarily limited to persons one is related to. In addition, chances of reporting crime between strangers are probably higher than between acquaintances. This is probably because acquaintances are likely to attempt solving their differences amicably before seeking legal redress.

Summary

In this chapter, four hypotheses were tested. The study findings provide partial support for the first hypothesis; only occupation was significant whereas income and education were shown to be insignificant. The results for the second hypothesis indicated that drug users are not recidivist. Results of the third hypothesis revealed that persons who grow up witnessing violence are likely to engage in violent crime later on in life. Regarding victim-offender relationship, testing of the hypothesis (4) pointed that violent crime occurs among related persons, in addition findings point to the fact that violent crime is increasingly occurring between strangers.

CHAPTER SIX: FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the study's key findings and conclusions. Based on the findings, recommendations are made and areas of further research are suggested. The overall objective of the study was to find out factors responsible for violent criminal offences. The specific objectives of this study were; to find out the socio-economic factors responsible for violent crimes; to establish the victim-offender relationship; to ascertain the social setting of violent crime; and to assess the violent offenders' views regarding the use of violence.

6.2 Key findings and Conclusions

Socio-economic factors were indicated by education level attained, occupation and income levels attained per month. Results of hypothesis one (the lower the socio-economic status of an individual the higher the chances for his/her involvement in violent crime), indicate that there is a relationship between education and violent crime. In addition, testing the same hypothesis by income level and occupation did not yield a significant relationship. However, the study findings seem to indicate that violent crime is more common among the semi-skilled and unskilled occupational groups. In fact, a majority (74%) of the respondents were in the unskilled and semi-skilled type of occupations.

Individuals with a low level of education are more likely to be involved in violent crime than individuals with high level of education. The reason being that education level is related to job placement and hence incomes earned. Individuals with low education have less skill and are therefore unlikely to find stable job placements. As a result they end up in unskilled and semi-skilled type of occupations with low and or irregular incomes. Such persons are likely to engage in violent crimes in a bid to make ends meet.

The problem of violent crime and criminality in general can be largely attributed to the failure of the economy. The Kenyan economy is largely capitalistic based on private ownership and pursuit of profit from investment (Gakuru 2002:30). The situation has been worsened by the fact that the economy has not provided enough opportunities where individuals can sell their labour, and hence earn a living. In addition, social safety nets that catered for individuals without access to livelihoods in the past are few if not completely non-existent. The few safety nets that were there have been partly eradicated through the structural adjustment programs, which have resulted in retrenchments, hence worsening the problem of unemployment.

The study concluded that violent crime engagement is a response to a need. The need to make ends meet, faced by the realities of unemployment worsened by the high cost of living, is a predisposing factor to violent crime commission. The findings indicate that persons in low socio-economic strata are more likely to engage in violent crime. Low socio-economic status is manifested in unemployment, under employment and low incomes. Consequently, unemployment and its related effects were seen to predispose most individuals to violent crime commission.

The study found out that most respondents did not have stable jobs and their incomes were also very low. Individuals with low incomes are likely to experience relative deprivation. Relative deprivation is not the simple situation of having nothing. Rather, it is the injustice to which it gives rise to, when an individual compares him/herself with others. Relative deprivation occurs at any level in the economic hierarchy and will be discernible whether the state is relatively poor or affluent. Additionally, the gap between the rich and the poor in Kenya has continued to increase and this is likely to fuel feelings of relative deprivation. It is this deprivation that has led many individuals to turn to violent crimes not only to make a living but also to access a high standard of living accessed by others in the society.

The second objective sought to find out whether the family background of the respondent has any effect on their engagement in violent crime. The study found that a majority (72%) of the respondents had witnessed fights within the neighbourhood as they grew up. The implication here is that one's values are influenced to embrace violence as an acceptable way of solving problems. Testing of the relevant hypothesis three confirmed that, there is a relationship between growing up in a violent background and involvement in violent crimes later on in life. The study concludes that exposure to violent situations in childhood is likely to predispose individuals to violent crime commission later on in life. Therefore, children who grow up witnessing violence in their environment are likely to engage in violence later on in life. This points to the role of the socialization process in children, and the need to ensure that children embrace values that are inclined towards conformity to approved or legal behaviour.

Regarding the victim-offender relationship, testing of hypothesis four adduced the fact that, the victim and the offender are related in violent crime context. While the findings support the conventional claim that violent crimes occur between persons related to each other, it also indicated that there is an increase of violent crime among strangers. Whether violent crime occurs among strangers or persons that are related, it is evident from the findings that individuals are likely to engage in violent crime as a means to an end.

The study also sought to find whether drug users are likely to be recidivist. Testing of hypothesis two revealed that, there is no relationship between drug use (alcohol consumption) and recidivism. Based on these findings, it was concluded that alcohol does not cause violent crime; however, its effects are related to violent crime. The implication here is that effects of alcohol distorts judgment, thus drunkards are therefore more likely to turn to violence in various situations than those who are sober. This is because their resistance to aggression reduces with the intake of alcohol.

From the findings, this study concludes that; relative deprivation predisposes individuals to commit violent crimes and individuals who growing up in violent backgrounds are more likely to engage in violent crimes

6.3 Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, this study calls for a multifaceted approach and diverse stakeholders in dealing with violent crimes. Preventive measures are more plausible to ensure a long lasting solution.

1. The government should employ every effort and machinery to create employment for the citizens. This is because engagement in violent crime is not purely a personality problem. On the contrary, engagement in violent crime is a result of the social environment and more specifically the struggle for survival. To bring violent crime down, preventive measures are more plausible. Engagement in gainful employment will lead to increased incomes alongside an improved standard of living, thereby limiting opportunities for idleness and frustration. This will not only boost the economy but also reduce government's expenses of maintaining congested prisons.
2. The government should endeavor to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor that has been widening over time. As earlier pointed out, relative deprivation is not the state of having nothing but feelings of injustice experienced when an individual compares him/herself with others. Such individuals are likely to turn to violent crime to be able to finance a standard of living that is enjoyed by others in the society. This can be done through ensuring that those with no livelihoods are able to access them. This is because when poor persons compare themselves with the rich, they are likely to experience relative deprivation.

3. The government should concentrate more on rural development through building industries in a bid to create more employment opportunities in the rural areas. This will in turn reduce rural-urban migration by the youth who seek employment opportunities in urban areas. Unfortunately, most of the youth who move to urban areas do not find jobs pushing many to slum areas while others turn to violent crime to make ends meet. This is supported by the study findings that point to the fact that a majority of respondents were from urban areas. If rural-urban migration is curbed and the youth are able to find employment in rural areas, violent crime is likely to reduce significantly.
4. At the family level, parents and guardians should ensure that the values passed to children are geared towards adherence to law. This calls for parents and guardians to identify good role models for their children. In addition, the civil society and parents should promote values that are inclined towards conformity to approved or legal behaviour. This is because the study found that 40.7% of the violent crimes occurred in the homes and hence children are likely to copy such violent acts.
5. The government through national campaign against drug abuse (NACADA) and other civil society organizations should intensify campaigns against drug abuse and in particular alcohol consumption. This is because findings of this study indicate that 60% of the respondents were consuming alcohol before imprisonment. Although alcohol does not cause violent crime, it distorts judgment and reduces resistance to aggression.

6.4 Areas for further research

This study sought information mainly from inmates. To strengthen and compliment discourse on the problem of violent crime, a national perception survey on the causes of violent crime is warranted. This will yield responses across the divide (all socio-economic strata) and will be able to capture responses of violent offenders who for one

reason or the other escape imprisonment. Due to logistical and budgetary constraints, this study sought information from inmates in two prisons, all in Nairobi province. There is need, therefore, to conduct a nation wide survey, covering all prisons in the country in order to capture views from a larger and diverse population to validate the findings on factors responsible for violent crime. Finally, research should also be carried out to establish appropriate programmes that could ensure inmates get job placement once they complete their sentences. This is because the study findings pointed to the fact that violent crime is a response to a need. If inmates that are released from prison do not get employment and/or into income generating opportunities, they are likely to turn to crime again and may find themselves in prison.

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INTRODUCTION NOTE

How are you? My names are Roseline Njeru, a postgraduate student from the University of Nairobi. I am conducting a study on factors responsible for violent crimes, among prisoners in Kamiti and Langata prisons. The reason (s) for doing this study is to understand why individuals commit violent crimes. This study will be useful in assisting and advising such individuals appropriately, to ensure they do not commit violent crimes again. I trust you will assist me a lot by giving me information. All the information and data collected will be treated with utmost confidence and will be used for purposes explained above only. The interview will take around thirty five minutes.

Thank you.

9. What was your average income per month in Kenyans shillings

1. Ksh. Below 3000
2. Ksh. 3001-6000
3. Ksh.6001-9000
4. Above Ksh.9000

10. What were your other source(s) of income (please rank them in order of importance)

.....

.....

.....

11. Do you own any property? 1. Yes 2. No

12. If yes what type of property is it

1. land: how many acreshow much would you receive if that land was sold today
2. Rental houses/plot how manyhow much rent is generated per month
3. Any other assets e.g matatu, pick up specify.....what is the worth of the specified assets

History of imprisonment

13. Have you ever been sentenced to any of the following institutions?

Institution	Yes/No	Duration of imprisonment	Reasons for the sentence
Rehabilitation school (approved school)			
Borstal institution			
Youth correctional and training centre			
Probation hostel			

14. Have you ever been imprisoned prior to your current imprisonment 1. Yes 2. No

15. If yes how many times

1. Once: for what crimes.....

2. Twice: for what crimes.....

3. Thrice: for what crimes

4. If more how many timesstate the reasons for each imprisonment.....

.....

.....

Types of crime(s) committed

16. For what offences are you presently imprisoned for.....

17. When were you imprisoned (this time round)

Datemonth.....year

18. How long do you expect to remain in prison.....

.....

Drug abuse

19. I suppose you do not use any of the following substances currently, but have you ever used any of the following substances?

1. Smoked cigarettes 1. Yes 2. No

2. Chewed miraa 1. Yes 2. No

3. Drank beer 1. Yes 2. No

4. Smoked bhang 1. Yes 2. No

5. Inhaled cocaine 1. Yes 2. No

6. If others specify.....

.....

.....

20. Whenever you have used, how often did you use the following substances per week and for what reasons

.....
.....
24. If the response in question 23 is yes who subjected you to any of the above

1. Parent (father /mother)
2. Brother/sister
3. Uncle/aunt
4. Cousin
5. Stranger

25. Please give reasons for your response in question 23.....

.....
.....
.....
.....

26. How would you describe the relationship of your parents as you grew up

1. Happy
2. Normal
3. Unhappy
4. Can't remember

27. What reasons do you attribute to your response in question 25?.....

.....
.....
.....
.....

28. Have you ever witnessed your parent(s) /guardian (s) fighting? 1. Yes 2. No

29 If the response in question 28 is yes how often did they fight?

1. Once in while
2. Regularly
3. Rarely
4. Never

Why did they fight (explain).....

- 2. Child
- 3. Parent (mother/father)
- 4. Relative (brother/sister/uncle/aunt/cousin)

35. How long did you know the person you injured?

- 1. Never knew him/her before
- 2. We were briefly acquainted (known the victim for less than six months)
- 3. We were fairly acquainted (known the victim for six months to one year)
- 4. We were well acquainted (known the victim for a period of one year or more)

36. Do you have relatives who have ever been imprisoned ?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

If yes, how manyspecify the nature of relationship with them

..... what crime (s) were they imprisoned

for/.....

.....

.....

.....

37. Has any of your close friend (s) ever been imprisoned?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

38. If yes, how manyand for what reasons

.....

.....

.....

.....

39. Did you commit the incident with someone else? 1. Yes 2. No

40. If yes, how many other persons: male (s).....female (s)

41. Where did the incident take place?

- 1. In a beer party
- 2. On the streets
- 3. At home
- 4. In the office
- 5. If other places specify.....

42. What propelled you to commit the offence?.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

43. Were you hired by someone else to act violently? 1. Yes 2. No

44. What is your opinion on the use of violence.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

INTRODUCTION NOTE

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Thank you.

APPENDIX 2

FACTORS RESPONSIBLE FOR VIOLENT CRIMINAL OFFENCES: A STUDY OF KAMITI AND LANGATA PRISONS

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR KEY INFORMANTS

Date of interview.....
Place of interview.....
Interview schedule number.....
Name of respondent.....
Occupational role.....

Area related to violent crime

1. Where do you think violent crimes occur most in rural areas or in urban areas?.....

Explain your response above.....
.....
.....

Socio-economic status related to violent crime commission

2. Which type of people are more likely to engage in violent incidences
Lowly educated.....
Average educated
Highly educated.....

3. What are the reasons for your response to question 2 above.....
.....
.....
.....

4. What classes of people in terms of income levels are more likely to commit violent acts?

1. Lower income groups (earning monthly income of below Ksh. 2000)
2. Middle income group (earning monthly income between ksh. 2000-7999)
3. Upper income group (earning monthly income of below Ksh.8,000 and above)

Explain your response to question to question 4 above?

5. In your view, does an individual's occupation predispose him/her to engage in violent crimes? 1. Yes 2. No

Why do you think so?.....

Drugs and violent crime commission

6. Do drugs predispose individuals to commit violent acts?

Why do you think so?.....

7. If your response to question 6 above is yes, list the type of drugs in order of their contribution to violence

.....

Victim-offender relationship

8. What is the victim-offender relationship in violent crime?

1. The victim and the offender are related
2. The victim and the offender are not related

In any 100 violent crimes, in how many of the cases are the victims and offender

1. Strangers.....

2. Related.....

Family background and violent crime commission

9. Is an individual's background likely to predispose him/her to act violently?

1. Yes 2. No

Explain your answer.....

.....
.....
.....
.....

10. Do you think children who were exposed to abuse (child labour, sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse e.t.c) are likely to engage in violent acts later in life

1. Yes 2. No

Explain your answer.....

.....
.....
.....

11. In your view, what reasons predispose individuals to act violently

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....