

**ARMED CONFLICT AND COPING MECHANISMS OF DISABLED
PERSONS: A CASE STUDY OF CONFLICT IN KISUMU, 2007 - 2013**

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DECLARATION

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

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We confirm that the work reported in this project report was carried out by the candidate under our supervision

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DATE

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my Father Peter Magero Abonyo and my Mother Anna Ongaya Abonyo who struggled to bring me up and taught me that the best kind of knowledge to have is that which is learned for its own sake. It is also dedicated to my wife Juliet Fwamba and my daughter Noel Camilla. I thank God for blessing me with them as they have been a source of inspiration. To God the Almighty I say be Glorified Forevermore.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

AED	Automated External Defibrillators
ADA	Americans with Disability Acts
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
CBD	Central Business District
CD4	Cluster Differentiation 4
DEK	Deaf Empowerment Kenya
EAC	East Africa Community
ECK	Electoral Commission of Kenya
FORD-K	Forum for Restoration Democracy-Kenya
GSU	General Service Unit
GTZ	German Organization for Technical Cooperation
HI	Handicap International
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICC	International Criminal Court
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IEBC	Independent Electoral Boundaries and Commission
JKML	Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KAU	Kenya African Union
KFL	Kenya Federal Labour
KICC	Kenyatta International Conference Centre

KLGWU	Kenya Local Government Workers Union
KNCHR	Kenya Nation Commission of Human Rights
KPU	Kenya People’s Union
LEGCO	Legislative Council
MP	Member of Parliament
NCPWD	National Council for Persons With Disabilities
NDP	National Democratic Party
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement
PEV	Post-Election Violence
PNU	Party of National Unity
PWD	Persons With Disabilities
TJRC	Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNRWA	United Nation Relief and Work Agency
UNV	United Nations Volunteer
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VCT	Voluntary Counseling and Testing
YADEN	Youth Art Development and Entrepreneurship Network

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ABSTRACT

This research focuses on armed conflict and the coping mechanism of disabled person in Kisumu with reference to the Post-Election Violence. It covers the period between 2007 and 2013. The preceding years were useful in building the history of conflicts in Kisumu City. The goal of this research is to show that the disabled are not only victims but can also be perpetrators in an armed conflict situation. It shows that the disabled persons develop coping mechanism during and after the armed conflict for this case in Kisumu City. The main questions addressed in this study are; what circumstances were the disabled persons in Kisumu perpetrators and victims of the Post-Election Violence (PEV); how did they cope with the situation during and after the PEV; and what challenges did they face as disabled persons? In answering this question, the study addresses three main objectives. It first analyzes the role played by the disabled persons in Kisumu during the conflict. Second, it analyzes the coping mechanisms that the disabled persons developed during and aftermath of 2007/8 PEV. Third, it assesses the challenges faced by the disabled persons in Kisumu on their coping mechanisms. The study was carried out in Kisumu City and it tests three hypothesis, first that the disabled persons in Kisumu were victims as well as perpetrators; secondly that the disabled persons in Kisumu developed some coping mechanisms after the 2007/8 Post-Election Violence and thirdly that the Post-Election Violence 2007/8 had devastating impacts on the disabled persons in Kisumu. To analyze and assess the coping mechanisms which disabled persons developed during and after the PEV, this study uses both primary and secondary sources. It has applied the basic human needs theory which represents social construct that cannot be empirically measured and is associated to outbreak of conflict or harmonious coexistence among a group of persons. As comprehended in this study that disabled persons in Kisumu who were affected by PEV developed different coping mechanism during and after the violence. The mechanisms were meant for them to survive the violence and its aftermath. These coping mechanisms range from i.) Spying, ii.) Incitement, iii.) Seeking support from the community and iv.) Personal strategies during the Violence. After the violence, coping mechanism range from: i.) livelihood approach, ii.) Turning to faith, iii.) Counseling, iv.) Involvement in small business, v.) Community support, vi.) Assurance from the security agents, vii.) Begging on the streets, viii.) Peace preacher and ix.) Personal strategies. This study reckons that most of the disabled persons faced challenges as they tried to cope with aftermath of the violence as all were essential for their survival.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

Disability- According to the UN (United Nations) definition it is any restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being.¹

The ADA (Americans with Disability Acts) defines disability as a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual.²

In the constitution of Kenya disability is defined as any physical, sensory, mental, psychological or other impairment, condition or illness that has, or is perceived by significant sectors of the community to have, a substantial or long term effect on an individual's ability to carry out ordinary day-to-day activities"³

This study therefore will use the term disability to mean anybody with any form of physical disability which ranges from minor to serious levels of disabilities which limit him or her to carry out one or more activities independently.

Coping- Coping is the process of perceiving a potential response to a threat/ challenges in life and executing the response by use of any means to survive. In this study coping is used to mean the ways in which the disabled used to survive the PEV.

¹ U.N. Decade of Disabled Persons 1983-1992. 1983. World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons. New York: United Nations.

² C. M. Harrington, The Americans with Disabilities Act: The New Definition of Disability Post: Sutton v. United Airlines, Inc. Vol 84. Issue 1 Fall 2000. P 251

³ Article 260 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Kisumu City is located in the larger Kisumu County. It is the third largest city in Kenya; and is the headquarter of Kisumu County representing the former Nyanza Province. The city has developed progressively from a railway terminus and internal port in 1901 to become a commercial, industrial, communication and administrative centre in the Lake Victoria basin.⁴ The main rivers flowing into the lake from Tanzania catchment are Mar, Kagera, Mirongo, Grumeti, Mbalageti, Simiyu and Mori. From The Kenyan catchment the main rivers are Nzoia, Sio, Yala, Nyando, Kibos, Sondu-miriu, Kuja, Migori, Riara and Mawa. From Ugandan catchment the main rivers are Kagera, Bukora, Katonga and Sio.⁵ It has, therefore, become an important destination for three regions of Nyanza, Western and West Rift Valley.

Kisumu city is situated on the North tip of Winam Gulf part of Kavirondo Gulf of Lake Victoria. It was the major port town of the East Africa Community (EAC) and since the collapse of the EAC in 1977 Kisumu's importance declined.⁶ Indeed, Kisumu has been a lively city inhabited by members of almost all the 42 ethnic groups of Kenya with the Luo being the dominant ethnic group in the city. In history, Kisumu city has been known to play host to foreign inhabitants including Europeans, Asians who came to the city as a result of the railway construction and immigrants from neighbouring countries like Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Sudan who form substantial part of Kisumu.⁷ Some have engaged in serious business ventures like sale of second hand motor vehicles spare parts

⁴ J.R. Pereira, MS Thesis, "Targeting Deprivation Through Qualitative and Quantitative indicators: Case Study of Kisumu; Kenya", Enschede: The Netherlands, March 2011 p 7.

⁵ LVEMP. Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project Phase 1, Revised Draft scientific Stocking Report-Progress During LVEMP 1 and Challenges for the Future. World Bank: Washington DC 2003.

⁶ "Kenya Expressor Tours and Safaris
http://www.ketsafaris.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=124:kisumu&catid=45:top-destinations&Itemid=156. Accessed on 12/4/2013

⁷ G. Anyumba, *Kisumu town: History of the built form, planning and environment (Housing and Urban Policy Studies)*. Netherlands: Delft University Press. (1890-1990) pp. 61–70.

as others have come as tourist. The commonly used language of communication is *Dholuo* but *English* and Kiswahili have been used for non-domestic purposes.

According to the 2009 population census Kisumu County had a population of 968,909.⁸ With an area of 2,085.9 Km², Kisumu city has a population density of 460 persons per Km², similar to that of the entire South Korea.⁹ With its growth in population, it is also the transportation hub for the western region linking Kenya to East African countries via Railway, Road, Water and Air.

Geographically, Kisumu city covers an area of approximately 417 Km²; 297 Km² is dry land and approximately 120 Km² is under water. It neighbours Kericho County to the East, Siaya County to the West, Vihiga County to the North, Nandi County to the North East, Nyamira and Homa Bay Counties to the South West.

Economically, Kisumu town is a major fishing centre and the use of old technologies hampers the full development of the industries, and recent water hyacinth menace to the lake has reduced fishing activity significantly.

Additionally, Kisumu is known of growing rice under irrigation in the Kano Plains, and much of the irrigation water is derived from River Nyando which is annually affected by perennial floods. These floods have caused displacement of people but also deposit a lot of fertile silt soil all across the plain which is good for farming. As a result, the northern and eastern borders of the Kano Plains play host to some of Kenya's most productive sugarcane fields. Just to name areas like Kibos, Miwani and Chemelil are sugarcane production centers well known in the city. The County also produces maize, beans, sweet potatoes, and fresh vegetables.¹⁰

Furthermore, Kisumu City and the surrounding areas have several light industries which include textile, molasses, fish processing plants and agricultural produce processors. It

⁸ Population and Households 2009 census.

⁹ G. Anyumba, *Kisumu town: History of the built form, planning and environment (Housing and Urban Policy Studies)*. Netherlands: Delft University Press. (1890-1990) pp. 61–70.

¹⁰ United Nations Human Settlement Programme, 'Kisumu City Development strategies (2004-2009) Prepared by Kisumu city Council and Center for Development and Planning Management, P 9-15.

has three sugar factories at Chemelil, Muhoroni and Kibos. Several backyard industries thrive in the City including tailoring, vehicle servicing and repair, handicrafts and boat-building. A number of banks have their regional offices in the city servicing the entire western Kenya region as they have helped influence the growth of economy of the city with continued circulation of money within the Kisumu city. Accordingly, the economic developments of Kisumu town have attracted different communities and foreign investors who have established businesses as they interact freely and peacefully with the native Luo community.¹¹

This came to an unpleasant halt with the occurrence of the 2007/8 Post-Election Violence that displaced some communities and the disabled persons. This peril of Post-Election Violence (PEV) slowed the development that had begun within the town as some of the facilities were reduced to ashes, affecting both the able bodied persons and the disabled persons in Kisumu.

1.2 Brief history of the trigger to 2007/8 PEV

The PEV that rocked Kenya in December 2007 to February 2008 was unprecedented. International, local observers and media reporters argue that it was spontaneous while others argue that it was inevitable, hence the contested presidential elections were only a spark. The delay in releasing 2007 presidential election results followed by subsequent declaration of the retired President Mwai Kibaki as the winner on 30th December 2007 were considered the main triggers. This led to bloody confrontation in the country as each group through the act of violence intended to compel their opponent to fulfill their will.¹² That is, the need to have one of their own heading to the State house.

Indeed during the 2007 general elections Kisumu was one of the hot spots due to the politically charged atmosphere in the region characterized with high expectation of their preferred candidate emerging the winner in presidential election. This created tension among members of the public who had bloody confrontations with security agencies leaving property worth millions of shillings destroyed and thousands displaced from the

¹¹ United Nations Human Settlement Programme, 'Kisumu City Development strategies (2004-2009) Prepared by Kisumu city Council and Center for Development and Planning Management, p 8.

¹² C. Von Clausewitz, On War, Princeton: University press, (1967), P 13.

city. It was sad as several lives were lost and businesses brought to a standstill as survivors in the conflict counted their losses.

The 2007/8 violence that was experienced in Kisumu was not the first but there were other earlier conflicts branded with political motivation in the history of Kisumu. This clearly illustrates the fact that Kisumu town has experienced several waves of confrontations akin to conflict as a result of political differences from the time when Kenya attained independence. These conflicts can be traced right from the strained political relations between the founding father president Jomo Kenyatta and his former Vice president Mr. Jaramogi Oginga Odinga; President Moi Verses Odinga, Moi Verses Raila, Kibaki Verses Vs Raila.

Indeed the PEV affected the thriving businesses and busy streets of Kisumu town occupied by thousands of people from different ethnic backgrounds. The able bodied and the disabled persons were all affected in varied measures, as some were displaced by the conflict.

According to the field data from Umoja Disable Self-help Group Kisumu city has approximately over six thousand disabled person and it was approximated by the chairman of the group that about a thousand of the disabled person in the city were affected with the PEV conflict which was short lived but of great magnitude.¹³ In this uncertainty some disabled persons were left behind as they struggled for safety, food, protection and recognition from the community. Such experience was as a result of the violence which got most of them unaware hence they were no more in safe hands as the violence spread within the city. It was of much threat to life as more cases of physical disabilities were reported with others getting injured in the conflict. One of the respondents puts it;

¹³ Oral Interview, Anthony Riako, Chairperson Umoja Disabled Self-Hel Group, Kondele 17/8/2015.

“My right eye got injured as the rowdy crowd barricaded Kisumu-Busia road and some threw stones which hit my eye. This has physically disabled me as I am a visually impaired”.¹⁴

This research examines the experience of the disabled persons during and after the PEV. It analyzes the disabled persons as victims and perpetrators of the PEV in Kisumu. It examines the coping mechanisms that the disabled persons developed to survive the conflict and the mechanisms they developed to survive in the aftermath. It also looks at the challenges the disabled persons faced in their efforts to cope up during and after the PEV.

1.3 Statement of the problem

After the end of Cold War in November 1989, conflicts have moved from interstate to intrastate for example, civil was experienced in Sudan, Rwanda, Afghanistan, Iraq, Bosnia, Burundi Sierra Leon, Liberia and Chechnya. The twenty first century has witnessed more intra state conflicts which have affected many African states. Countries like Cote D’ivoire and Kenya were once perceived as islands of peace have not been left behind. These conflicts have varied in intensity and reasons why they erupt and affect the population. This point makes it interesting to interrogate the question around the coping mechanism that disabled persons in Kisumu developed during and after the 2007/8 PEV.

The Kenya PEV was unprecedented as it engaged the world and scholarly workers on conflict dwelt on the causes, course and impact. Indeed some scholars like Joshua S. G. has written on Impact of War on Children and Imperative to End War in which he basically discuss the impact of war to children and how gender shapes war. El-Bushra J. & Mukarubuga have written on Gender and Development: Women, War and Transition. In their articles they have written on how conflicts have affected women and children. In Kenya there is available literature from the NGO world on conflict between landlord and tenant in Kibera which have been characterized with injuries and loss of property and lives. From government engineered commissions; Kriegler and Waki reports have documented the causes and pattern of the PEV, those who

¹⁴ Oral Interview, John Dan Muga, at YADEN Offices , 23/9/2014.

participated, how PEV affected Kenyans and reports from the media, yet the story of the disabled persons remains untold.

In conflict studies, it appears the story of disabled persons who include, vision, hearing, mental and mobility impairment have remained untold. What is available are only flirting NGO reports on effects and causes of conflict. J. Henry Enns in his works on Journey to the Middle East, he asserts that in Palestine the disabled persons are the most oppressed than any other group and social service and health care workers have neglected their responsibility to support the disabled persons after the conflict. J. Henry Enns does not go further to tell the coping mechanisms developed by the disabled persons in Palestine as a result of the armed conflict. In Kenya the impact of PEV to the disabled persons has not been deliberated on as studies undertaken have looked at the general impact of the PEV to the Kisumu population forgetting about the coping mechanisms they developed during and after the PEV

It is in view of this scholarly marginalization of the coping mechanisms, role of disabled persons as perpetrators and victims that this study was conceived. Kisumu was hard hit and hosts numerous disabled persons, some who run on the streets as beggars, small business and madmen hence provide a sound area for this study.

The study was meant to discuss whether the disabled person developed coping mechanisms during and after the PEV. It poses critical question that, were the disabled persons perpetrators and victims of the PEV. Correspondingly, it also probes on what role did the disabled persons play during the PEV in Kisumu? Some of the disabled persons were the most vulnerable people in Kisumu City especially during the PEV and yet little is known whether they faced any challenges when coping with the situation. It also examines if the disabled were part of the affected population by PEV, and if so, did they in any way manage to cope with the plight of PEV? The study focuses at the coping mechanisms developed by the disabled persons in Kisumu City during and after the PEV

1.4 Aims and Objectives

The objectives of this research were as follows:-

1. To analyze the role of the disabled population in Kisumu during the conflict.
2. To analyze the coping mechanism that the disabled persons in Kisumu developed during and aftermath of 2007/8 PEV.
3. To assess the challenges faced by the disabled persons in Kisumu on their coping mechanisms during and after the conflict.

1.5 Justification of the Study

The 2007/8 PEV in Kenya sparked the minds of the whole world as it was a rare thing to be heard of in a country which was largely considered to be ‘an island of peace.’ This made Kenya feature prominently in the global news as cases of internal displacement and killings took over from the harmonious co-existence that Kenyans had enjoyed for years. The disabled persons were victims who suffered most as they could not access social service or be offered immediate security. Some of them were disabled more, as the injuries and impairments put additional strain on their health.¹⁵

This research was undertaken because other studies undertaken are silent on the coping mechanisms of the disabled persons during and after the PEV in Kisumu. This has been left out of their discussion hence the concern of the study. This has passed a wrong message to the public that the disabled persons were not caught in PEV and had different coping mechanism from the able bodied persons. The study endeavours to discuss the coping mechanisms of the disabled persons during and after the PEV in Kisumu.

The research will be of help to the government and Non-governmental organization in their efforts to analyze the coping mechanisms that disabled persons develop in moments of conflicts. It will also be a means to educate the public that disabled persons just like any other human person, they reason and have feelings hence they need support for them to cope during and after any given disaster situation.

¹⁵ S. Elsdon, ed. Compass, *Rocking allover the World, can we end poverty and disable People*, “Conflict Disaster and disability” October-December issue 56, 2000 Lampart Gilbert Publisher, P. 15.

1.6 Scope and Limitation

The study examines the coping mechanism of the disabled persons during and after the PEV in Kisumu and whether they were perpetrators or victims. It analyzes the challenges the disabled persons faced when coping during and after the PEV. The study covers the period between 2007 and 2013. The year 2007 has been chosen because it was the year when the general elections that fueled the conflict in Kenya were held. The year 2013 was chosen because it was the immediate general election held after the 2007/8 PEV.

The area of the study was Kisumu City in former Nyanza Province. Most studies have concentrated on urban settlements like Kibera, Mathare and Rift valley. This area of study was important because it was one of the hot spots that heavily witnessed the PEV. The presence and experience of the disabled persons in the city of Kisumu during and after the violence is interesting part to study. This makes one to ask, why did the communities that were living peacefully end up in arms against each other?

It was anticipated that various factors would be a limitation in the carrying out of the study. Such are, among the Luo community the disabled persons are viewed as bad omen in the society and hence some respondents were not ready to give right information related to conflict and the disabled persons during the PEV. This was because talking about any disabled person is like inviting evil into your life hence reason why the respondents were reserved on speaking about them. To counter this limitation, questionnaires were used as they helped them understand the vulnerable group of the disabled persons the study is referring to. The second limitation that was hypothetical to be faced with was language barrier which is sensitive. This was a challenge to the researcher on interviewing respondents who hardly knew either Kiswahili or English. To counter this, the researcher employed two research assistants from the area of study who assisted in translation during interviews with respondent. Another limitation that was anticipated was that the respondents who were traumatized as a result of the conflict. The researcher countered this by using counseling skills acquired in his religious studies class and knowledge acquired on healing process in armed conflict and peace study class to help the traumatized as it made them open up and shared relevant information which was useful for the study.

1.7 Literature Review

This part of the study will discuss views of scholars who have written on armed conflict, coping mechanisms and explore on the existing gaps from their scholarly work which will form the body of analysis of the succeeding chapters. Conflicts have been common in the world and particularly Africa.

According to R.S Lazarus, coping is a process of perceiving a potential response to a threat and executing the response. His work is based on two distinct theories about the ways in which people cope.¹⁶ First, *problem-focused coping*, is aimed at doing something to change the source of stress. This occurs among people who feel they can do something constructive to minimize stress. The second is, *emotional-focused coping*, manages or reduces the emotional distress that results from stressful situation. This occurs amongst those who feel they must endure the situation that brings on stress.¹⁷ The author looks at the coping mechanisms as developed by groups that are psychologically stressed without specifying which particular group and in which case. For instance he does not specify stress as a result of conflict and if the disabled are among those who are stressed and are finding ways to cope with that stress. This study will focus on the coping mechanism developed by the disabled with reference to the PEV as it happened in Kisumu.

It is also important to note that the strategies used to cope and overcome environmental stressors and difficulties tend to be more or less similar across different disability groups. Such that, several personal factors and environmental factors play a vital role in course of the disabled adjustment and well-being. With regard to personal factors, accepting one's self, developing self-confidence, having spiritual strength, and working hard are some of the pertinent that are common for groups affected by armed conflict. More so, getting connected to the social factors, such as family, religious individuals or institutions, NGOs, and acquaintances with successful persons are also some of the strategies that those with disabilities can adapt in any given disaster situation. It has therefore been noted that temperamental characteristics, degree of sociability, faith, family support and

¹⁶ R.S Lazarus. *Psychological stress and the coping process*. New York: McGraw-Hill (1966) p 3-9.

¹⁷ Ibid

friends constitute a good part of protective factors.¹⁸ This informs the study which its concern is to discuss coping mechanisms developed by the disabled persons during and after armed conflict and for this case in Kisumu.

According to S. Elsdén of Leonard Cheshire Conflict Centre, the disabled persons are often made invisible by society. This invisibility can be lethal in situation of armed conflict or natural calamities.¹⁹ The author views the disabled persons as innocent people in times of conflict and this is an issue to their survival in an armed conflict situation. In an emergency situation, the disabled persons have been faced with disproportionately higher rates of morbidity and mortality.²⁰ This author shows clearly that the disabled persons can be victims in time of conflict as they can be faced with different forms of challenges which, they have to cope with in a conflict situation. He further argues that in a conflict situation, the disabled persons get injured, displaced or die in the process. The disabled persons are therefore a vulnerable group in times of conflict or any other calamities.

This study provides the information to our understanding of the disabled persons in armed conflict. Though the author of the article does not discuss the coping mechanisms developed by the disabled persons during and after the conflict, the dissimilarity of this study and the one done by S. Elsdén of Leonard Cheshire Conflict Centre is that, this study is focused on the coping mechanisms developed by the disabled group. It does not focus on the disabled persons as victims alone but also as perpetrators in conflict. Consequently, in an armed conflict, in reference to PEV, the outcomes of this study will bring out a new dimension different from that of S. Elsdén.

S. Elsdén further argues that conflict related injuries and impairments puts additional strain on healthcare resources...²¹ The author notes that an armed conflict can disable persons and hence making them eligible for rehabilitation programs and compensation

¹⁸ E. Werner, Protective Factors and Individual Resilience. In Meisels S.J and Shonkoff, 1993: Handbook of Early Childhood Intervention, New York : Cambridge University Press, (1993), p 32.

¹⁹ S. Elsdén, ed. Compass, *Rocking all over the World, can we end poverty and disable People*, "Conflict Disaster and disability" October-December issue 56, 2000 Lampart Gilbert Publisher, P. 15.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

that other disabled persons cannot access hence furthering isolation and marginalization.²² In his argument, the author is interested in those who are disabled in a war-time situation. This study will go further to look at those who were disabled before the conflict hence making sense for PEV scenario in Kisumu. As a result, to be different from any other conflict situation as cited by the author, PEV in Kisumu combatants will be established on the line of disability and the coping mechanisms during and after the conflict.

In Palestine, the disabled people have been the most oppressed than any other group. It is argued that United Nation Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA) which is supposed to provide social services and health care to people in the refugee camp have neglected their responsibility to disabled persons,²³ Though Palestinians are not allowed to join organizations in most countries, and this makes it difficult for the disabled people to organize themselves. Instead the conflict in Palestine has caused a considerable escalation in numbers of the disabled people in the country. The writers, however, tend to treat conflict as perpetrated by able people and disabled are the only victims. The study will deal with disabled as perpetrator and/or victims in PEV in Kisumu. On the same note, the intended research will also deal with impact of the PEV on disabled people in Kisumu during and after the PEV in Kisumu hence viewing them as victims.

Date-Bah, notes that people's experiences during conflict are not gender neutral and that the impact of armed conflict as well as coping strategies adapted by people in the exigencies of the context tend to differ between men and women.²⁴ For him gender is an important element in determining vulnerability and it becomes more acute in the conflict-affected situation as increased burdens are placed on women in absence of men. This literature at a point it informs this study, but the writer tends to put more emphasis on women and men in discussion of coping strategies in an armed conflict situation forgetting about how disabled persons both men and women do cope in armed conflict

²² S. Elsdon, ed. *Compass, Rocking allover the World, can we end poverty and disable People*, "Conflict Disaster and disability" October-December issue 56, 2000 Lampart Gilbert Publisher, P. 15.

²³ J. Henry Enns "*Journey to the Middle East*" *Vox Nostra* No.2 (May 1988) P. 14

²⁴ E. Date-Bah, ed., *Jobs After War: A critical Challenge in Peace and Reconstruction Puzzle*, Geneva: International Labour Office (2003) P111.

situation. The intended study will discuss the coping strategies developed by the disabled during an armed conflict situation with special focus at the Kisumu post-election violence. It will examine different methods and ways adapted by disabled persons and how they used them to survive during and after the Post-Election Violence.

According to El-Bushra J. & Mukarubuga C., women and girls in particular experience conflict and displacement in different ways from men because of the gender division of roles and responsibilities.²⁵ They note that the gendered impact of war on women and men varies. This shows how it is recognized that there is a major shift of gender roles in situations of armed conflicts when most men go to war and women are left behind to fend the family and communities. Indeed, both gender roles and conflict relate fundamentally to the exercise of power. They also emphasize on the fact that conflict distorts gender roles, creating tensions between the different demands placed on women. Though women's role in protecting and maintaining the family is magnified in war, to the extent that they may take over many of men's functions, they mostly retain their subordinate position in power structures. This implies that, women are often at the heart of war but usually not as soldiers. More often, they are viewed to be its silent victims in many different ways. This literature informs the study since the authors are aware of impacts which any person in conflict situation can experience. On the other hand though the authors' concern was on impact of conflict on women, they put more emphasis on the women's changing roles in a conflict situation. The intended study is to discuss, the changing role of the disabled during armed conflict, the impact they are faced with and the coping mechanisms they develop during and after an armed conflict with reference to Kisumu.

Joshua S.G argues that war affects children just the ways it affects adults, but also in different ways.²⁶ The author's arguments are relevant to this intended study as he acknowledges the fact that impacts of conflicts do not only affect children but any other adult persons as well. Though he did not specify whether the adults are disabled

²⁵ J. El-Bushra and C. Mukarubuga (Gender and Development: Women, War and Transition, 3(3). Great Britain. Taylor & Francis Ltd (1995) pp 3-8.

²⁶ S. G. Joshua, War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa. Cambridge University Press, (2001), p 25.

or they are only those abled bodied, he leaves us with no clear explanation on whether the disabled are among the adults he refers to and if so, what are the coping mechanisms developed by them during and after the conflict. This study intends to discuss these impacts of armed conflict to disabled person and the coping mechanisms they develop.

According to Campbell, the disabled are naturally disdained as they cannot cover up their neediness and hence they remind us of the insecurity hidden in our false sense of self possession²⁷. Campbell views the disabled persons as a group which is despised thus living with fear as they need protection. This he applies to each human person that being despised leads one to live an insecure life. Such understanding of Campbell triggers a question of how can the disabled persons be regarded to as human person who need security? Through his argument the Campbell brings out the picture of disabled as victims but he does not state how disabled can also be perpetrators to conflict. Akin to that he has does not show how they cope up during and after the conflict. These gaps therefore, make it an area of concern for the study.

Karla Poewe looks at women as those who fight for the liberation of their state and voice their grievances in forums aimed at reuniting the nation.²⁸ This view is credible but are disabled different from the able persons? Poewe has focused on the centrality of women in war of liberation. This study is interested in looking at disabled as perpetrators as well as vulnerable group in case of conflict with special interest of the PEV in Kisumu.

However, accepting help and support from those who care about and listen to a disabled individual strengthens resilience. Some people find that being active in civic groups, faith-based organizations or other local groups provides social support and can help in reclaiming hope. Assisting others in their time of need also can benefit the helper as well as the recipient. Though Diaz argument is basically focused on the development of

²⁷ A.V Campbell, *Health as Liberation, Medicine Theology and the Quest*, New York: Pilgrim press 1995, P 30.

²⁸ Karla Poewe, *The Namibia Herero: A History of their Psychological Integration and Survival*, New York: the Edwinmeven press 1995, 183.

resilience in disabled persons, it is also relevant to this study as it intends to look at how resilient the disabled persons were during the PEV in Kisumu.²⁹

In Africa, traditional society offered women more respect, protection and security in times of conflict. Such protection of women left out the disabled as in most African states and culture they are viewed as bad omen as a result of their impairment and incapacitation associated with evil. This form of stereotype to the disabled person has made them face lot of challenges in their lives. It has been inhumane as disabled person have been mistreated, discriminated and above all abled bodied persons have failed to recognize their rights as they treat them unjustly especially in moments of conflict.³⁰ Certainly the attributes to the disabled have been made strong influencing the public to view them as powerless. Though Govig work provides important information, it has failed to show how these disabled persons can receive positive attributes that can empower them and how they can be perpetrators to a conflict and can survive during and after the conflict as a result of the strength they possess. This literature will help inform the study on disabled coping mechanism during and after the PEV in Kisumu.

Based on media sidelining the disabled, Handicap International (HI) in collaboration with The German Organization for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), Automated External Defibrillators (AED), and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) decided to have training for the media on Effective Reporting of Disability. It is indeed important for the disabled to be identified during and after any violent as perpetrators or victims. Just as the HIV/AIDS victims have been covered by the media on how they are coping, this makes it certain for the media to cover and hear the voices of disabled persons in conflict situations. The media has to portray the disabled in a conflict situation in Kenya by identifying their roles.³¹ This will sensitize the public to focus on helping

²⁹ C. L Diaz et al., The Road to Resilience. Discovery Health Channel, American Psychological Association (2004) p 6.

³⁰ S.D. Govig, Strong at the Broken Place: Persons with Disabilities and the Church Westminster: John Knork press, 1989, 3

³¹ M Inimah, Dr. E. Mukulu and Dr. P. Mathooko, literature Review on Media Portrayal of People with Disabilities in Kenya, International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, p 4.

persons with disabilities in Kenya who are often discriminated against and excluded from schools, work opportunities and health services to become more visible in their societies.

Murphy, argues that a person with disability must make an extra effort to establish status as an autonomous, worthy individual, but the reaction of the other party may totally undercut these pretensions through some thoughtless act or omission.³² Murphy argument affirms the need for the disabled to cope with any given difficult situation. Though he does not clarify whether this situation is in armed conflict or after the conflict, he goes further linking the challenge to the other party in the society. Murphy's argument is relevant to this study which is interested in discussing the coping mechanisms developed by the disabled in armed conflict situation. The study intends to find out measures that disabled person used in armed conflict and could make life better or more difficult for disabled persons during or after the PEV in Kisumu. .

Persons with disabilities face two kinds of problems: how to cope with their disabilities and their limitations and how to cope with the reactions of other people to them. In a way the latter is harder because they can often control their own reactions, but there is a little they can do to control the reaction of others. Murphy goes further to argue that it is difficult for the disable persons to cope since they live in a state of social suspension, neither sick' nor well', dead' nor alive" out of society nor wholly in it... they exist in partial isolation from society as undefined, ambiguous people.³³ Murphy does not clarify whether the isolation of the disabled he refers to is as a result of conflict and if so, how do they cope. This brings us to this study which its main objectives are derived from armed conflict and coping mechanisms of the disabled persons during and after the PVE in Kisumu.

Ingstad argues that in situations of extreme poverty, people with disabilities are particularly vulnerable and show abuse and neglect for their disabled members. He is

³² R. Murphy, Encounters. The Body Silence in America. In Disability and Culture, eds, Ingstad, B. and Whyte. S.R Berkeley: University of California Press (1995), p 146.

³³ R. Murphy, Encounters. The Body Silence in America. In Disability and Culture, eds, Ingstad, B. and Whyte. S.R Berkeley: University of California Press (1995), p 112.

keen to put it that, in such a situation successful coping is a function of "attitude" towards disabled family members plus household resources.³⁴ Since coping mechanism is key to this study, Ingstad argument makes sense to the study as poverty has been a challenge to disabled persons to cope in a conflict situation as the attitude from other members of the society has remained unchanged. For this case, the disabled in Kisumu have been considered as bad omen, an attitude which has made it difficult for some of them to cope with life. On the other hand the limitation to his argument is that it does not discuss the disabled in a conflict situation, and this is the concern of the study.

According to Justino, conflict and violence affect the lives and livelihoods of individuals and households through the direct and indirect transformations they entail. For Justino conflict and violent acts bring changes in household composition, changes in household economic status and effects caused by forced displacement and migration.³⁵ Justino argument is of relevance to this study with Post-Election Violence in Kisumu the livelihoods of the disabled people changed either directly or indirectly. In fact as Justino puts it, the change in household economic status and change of household composition altered the lives of disable person in Kisumu city. The argument of Justino gives strength to the study which is concerned with discussing some of the challenges the disabled persons faced when coping after the violence.

Bundervoet and Verwimp, argue that violent conflict kills, cause injuries and disables people. They go further to argue that this violent conflicts also results to loss of property such as houses, land, labour, utensils, cattle, livestock and other productive assets also get lost or destroyed as casualties of fighting or due to deliberate destruction and looting.³⁶ Bundervoet and Verwimp, in their analysis, they are not specific of whether the losses incurred during the violent conflict in Burundi were faced by the disabled persons

³⁴ B. Ingstad The Disabled Person in the Community: Social and Cultural Aspects. International Journal of Rehabilitation Research, 13, 1990. Pp. 187-190.

³⁵ P. Justino, The impact of Armed Civil Conflict on Household Welfare and Policy Response in Richard Kozul-Wright and Piergiuseppe Fortunato (eds.), *Securing Peace: State-Building and Economic Development in Post-Conflict Countries*, Bloomsbury Academic in association with the United Nations 2011, p 21-45

³⁶ T. Bundervoet and P. Verwimp, "Civil War and Economic Sanctions: An Analysis of Anthropometric Outcomes in Burundi" HiCN working Paper no 11, Households in Conflict Network (www.hicn.org).

or not, but the two scholars are clear on the fact that violent conflict resulted to injuries and disables people. This literature is relevant to this study as it understand some of the coping mechanisms developed by the disabled who lost their property on getting displaced from their work place within the Town of Kisumu.

According to Collier and Hoeffler, Armed conflicts may lead to new opportunities and many individuals and households have made use of conflict contexts as a means to improve their social, economic and political status. They go further to emphasize that one of the ways in which individuals have used conflict to their advantage is through recruitment into armed groups. Indeed Collier and Hoeffler argument make sense when it comes to coping mechanisms as individuals in conflict situation develop the greed in recruitment into armed groups. They went further to argue that empirical evidence suggests that ordinary individuals join armed groups in order to avoid destitution, as a livelihood coping strategy and to secure protection from violence for themselves and their families.³⁷ This literature informs the study, but the authors were not specific when referring to ordinary individuals though they are clear in their argument that these individuals get recruited to armed groups as a means to cope with the violence conflict. This study will discuss on coping mechanisms developed by the disabled during and after the Post-Election Violence. It will deliberate on how some of the disabled were able to fit in as protesters of the PEV in Kisumu as means to cope with it.

1.8 Theoretical Framework

The study adapts the basic human needs theory which has been explained differently by different scholars such as Abraham Maslow, John Burton and Christopher Mitchell. The theory has based its argument on human basic needs to explain the outbreak of a conflict or the harmonious coexistence among the group of person living together. The theorist asserts that a human basic need is a social construct and cannot be empirically measured as some have seen leadership as basic needs. This theory has been used in different study to identify the immediate basic human need for given groups in a given situation. Similarly the theory will be used in this study to help understand that disabled person

³⁷ P. Collier, and A. Hoeffler, Greed and Grievance in Civil War, *Oxford Economic Papers* 56 (4): pp 563-578.

look at what is a basic human need to them as active agents who make deliberate decisions about how to respond to and cope during and after the PEV in Kisumu.

According to John Button, basic human needs are the centre of peace and conflict resolution. He argues that it is important to conceptualize basic human needs and know its essential elements, know how they measure themselves and how they identify themselves.³⁸ In reference to this theory, the Kenya post-election violence and for the case of Kisumu it was a basic human need for one group of people to have a leader of their choice as opposed to the other group. It is through such difference in what is basic for one person as opposed to the other person that human needs become inherently conflict promoting. The resulting conflict which comes with its consequences sees those affected sought for coping mechanism for them to survive.

This theory gives strength to the idea that coping mechanisms can prevail where basic human needs are guaranteed and that where they are not guaranteed coping mechanisms become inevitable. This theory has been viewed to be specific and applicable to many interrelated phenomenon.

According to Steere, Maslow hierarchy of needs is often portrayed in the shape of a pyramid with the largest, most fundamental levels of needs at the bottom and the need for self-actualization at the top.³⁹ This theory as used in this study the basic human needs for the physically disable person during and after the PEV in Kisumu were among the most fundamental level of needs which include self-esteem, friendship and love, security and physical needs. The PEV led to the deficiency of these needs thus with the exception of these fundamental need as Maslow argues there may not be a physical indication, but the individual will feel anxious and tense since they are not able to satisfy them thus the outbreak of conflict. This Maslow's theory suggests that the most basic level of needs must be met before the individual will strongly desire or focus motivation upon the secondary or higher level needs. Maslow theory on hierarchy gives strength to the study as the disabled persons in Kisumu focused on secondary level of needs for them to cope

³⁸ J. Burton, Conflict: Basic Human Needs. New York: St. Martins Press, 1990b, Pp. 166-171.

³⁹ Steere, B. F. Becoming an effective classroom manager: A resource for teachers.. Albany, NY: SUNY Press (1988) , p 21.

during and after the PEV as they got motivated to go beyond the scope of the basic needs and strive for constant betterment.

Another proponent to this theory is Christopher Mitchell, he argues that the causes of conflict have been due to the existence of basic human needs in individuals, communities and groups. He goes further to argue that there will only prevail peace when the basic human needs of these categories are achieved. Conflicts have occurred in cases where basic human needs are denied to the persons.⁴⁰ For instance, when physical security and wellbeing, community or cultural recognition, exercise leadership and distributive justice are denied then conflict becomes inevitable. The approach used by Mitchell makes the theory applicable to this study since basic human needs are essential and indeed for the disabled to survive in a conflict situation their basic human needs have to be fulfilled.

Therefore, basic human needs theory asserts that a viable society must provide for survival needs for instance security that is satisfying. In this case, a well-established society helps its individuals to develop loyalties and aspirations compatible with social values. This clearly shows how every social and political system is basically an experiment hence a challenge to basic human needs. In reference to the disabled persons, the PEV in Kisumu was a challenge for them to fulfill their basic human needs. As a vulnerable group in times of conflict, it was involving for them to cope with the conflict situation during and after hence call for basic human needs that will help them survive from the conflict situation.

Furthermore, the basic human needs factors such as security, identity, freedom, autonomy, control, recognition, nationality and respect were responsive to fueling the post-election violence in Kisumu. This makes the theory relevant as the post-election violence in general was also centered on basic human needs whereby each community's basic needs were not satisfied and hence resulting into the conflict that left many displaced. The disabled suffered the consequences as the most vulnerable group whose basic human needs were not respected.

⁴⁰ R. Mitchell, Christopher, "Necessitous Man and Conflict Resolution: More Basic Questions About Basic Human Needs Theory," in Burton (1990b), pp.149-176

This basic human needs theory has some shortcomings as it assumes that each individual's or a group of people's basic human needs have to be satisfied. This is a big challenge to the theory as it is not easy for each person's basic human needs to be satisfied at times when one's basic human needs are viewed to apply to all. The other problem is the basic human needs hierarchy of which is not easy to prioritize. For instance, during the post-election violence one could not tell which basic need was not satisfied as the conflict was linked to other basic human needs that were not satisfied some years back in the history of Kenya and Kisumu in particular.

1.9 Hypotheses

The study tested three hypotheses:

1. The disabled persons in Kisumu were victims as well as perpetrators of the PEV
2. The disabled persons in Kisumu developed coping mechanisms during and after the 2007-2008 post-election violence.
3. The post-election violence 2007-2008 had devastating impact on the disabled persons in Kisumu.

1.10 Methodology

The study used both secondary and primary data. Secondary sources of information that were used to develop this study included books and articles from scholarly journals. It also utilized relevant books and scholarly journals found in the University of Nairobi's Jomo Kenyatta Memorial Library (JKML), Kenya National Commission of Human Rights (KNCHR) resource centre along Lenana road, and the Kenya Human Rights Commission Library (KHRC) along Gitanga road. Website publication and newspaper articles were also used. The information acquired from these secondary sources of information assisted in bringing forth a clear background for the disabled persons in armed conflict situations and disheartening experience they had undergone to cope with violence cases in Kisumu.

Primary sources used in the study included reports from the non-governmental organizations working in Kisumu County which was used to fill gaps found in books and journals. This helped in providing information about the disabled persons and the coping

mechanisms they develop in times of conflict. Oral interviews with unstructured questions that were conducted were of great help to the study. This provided the researcher with an opportunity to ask broad questions. It provides a high degree of objectivity, probing and clarification. There were various informants that were involved in responding to the descriptive questionnaire as they were sampled using the snowballing method which enabled us to get the appropriate information from the respondents were chosen according to their knowledge about the city of Kisumu, the conflict that have sprung up in the city, witnesses and victims of the PEV, gender age and their prominence in their locality. For the field interviews I obtained an introduction letter from the Department of History and Archaeology which enabled me to go to the field.

To overcome the language barrier, I got services from two research assistants who speak *Dholuo*. They helped in translation during interviews with the respondents. The Assistant Chief of Kisumu town helped the researcher in establishing the relationship with the Kisumu people. This enables the study to achieve its target of collecting relevant information from different respondents. Questionnaires were used as they helped in guiding the respondent with open ended questions. The researcher with the help of research assistants facilitated in the administering the questionnaires.

The respondents who the study targeted were the physically disabled persons from Kisumu city, the Kisumu administration office, non-governmental organizations in Kisumu, and residents of Kisumu town, that is, both men and women who experienced post-election violence as well as those who experienced or had knowledge of the past conflicts in Kisumu. It also targeted those who were new arrivals in Kisumu after the conflict. Time was managed well by ensuring that correct information was received from the informants as the days planned for the field work were well utilized.

Sampling method was through purposive and snowballing method. This is where the initial subject of required characteristics with the relevant information was identified and they use their social networks to refer the researcher to other people who could

potentially participate in or contribute to the study.⁴¹ The Snowball sampling was useful as it assisted in recruiting some of the respondents who could not be accessed by the researchers through other sampling strategies.⁴² Key respondents were the disabled persons in Kisumu, able bodied persons who experienced the post-election violence in 2007/8 and other conflicts in Kisumu were also among the respondents. The initial subjects identified directed the researcher to others whom they knew had the required information or characteristics. This method was also useful because the population that had the desired characteristics were not well known as the method helped in tracing some Key respondents.

The tools that were used were note taking and observation. The disadvantage of note taking was that a number of persons who were interviewed felt insecure as the information they were giving were confidential. This was handled by assuring the respondents confidentiality. On the other hand observation was advantageous as it permitted in depth understanding of the subject matter. The disadvantage of observation was that it introduced reactive effects in the participants due to researcher's presence. This was overcome by creating a friendly environment for the respondents hence enabling them to freely share their experience of the PEV and any other conflict that was felt in Kisumu.

A total number of forty eight respondents were interviewed with 23 of them being physically disabled, which equal 47.9% of the sample and 25 were able bodied or physically able, which also equal 52.1% of the total sample. However, only thirty one gave consent for their names to be used for the study and a total of 39 interviews were used with 20 from the able bodied persons which equals 41.7% of the total sample and 19 physically disabled persons which equals 39.6%. The remaining respondents were not at ease with being quoted for fear of being victimized as they were public figures in the city. The qualitative method of data analysis was used. The approach recognizes that anybody is capable of constructing knowledge as information was acquired from respondents with the desired characteristics.

⁴¹ O. Mugenda and A. Mugenda, *Research Methods*. (Nairobi: Acts Press 1999), P 51.

⁴² NK, Denzin, YS Lincoln (eds.). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications, 2000 pp. 32-38.

CHAPTER TWO

CONFLICTS IN KISUMU: A HISTORY

2.1 Introduction

Kenya has been faced with a series of conflicts and violence which have been associated with general elections especially after the re-introduction of multi-party politics in 1992 following the repeal of Section 2A of the Constitution of Kenya which saw it becoming a multi-party state *De jure*. Similarly, Kenya has experienced conflicts and violence following assassinations of prominent politicians and people. Moreover land clashes and cattle rustling have been common in the North Rift. Kisumu bore the brunt of conflicts related to general elections and political assassination of prominent politicians.

Kisumu has been known to be synonymous with conflicts whenever there has been a political related upheaval in Kenya since independence. The level of these conflicts has been unprecedented perhaps only reactions in Nairobi would be explained as surpassing those of Kisumu. Most of the conflicts have had ramifications on the livelihood of the residents leaving some disabled. This has made the future of the disabled a challenge because each conflict is unique with its own characteristics.⁴³ These characteristics have become so peculiar when one considers the impact they have had on Kisumu as a city. So profound in these is the impacts this conflicts have on the disabled who have either lived during this conflicts and particularly those who have survived these conflicts. This chapter endeavour to explore the conflict in Kisumu in which this study is embedded. It discusses history of conflicts in Kisumu noting instances that triggered them.

2.2 Kisumu city: From History to Conflicts

Unlike other major towns that are only 100 years old at best, Kisumu was a human settlement more than a century before Europeans came to East Africa.⁴⁴ It presents a cosmopolitan set-up with indigenous Luo as the most populous and dominant community. Little is known about inter-ethnic conflicts and land clashes in Kisumu

⁴³ P. Wallencsteen, *Understanding Conflict Resolution "War, Peace and Global System"* (London: Sage Publication 2002), p 17.

⁴⁴ A. Kareithi, Kisumu in the early 1980,s
http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/m/story.php?articleID=2000083912&story_title=Kisumu-the-resilient-city-of-refuge retrieved on 14th May 2013.

County. It is argued by Kareithi that many battles had been fought, won and lost in the theatre of conflict before the railway reached the port of Kisumu in 1901. The arrival of the railway, famously referred to as the Uganda railway, breathed a new lease of life to residents of the area. This is believed to have greatly contributed to the growth of Kisumu town as an urban centre attracting business ventures from the entire region. as Kareithi puts it, modernists believe that Kisumu as a town was founded in 1898 after the coming of the Imperial British East African Company's agents which was founded in 1872. The company preceded the British government in the administration of what became the East African Protectorate.⁴⁵

In early 1901 the construction of Port Florence began, which was later renamed Kisumu. Thereafter, the British came up with better plans for the small town of Kisumu and in 1902, expansion of Kisumu began, which led to the rise of Kisumu as the old Kisumu was disbanded to create room for street constructions. In late 1930s and early 1940s Kisumu town was top in terms of military, business and administrative duties.⁴⁶

The town gained its Municipality status in 1960 and it was noticeable that there were more Asians than Africans in the city. It was during 1960s that there was an increased population of African community as Kenya gained her internal self-governance from the British in 1963. Independence was a problem for the city as it experienced stagnation in terms of development and economic growth.⁴⁷

However, the Luo community remained politically active since pre-independence times, during the struggle for independence with the likes of Ochieng Oneko and Oginga Odinga playing quite significant roles. While Ochieng Oneko paid heavily as one of the Kapenguria six facing incarceration by the colonial government, Oginga Odinga was greatly considered as the doyen of opposition politics upon Kenya's independence. In fact it is widely believed that he had the wit to attract a near hundred percent Luo following. According to the interview,

⁴⁵ A. Kareithi, Kisumu in the early 1980,s
http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/m/story.php?articleID=2000083912&story_title=Kisumu-the-resilient-city-of-refuge retrieved on 14th May 2013.

⁴⁶ Frank Odindo, Kisumu City History, <http://www.kisumuhub.com/entry.php> accessed on 18/9/2013.

⁴⁷ Ibid

*Everybody was for Jaramogi Oginga Odinga*⁴⁸

This is due to the fact that, time and again it is quite evident that the Luo community tends to vote as a block for its candidate of choice since the re-introduction of multi-party politics in 1992. As such former Nyanza province has generally been characterized with peaceful electoral process for long period.⁴⁹ However, disturbances are common when it appears unlikely for them to get their desired results.

Indeed Kisumu city has been marred with violence related to assassinations of potential leaders. For instance, the October 1969 massacre was associated with the assassination of Tom Mboya on 5 July 1969 and mysterious road accident that resulted to the death of Argwings Kodhek the same year; the assassination of J.M Kariuki 1975 there were violent demonstrations in major towns like Nairobi, Nakuru and Kisumu. Similarly, chaos erupted in 1990-1992 caused by the 'Baghdad boys who are associated with acts of violence in Kisumu as they are used by politicians during the election period.'⁵⁰

After 1992 elections, Kisumu experienced a period of relative peace. It appeared their preferred political candidate; Jaramogi Oginga Odinga was clearly defeated to a level not warranting a contest of the presidential election results. With forgotten violent acts, life continued thriving in the city as Kikuyu, Gusii, Kamba, Luhya, Kalenjin, and Luo continued living harmoniously, freely exchanging goods and services as they interacted amicably.

In 1997 General Election, Raila finished third after the former President Moi and Democratic Party candidate Mwai Kibaki respectively. He accepted defeat and there were no traces of violence in Kisumu after the declaration of the presidential result in 1997. Raila Oginga Odinga only managed to retain his position as the Langata Member of Parliament (MP). In fact, he ended up supporting the Moi government, and led a merger between his party, National Democratic Party (NDP), and Moi's Kenya African National

⁴⁸ Oral Interview, John Dan Muga, on Phone from Kisumu, 15/7/2013.

⁴⁹ The Commission of Inquiry into the Post-Election Violence 2008-Waki Report <http://www.act.or.ke/images/Platform/Stories/PCBM/The/Commission/of/Inquiry/into/the/Post/Election/Violence/2008-WAKI/Report.pdf> P. 174.

⁵⁰ Oral Interview, Anonymous respondent, Kisumu Town, 26/6/2013.

Union (KANU) party. He served as in the Cabinet as Energy Minister during Moi's final term from June 2001 to 2002,⁵¹

It was in 2005, after the death of Dr. Crispin Mbai that violence broke up in Kisumu albeit on small scale, it was heavily witnessed on the outskirts of Kisumu city in Mbai's birthplace of Homabay County, as it was considered an assassination.

It was after the 2007 general elections that violence reached unprecedented level in Luo Nyanza and particularly in the city of Kisumu. The residents were hard hit by the violence as the physically disabled were faced with consequences in all aspects of their life including the psychological and economic aspects as will be discussed later in this study.

In 2013 it was almost a repeat of what happened in 2007/8 albeit on a smaller scale. It will be important therefore to discuss some of the incidences that have resulted to violence in Kisumu City. These violence have greatly affected the disabled, yet one wonders whether they were equally perpetrators to the violence as will be explored in this study.

2.2.1 Assassination of Tom Mboya 1969

Tom Joseph Mboya was born on 15th August 1930 in Kilimambogo. He was educated at various Catholic mission schools, completing his secondary school education at the Mang'u High School. Between 1948 and 1950 he attended the Sanitary Inspector's School in Nairobi, one of the few places which also provided a stipend during training. In 1952 he founded the Kenya Local Government Workers Union (KLGWU).⁵²

With his leadership skills, Tom Mboya stepped into the political vacuum left by Jomo Kenyatta by accepting the post of treasurer in Kenyatta's party, the Kenya African Union (KAU), as he took effective control of nationalist opposition to British rule. In 1953, with support from the British Labour Party, Mboya brought Kenya's five most prominent Labour Unions together as the Kenya Federation of Labour (KFL) becoming the largest

⁵¹ W. O. Oyugi, P. Wanyanda and C.O. Mbai, *The Politics of Transition in Kenya*, "From KANU to NARC", Nairobi: Heinrich Boll Foundation 2003, pp32-36.

⁵² D. Goldworthy, *Tom Mboya the Man Kenya Wanted to Forget*, Hlmes and meers publishers 1982, pp 10-20.

officially recognized African organization in Kenya.⁵³ The Kenya Federation of Labour was recognized in Africa because it became the Kenya Africans Voice, during emergency when all political parties were banned. In addition it also led the struggle for the release of detainees to liberty.

Indeed, Mboya continued building his prominent figure in Kenyan politics by organizing protests against mass removals, detention camps, and secret trials. This triggered the British Labour Party that arranged for a year's scholarship for Mboya (1955-56) to Oxford University where he studied industrial management at Ruskin College. It was very unfortunate for Mboya as at the time he returned to Kenya the Mau Mau rebellion was already quashed as over 10,000 Mau Mau rebels were estimated to have been killed during the disturbance, compared to just over 100 Europeans.⁵⁴

This did not stop Mboya from pursuing dream and in 1957 he formed the People's Convention Party and was elected to join the Colony's Legislative Council (Legco) as one of the only eight African members. In 1958 he attended a convention of African nationalists at Accra, Ghana where he was elected chairman.⁵⁵

It was in 1959 when he received his first honorary doctorate that helped set up the African-American Students Foundation which raised money to subsidize the cost of flights for East African students studying in America. It is at this point that he promoted education and knowledge for the people of this country.

In 1960 when detained Jomo Kenyatta was still considered the country's nationalist leader, there was great potential for ethnic division amongst the African population. But Mboya, who was a representative of the Luo, which was the second largest ethnicity at that time, played a major role as a mediator for political unity in the country. He

⁵³ Ibid

⁵⁴ D. Goldworthy, Op.cit. p 17.

⁵⁵ Ibid

campaigns for Kenyatta's release, which was only realized on 21 August 1961, after which Kenyatta took the limelight.⁵⁶

Thereafter, Tom Mboya was initially given the post of Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs, and was then moved to Minister for Economic Planning and Development in 1964. He remained a defiant spokesman for Luo affairs in a government heavily dominated by Kikuyu.⁵⁷

It is argued by Hillary Ng'weno that Mboya was being groomed by Kenyatta as a potential successor, a possibility which deeply worried many of the Kikuyu elite.⁵⁸ When Mboya suggested in parliament that a number of Kikuyu politicians (including members of Kenyatta's extended family) were enriching themselves at the cost of other ethnicities, the situation became highly charged.⁵⁹

It was on the morning of July 5th 1969 that Tom Mboya, President Jomo Kenyatta's Minister for Economic Planning and Kenya African National Union (KANU's) secretary general, arrived at Nairobi's Embakasi Airport from Addis Ababa where he had been attending a meeting of the Economic Commission for Africa.⁶⁰ He was accompanied by his Permanent Secretary, Philip Ndegwa, and his brother, Alphonse Okuku Ndiege. He had dropped them off at his office, and then before 1pm went to Chhani's Pharmacy on Government Road now Moi Avenue to buy some lotion for dry skin. After chatting with Mrs. Mohini Sehmi Channi for a while, Mboya stepped out of the shop.⁶¹

Outside, around two meters from the door, was a young man in a dark suit, holding a briefcase in his left hand. His right hand was in his pocket. In a few seconds two shots rang out. Mboya slumped over. Despite efforts at mouth-to-mouth resuscitation Mboya was pronounced dead upon arrival at the Nairobi Hospital.⁶² Word spread that Mboya had been assassinated and within hours, there were riots and demonstrations in Nairobi,

⁵⁶ D. Goldworthy, Op.cit. p 18.

⁵⁷ Ibid

⁵⁸ Hillary Ng'weno The Daily Nation online

⁵⁹ D. Goldworthy, Op.cit . p 19

⁶⁰ Hillary Ng'weno The Daily Nation online

⁶¹ S. F. Yette, "M. L. King Supports African Student," *News of Tuskegee Institute*, December 1959, p 26

⁶² D. Goldworthy, Tom Mboya the Man Kenya Wanted to Forget, Hlmes and meers publishers 1982, p 10.

in towns and villages in Luo-land. The experience of the Kenya Peoples' Union (KPU) had given most Luo the feeling that the Kikuyu were out to deny them any position of political leadership. They had pushed Oginga Odinga out of the ruling party KANU and it was collaborated that they were responsible for the assassination of Tom Mboya. These Luo suspicions appeared to be confirmed when on July 10th five days after the murder; a young Kikuyu man named Nahashon Isaac Njenga Njoroge was arrested and charged with the murder.⁶³

The assassination of Mboya was received with violence in Kisumu as it resulted into destruction of property, injuries and loss of lives. Police officers came in to quell the situation as the locals engaged them in running battles.

One of the respondents said that the violence which erupted as a result of assassination of Tom Mboya affected the physically disabled persons, displacing them from their strategic points where they begged or managed small businesses for their survival.⁶⁴ Another respondent said that he came to learn from his father that the physically disabled were discriminated by the demonstrating people that destabilized business in Kisumu town and some of them were forced to join the demonstration.⁶⁵ This was a challenge for the physically disabled persons as they could not manage to vacate the town which had poor terrain that could not have favoured them. This was not different from the PEV as disabled persons could not trace their way out of the city. Accordingly, those who used walking aid, those with visual problem, one arm and blind could not easily navigate through the chaotic atmosphere that was experienced in Kisumu.⁶⁶ The assassination of Tom Mboya left the Luo community furious having lost a prominent and promising leader not only as a community but the whole country.

2.2.2 The Kisumu Massacre 1969

In October 1969 the residents of Kisumu were angered over mysterious accident that resulted to the death of Argwings Kodhek and that of Tom Mboya which was as a result

⁶³ Weekly Review, Mboya to the *New York Times*, 8 November 1959, MLKP-MBU.

⁶⁴ Oral Interview, Maurice Opiyo, Kondele Shopping Centre Kisumu, 28/9/2014

⁶⁵ Oral Interview, John Dan Muga, Kenyatta Sports Ground Kisumu, 23/6/2013

⁶⁶ Ibid

of gunshots, was still fresh in their minds. This was seen to be a political move since it was almost the time of campaigns heading into general elections, and before Mboya assassination he was anxious that KANU would perform well in Luo-land in comparison to the previous General Election against Odinga's Kenya Peoples Union (KPU). So, in October 1969 Kenyatta set off on a campaign tour to Rift Valley and Nyanza Provinces intending to demonstrate that he was back in control of the political landscape. The decision of the late President Kenyatta for a campaign tour in Rift Valley and Nyanza did not end well.⁶⁷

It was at the grounds of the Soviet-built hospital in the lakeside city of Kisumu (Russia Hospital) that people of Kisumu faced the massacre. The venue was filled with school children, teachers, local leaders and traditional choirs ready to welcome and entertain President Jomo Kenyatta and his Cabinet at the opening of the facility. Some of those who had turned up to welcome President Kenyatta met their death in the hands of his security detail as the event was more chaotic than anticipated as it was the bloodbath on the afternoon of 25th October 1969.⁶⁸

In pursuit of elusive justice, eleven survivors and witnesses of the chronicled events of that day presented a memorandum to the Ambassador Bethwel Kiplagat's Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) tasked to probe historical injustices in the country that occurred between 12th December 1963 to 28th February 2008, then educate and engage the public on issues around its work.⁶⁹ The report by the TJRC on probing of historical injustices in the country was handed to the president Uhuru Mwigai Kinyatta on 3 May 2013.

It is argued that it was on Kenyatta's arrival at the hospital that drunken youths clad in the opposition Kenya Peoples Union (KPU) shirts and caps provoked the Head of State with chants of *Dume Dume* (Bull Bull) which was the opposition's symbol. This went on

⁶⁷ S. Otieno *Politics to Blame for Kisumu Violence Locals Say*, November 1, 2012 <http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-93763/politics-blame-kisumu-violence-locals-sy> Retrieved on 13th May 2013.

⁶⁸ P. Amina, *A Date with Death or the president: A Tale of the Kisumu Massacre* 26th October 2012, <http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/article-92989/date-death-or-president-tale-kisumu-massacre> Retrieved on 21st may 2013.

⁶⁹ Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission Report 2013. P 1.

with chants which were meant to remind Kenyatta of the mysterious accident of Foreign Affairs minister, Argwings Kodhek in January 1969 and the assassination of Economic Planning Minister, Tom Mboya, on a Nairobi street on 5th July 1969.⁷⁰ This stage provocation impelled Kenyatta's security personnel who promptly reacted with gunfire that were aimed at the unsuspecting audience. In a split of a second, 11 people lay dead in a pool of blood with bullet wounds (four children, five adults and two policemen) as hundreds of others were injured as hell broke loose.⁷¹ This contributed to Kenya going back to a one party state with the opposition leader Jaramogi Oginga Odinga together with his other KPU members being put under house arrest and KPU was proscribed as a political party. Some of those who survived were injured, leaving some with permanent impairments.

One of the eye witnesses and survivors of the violence argued that, it was traumatizing as live bullets were shot directly to the crowd that comprised of the able and the disabled persons. The violence left some with disability as others were disabled even more.⁷² This resulted to cases of becoming dependents as the families they came from were their only hope. According to John Dan Muga, this violence was the worst in the history of conflicts in Kisumu.⁷³

2.2.3 Assassination of JM Kariuki 1975

JM Kariuki was born on 21st March 1928 in Kabati-ini Town in Rift Valley Region. He was a Kenyan socialist politician during the administration of the Jomo Kenyatta government. He held different government positions since independence in 1963 up to 2nd March 1975 when he was assassinated.

It was in the late 1960s, when JM Kariuki's relationship with Kenyatta became increasingly strained because Kariuki was critical of Kenyatta's administrative policies. Some of their disagreements were; government corruption; the widening gap between the rich and the poor; deteriorating relations among East African Community members; and

⁷⁰ The Editor Weekly Review, "the Kisumu Massacre" in the weekly review 27th October 1969.

⁷¹ The Daily Nation, 'Assassin's bullet stops popular Mboya' in the daily nation 12th Augusts 2013 by Emma Omari.

⁷² Oral Interview, Anonymous for Security Reasons, Kondele, 23/6/2013.

⁷³ Oral Interview, John Dan Muga, Kenyatta Sports Ground Kisumu, 23/6/2013

unfair land distribution after independence. He vehemently argued that the United Kingdom gave the Kenyatta government funds to buy back land from the White settlers and redistribute it back to the natives. However, the land was never redistributed, but most of it was handed over to Kenyatta's close friends. J M Kariuki was popular because of his famous sayings;

“Political independence without economic independence is like having a wedding without a bride.”

“In Kenya today, I can only see the dawn of a June morning rising majestically from the white oblivion into the serenity of life.

“If we forget these people (the youth), we will find ourselves surrounded by rogues who are rogues not because they want to become rogues but because they are hungry and this leads them into temptation.”

“It is this greed that will put this country into chaos. Let me state here that this greedy attitude among the leaders is going to ruin this country.”

“Kenya has become a nation of 10 millionaires and 10 million beggars.”

“Every Kenyan man, woman and child is entitled to a decent and just living. That is a birthright. It is not a privilege. He is entitled as far as is humanly possible to equal educational, job and health opportunities irrespective of his parentage, race or creed or his area of origin in this land. If that is so, deliberate efforts should be made to eliminate all obstacles that today stand in the way of this just goal. That is the primary task of the machinery called Government: our Government.”

“We fought for independence with sweat, blood and our lives. Many of us suffered for inordinate days directly and indirectly. Many of us are orphans, widows and children as a result of the struggle. We must ask: What did we suffer for, and were we justified in that suffering?”⁷⁴

As a result violence broke up in Kisumu and Nairobi following the death of J.M Kariuki as his famous sayings were recalled by Kenyans. This was witnessed with the destruction of properties, looting of shops, injuries that resulted to permanent disabilities, barricading of Kisumu-Nairobi and Kisumu-Busia roads, loss of lives while the disabled were

⁷⁴ African 24 Media, The Life and Times of Josiah Mwangi (J.M.) Kariuki, <http://photography.a24media.com/index.php/photogallery/prominent-faces/127-the-life-and-times-of-josiah-mwangi-jm-kariuki> accessed on 14/9/2013.

faltered upon by the protestors who were involved in running battle with the police who came to quell the situation. The disabled persons were left without choices of how they could cope with the situation as some were forced to vacate the town and seek for safety to the neighboring towns.⁷⁵ However, one of the respondents alleged that some disabled joined in demonstration as they felt robbed of a leader who could address their problems as needy persons.⁷⁶ Though J.M Kariuki was a Kikuyu, the Luo went to the streets as they felt to have lost another promising leader who was ready to protect the interests of all Kenyans and not only his tribe.

2.2.4 Assassination of Dr. Robert Ouko 1990

Robert Ouko was born on 31st March 1931 and was a Kenyan politician who served as a foreign minister of Kenya from 1979 to 1983 and again from 1988 to 1990 when he got assassinated. He was one of the upcoming leader in Kenya as he was widely acknowledged to be one of the government's most capable administrator and therefore a national political figure who could have emerged as a serious contender in the succession politics free from the stigma attached to a Kikuyu candidate with the opposition being taken for granted.⁷⁷ What began to change in 1990 was the collapse of the government's will to preserve its monopoly of power, a response to increasing Western concern and the death of two senior political figures.⁷⁸ The first key moment was murder of Foreign Affairs Minister Robert Ouko in February 1990, a non-partisan administrator and anti-corruption crusader who had earned more respect internationally than sitting president Moi. It was on 16th February that Ouko was found dead and his body burnt near his home in Koru in now present Kisumu City. Ouko's death suggested a new era of political violence was dawning. This was characterized with violent protests in streets of Kisumu and Nairobi.⁷⁹ University students took to the streets resulting to running battles with the police. It was reported that in the process some were stumbled upon and others were hit by scared motorists driving off in a rush from the conflict zones.

⁷⁵ Oral Interview, Moses Audi, Kenyatta Sports Ground Kisumu, 23/6/2013.

⁷⁶ Oral Interview, Maurice Opiyo, Kondele Shopping Centre Kisumu, 28/9/2014

⁷⁷ D.W. Throup et al., *Multiparty Politics in Kenya: The Kenyatta and Moi States and the Triumph of System in the 1992 elections*; Janes Currey Publishers: Ohio University Press 1998, Pp 57-59.

⁷⁸ D.W. Throup et al., *Multiparty Politics in Kenya: The Kenyatta and Moi States and the Triumph of System in the 1992 elections*; Janes Currey Publishers: Ohio University Press 1998, Pp 57-59.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

This was one of the violence of high intensity that had happened in Kisumu as men and women, the aged and children as well as the disabled were on the streets of Kisumu protesting. On the other hand some of them ended up as victims and the disabled persons were not spared as some were unaware that the protest was on. According to John Dan Muga, the violence that broke out as a result of Ouko's death resulted into disabilities of some people and he gives an example of some of his friends confessing to him when visiting his organization known as Youth Art Development and Entrepreneurship Network (YADEN) at Kondele office that they got disability following the protest over the death of Robert Ouko.⁸⁰

The disabilities during these protests were as a result of the actions of the General Service Unit (GSU) who followed people even up to the estates as they whipped them injuring others. It is also understood that most of the disabled were victims of the violence as they were ignored by the protestors and government officials who did not recognize their need of support when the GSU dispersed the protesting crowd.

More violence was witnessed during the burial when university students chanting slogan *Bob, Bob*, as Ouko was famously referred to by his adherents. They engaged in shootings and running battles with the GSU and regular police, and later in the evening there were lootings in Kisumu town by alleged rowdy mobs comprising university students and irate *matatu* operators. This greatly affected the disabled in the streets who had to scamper for safety as some were hurt even more.⁸¹

2.2.5 The Baghdad Boys 1992

The Baghdad boys are a formerly dreaded youth gang which has been a political hireling or goons, who usually come in handy during elections. They have been associated with violent acts in the past which led to death and injury, especially during the countdown and peak of multi-party politics in Kenya.⁸² This name 'Baghdad' was first coined in the 90's when the group was formed; it coincided with the Gulf War; when the United States

⁸⁰ Oral Interview, John Dan Muga, on Phone from Kisumu, 15/7/2013.

⁸¹ Oral Interview, Ochieng Onyango, Kondele Shopping Center, 23/6/2013.

⁸² Purity Akotsi, Unmasking the Baghdad Boys of Kisumu 3rd September 2012
<http://www.internewskenya.org/article.php?id=245> Retrieved on 3/9/2014.

and Allied Forces staged a raid against Saddam Hussein in Baghdad, the Iraqi capital city.⁸³

After its formation, the Baghdad Boys were used by politicians during multiparty politics in early nineties to help opposition politicians, who were against President Moi's tyranny. This dreaded youth gang was the brain child of about 40 Kisumu youths under the leadership of Audi Ogada. It started in the early 1990s to help a group of politicians who were fighting for the second liberation when Kenya was clamoring for multiparty democracy.⁸⁴ This group though founded in Kisumu soon spread to different parts of the country, but with a similar agenda.

The effort of the group was to advocate for an end to the single party system. They became allied to the Forum for Restoration of Democracy-Kenya (FORD-K) party led by the then doyen of Kenyan opposition politics Jaramogi Oginga Odinga who was determined to end the single party rule.⁸⁵ This group was joined by a group of ex-soldiers of 1982 planners of the failed coup attempt who added more impetus to its roles. The group was associated with robbery, incitement to violence, planning to commit felony, causing malicious damage and attacking security agents.⁸⁶ This militia group made Kisumu an insecure place as political rivalry developed.

With violence acts often launched by the Baghdad group during elections, Otwoli said, The disabled who were on the streets were more affected as the group did not care whether one was physically disabled or not. The militia group damaged property on streets of Kisumu and the school for the disabled by the name Joy School in Kisumu town was most affected as it could not run its errands in a peaceful atmosphere. Fear was what the disabled in that school will survive on during the reign of the Baghdad Boys.⁸⁷

⁸³ Purity Akotsi, Unmasking the Baghdad Boys of Kisumu 3rd September 2012
<http://www.internewskenya.org/article.php?id=245> Retrieved on 3/9/2014

⁸⁴ J. Ochieng, *The Star*, "Former Baghdad Boys Terror Gang Boss Recalls his Dark Past, May 10, 2011,
<http://www.the-star.co.ke/news/ararticle-64131/former-baghdad-boys-terror-gang-boss-recalls-his-dark-past>
Retrieved on 20th May 2013.

⁸⁵ Ibid

⁸⁶ Ibid

⁸⁷ Oral Interview, Otwoli Jane, Nairobi Kawangware, 11/7/2013

The action of the dreaded gang group led to increased insecurity on streets of Kisumu, one of the respondents being interviewed said;

The former Baghdad Boys who were involved in criminal activities, have now changed and now Baghdad Boys are involved in preaching peace and collaborate with YADEN in support of the disabled who were affected in all conflicts in Kisumu. I understand that the Baghdad Boys received support from some physically disabled persons who demonstrated together with them in hope of their grievances to be heard. Some of the physically disabled persons and the abled persons who were only interested in watching the battle engaged in between the police and the Baghdad Boys ended up as victims as they suffered injuries while others were reported dead.⁸⁸

This clearly indicates that the violence that involved the Baghdad Boys did not spare the physically disabled persons in Kisumu either in support of the group or victims of the violence committed by the group.

2.2.6 The death of Dr. Crispin Mbai 2003

The death of Dr. Mbai on 14th September 2003 was viewed to be political amid internal rows in Kenya's ruling National Rainbow Coalition over the creation of the post of Prime Minister. Until his death Dr. Mbai, was a lecturer at the University of Nairobi and chairman of the technical committee on devolution of power at the Constitutional Conference at the Bomas of Kenya.⁸⁹

This was received with reactions as students from the public universities in both Nairobi and Kisumu staged demonstrations to express sympathy over the death of the senior official through gun shot in Nairobi. The students marched from their campuses towards the city centre but were stopped by police. University of Nairobi students on their part marched to the Attorney General's chambers and then towards the Bomas of Kenya where the constitutional conference was going on. Heavy security was maintained at the venue as the police had to fire teargas into buses ferrying students. In Kisumu, Ooko

⁸⁸ Phone Interview, John Dan Muga, Kisumu, 15/7/2013.

⁸⁹ O. Daniel Kenyan Varsity Stage Demo in Cities Don's Killing, <http://www.hananews.org/WholeArticle.asp?artId=715> retrieved on 14/7/2013

reports that motorists were stoned as the students demonstrated along the city center demanding for thorough investigations into the killing. Some politicians also protested saying it was a political assassination.⁹⁰

On the streets of Kisumu city there was violence with minimal intensity, the disabled were affected as they were not aware of what was going on as students stormed to the Central Business District (CBD). However it was worse at the home of the late Mbai as university students protested more resulting to injuries and death of a young boy who was stampeded by the crowd of protesters.

2.3 The Post-Election Violence 2007-2008

The 2007/8 post-election violence was quite unprecedented. It was what one would call the mother of all the conflicts Kisumu has ever witnessed as it made other ones lesser given the number of casualties and the duration.

Kisumu residents went to the polls and cast their votes peacefully. At this time, more police and security forces were already deployed. The general feeling among the residents was that they had cast their votes peacefully and deserved an outcome agreeable to their reasonable expectations.

However, the delay in announcing the presidential results led to a lot of anxiety and rumors started peddling around allegations of results doctoring. This was further accelerated by heavy presence of the General Service Unit (GSU) and regular police in Kisumu and its environs. The Luo community thus acted to pre-empt rigging but the police and the state machinery moved with recklessness and disregard to their lives in suppressing their freedom of expression. As push and pull continued, serious crimes were perpetrated against the people fighting for recognition of their democratic rights.⁹¹ According to Audi Moses, it was alleged that some Luo youths in Kisumu had threatened to take unspecified actions against the Kikuyu who had registered as voters in the area

⁹⁰ O. Daniel Kenyan Varsity Stage Demo in Cities Don's Killing,
<http://www.hananews.org/WholeArticle.asp?artId=715> retrieved on 14/7/2013

⁹¹ The Commission of Inquiry into the Post-Election Violence 2008-Waki Report
<http://www.act.or.ke/images/Platform/Stories/PCBM/The/Commission/ofInquiry/into/the/Post/Election/Violence/2008-WAKI/Report.pdf> Pp. 176-177.

should they have exhibited any form of support for or attempted to vote against ODM candidates.

It was on 30th December when the violence was first experienced immediately after the presidential results were announced.⁹² Amid protests by observers and ODM political leaders at Kenyatta International Conference Centre (KICC), the Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK) Chairman Samuel Kivuitu announced PNU's candidate Honourable Mwai Kibaki as the winner in the evening. The timing was considered irregular.⁹³ This was what sparked national protest by ODM supporters and Kisumu witnessed what would go down into Kenyan history as the most protracted and ethicized protests that were very violent. This violence led to destruction of property, loss of lives and injuries that left some people maimed as others were more physically disabled. The violence also resulted to a mass exodus of the perceived communities from violence-prone Kisumu area. As a result, the Electoral Commission Chairman ended up admitting that he acted under pressure. It was then made clear when he said that

“I do not know whether Kibaki won the election.”⁹⁴

This was considered an ironical expression by the Electoral Commission of Kenya Chairman who declared Kibaki as the winner without actually knowing whether or not he had won.⁹⁵

The violence was experienced in key towns in Kenya but the intensity in Kisumu was higher as the targeted people were from the Kikuyu community and any other community from the Central Kenya and the Gusii community who their property were destroyed in Kisumu. This target group was presumed to have been hundred percent Pro-Kibaki. Machetes, clubs, and other crude weapons were used by the attackers to drive away the target group and destroy their property. It was indicated by the Waki Report that at least 81 people were killed in Kisumu; 5 were women, 343 sustained multiple injuries, 200

⁹² Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR), 2007, pp 14-22.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ I. Ongiri, on Kenya Electoral Commission Chair Jan 2, 2008.

<http://www.kenyanpundit.com/2008/01/01/post-media-blackout-update-jan-2-1215-am/> Retrieved on 20th May 2013.

⁹⁵ C.O.Imbiakha, MA project paper on “Youth in Peacebuilding in Kenya’s North Rift Region: A case Study of Burnt Forest, 1992-2010,” December 2012, p 32.

residential houses were burnt, 50 commercial buildings were destroyed/looted and 32 government offices were also damaged.⁹⁶

This induced revenge attacks, resulting in over two months of civil unrest throughout Kenya.⁹⁷ The main targets of the violence were the Kikuyu, Kibaki's tribe. They were attacked in various spots including Kibera slum in Nairobi, Kikuyu inhabited locations in Coast Province and those residing in Kisumu County.⁹⁸ This was horrible as 81 people were left dead, young girls and women were raped, and 2,886 people were internally displaced in Kisumu. Some of the displaced people who were hurt elsewhere and moved to Kisumu are leading a poor life as all they had was destroyed during the violence. Others are coping with the disabilities they sustained during the PEV period as those disabled persons who were disabled more physically, psychologically and economically are also struggling to cope with life after the violence.

Most of these atrocities happened in the first 14 days after the 2007 general election while the ruthlessness of this conflict stretched in a period of 59 days, that is, from 27th December 2007 which was voting day to 28th February 2008 when a political negotiation was reached.⁹⁹ At this point, it is important to note that, the Post-Election violence as it happened was an inevitable thing and the contested presidential elections were only a spark.

2.4 The Murder of Shem Onyango in Kisumu and its aftermath 2012

Shem Onyango was shot by unknown assailants at about 10am on Monday, 29th October 2012 as he was driving to the bank. He died later at the Aga Khan Hospital where his wife, also wounded was admitted with critical injuries.

Protestors soon gathered, and led by local Muhoroni MP Ayiecho Olweny and Kisumu Town East MP Shakeel Shabbir, marched to the Nyanza Provincial police headquarters

⁹⁶ Waki Report on Post-Election Violence 2007-2008

http://www.marsgroupkenya.org/pdfs/2008/10/Waki_Chapters/Chapter_9_Extent_of_consequences_of_Post_Election_Violence.pdf Retrieved on 20th May 2013, Pp 305-338

⁹⁷ T. Yamano, Y. Tanaka and R. Gitau, *Haki Yetu (It's Our Right): Determinants of Post-Election Violence in Kenya*, Tokyo: National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, 2010, P 2.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp 6-7.

⁹⁹ C.O. Imbiakha, *Op.cit.* p 33.

and onto the Provincial Commissioner's office demanding action to improve security in Kisumu following subsequent spate of violent robberies, car-jacking, and murders that had occurred in the town.

The demonstrations got out of hand as one man was shot dead by police, three injured and three other people were burnt to death in a furniture store. It was then alleged that police threw teargas canisters which burned the premise. This led to violent protests by thousands of residents which resulted to disruption of normal business, destruction of property, loss of lives, property and a strain on the physically disabled who were stumbled on, as others lost their assertive aid while others their businesses were looted in the streets of Kisumu town. This murder of a businessman and local ODM chairman Mr. Shem Onyango in Kisumu, and the subsequent riots and deaths were almost inevitable as the police throwing of the teargas canisters was only a spark.

2.5 Violence in Kisumu following Declaration of Uhuru as President-elect 2013

Unlike the 2007 election, which degenerated into inter-ethnic violence, Kenya has been largely peaceful in the subsequent general elections. Kisumu County has been under heavy security even as 4th March 2013 general election approached. The situation remained the same as the country awaited the Supreme Court's ruling after Mr. Odinga contested election results. Kisumu County is considered a stronghold of former Prime Minister Raila Odinga, who was Mr. Kenyatta's closest competitor for the presidency. Tensions was high in Kisumu before, during and after the Supreme Court delivered its ruling. Some ODM supporters mainly the youth reacted violently to the Supreme Court ruling.¹⁰⁰

Mr. Odinga charged the presidential election was "tainted" by irregularities. Mr. Odinga's lawyers alleged in court that the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) boosted Kenyatta's numbers at some polling stations helping him to avoid a run-off. According to official figures, Kenyatta avoided a run-off by garnering 6,173,433

¹⁰⁰ Human rights watch, Kenya: Witnesses Describe Kisumu Killings by police, May 23rd 2013.

votes of 12.3 million votes cast, which translated to 52% of the total votes cast giving him a clear sweep without a rerun.¹⁰¹

The Supreme Court upheld Kenyatta's victory as valid and that the election met the Constitutional threshold. The six Supreme Court judges¹⁰² were expected to release a detailed judgment on 13th April 2013. Odinga said he accepted the Court's verdict even though he regretted that some of the evidence produced by his lawyers had been disregarded.

Casting doubt on the judgment of the court could lead to higher political and economic uncertainty, and make it more difficult for our country to move forward after the verdict. We must soldier on and resolve to reform our politics and institutions. Respect for the supremacy of the Constitution in resolving disputes between fellow citizens is the surest foundation of our democratic society.¹⁰³

Following the Supreme Court ruling, violence broke out in Kisumu's Kondele and the neighboring Nyawita settlement areas that were the epicenter of unrest after the court decision. Demonstrators barricaded roads, burnt tyres, and looted shops. This sparked the police to come in and quell the situation while using rubber bullets, teargas, and live bullets. It is also noted that they kicked, slapped, and whipped with sticks and batons anyone who crossed their path including the disabled, irrespective of whether they were participating in violence or not.

The running battles that involved the police and protesters resulted into loss of lives as some were shot by the police. The Kondele shooting killed one Joseph Ongor just outside the Lake Breeze Hotel. A 27 year old male passenger on a motorcycle was also shot at Kondele crossing on his way home. This escalated the tensions and protesters begun throwing stones at the police.¹⁰⁴ In addition, at Kisumu Manyatta slums, three rioters were shot dead by police bringing to five the number of people killed in post-election

¹⁰¹ Human rights watch, Kenya: Witnesses Describe Kisumu Killings by police, May 23rd 2013.

¹⁰² The six supreme Judges were, Chief Justice and President of the Court Willy Mutunga, Deputy Chief Justice and Deputy President of the Court Kalpana Rawal, Associate Justices; Philip Kiptoo Tunoi, Jackton Boma Ojwang, Mohamed Khadhar Ibrahim and Smokin Wanjala.

¹⁰³ Human rights watch, Kenya: Report on Raila Odinga Statement on Judgement by the Court on Election Petition, May 23rd 2013

¹⁰⁴ Ibid

violence since the Court's verdict as reported by Joseph Ole Tito, the Police Chief for Nyanza Province. The incidents threatened to disrupt peace across most of Kenya, which five years ago had degenerated into deadly violence stemming from a disputed election.

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This aimless action by the police has made the Kenya security force questioned on how they have to abide by the United Nation's Basic Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms as the enforcement officials are called upon to apply non-violent means and use force only when strictly unavoidable to protect life.¹⁰⁶

The anger of Kisumu residents which was expressed in a violent manner destabilized normal life in Kisumu town as the disabled were caught in the quagmire that saw some of them sprawled upon and injured further.

2.6 The causes of 2007/8 PEV Kisumu

The post-election violence that hit the whole country appeared to be more of ethnic differences rather than political, even as Mwai Kibaki was declared the winner in the 2007 general election. This makes one to look at the cause of the violence as planned to deny them their political right which was a basic need to them. As such the cause of the 2007/8 PEV fits well in basic need theory which is used in this study. In Kisumu, the cause of the conflict was social, economic, political and psychological which was as a result of declaring a president-elect not being one of their own. On this ground, identity became the key issue as perpetrators of the PEV began identifying who to attack on ethnic basis. "This turned out to be a running battle between the police and the violent and destructive crowd on the streets of Kisumu who targeted to destroy property belong to those they knew were supporters of PNU."¹⁰⁷

The violence was also caused by power struggle among ethnic groups. The 2007 presidential election was in essence a contest between the incumbent president Kibaki, and the opposition candidate Mr. Odinga. The two tried to bring on board major ethnic

¹⁰⁵ Om. Odula and Rodney Muhumuza, Five killed in riots after Kenyatta decision

¹⁰⁶ Human Rights Watch, Kenya: Witnesses Describe Kisumu Killings by police, May 23rd 2013.

¹⁰⁷ Oral Interview, Moses Audi, Kenyatta Sports Ground, 24/9/2014.

groups as voting blocks to form coalitions with numerical strength. Another central issue during the election was devolution or decentralization of resources and power. On one hand, Odinga represented the voice of the smaller ethnic groups that have felt marginalized by the central government and yearned for devolution of power. On the other hand, Kibaki represented the largest ethnic group, the Kikuyu and others who favored a strong centralized system.¹⁰⁸ Following this argument, post-election violence has been considered to have erupted as a result of power struggle between these two groups particularly engulfed by reaction from Luo-people.

For them, devolution did not only mean devolution of politics but also devolution of resources from the central government. Therefore, there was a general feeling that the Kikuyu would stick on power to protect their milk cow yet the Luo felt they were deliberately denied the opportunity to also ‘eat.’ This illustrates the basic need theory as used in the study as ascending to power again was a basic need for the Kikuyu community while on the other hand the Luo felt denial of their basic need which triggered them to protest on streets of Kisumu as the violence spread to other major towns in Kenya.

Ethnic polarization and the mobilization of ethnic sentiments by political leaders during campaigns were also a cause for the violence.¹⁰⁹ This was seen in the fact that both the police and military have historically been recruited along ethnic lines to protect particular government which has increased the likelihood of their breaking down along ethnic lines in a crisis and being either unable or unwilling to maintain law and order impartially.¹¹⁰ As a result of this formation, post-election violence proliferated and intensified for a number of months as politicians and business owners allegedly chose to hire gangs of youth to fight off their attackers rather than call in forces whose loyalties could not necessarily be counted on. Hence the problem of ethnic distrust in the poll violence was a clear factor for the outbreak of PEV in 2007/8.

¹⁰⁸ T. Yamano, Y. Tanaka and R. Gitau, *Haki Yetu (It's Our Right): Determinants of Post-Election Violence in Kenya*, Tokyo: National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies, 2010, Pp 2-3.

¹⁰⁹ Kriegler and Waki Reports on 2007 Election, revised Edition, Primark Ventures Publishers 2009 http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_16094-1522-2-30.pdf P. 52.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, P 52.

Another cause for the PEV was the perceived delay to release the final presidential election results which was interpreted as a pointer towards rigging. The community thus acted to pre-empt rigging but the police and the state machinery moved with force in disregard to peoples' lives to suppress demonstrations hence leading to unnecessary violence. The delay further accelerated anxiety to the level that the principles of spontaneity and inevitability quickly came into play. Anxious moments just needed a trigger which they found in the announcement of the presidential result.

The deliberate use of violence to obtain political power and the decision not to punish perpetrators also contributed to the violence as it had established a culture of impunity within the country. This, in turn, led to the spread of violence in the country, which was almost beyond the control of the State and its institutions.¹¹¹ All these factors have become a method to develop a political difference in view of obtaining the political power as a sense of national identity was eroded.

It has also been understood that political power in Kenya has been personalized around presidency and this has been increased by changes in the Constitution under subsequent Presidents since independence. This was the main cause of the country's political restlessness which contributed to post-election violence. This has been experienced through laws passed to increase executive authority, and other laws seen as being in the way of an executive presidency were often changed or even ignored. This is clearly explained by the fact that by 1991, the Constitution had been amended about 32 times hence weakening checks and balances associated with democracies in Kenya.¹¹²

In addition, it has been argued that political leadership incited the communities against each other particularly when ODM ordered for peaceful mass action across the country with other political leaders backing the action. This contributed to the exacerbation of the post-election violence not only in Kisumu but in the entire nation.

¹¹¹ Waki Commission Simplified Report, Commission of Inquiry to Investigate the Post-Election Violence (CIPEV) <http://www.ncek.org/index.php/information/publications/114-wakireport.html> National Council of Churches of Kenya, 2009, Retrieved on 20th May 2013.

¹¹² Kriegler and Waki Reports on 2007 Election, revised Edition, Primark Ventures Publishers 2009 http://www.kas.de/wf/doc/kas_16094-1522-2-30.pdf P. 48.

2.7 The cause of 2013 violence in Kisumu

Firstly, violence erupted in Kisumu on 9th March 2013 following IEBC's Chairman Isaac Hassan declaring Uhuru Kenyatta as the winner in the 2013 general election.¹¹³ This was received with mixed reactions in Kisumu County. Protesters were seen on the streets as roads were barricaded and bonfire lit demanding for a recount of votes cast.

The protests were cooled down when the Supreme Court took over the matter for investigation to verify the validity of the election results. The argument was why it took five days for the results to be announced instead of official 48 hours after voting ended.

The violence was also caused by the eagerness of the crowds who wanted to know the verdict of the Supreme Court over the presidential results. Tension was visible in the minute hours of 30th March 2013 at Kibuye market and spread to other parts of Kisumu County. Hell broke loose when the Supreme Court ruled in favor of President-elect Uhuru Kenyatta by upholding his victory. Thus demonstrations turned more violent as the protesters were engaged in running battles that resulted into destruction of property, death and physical injuries that caused physical disabilities to some people.

2.8 Conclusion

This chapter endeavoured to look at conflicts in Kisumu through a historical perspective. Indeed the chapter has analyzed the 1969 Kisumu massacre which followed the assassination of Argwing Kodhek in January 1969 and Tom Mboya in July the same year. The resultant violence was felt in most towns of the country but Kisumu town was hard hit. It has also brought to the fore the violence that followed the death of JM Kariuki in 1975, Dr. Robert Ouko in 1990, Dr. Crispin Mbai in 2003 and Shem Onyango in 2012. It is certainly true that the violence that rocked Kisumu during the terror by the Baghdad Boys militants in 1992, the 2007/8 post-election violence and the 2013 violence were unprecedented.

¹¹³ D. Miriri and G. Obulutsa, 'Kenyatta declared winner of Kenya's Presidential vote' 4th March 2013. Retrieved on <http://www.reuters.com/article/2013/03/09/us-kenyan-elections-announcement-idUSBRE92717V20130309> 21st July 2013

The chapter has also explored the reasons behind the violence ranging from political incitement to political expediency and the gains that are accrued with the presidency hence perfectly suiting into the basic needs theory. This long history of conflicts in Kisumu is important since it gives the study a clear understanding of when have conflict taken place in Kisumu and what have been the main triggers. It is against the background of understanding this history of violence in Kisumu that this study endeavors to interrogate the disabled in this violence; were they only victims or perpetrators as well? This becomes the subject of the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

THE DISABLED IN THE CONFLICT IN KISUMU

3.1 Introduction

Conflicts in most cases have happened due to causes related to resources allocation, cross-border conflict as a result of arguments on boundaries, historical injustices, environment and political transition. The conflicts in Kisumu have been associated with political needs of the people, which have found both the able and the physically disabled persons to the streets as perpetrators and equally as victims depending on the intensity of the violence. The PEV as it happened in Kisumu, the disabled persons also got to the streets on realizing that they were denied their basic human needs, this was the open avenue for them to address their grievances. This fits well in the theoretical framework of basic human needs theory as used in the study. Indeed, the conflict was characterized with the criminalities and fatalities which made the PEV complete in its own context. Such characteristics saw the victims who suffered the consequences of the conflict as they struggled to cope with the situation. Perpetrators as those involved in driving the conflict also suffered the consequences of the conflict.

Accordingly, in conflict situation, the concepts of victims and perpetrators have been a common phenomenon in attempting to explain the trend of conflicts. In the former one group is armed and ready to act in a violent manner while in the latter a group of persons feels the consequence of the violence. During the post-election violence, perpetrators and victims could easily be identified in major towns. This was due to the fact that they were characterized with displacing and displacement factor. In Kisumu City in particular, the engaging role of people with various disabilities was difficult to understand as there was no keen interest offered to the group which is considered vulnerable. This study is conceived to disaggregate the roles of the physically disabled as victims or perpetrators during the Post-election Violence.

Though the social context of disability has been based on factors of reliance on support services as a result of poverty and isolation, the group has not been left out as either

perpetrators or victims of the conflicts in Kisumu. From a historical point of view, individuals with disabilities have not been considered reliable reporters of abuse nor have they been given the chance to be self-directed in many domains of their life. On the other hand, the traditional approaches of protecting people with disabilities have involuntarily kept them from accessing the facilities and resources needed for protecting themselves. This chapter therefore endeavors to interrogate the place of the disabled persons in the conflict in Kisumu as perpetrators or victims. It raises pertinent questions as to whether disabled persons played roles in the conflicts as perpetrators and how the conflict affect them and their livelihoods as victims.

3.2 The disabled persons

Disability is the consequence of an impairment that may be physical, cognitive, mental, sensory, emotional, developmental, or some combination of these. A disability may be present right from birth, or occur during a person's lifetime.¹¹⁴

Disability is an umbrella term, covering impairments, activity limitations, and participation restrictions. Disabilities in a person is a problem in body function or structure as one faced with a challenge of activity limitation which is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action. Similarly, participation restriction is a problem experienced by disabled persons in involvement in life situations. This makes disability a complex phenomenon, reflecting on an interaction between features of a person's body and features of the society in which one lives.¹¹⁵ Persons with disabilities have therefore been unfairly stigmatized by society by being sidelined in a number of activities such as decision making and vying for political seats within the country.

Kenya as a sovereign state has a number of groups fighting and advocating for the rights of people with disabilities, and they include: National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCPWD), Handicap International (HI) and Deaf Empowerment Kenya

¹¹⁴ U.N. Decade of Disabled Persons 1983-1992. 1983. World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons. New York: United Nations.

¹¹⁵ Disabilities. World Health Organization. Retrieved on 11 August 2012.

(DEK). These groups have tried to help build the relationship of the disabled persons with able bodied persons from the community, as they help in reducing instances of discrimination and stigmatization of the disabled persons. For instance during the Kisumu disabled workshop held in 2009, it was stated that in 2007 the media in Kenya hardly engaged in disability issues because of scanty knowledge on the subject during the post-election violence.¹¹⁶ The media was accused of failing to highlight the plight of the disabled during the PEV. This clearly indicates that whenever issues concerning Persons With Disabilities (PWD) are covered the public has mainly centered on the personality and not the disabled whom they are lace with pity. This was clear as, one of the respondents in Kisumu, a wheelchair case said:

I have been living with physical disability with crippled legs for the past 30 years. My life has been begging on the streets of Kisumu and I have realized that disabled are not considered when conflict breaks within the town as we have been overlooked.¹¹⁷

According to Priscah Omondi, it can be deduced that, the public truly sidelined the disabled who in most cases have been victims in times of conflict. Throughout the violent acts that have taken place in Kisumu, the disabled have not received any attention from the public as they have struggled for their safety unaided.

Indeed, the government has recognized that discrimination against persons with disabilities is entrenched in stereotypes prevailing in Kenyan society that portray persons with disabilities as a burden and a curse to the society. This has often led to instances where individuals or families that have persons with disabilities to shy away from revealing such persons as some end up as street beggars with no clear identity of where they come from. In such instances, the challenge to the disabled persons has been when violence erupts and the streets are impassable they get destabilized physically,

¹¹⁶ G. M Inimah, E. Mukulu and P. Mathooko, literature Review on Media Portrayal of People with Disabilities in Kenya, International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, Vol 2 No. 8 (Special Issue April 2012), p 4.

¹¹⁷ Oral Interview, Priscah Omondi, Kisumu Town, 22/6/2013

emotionally and economically.¹¹⁸ In a conflict situation therefore, it is very sympathetic as disabled persons get mistreated and abused by the able bodied persons. As Priscah Omondi one of the physically disabled who moves with the support of wheelchair illuminated their mistreatment by the able bodied persons;

We struggle to make ends meet as we were at a time mistreated and abused by the able persons who destroyed our businesses, took away our walking aid as they held that we are a curse to the community.¹¹⁹

To be seen as a curse to the community and the mistreatment they received from the able bodied persons left about half of the disabled population in Kisumu city losing their walking/supportive aid as the able persons use them as weapons in the course of the conflict. This made it nasty to about half of the disabled person population in Kisumu city to vacate from the hot spots in times of violence as they lacked their supportive aid. Interviewing a disabled who use crutches he adduced to this saying;

“Things have been worse whenever violence broke up within Kisumu city. We, the disabled are the most affected since we cannot vacate the town quickly as some protesters end up snatching our supportive aid. We are immobilized and cannot vacate the scene of violence as we are left to suffer the brunt of the violence.¹²⁰

In the course of the post-election violence, the disabled persons were invisible such that they were not given much consideration as this was centered on inequalities they experience from the society thus making them not recognized to the general public. The stereotype which is given to them has made the disabled not to be identified in many conflict situations as potential perpetrators but viewed disproportionately as victims.

It is therefore worth noting that, the disabled persons up to a certain level also contribute to development of issues which could affect everyone in the society. While participating

¹¹⁸ National Report; Kenya’s Initial Report Submitted Under Article 35(1) Of The United Nations Convention On The Rights Of Persons With Disabilities 31st August 2011, p 13.

¹¹⁹ Oral Interview, Priscah Omondi, Kisumu Town, 22/6/2013.

¹²⁰ Oral Interview, Ismael Otieno, Robert Ouko Estate, 19/6/2013.

in these activities, they socialize with both the old and young, as they endear themselves to the masses. Some of the activities crafted by the disabled persons became very useful in planning and execution of PEV. For instance, one of disabled who is crippled in the legs but with functioning hands and sane mind, who worked cobbler in Kisumu city confessed that he was influential in planning for the violence as he hosted a number of idlers who always gathered at his workplace as they shared politics with high hopes ODM winning the election. This was a basic human need to the idling youths such that ODM emerging winners in the general elections will change their lives as the ODM manifesto was out to support all groups of people in the country. He alludes that the area of work for disabled who were involved in small businesses such as newspaper vending, and selling of sweets along the streets of Kisumu town were safe for gatherings and planning for what do when the elections were ridged. On the other hand it is clear that a number of the disabled have the potentiality to contribution to the development of the nation as they show their capability in different field of work. One of the respondents, a newspaper vendor on a wheelchair in Kisumu town had this to say;

“I have been a newspaper vendor in this town for twenty years. Violent cases have often exploded within the city and as a disabled person I have suffered a lot. My contribution to the development of the nation has always been tempered with whenever violence erupts.”¹²¹

Accordingly, the Post-Election Violence which rocked the whole country saw different actors involved and it is difficult for one to rule out the participation of some disabled persons as perpetrators during the conflict. Although the disabled persons had minimal participation in fueling of conflicts in Kisumu city, the study shows that majority of them were victims of the PEV. As victims, the physically disabled persons feared for their lives and loss of property as the intensity of violence that erupted in Kisumu could not favour them. On the other hand, the study has found out that a small percentage of physically disabled persons were active in a number of conflicts/violence that have hit Kisumu city since independence.

¹²¹ Oral Interview, Grace Akinyi (Not real name for security reasons), Kisumu Town, 20/6/2013.

Throughout these violent/conflicts, physically disabled persons in most cases they have been have been insulted as their disabilities have been linked to madness, lunacy, curse or demonic possession. This stigmatization, and as it is alleged by John Muga, it has been the root cause of mistreatment, social exclusion, and poor treatment of persons with disability in any function carried out by the society.¹²² Although not rampant now, families still chain or hide from the public their disabled members. This practice remains archaic as it goes against the human rights which the disabled persons of any kind are entitled to as they are also human beings like any other.¹²³ Thus with the capabilities they possess the disabled persons are also emotional and need to satisfy their basic human needs in life.

3.3 The perpetrators of the Conflict

Armed conflict and political violence are generally viewed as "male domains" perpetrated by men whether as armed forces, guerrilla groups, paramilitaries or peacemakers. The unavoidable, or deliberate, involvement of physically disabled persons and women has received far less attention, and there is a tendency to portray a simplistic division of roles between men as aggressors and the physically disabled, women and children as victims, particularly of injuries, death and sexual abuse among other atrocities.¹²⁴ The personality causes, costs and consequences of violent conflicts have been at best under-represented and more often misrepresented. In reality, both able and disabled persons are both actors and victims throughout violent conflict and all stages of conflict considering their physical and mental implications.¹²⁵ The different between the disabled persons and the able bodied person is the level at which they were involved as actors and how vulnerable they are to be victims.

The conflicts in Kisumu have been of political, economic and social nature as the physically disabled have played some key role throughout the conflict situations as in one way or another they have perpetrated wrongdoing. That is, they have not only been a

¹²² Oral Interview, John Dan Muga, Kenyatta Sports Ground, 23/6/2013

¹²³ G. M Inimah, . E. Mukulu and P. Mathooko, literature Review on Media Portrayal of People with Disabilities in Kenya, International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, p 4.

¹²⁴N. Caroline O. Moser, Fiona Clark, ed., Victims, Perpetrators Or Actors? Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2001) p 243

¹²⁵ Ibid, p 243.

means of presenting themselves as perpetrators, but also as advocates, fostering the trust and collaboration with the able bodied persons who majority are more violent in an encounter. As the debate sage over, the role of physically disabled persons as perpetrators, it is important to understand that the disabled as depicted in this study refers to the physically challenged. This class of the disabled person has the capability to participate in violence in different ways depending on their levels of disabilities. Some of the acts they could carry out and will be discussed below include stone throwing aimed at destroying, demonstration aimed at airing their grievances, mobilizations and as informers to help facilitate in attaining their objectives by being fierce.

3.3.1 Stone Throwing as a weapon

Stone throwing is one of the weapons that have been used by many people in time of conflict. Indeed, slings which are projectile weapons typically used to throw a blunt projectile such as a stone, clay, or lead are used. The sling is inexpensive and easy to build as it has historically been used for hunting game and in combat thus they can be easily made by the disabled themselves.¹²⁶ This weapon has been used as a means to react and defend themselves from the aggressors. It was alleged that most violence acts that have taken place in Kisumu, stone throwing as a weapon using slings was common as those involved have aimed at causing damage to property and injuries to human person. In the same way, during the Post-Election Violence, throwing of stones as a weapon using slings and hands were noticeable in the city of Kisumu as it was not only left to the able youths but a number of disabled persons were also involved as one of the respondents had this to say;

“I saw a number of disabled persons also participate during the PEV as they took to the street throwing stones which resulted to damage of property. The able persons took advantage of those disabled persons of who some were to avail stones to the able persons.”¹²⁷

Their involvement in stone throwing which saw them destroy properties worth millions of shillings, was a clear indication that they were perpetrators of the violence as they

¹²⁶ S., Cliff, *The Sling for Sport & Survival*. Boulder, Colorado: Paladin Press, 2011. pp. 60–63.

¹²⁷ Oral Interview, Moses Audi, Kenyatta Sports Ground Kisumu, 23/6/2013.

joined the crowd to show that they were in solidarity to fight for their basic human need for the electoral commission to show transparency on who rightfully was the winner at the end of the 2007/8 general election. Indeed six of the disabled whom we interviewed were quick to say that transparency lacked in 2007/8 general election and that is why violent broke out in the city of Kisumu in protest for the delay and declaration of Emilio Kibaki as the winner which was not satisfying.

3.3.2 Demonstrations

Demonstrations are also referred to as street protest and they are action by a mass group or collection of groups of people in favor of a political or other cause; it normally consists of walking in a mass march formation and either beginning with or meeting at a designated endpoint, or rally, to hear speakers.¹²⁸ Though there has been stereotyping to physically disabled as complete victims in armed conflict, they have not been stereotyped as perpetrators in conflicts. As such demonstrations or street protests do not exclude the disabled from the action which are either violent or nonviolent in nature. As Collier and Hoeffler puts it, individuals join demonstrating or protesting groups in order to avoid destitution, as a livelihood coping strategy and of all to secure protection from violence for themselves.¹²⁹ In fact it is when the disabled are beginning to be realized that they are part of the society affected by recurrent of the conflicts which has seen them go for demonstration or protest in the violence with the aim of protecting their basic human needs as they raised their grievances on disputed election. During the post-election violence in Kisumu as reported by Moses Audi, who saw four physically disabled person who did not look timid as they joined the demonstrating crowd on the streets cited that;

“The four physically disabled joined the mass group demonstration together with able bodied persons as a sign of being in solidarity, as they expressed their anger of their own being denied political leadership being denied their political right.”¹³⁰

¹²⁸ E. Hobsbawm *Interesting Times: A Twentieth-Century Life*. Random House Digital, Inc. (2003). pp. 72-76.

¹²⁹ P. Collier, and A. Hoeffler, Greed and Grievance in Civil War, *Oxford Economic Papers* 56 (4): pp 563-578.

¹³⁰ Oral Interview, Moses Audi, Kenyatta Sports Ground Kisumu, 23/6/2013.

It is from this argument that one gets to understand that within the demonstrating mass group the courageous physically disabled with the same objective can easily join demonstration with the aim of presenting their grievances to the public in a violent or nonviolent manner in a conflict situation. As Moses Audi puts it, the four physically disabled persons in Kisumu, were involved in the demonstration which exposed them to the risk of becoming victims as the demonstration ended violently. Indeed the courage of the four physically disabled persons to get involved in demonstrate made them as a man willing to remain at his post and to defend himself against the enemy without running away.¹³¹ This was the self-affirmation of the disabled persons that their desired basic human need were not fulfilled by getting involved in the demonstration in spite of the fact that they are incapacity physically.

3.3.3 Mobilizing role

Mobilization is a key ingredient in a conflict situation as it is the act of assembling and making both crowds and supplies ready for war or conflict.¹³² In most cases it has been a role associated with the able bodied persons who can move quickly and gather information that could influence the conflict. In Kisumu it was a different case as one respondent asserted that he spotted one disabled person on a wheelchair who was an active mobilizer of the crowd in Kisumu town during the PEV as he cited;

The physically disabled person on a wheelchair did not shy off because his crippled legs. He was vocal and courageous as he mobilized the crowd. With the courage he possessed, he was on the front line as the crowd cheered at whatever he said. On his wheelchair he gave them morale as he kept them company in committing criminal offences such as looting and torching of some business premises.¹³³

For one to be a mobilizer, he/she has to gather the courage to unite and walk the crowd towards a common goal. This characteristic qualifies the disabled person as mobilizers for the case of Kisumu hence grouping them as perpetrators to PEV, depending on the

¹³¹ P. John, M. Cooper, and D. S. Hutchinson. "Laches." Complete Works. Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Pub., 1997, pp. 676-682.

¹³² C. McPhail, *"Protest Mobilization, Protest Repression, and Their Interaction"* Repression and Mobilization, Volume: 21 New edition University of Minnesota Press, 2005, pp. 3-15.

¹³³ Oral Interview, Stephen Okwiri (Not real name for security reasons), Kisumu Town, 20/6/2013.

courage and reasons that pushed them to demonstrate. This clearly negates the perception of able persons as the only rightful mobilizers in any given conflict situation. This is due to the fact that without tactics and courage to move the crowd no able or disabled person will get into act of demonstrating. As alluded by one of the respondent, around 0.5% of the total population of disabled in Kisumu city were courageous, tactful and actively or partially participated in demonstration as they had minor or partial disabilities; lame with only one healthy leg, mono-eyed and those with one functioning hand who participated.¹³⁴ The above example illustrates just one of many such cases that the disabled persons participated actively and therefore were perpetrators during the PEV in Kisumu city.

3.3.4 Informants

Information is sometimes said to be a weapon of war. The rapidity by means of which information is conveyed greatly influences and worsens the conflict. It gives it fire through propaganda, stereotyping and hate speech with propaganda meaning the consistent, enduring efforts of the informants to create or shape events to influence the relations of the public to an enterprise, idea or group.¹³⁵

In a conflict situation, the perpetrators have channels of receiving information on what is going on and when and where to attack. This role of being an informant in a conflict situation has in most cases been related to women and children. In reference to the data collected from the field it was noted that, around 1.5% of the total population of the physically disabled persons in Kisumu were worthy informants in the violence as they took advantage of their disability by being considered victims in most conflicts. In Kisumu town one of the respondents said;

“The disabled took advantage of their disability to signal the crowd whenever they realized that the police were heading to their direction. The police left the disabled ignoring that they could do nothing without knowing that they were passing information to the protesters and in this way, they perpetrated the conflict which

¹³⁴ Oral Interview, Stephen Okwiri (Not real name for security reasons), Kisumu Town, 20/6/2013

¹³⁵ E. L. Bernays and M. C. Miller, *Propaganda* (Brooklyn, NY: Ig Publishing, 2004), p 53.

resulted to loss of lives and property, looting and destabilization of normal life in our Kisumu city.”¹³⁶

From the respondents, information, it has often happened that the physically disabled are viewed as victims who cannot carry out actions related with perpetrating the violence. It is clear from the respondent that around 1.5% of the physically disabled persons in Kisumu were confidential informants and indeed they provided information in order to obtain lenient treatment for themselves, as in return they were assisted to get some food for their survival.¹³⁷

3.4 Reasons why disabled became perpetrator

Though there have been conflict melt down due to peace-building and reconstruction activities in Kisumu, in 2007/8 it was a different instance yet it remained political. According to the data collected from the field around 20% of the physically disabled persons were also attached to the politics of the country as they had reasons for voting in their desired candidate. With fixed minds on their basic human need of seeing ODM producing the fourth president of the republic of Kenya, it was difficult for around 20% of the physically disabled person in Kisumu to swallow it silently.¹³⁸ On the same note, they felt that it was the ripe moment for them to express their grievances and equally their solidarity with their political leaders. Indeed, it is of relevancy to discuss some of the reasons why the disabled were perpetrators in Kisumu PEV. The reasons include, the feeling of being marginalized in decision making process, lack of economic empowerment sources and political synergy or interaction.

3.4.1 The feeling of being marginalized in decision making process

From the oral interviews it is adduced that, the disabled in Kisumu felt that their communities had marginalized them in decision making processes. They felt that the marginalization had left majority of the disabled out of many government positions and allocations. It was then argued by Lilian Adhiambo that;

¹³⁶ Oral Interview, Kennedy Ochieng, Kenyatta Sports Ground Kisumu, 23/6/2013.

¹³⁷ Oral Interview, Kennedy Ochieng, Kenyatta Sports Ground Kisumu, 23/6/2013.

¹³⁸ Oral Interview, Focus Group Discussion, Kondele, 24/6/2013

Around 0.5% of the disabled were perpetrator because they felt that it has been a long time as they have not been included in decision making and PEV was the right avenue for them to present the grievance of being included in decision making by the state.¹³⁹

Indeed, being marginalized in decision making made them feel socially disadvantage and relegated to the fringe of society as they have been systematically denied full access to various rights, opportunities and resources that are normally available to members of a different group, and which are fundamental to social integration within that particular group. Such included housing, employment, healthcare, civic engagement and democratic participation.¹⁴⁰ It was saddening for the disabled who were denied their basic human right through marginalization as they had to respond to it as a means to fight for their basic human right which was democratically electing their rightful president who was ridged out thus trigger to the violence as it was openly known to the public including the disabled that the presidential general elections were ridged.

3.4.2 Economic Empowerment

Undeniably 65% of the disabled who were interviewed in Kisumu live in abject poverty. It is only 25% who endeavor to make a living by running small businesses that cannot march their large-scale business competitors. On the other hand 32% of those interviewed were street beggars as means to earn a livelihood. Hence the bid to get economic emancipation remained a reason for them to act as perpetrators of the conflict. Within the focused group discussion, the responded argued that approximately 12% of the physically disabled in Kisumu city were forced by the situation to act in demand for economic empowerment as they were living in dire poverty. They claimed to have suffered a lot and it deemed to them that they will continue suffering.¹⁴¹ This was due to the fact that, there has been a general feeling that a change in political leadership of the country will help transform the lives of the disabled persons economically and not only in Kisumu but the whole country.

¹³⁹ Oral Interview, Lilian Adhiambo, Kenyatta Sports Ground Kisumu Town 23/6/2013

¹⁴⁰ Hilary Silver, *Social Exclusion: Comparative Analysis of Europe and Middle East Youth*, Middle East Youth Initiative Working Paper (September 2007), p.15

¹⁴¹ Oral Interview, Focus Group Discussion, Kondele, 24/6/2013.

3.4.3 Political synergy

Ray France et al defines Political synergy as the interaction of political elements that when combined produce a total effect that is greater than the sum of individual elements or contribution.¹⁴² The Orange Democratic Movement dominance as a political party in Kisumu city had been branded the potential winning party for the 2007 presidential election as a result of its successful merger of different political parties that produced a total effect to the Kenyan citizens. Positively, a reasonable percentage of around 82% of the interviewed physically disabled persons affirmed that they were tied in a successful political merger of political parties that formed ODM, with high hopes that Mr. Odinga, ODM's presidential candidate would emerge the winner.

All did not go well as the announcement of presidential results followed by the declaration of Mwai Kibaki as the winner and the President-elect was received with mixed reaction in major towns across the country. This left the residence of Kisumu city and other strong hold regions of ODM in disbelief, as they did not see the reason why the successful merger and interaction of different parties that formed ODM could not emerge as winners? As a result there were reactions by people of Kisumu and as reported by respondent, about 0.5% of the total population of the physically disabled in the city joined the crowd demonstrating in protest for stolen elections. In the process stone throwing using slings was a weapon they used as they aimed at causing injuries and destruction of property.

Furthermore, they were informers to the abled bodied protestors as they express anger of being denied their political right which left the city of Kisumu in amess. Indeed they wanted to see ODM presidential candidate Mr. Odinga emerge the winner and this was to satisfy their basic human need as the 55 % of disabled persons whom were interviewed held that ODM winning the presidential election was one of their basic human need which they felt had to be actualized. This was further influenced by the general feeling among the physically disabled that the community that manipulated the political system and clinched the presidency enjoys the national cake.¹⁴³ This would make them become

¹⁴² R. French et al, *Organizational Behaviour*, 2000, pp. 15-23.

¹⁴³ C.O Imbiakha, *Op.cit*, p 26.

the main beneficiaries as they would feel the closeness of the presidency in the city of Kisumu.

3.5 Perpetrators in Kisumu PEV

According to the Waki Report, the perpetrators of the post-election violence were mentioned as; state security agents and such are, Administration Police (APs), regular police, and members of the General Service Unit (GSU), organized gangs, militias, neighbours, relatives, supposed friends, and individuals working in IDP camps.¹⁴⁴ The same trend was quite available in Kisumu as these agents of violence indiscriminately beat, mutilated and even maimed some of the physically disabled persons in Kisumu.

These groups differed from each other as perpetrators because each acted differently using different means, strategies and skills. In some areas, sexual assault, destruction of property, threatening acts were strategies used to pressure people to leave their homes as they were perceived to have voted for the ‘wrong’ candidate or tribe and in tandem with that to dominate, humiliate and degrade them and their communities into a pit of powerlessness.¹⁴⁵

3.6 Threats from perpetrators of PEV

Perpetrators are known to be very arrogant, scaring and ready to destroy persons, that is, they are always ready to commit or do something which is pretty bad. In armed conflict, perpetrators have the courage to mobilize the crowd which gives them the threatening factor.¹⁴⁶ Thus 57 % of the respondents who were interviewed argued that, the perpetrators of the PEV in Kisumu were feared by the locals because of the threats they posed to them. Some of these threats were actualized while others remained to cause fear, misery and even forced people into migrating from their habitual residences. These threats include spread of fear and insecurity, forced eviction and criminal activities. All these acts of perpetrating the violence were aimed at destabilizing the activities within the city cause injuries and destruction of property which makes them answerable

¹⁴⁴Waki Report On Post-Election Violence 2007-2008
http://www.marsgroupkenya.org/pdfs/2008/10/Waki_Chapters/Chapter_6_sexual_violence.pdf retrieved on 20th May 2013, Pp. 252-254

¹⁴⁵ Ibid, Pp. 252-254

¹⁴⁶ D. Harper, Etymology Dictionary, Random House, 2010, p 1188.

3.6.1 Spread of fear and insecurity

Perpetrators in a conflict situation are habitually armed with weapons which will instill fear and cause insecurity to enable them control the movement and/or the resources of the residence of the area. In Kisumu this was pigeonholed with continuous attacks against resident and civilian objects which led to restrictions of their movement. This was a big challenge to the residents of Kisumu as their basic human needs of enjoying normalcy in their businesses and daily activities were halted by the violence. According to the respondents about 5% of the physically disabled were not able to continue managing their small businesses in the city of Kisumu but 0.5% who were involved in protests posed fear and insecurity in the city. On the same note 52% of the respondent said that it was difficult for the residents to access some of the essential basic human needs such as water points and market places which were a pipedream as they were scared of being harmed or forced into sexual harassment by the able bodied perpetrators.

3.6.2 Forced eviction

Forced evictions in Kisumu during the PEV constituted of gross violations of the human rights to adequate housing, food, water, health, education, work, security of the person, freedom from cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment, and freedom of movement.¹⁴⁷ The 52% of the respondents interviewed said that the act of forced eviction were carried out by perpetrators who forced out about 65% of people from their rented business houses from the central business district of the city of Kisumu thus living them in a helpless state. The forced eviction act also affected the disabled persons who were socially and economically traded in the Kisumu town as their human rights were also violated. The targeted communities were those from Central Kenya and those that were perceived to have supported the Party of National Unity (PNU). These threats from perpetrators resulted to loss of lives and destruction of property. Indeed the eviction were not in accordance with international human rights due to the fact that it was forcefully as it increasingly led the evicts dependent on humanitarian aid. According to the respondents, about 0.5% of the physically disabled were involved as perpetrators in this conflict and they supported the able bodied persons who were armed with machetes and clubs during the eviction exercise.

¹⁴⁷ United Nation Human Rights “forced eviction” facts sheet No 25/Rev.1 Forced Eviction.

3.6.3 Use of criminal activities

Criminal activities refer to those activities that are harmful and punishable by the state.¹⁴⁸

The study refers to those acts which were harmful not only to individuals who are abled or disabled but also to community, society or the state. It was noted by 57 % of the respondents interviewed that, perpetrators of the PEV in Kisumu committed crimes such as assaults, destruction of property, murder, sexual harassment and physical abuse. It was alleged by Moses Audi that he saw about four physically disabled persons who were involved as fighters, labourers, messengers/mobilizers and informers within the city of Kisumu. With concern, to go by the law the notion that acts or contributes towards murder, rape and theft are prohibited by law as they are criminality in nature.¹⁴⁹

For Moses Audi the four physically disabled persons were noticed with the demonstrating crowd thus effecting the criminal acts of theft and damage of properties which is an offence in accordance to the human rights law. He went further to say that these criminal acts were also experienced at Kondele, Nyalenda, and Otongolo estates in Kisumu city where violence was at its maximum. The respondent concluded by says that the acts resulted into family breakups as perpetrators made it cumbersome for families to trace their missing members and relatives. The affected families remained anxious for news as they thought of the whereabouts of their loved ones.¹⁵⁰ It was very unfortunate that the law did not target to punish those who were perpetrators at the ground level and reacted using criminal ways which affected the lives of fellow Kenyans, but instead the law targets leaders who were drawn from ODM and PNU political parties.

3.7 The Disables as Victims in Kisumu PEV

While it is alleged from a foregoing discussion that about 0.5% of the total population of physically disabled were perpetrators of the conflict in Kisumu, this study maintains that they were victims in equal measure. Victims according to this study are those people who were affected during the Post-Election Violence. From the data collected from the field about 70% of the interviewed physically disabled persons were victims and they were incapacitated physically, psychologically and economically as they were forced to

¹⁴⁸ E. A. Martin, Oxford dictionary of Law (7ed.), Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003, p263.

¹⁴⁹ E.Mark, "What is crime" 17th June 2010 BBC News, Retrieved on 4th August 2015

¹⁵⁰ Oral Interview, Moses Audi, Kenyatta Sports Ground Kisumu, 23/6/2013.

depend on Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and the government. These institutions helped rehabilitate them from the traumatic experiences of the 2007/8 violence. According to James Opar, their organization “Flamingo Community Based Rehabilitation” was much involved in rehabilitating the victims of PEV included disabled through counselling and trauma healing sessions.¹⁵¹ It was therefore noted that, other victims sought refuge in IDP camps, which were occupied by returnees at Moi Stadium in Kisumu and St Mark *Milimani* Anglican Church compound. In addition, Kondele and Central Police Station accommodated those who were displaced from the rest of the city centre.¹⁵²

Accordingly, the 2007/8 Post-Election Violence in Kisumu caused more harm to a number of people from communities. The properties belonging to Kikuyu and Gusii communities were the most targeted as they were perceived to have supported PNU which was declared winning party for 2007 presidential election. This made their lives more susceptible as they had to seek for asylum and safety for their lives. Hence in reference to the data about 70% of the interviewed disabled persons who were victims lost their property as their businesses were vandalized by irate Luo gangs who moved in and around the city armed and chanting anti-Kikuyu and anti-Gusii songs. The rowdy gangs did not care of who was a disabled person, a Luo or not they were all affected by the violent demonstration, and this drives us to the discussion of how the disabled were victims during the PEV in Kisumu.

3.7.1 Struggle for safety

With the violent situation in Kisumu city, it was not only the Kikuyu and the Gusii community that bore the violence. According to the respondents about 20% of the disabled persons including women, children and HIV/AIDs patients were victims. They sought safe haven in police stations and church compounds where they would earn a livelihood as their basic human need to security was satisfied. For instance, Kondele and Central Police Stations in Kisumu became homes to many including the physically

¹⁵¹ Oral Interview, James Opar (not real name), Flamingo Community Based Rehabilitation, Kondele, 18/8/2015.

¹⁵² Oral Interview, Charles Zacchaeus, Kondele, 20/6/2013.

disabled persons. However, it was again a challenge for some of the physically disabled persons who were not able to move faster as they urgently needed aid, thus making them susceptible to injuries from the rowdy crowd. One of respondent who was a victim following his struggle for safety had this to say;

I could not move quickly for my safety because I move with the support of my hands. It was too late when I arrived at the Kondele Police Station. It was already crowded with many people but I forced myself through just for my safety.¹⁵³

This struggle for safety illustrate how the physically disable were victims as it depended on their means and tactics they used to get to safer places.

3.7.2 Displacement

Displacement is an act of being moved by circumstances from your place of work or residence to another place for safety measures. As such, just as in any other conflict or violent, displacement was experienced in Kisumu city during the 2007/8 PEV. About 63% of the physically disabled who we interviewed were victims of displacement as they were forced out of Kisumu town hence subverting them from their daily activities. It was clear from one blind respondent at Otongolo shopping center who said that she was a beggar at Ukwala Supermarket entrance in Kisumu town but the violence displaced her and now she is forced to beg at Otongolo where she does not collect as much when compared to the former place.¹⁵⁴ This depicts her as a PEV victim as she remembered with nostalgia her good old days as a beggar in Kisumu town though she is blind.

3.7.3 Physical injuries

Physical injuries are common whenever there is a violent act in any given place. As Bundervoet and Verwimp, puts it, violent conflict kills, cause injuries and disables people.¹⁵⁵ The 2007/8 PEV in Kisumu like any other violent conflicts resulted to physical injuries experienced by those who were displaced from Kisumu city. According to the

¹⁵³ Oral Interview, Patrick Oburu (not real name for security reasons), Kondele, 24/6/2013.

¹⁵⁴ Oral Interview, Jane Achieng' (not real name for security reasons), Otongolo Shopping Center, 21//6/2013.

¹⁵⁵ T. Bundervoet and P. Verwimp, "Civil War and Economic Sanctions: An Analysis of Anthropometric Outcomes in Burundi" HiCN working Paper no 11, Households in Conflict Network (www.hicn.org).

data six of the interviewed disabled persons who could not quickly vacate the town center were victims of physical injuries. The six disabled that were interviewed were unaware of the unfolding situation as they were busy with their daily jobs in different parts of the city as the violent spread across the town. The PEV was consequential to them as they recalled how they lost their assisting devices and means of independence as they struggled to access temporary camps, and food distribution centers. In this struggle they affirmed that they were disabled more as they developed new cases of physical disabilities resulting from physical injuries caused by the PEV. One of the respondents noted that there was a physically disabled boy who was trampled upon by the rowdy crowd that disabled him more as he sustained a broken leg adding the disability to his disabled right hand.¹⁵⁶

3.7.4 Sexual harassment

Sexual harassment is typically of a woman in workplace, social situation or conflict situation involving the making of unlawful sexual advances or obscene remarks; it is a bullying or coercion of the sexual nature.¹⁵⁷ Though it is unlawful to harass a person, disabled or able bodied because of that person sex, in conflict situation, women have been victims of sexual harassment by the perpetrators of violence who have aimed at hurting them. In Kisumu, five of the interviewed female disabled persons said that they were not secure and were either sexually harassed or abused by the police and gangs. One of the disabled lady interviewed at Kenyatta Sports Ground Kisumu cited the case of sexual harassment she experience in the hands of the police.

I was in the company of friends who went to loot from Ukwala Supermarket but all was not well as we were caught by the police. I could not run as fast as my friends. I landed in the hands of the police who demanded to have forced sex with me. I refused but they ended up abusing me sexually...¹⁵⁸

The attackers or security agents in conflict situation have never differentiated between the incapacitated and the capable bodied persons, they have abused them sexually hence

¹⁵⁶ Oral Interview, John Dan Muga, Kenyatta Sports Ground, 23/6/2013.

¹⁵⁷ P. Michele, Antoinettee; Brickman Academic and Work Place sexual Harassment, SunyPress, 1991, pp. 2-6.

¹⁵⁸ Oral Interview, Anonymous for Security purposes, Kenyatta Sports Ground, 19/6/2013.

humiliating and intimidating them. As such sexual abuses led to unwanted pregnancies, Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs) and HIV/AIDs. Some were traumatized as they consented in despair and apathy. This became a heavy burden to a people who were already physically disabled as they could not manage the double effect of their disability.

3.7.5 Psychological trauma

This is a type of damage to the psyche that occurs as a result of a severely distressing event. It is also the result of an overwhelming amount of stress that exceeds one's ability to cope or integrate the emotions involved with that experience.¹⁵⁹ In 2007/8 Post-Election Violence there were violation of human rights which put people of Kisumu in a state of extreme confusion and insecurity as physical injuries, sexual harassment to physically disabled persons added a psychological wound which was hard to accept. This experience that disabled persons went through left them traumatized. This trauma was as a result of witnessing the events that led to loss of lives of persons they knew or interacted with as friends or customer who bought their goods.

The psychological trauma as felt by the disabled persons and the normal person were different due to the fact that for the disable person it was a double tragedy as they found it difficult to deal with psychological and their physical disabilities at the same time. For instance Mr. John Dan Muga as one of the victims of trauma occasioned by the physical disability he sustained during the violence. He said that he began taking alcohol heavily as a mechanism to help him forget the disability he developed and the job he lost.¹⁶⁰ Losing an eye was something that John Dan Muga could not contemplate. On the same note he could not believe that his job came to an end.

3.7.6 Loss of property

There were victims who reckoned losing their property while they were fleeing their homes. In Kisumu, the physically disabled persons as defined in this chapter were totally subverted from their circadian activities that ended up losing their valuables. The twenty

¹⁵⁹ A. P. Deprince and J. J. Freyd, "The Harm of Trauma: Pathological Fear, Shattered (2002) in J. Kauffman (ed). *Loss of the Assumptive World a Theory of Traumatic Loss*, New York: Brunner Routledge pp. 71-82.

¹⁶⁰ Oral Interview, John Dan Muga, Kenyatta Sports Ground Kisumu, 23/6/2013.

respondents in a focused group discussion at Kondele said that majority of the disabled persons lost their possession while their businesses were looted, houses were razed, supportive aid such as crutches, eye glasses, and wheelchairs were forcefully taken away from them and some of which were used as weapons by the rowdy protesters.¹⁶¹

Equally, they said that about 150 of the physically disabled persons were victims of vandalized small businesses of selling newspapers, sweets, biscuit, cigarettes and snacks.¹⁶² In Kisumu town these small businesses managed by about 4% of physically disabled were vandalized by protesters who were angered following the delay on releasing final presidential results and later the declaration of Mwai Kibaki as the President-elect of the Republic of Kenya. The 2% of the total physically disabled persons who managed small businesses lost their stock as they could not put off the protesters from looting. It was alleged that the protesters even forced the physically disabled persons to join the protest marches and those who refused were dealt with accordingly by the protesters. It was critical that, some of these acts by the protesters affected the disabled persons directly or indirectly. For example in Kondele, while the arsonists targeted Grand Kimwa Hotel the effect was to all the surrounding stalls including those of a physically disabled persons on wheelchair who sold second-hand clothes and Mr. Otieno's kiosk, a disabled person who goes on crutches. One of the respondents who witnessed recalled vividly;

The protesters were throwing stones using slings and destroying property worth millions. They arrived at Kondele and targeted to torch Grand Kimwa Hotel. I saw a disabled woman on a wheelchair roasting maize at the veranda of a shop. Her business looted by the angry horde that left her helpless and within a short time the Hotel was set ablaze...¹⁶³

This is just one of the examples on how the disabled persons lost their property to the angry protesters in Kisumu town. Indeed, it has been challenging for a number of them to revive their businesses as they still live in fear of facing the same impact.

¹⁶¹ Oral Interview, Focused Group Discussion, Kondele, 22/6/2013.

¹⁶² Oral Interview, Focused Group Discussion, Kondele, 22/6/2013.

¹⁶³ Oral Interview, Philip Okore(Not Real Name for Security Reasons), Kondele, 22/6/2013

3.7.7 Inability to access food, water and other basic needs

Conflict situations have been characterized with the difficulty to access food and other basic human needs. During the post-election violence it was alleged by one of the respondent that more than 20% of disabled persons were faced with the challenge to accessing food from shopping centers due to protracted Post-Election violence.¹⁶⁴ This was followed by limitation of quantities of essential goods such as flour and sugar that one was allowed to buy from Nakumatt Supermarket. This was due to the fact that Nakumatt was the only supermarket that was operational in the town at that time. In fact, it made life tough for physically disabled persons to access food from the supermarket as the queue was long. Apart from queuing, the process involved scrambling which greatly disadvantaged the physically disabled persons.¹⁶⁵ This caused some physically disabled persons to go with little or no food for days.

This was unusual problem as they have been accentuated by the sad history of Kenya's Post-Election Violence and the reality that perpetrators have not only gone unpunished but have continued afterwards as powerful political figures.¹⁶⁶ While on the other hand the victims remain to count their loss, one responded said that about 0.1% of physically disabled persons also sustained higher rates of morbidity and mortality due to lack of food.

3.8 The disabled persons as victims

The disabled persons did not become victims out of their own will, they faced many challenges during the 2007/8 PEV which made them susceptible to injuries. Some of the reasons of their vulnerability as victims include; loss of support from the family members, loss of mobility and accessibility aids, and the public lacking knowledge of the disabled needs

¹⁶⁴ Oral Interview, Monicah Awino, Nyalenda Kisumu, 19/6/2013.

¹⁶⁵ Oral Interview, Monicah Awino, Nyalenda Kisumu, 19/6/2013.

¹⁶⁶ Waki Report On Post-Election Violence 2007-2008

http://www.marsgroupkenya.org/pdfs/2008/10/Waki_Chapters/Chapter_6_sexual_violence.pdf retrieved on 20th May 2011, 3P 242

3.8.1 Loss of support from family members

From the data, five of the interviewed disabled persons affirmed that during the 2007/8 PEV they were victims ensuing from their loss of support from family members. Indeed people with pre-existing impairments in a conflict situation find the situation exacerbated by the loss of family members which force them to move to areas that were not favorable in the direction of their life.¹⁶⁷ In Kisumu city, five disabled persons who were interviewed said they ended up as victims as their family members were powerless to give support to them as they were concerned with their own security. This left them to fend for themselves and it was not a tranquil task since it was challenging for them to begin a new life without family support. This exposed them suffering which saw them losing their property, businesses; while others sustained physical injuries as well as psychological trauma. It was further revealed by the respondent in a focused group discussion that approximately 0.5% of the physically disabled persons succumbed to injuries and family members were not ready to conciliate with them.¹⁶⁸

3.8.2 Loss of mobility and accessibility aids

According to six of the disabled persons interviewed, they said that they were victims during the 2007/8 PEV in Kisumu city such that they lost their mobility and supportive aids and this was worsened by way of change in terrain to help them vacate the town to a safer location during the violence. Indeed, with the experience of the six interviewed disabled they alleged that the loss of mobility and supportive aids was also experienced by other disabled person who found it difficult to vacate from the hot spots of the violence. Their victimization was exacerbated by the fact that they were not able to read information, access food and water, or sanitation services as infrastructure was damaged and/or barricaded by the crowd. This worsened their way of life as they could not carry out their activities as required without the supportive/mobility aids. Actually one of the respondents who witnessed a disabled person loss his walking aid said;

It was tough for the poor disabled person whose walking aid was forcefully taken by the crowd that used it as a weapon. The young

¹⁶⁷ S. Elsdon *Op.cit*, p 15.

¹⁶⁸ Oral Interview, Focused Group discussion, Kondele, 24/6/2013

man who was a street beggar in Kisumu town became a victim of the violence since he was disabled further as the disruptive crowd trampled on him.¹⁶⁹

Losing walking or supportive aids as a result of violent is very challenging such that the disabled victims of circumstances find it difficult to coordinate body parts without the device.

3.8.3 The public lacked knowledge of the disabled needs

The physically disabled persons especially women are predominantly vulnerable to violence, exploitation and sexual abuse/harassment. This stands because the attention and generational aspect of injury and disability is often ignored as the protesting crowd focus on different needs for the communities. Such has made conflict-related injuries and impairments to put additional strain on available healthcare resources. During the 2007/8 PEV that rocked the whole country, in Kisumu, 68% of the interviewed physically disabled persons felt ignored by the protesting crowds. As Audi puts it, the physically disabled persons were overlooked by the public as they were perceived to be of no help in the demonstration that remained violent hence ending up as victims of injuries in the course of violence.¹⁷⁰ The 68% of the interviewed physically disabled persons at this point they were in need of security and protection which was a basic human need to them at that particular time. It is important to note that, the public did not understand the plight facing the disabled persons thus inflicting them with more harm. This endangered their basic human needs to freedom of movement as human being, thus relates well to the theory of basic human need used in this study.

The public also had inadequate knowledge regarding specific challenges that people with disabilities encounter in conflict time. However, the public remained confronted with the unfavorable conflict situation that could not allow them reach out to help the physically disabled persons. In most cases during conflict, disabled persons will always struggle to run away from the zone of conflict for their safety. The public, in this case as perpetrator, continued to sizzle the violence and pursued their enemy without considering the consequences it will cause not only to their enemy but also to the disabled persons. In

¹⁶⁹ Oral Interview, Moses Audi , Kenyatta Sports Ground Kisumu, 23/6/2013

¹⁷⁰ Oral Interview, Moses Audi , Kenyatta Sports ground Kisumu, 23/6/2013.

Kisumu town about 2% of disabled persons who managed small business in town could not vacate the places quickly as they were weakened by the mob that took away their supportive/mobility aids and used them as weapons hence denying them their basic human need in form of security.

3.9 Conclusion

The chapter discussed the physically disabled person, the roles they played and how they were regarded during the conflict situation. It brings them out as perpetrators and victims in equal measures, though their participation and effect of the violence on them varied in intensity.

This is an opener to the reader who will understand the activeness and inactiveness of physically disabled persons in the 2007/8 PEV. This is highlighted in the discussion where the roles of the physically disabled persons as perpetrators and victims were in the conflict. The chapter notes that some of the physically disabled persons were involved in the post-election violence due to the political factors of declaration of Mwai Kibaki as the President-elect of the Republic of Kenya which sparked the conflict. These arguments have explained the reasons why and how Kisumu people who lived in tranquility rose up in arms against other communities perceived to have supported and voted for Kibaki's PNU thus helping him secure the Presidency. More significant is the place of the physically disabled persons in the conflict, as perpetrators and as victims. Accordingly, issues to do with basic human need really came into play which actualized the theoretical framework within which this study of the Armed Conflict and Coping Mechanisms of the Disabled Persons operates.

The explanation in the chapter illustrates the presence of perpetrators and victims in Post-Election Violence which can be identified in the coping mechanisms of the physically disabled persons in Kisumu. It is important to understand the place of the physically disabled persons as perpetrators and as victims of the conflict in Kisumu. It will therefore be of interest to understand the coping mechanisms developed by the physically disabled persons and of significant is how they survived the conflict during and the 2007/8 Post-election Violence. This is the concern of the next chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE COPING MECHANISMS BY THE DISABLED PERSONS DURING AND AFTER POST ELECTION VIOLENCE IN KISUMU CITY

4.1 Introduction

The disabled persons have remained targets in many conflict situations just as they have suffered in Post-Election Violence. This justified them to be civilians in the conflict which they have survived or suffered the threats it posed to their lives.

The blanket consideration of disabled as victims of violence has made it tricky for one to identify them as perpetrators in any given conflict. They have been used as aspects to survivors to the consequences of the conflict situations. In Sierra Leone, the physically disabled persons coped up with the situation as victims and perpetrators. This abetted them to attain a self-reliance state of life as they were determined to go on with life despite being disabled and traumatized during the long period of civil war in the country.

The chapter focuses on the coping mechanism for the disabled persons as victims and perpetrators during and after the Post-election Violence in Kisumu. This is to recognize how challenging it was for the physically disabled persons to cope up with the situation. As a result, it is important to recognize the coping mechanisms of physically disabled persons in a conflict situation. It will therefore be of necessity to well-address whether physically disabled persons develop or adopt any coping mechanisms during and after the conflict? Were the physically disabled persons determined to survive the threats of the violence that rocked Kisumu in 2007/8 and 2013 ruling by the Court on presidential results?

The chapter is divided into four parts; the first part gives the clear understanding of coping mechanism in reference to the conflict situation. The second part addresses the coping mechanisms the physically disabled persons adopted to survive during the Post-Election Violence. Thirdly it addresses the coping mechanisms developed by physically disabled persons after the violence for their survival. The fourth part reports on the challenges they faced in their coping mechanisms.

4.2 Understanding coping mechanism

Coping mechanisms occur in response to psychological stress usually triggered by changes in an attempt to maintain mental health and emotional well-being. Life stressors are often described as negative events such as the death of a loved one, loss of a job, conflict resulting to displacement and associated with violent threats. However, positive changes in life are birth, marriage, relocating, a new job, and being able to return from where one had been originally displaced hence right of return.¹⁷¹ All these require coping skills to adapt. In addition coping strategies can also be understood as the behaviors, thoughts, and emotion that one uses to adjust to the changes that occur in his/her life.

Furthermore, coping is expending conscious effort to solve personal and interpersonal problems and seeking to master, minimize or tolerate stress or conflict. The term coping generally refers to adaptive or constructive coping strategies, for instance the mechanism reduce trauma levels.¹⁷² However, some coping strategies can be considered to increase trauma level hence a non-coping mechanism for one to tolerate conflict. Furthermore, the term coping can also refer to reactive coping where the coping response follows the traumatizing instances. This is different from the coping mechanism, in which a coping response aims to head off future traumatizing actions. The coping mechanisms that were noted with the physically disabled persons were partly controlled by their personality traits but also partly by the social context, particularly the nature of the stressful environment.¹⁷³

Without a doubt, physically disabled persons develop varied coping mechanisms in their life when faced with conflict situation by being open and interactive with multiple factors for them to survive. This study seeks to understand relational dynamics as mechanisms physically disabled persons used to survive the conflict (PEV) in Kisumu city.

¹⁷¹ C.R. Snyder, and M. Lefcourt, Herbert *Coping With Stress*. New York: Oxford University 2001, pp. 68–80.

¹⁷² E. M Cummings, et al, eds. *Life-span Developmental Psychology: Perspectives on Stress and Coping*. (1991), p. 92

¹⁷³ Carver, C. S.; Connor-Smith, J. (2010). "Personality and coping." *Annual Review of Psychology*, 61, 679 - 704.

In view of that about 15% of physically disabled persons during the PEV faced situations that demanded considerable coping strategies. They were in need of direct and intense contact with people who could help them build on coping mechanism. This was due to the fact that they were experiencing distress caused by PEV that threatened their lives and yet they already had several needs ranging from economic, psychic, and social, among others. As one of the informant who was a victim said;

I was rendered useless as I could not move. I was disabled more as my one abled leg got a fracture. My small business was vandalized yet no one was willing to help.¹⁷⁴

From the data collected from the field it was difficult for about 8% of the interviewed disabled persons at that time as their businesses were no more. The destruction of their businesses left them psychologically affected as they struggled to cope from PEV.

Accordingly, there are many coping mechanisms that these approximate 15% of physically disabled persons used during and after the PEV in Kisumu. As such, some mechanisms proved to be more effective than others depending on the nature of the stressful situation and the persons who employed them. Thus in connection to that, ineffective coping mechanisms, can be used to refer to as maladaptive coping, it may also be applied to stressful events or internal conflict, often unconsciously as they are counterproductive.¹⁷⁵

4.3 Coping mechanisms during the PEV

The physically disabled persons as victims or perpetrators in the post-election violence turned out to play some roles during the violence as a means for them to cope with the situation. The coping mechanisms they used include: spying and mobilization.

4.3.1 Spying

According to the interviews conducted, it was reported that about 0.4% of the physically disabled persons in Kisumu city coped with the violent situation by strategically employing the supportive role of spying for the violent groups involved in running battles

¹⁷⁴ Oral Interview, Ismail Otieno, Robert Ouko Estate, 19/6/2013

¹⁷⁵ Carver, C. S.; Connor-Smith, J. (2010). "Personality and coping." *Annual Review of Psychology*, 61, pp. 679 - 704

with the police. They secretly passed information to the groups on where they should target and where not to target for their personal safety as they used the advantage of being ignored by the police.¹⁷⁶ About 0.1% of physically disabled persons were successful in spying mission as they were able to notice, sight and carefully observe movement and action of the police and the demonstrating crowd. This helped them to cope with the situation which was risky and traumatizing.

4.3.2 Mobilization

From the data collected from the field, two of the responded said that approximately 0.5% the total population of the physically disabled persons also contributed in keeping the violence alive as they motivated the protesting crowd as a mechanism to cope up. This was extended to the spreading of information that mobilized the groups through rumors. The two respondents noted that this percentage of physically disabled persons in Kisumu City was known of their ability to mobilize the angry crowd through spurring words. This can easily be related to other conflicts experienced in Kisumu where it is alleged that the physically disabled persons were also involved in fueling conflict as a coping mechanism. One informant who was a witness during the 2007/8 PEV said;

I saw four physically disabled persons who were agitators during the PEV as a means to cope with the situation. They used provocative words on the street in exacerbating the conflict. They expressed the fact that they were marginalized thus demanded for economic empowerment and inclusion in decision making process and relevant policies relating to their plight. Those who did not participate were abused and isolated by the angry crowd.¹⁷⁷

Since most of this rounded figure of 0.5% of physically disabled persons were in *Jua kali* industry as cobblers, kiosk operators, newspaper vendors, and street beggars where the violence erupted, they brought all activities to a standstill. Another respondent who was an eye witness said;

I recall very well one young man nicknamed ‘Ninja’ on a wheelchair at Oginga Odinga Street who was instrumental in

¹⁷⁶ Oral Interview, Kennedy Ochieng, Kenyatta Sports Ground Kisumu, 23/6/2013

¹⁷⁷ Oral Interview, Paul Onyango, Kondele Shopping Center, 24/6/2013.

mobilizing the crowd. He greatly moved the crowd by issuing directives and next course of action.¹⁷⁸

This was a powerful disabled person gifted with jab and mobilization skills which he exploited in order cope up with the Post-Election Violence.

4.3.3 Personal strategies

During the PEV in Kisumu as from the interviews carried out, 2% of the interviewed physically disabled persons survived the violence through personal strategies which aided them escape the peril. As one of the physically disabled informant who walks by support of his hands adduced when interviewed;

It was difficult at that time as a cobbler. I did not know where to go with my physical disability. No one came to my rescue... I hid in an empty sack that I use for storing shoes on the street. I heard gun shots as I prayed for my safety in the sack. No one noticed I was hiding in the sack and that is how I survived the PEV.¹⁷⁹

This reflects the struggle in which 2% of the interviewed physically disabled persons found themselves during the Post-Election Violence. It clearly illustrates how people with disabilities are highly vulnerable in conflict situations as they seek for means to survive the conflict situations.¹⁸⁰ This is again expressed during the interview by another informant with mono eye disability said and I quote;

I was injured on my left foot and I could not run any more for my safety. I almost gave up but next to me was a litter bin on the street where was lying. I crawled, got hold of it and hid myself in it. I did not care for anything except my life which I saved eventually.¹⁸¹

When the informant was asked whether he thought of any health risk pertaining the litter bin or it being set ablaze or catching fire from nearby houses that were on fire, he replied saying;

Nothing of that kind came to my mind. I was not able to run for my safety after getting physically disabled more, so the litter bin was

¹⁷⁸ Oral Interview, Philip Apunda, Kenyatta Sports Ground Kisumu, 23/6/2013.

¹⁷⁹ Oral Interview, James Owino, Kisumu town, 23/6/2013.

¹⁸⁰ Disability in Conflict and Emergencies, Fact Sheet, The Atlas Alliance Global Support to disabled people. Pp. 1-2

¹⁸¹ Oral Interview, Onesmus Odinga Kisumu town, 24/6/2013

my only refuge. I believed no one would find me out. It all came to pass.¹⁸²

The 2% of the interviewed physically disabled persons were courageous during PEV and did not easily give up because of their conditions; they had to seek for effective ways which helped them cope with the violence. Though it was not an easy undertaking, they managed to survive as the director of Youth Art Development and Entrepreneurship Network (YADEN) says; other percentage of physically disabled persons who were not interviewed found themselves in drainage systems for safety. He says that, this happened when teargas was thrown at them irrespective of their physical challenges.¹⁸³

Nevertheless, according to the respondents about 1.5% of total population of the physical disabled persons also survived the PEV by acting in cohorts with the perpetrators who were involved in running battles with the police on the street of Kisumu. In this way the perpetrators were made to believe that they were one thing as they sang the same tune.

4.4 Coping mechanisms after the PEV

The physically disabled persons' voices and needs have been raised for them to cope with the after effects of the PEV. These voices are touching and some emotional as they express the suffering incurred during the skirmishes. As a result it was a big challenge for the physically disabled persons to cope even though some proved to be more successful in their strategies to survive. Though physically disabled persons have remained largely overlooked in Kenya, PEV was a lesson to Kenyans that physically disabled persons are also human being and as a vulnerable group they need to be considered for help to reduce the risks of falling victims in conflict situations. Some of the mechanisms that the disabled persons in Kisumu developed include, the livelihood approach, turning to faith, counseling, and involvement in small business, community support, and assurance from the security agents, begging on the streets, as peace preachers, personal strategies, support from government and non-governmental organization.

¹⁸² Oral Interview, Onesmus Odinga Kisumu town, 24/6/2013

¹⁸³ Oral Interview, John Dan Muga, Kenyatta Sports Ground Kisumu, 23/6/2013.

4.4.1 The Livelihoods Approach

Securing livelihoods, as a means used to maintain and sustain life, was essential to enabling the physically disabled persons working in groups or single-handedly to cope with the violence. The livelihoods in form of coping mechanism adopted by the disabled persons just as Jacobsen argues, it comprised of how people access and utilize resources enabling them to increase their economic security thereby reducing the vulnerability created and exacerbated by conflict and how they pursue goals necessary for survival and possible return.¹⁸⁴ In their pursuit of livelihoods, the physically disabled persons who were part of the displaced population consider the resources that were available to them, developed strategies to mobilize and access these resources and defined their goals and priorities to live in harmony. While this approach was used within the context of refugees, it has principles that are applicable to the disabled persons who easily can become refugees and or internally displaced persons. As reported by the respondents about 30% of the physically disabled persons in Kisumu City after the violence did not strain to minimize food insecurity and economic vulnerability. The resources that were available to enable them cope with the violence were social networks and institutions, household assets and social cultural and economic resources.

4.4.2 Turning to Faith

Indeed, 5% of the interviewed physically disabled persons who felt they had no one to turn to for support after the PEV, religion played an important role in creating a safety network. The 5% of the physically disabled persons who were interviewed described themselves as devout Christians and Muslims as they freely talked about the spiritual support they received. For that reason the 5% of the interviewed physically disabled persons who aligned with faith-based organizations received financial support and moral support. They drew personal strength from their association with these groups and their belief in God. In addition, Church-going was an activity most of them were attracted to after the PEV but interestingly, turning to God was pursued on an individual basis.

¹⁸⁴ Karen Jacobsen. "Livelihoods in Conflict: The Pursuit of Livelihoods by Refugees and the Impact on the Human Security of Host Communities." *International Migration* Volume 40, Number 5, Special Issue 2, 95-123 (2002), p98

One respondent when asked why he turned to faith for support; he said, “as long as I am alive, praying is essential.”¹⁸⁵ He acknowledged that it was his hope in God that kept him alive during and after the PEV. He pointed out that he receives food and clothing from a Catholic Church in Kisumu which he did not specify on monthly basis. Serving God and believing that God would relieve their suffering was a common response from interviewed disabled persons who were victims of PEV in Kisumu.¹⁸⁶

Their views on being affected by PEV were within the context of God’s plan for their lives and their trust that faith in God would allow them to deal with any hardships that confronted them during and after the PEV. Their conviction in God and the influence of religion on their lives as physically disabled persons who were affected during the PEV was evident as one of the respondent expressed his views on how he was frustrated after the PEV as he ended up in alcohol consumption in the community and how he turned to God.

Consumption of alcohol to me was as a result of being frustrated. I did not believe my eye was no more. I thought that taking alcohol will help me forget about the incident at that particular time but all was ineffective at that phase. Turning to God brought my deliverance from frustrations. I received God in my life and I have since stopped drinking.¹⁸⁷

While the 5% of interviewed physically disabled persons coped individually with the difficulties of displacement by turning to God others gained access to resources by aligning with faith-based organizations. They did this by working as a group with external networks as they gained access to more resources than those who worked independently. However, one of the disable respondent said that in Kisumu, there was distinction that external religious organizations maintained between different ethnic groups, he put it that;

¹⁸⁵ Oral Interview, George Juma, Nyalenda, 21/6/2013.

¹⁸⁶ Oral Interview, George Juma, Nyalenda, 21/6/2013.

¹⁸⁷ Oral Interview, John Dan Muga, Kenyatta Sports Ground Kisumu, 23/6/2013

The Luo had access to special services such as a special school courtesy of foreign aid. This was due to the fact that the community supported ODM party. Other communities apart from the Luo received less attention. This was clear as the Anglican Church in Kisumu County offered support to the physically disabled persons. They taught their children about Biblical stories, and how to read and write. Whereas others were of different faith they did not mind offering support to them as they aimed at coping with the PEV menace.¹⁸⁸

On the other hand, other religious groups of born-again Christians also helped the community to deal with HIV/AIDs related issues by providing Anti-Retro Viral (ARVs) medication to those infected during the PEV. They also delivered food stuff like maize floor, rice, beans, and cooking oil to affected families. Special care was offered to the disabled elderly who were affected by the PEV menace.¹⁸⁹

Furthermore, according to the respondents, less than 1% of the approximate population of disabled persons also coped with the situation as they became servants of God advocating for peace through their preaching. Kennedy Oloo adduced;

I have a friend who was physically disabled as a consequence of the PEV. He was a businessman at Kondele where the violence was intense. His business was vandalized and he sustained injuries on both hands. He has turned to be a peace advocate through preaching the Gospel in Kisumu City. His experience in the course has moved the public who generously donate to him in kind and in material.¹⁹⁰

Though negative attitude has greeted the disabled persons in many situations some have lived to become potential peace preachers on turning. This has endeared them to the audience with some turning to God for contrition and reconciliation. As a coping mechanism developed by the disabled persons in Kisumu, it has also helped the Kisumu residents to reconcile and reconstruct their town.

¹⁸⁸ Oral Interview, James Kibosi, Kenyatta Sports Ground Kisumu, 20/6/2013.

¹⁸⁹ Oral Interview, Jackline Awinja, Nyalenda, 21/6/2013

¹⁹⁰ Oral Interview, Kennedy Oloo, Kondele, 24/6/2013.

4.4.3 Counseling

Counseling is a type of a therapy that has been used to help different people with different social or personal problems which enables them to cope with the situations they are surrounded with.¹⁹¹ The six of the interviewed physically disabled persons in Kisumu did not forget about counseling as a coping mechanism after the PEV. John Dan Muga one of them recounts how counseling therapy helped him cope with the situation as a disabled person.

I coped with the aftermath of PEV by getting counseling sessions at Nyanza Reproductive Health Services. They greatly encouraged me to move on with life forgetting the past. They also trained me as a Hygiene Officer and later on they offered me a one year working contract. I also attended counseling sessions at Voltage Consultancy where I came to understand that even with disability I could be successful in life. The counseling sessions I attended from the two organizations abetted me to stop my alcoholism which had defined my wasted life. Previously I never wanted to see my image in a mirror but counselling really helped me to accept that with one eye I could still do a lot. It is from this encouragement that I came up with an organization which I relay on and I have focused on supporting the physically disabled persons by engaging them in different activities.¹⁹²

Though residents of Kisumu have often associated counseling to Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) services, it did not hinder John Dan Muga from seeking alternative counseling elsewhere. He asserts that counselling was fundamental to him as he landed a new job opportunity at YADEN.

4.4.4 Small-scale businesses

The need to pick up pieces and continue with life prompted some of the Post-Election Violence victims in Kisumu to get involved in small-scale businesses to generate income. One respondent who was physically disabled on a wheelchair from childhood and survived the PEV held that;

After the violence I realized that being involved in a small-scale business was the only way to cope with the situation. This was due to the fact that being idle caused me great distress as I recalled the

¹⁹¹ S.D. Brown, and R.W. Lent, *Handbook of Counselling Psychology*(4th ed.) New York: Wiley, 2008 p. 5-30.

¹⁹² Oral Interview, John Dan Muga, Kenyatta Sports Ground Kisumu, 23/6/2013

PEV. I decided to hawk sweets at Kisumu bus terminal. This has enabled me to cater for my basic needs.¹⁹³

This was the courage they gathered as it was difficult for small-scale businesses to thrive in an environment with vast large-scale businesses in Kisumu town. About 10% of the interviewed physically disabled persons were operating small business in different parts of Kisumu as the only means for their survival.

4.4.5 Community support

Though the community had viewed the disabled persons both as a burden and a curse, during the PEV the latter disregarded the stereotype and sought for support from the former. The community comprising of chiefs, sub-chiefs, village elders, and local organized networks, served some important functions that enabled physically disabled persons to cope after the conflict. This was characterized with the community providing vital information to the affected physically disabled persons, mediating between the government and the physically disabled persons in Kisumu, and working with other ethnic groups to promote their social co-existence. The best out of this was the establishment of joint economic venture “merry-go-round”. This has helped physically disabled persons to empower each other financially as it involves saving and sharing money monthly on rotational basis thus enabled them to establish small businesses in Kisumu town.

The community also played a major role in helping the physically disabled persons cope with the Post-Election Violence by encouraging them to maintain unity within their families, friends and neighbors. This was done by inspiring them to socialize and integrate with the rest of community so as to neutralize the animosity that had existed before. As a result it enabled them to become more responsible as they ensure that the little resource available is used considerably.

The disabled were also helped when their family members queued for food at various charitable centers which was not easy at that time. Nakumatt was the only operating supermarket at that time and the protracted queues were unfavorable for the physically

¹⁹³ Oral Interview, Erick Sakwa, Kisumu Bus Station, 20/6/2013

disabled. Some youths volunteered to lined up and buy food for the physically disabled persons. The quantity of commodities one would buy was limited by the supermarket and these youths had to make several rounds in order to buy enough food for the physically disabled persons including the elderly.¹⁹⁴

4.4.6 Support from the security agents

About 40% of the respondent said that about 10% of disabled persons as victims of PEV coped with the situation following the support they received from the police who assured them no more violence as the situation was under their control. One of the responded said that; the security agents encouraged them to resume to their normal life without fear hence reorganized themselves in readiness to restart their businesses.¹⁹⁵ More so, another respondent by the name Moses Audi also alluded that apart from support from the security agents in general, it was only one security agent, Mr. Wanyama, who played a major role in helping the disabled persons to cope with the situation as he was instrumental in calming down the protestors in a peaceful way. This made him famous and accepted by Kisumu residents.¹⁹⁶

4.4.7 Begging on the streets

Six of the respondent who were physically disabled persons and victim of PEV resorted to street begging in Kisumu as a coping mechanism after the Post-Election Violence. One of them said;

Though I was disabled before I was disabled more during the violence as my artificial leg which I would fix to aid me walk was taken from away. Blood kept oozing out of the amputated part. I was selling sweets along Oginga Odinga Street before the violence broke out. Since then, I have not been able to get back my walking aid and this has forced me to beg on the street in order to survive with my children.¹⁹⁷

Such traumatizing experience robbed the physically disabled persons off their capability to be independent forcing them to seek alternative means of survival. Celine Margret who

¹⁹⁴ Oral Interview, Kennedy Oloo, Kondele, 24/6/2013.

¹⁹⁵ Oral Interview, Kennedy Oloo, Kondele, 24/6/2013.

¹⁹⁶ Oral Interview, Moses Audi, Kenyatta Sports Ground, 23/6/2013.

¹⁹⁷ Oral Interview, Celine Margret, Kenyatta Sports Ground, 20/6/2013

lost her artificial leg had no option other than becoming a beggar against her wish. Until the violence erupted she sustained herself from her small business.

4.4.8 Independent coping approaches

According to the respondent about 2% of the physically disabled persons who were victims of the Post-Election Violence attempted to keep off situations that could escalate the violence. They avoided hate messages, provocation, and propagation of innuendos and gossip that could have contributed to risking their lives. They also avoided moving out individually but they sought able-bodied persons' company. On the same note, they avoided predictability of what would happen as it could limit them from their plan to evacuate the city.¹⁹⁸

Indeed being made aware of the dangers posed by the conflict also helped them cope with its impact and consequence. They learnt that marginalization, food insecurity, water shortage, joblessness, landlessness, homelessness, impoverishment, and social disintegration were faced by the displaced population in Kisumu City.

In their new environment, the physically disabled persons lacked basic needs such as food, water, clothing and shelter as the number of the displaced persons put a strain on available resources at the emergence camps. It was not easy to access proper sanitation and hygiene, education, health services, and employment opportunities.

The 5% of the physically disabled respondents who were interviewed reported that they were barred from accessing resources available to the Luo who were displaced from other parts of the country. This made them to struggle to gain acceptance in the community. The respondents went further to allege that the only leadership in the community included the security personnel, the District Commissioner, Chiefs and the Assistant Chiefs who did ensure the displaced were resettled and the disputes resolved. They did little or nothing at all to improve access to resources for the physically disabled

¹⁹⁸ Oral Interview, Kennedy Oloo, Kondele, 24/6/2013.

persons.¹⁹⁹ Indeed they worked closely with the security personnel who helped to keep out wrong elements and maintained some peace in Kisumu.

4.5 Support from the government and non-governmental organization

According to the respondent in a focused group discussion, they argued that the government helped more than 20% of disabled persons to cope with the PEV by setting up legal frame works that helped the two Principal reach an agreement.²⁰⁰ A power sharing deal was brokered thus the government of national unity was formed comprising of the two warring sides. This bore good governance fruits with establishment of social amenities and strengthening of military capacity and security. The physically disabled persons came to be recognized and formed part of the national assembly and other political positions as the new Constitution came into existence in 27th August 2010.

Similarly, non-governmental organizations were the driving force in creating state of normalcy after the 2007/8 PEV. They worked closely with the vulnerable persons as confirmed by Kennedy Ochieng, a resident of Kisumu who said;

Non-governmental organizations helped majority of physically disabled persons to cope with the situation after the PEV. Organizations such as Plan International in Kisumu offered moral and material support to the vulnerable persons through capacity building sessions. They also advocated for issues relating to children and orphans. He also noted that the Concern Worldwide helped in life skills training such as tailoring, catering, and driving. The USAID on the other hand provided food, blankets, and mosquito nets among other materials.²⁰¹

In connection to that Jackline Awinja cited that, “Aphia Plus under the umbrella of the USAID helped the HIV/AIDs patients to cope with the situation by providing food and medication to the sick. This helped the sick boost their cluster of differentiation 4 (CD4) count.”²⁰²

¹⁹⁹ Oral Interview, Dennis Odhiambo, Manyatta Slum Kisumu, 24/6/2013.

²⁰⁰ Oral Interview, Focused Group discussion, Kondele, 24/6/2013

²⁰¹ Oral Interview, Kennedy Ochieng, Kenyatta Sports Ground, 23/6/2013

²⁰² Oral Interview, Jackline Awinja, Nyalenda on 21/6/2013.

4.6 Challenges disabled persons faced on coping with PEV

The disabled persons are among the minority groups starved of services and mostly ignored by the society. However, disability as defined earlier in this study includes the aged, mono eye, lame in legs or hands, partial/complete blind, partial/complete deaf and mentally impaired individuals. With all these characteristics, the disabled persons in Luo community have been stereotyped as bad omen and a burden. This made it difficult for them to fully get integrated with those in IDP camps especially those of Luo origin. Therefore, challenges that the disabled persons have faced during and after the PEV include; discrimination and stigma, scarcity of food, psychological distress, and basic need dilemma, financial incapacitation, competition, illiteracy and ignorance, inadequate physical facilities and accessibility to social amenities.

4.6.1 Discrimination and stigma

The people with disabilities in Kisumu during the PEV situation experienced multiple layers of discrimination. This included being disabled more with ethnicity, gender and sexual discrimination. As such 12% of the interviewed disabled persons said that they were also discriminated and stigmatized due to lack of appropriate cultural services, myths, negative stereotypes and prejudice from members of their own communities. As a result of these discriminative and stigmatizing factors, the able bodied persons were reluctant in according the disabled persons appropriate support and care which could assist them to cope during and after the conflict.

It was also noted from the data collected that 7% of interviewed disabled were also discriminated and stigmatized during and after PEV as they lacked equity in income support and intervention by the government. This was the period when they were in need to cope with the situation yet they were extremely isolated and marginalized. Their situation was characterized with financial vulnerability which hindered them from participating amicably in social, economic and cultural life. According to the respondents in a focused group they argued that about 35% of the disabled persons were dependents on families and care-givers and it was an immense challenge for them as the families were discriminative by referring to them as bad omen hence stigmatizing them.²⁰³

²⁰³ Oral Interview, Focused Group discussion, Kondele, 24/6/2013

Though the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Article 11, which came into force, explicitly states that; “States’ Parties shall take all necessary measures to ensure the protection and safety of persons with disabilities in situations of risk, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and the occurrence of natural disasters,”²⁰⁴ it was surprising that disabled persons have continued to be discriminated and stigmatized in armed conflict situations. The PEV that rocked Kisumu could not be ruled out to have caused suffering to the disabled persons. According to Simon Kwedho who was disabled during the PEV, he said;

As physically disabled persons we have tried to cope up with the PEV menace but we still face prejudice from the community. At times we are regarded as outcasts in the community irrespective of the cause of disability; not even if it was as a result of the PEV.²⁰⁵

This has been a challenge to disabled persons as they are facing them in their new lives after the PEV. The challenges have forced some of them to establish other coping mechanism such as begging on the streets of Kisumu to help cover up the discriminative and stigmatizing experiences from the society.

4.6.2 Scarcity of food

Food as a basic need was not available for the disabled persons in proper and adequate time during and after the 2007/8 PEV and it is clear that in extreme scarcity of food people with disabilities are more vulnerable to starving hence need to employ unsafe and risky means to cope with the situation.²⁰⁶ As such, according to Moses Audi one of the respondent noted that he saw four disabled person who were involved in demonstration, risk their lives further by resort to looting from shops as a means to enable them get food for their survival. During the interview, Audi went further to report that;

There was physically disabled lady with one functional hand in town, she joined the protesters who broke into shops and looted in

²⁰⁴ United Nations, Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities (article 11) 2006.

²⁰⁵ Oral Interview, Simon Kwedho, Kisumu Town, 24/6/2013

²⁰⁶ B. Ingstad The Disabled Person in the Community: Social and Cultural Aspects. International Journal of Rehabilitation Research, 13, 1990. Pp. 187-190.

order to get some food. They were rounded up by the police but other protesters fled. The police demanded to have sexual intercourse with the disabled woman. She refused to give in to their demands and so they beat her ruthlessly leaving her more disabled. She never got the food and besides she ended up in hospital.²⁰⁷

The scarcity of food and the difficulty of getting it forced about 30% of disabled persons to rely on non-governmental organization for food, clothing and financial support.²⁰⁸ Some of these organizations include; YADEN, World Vision, Aphia Plus under USAID and religious institutions provided support to the disabled victims of conflict in Kisumu. Accordingly, HIV/AIDs disabled persons were more affected as they found themselves abandoned by family members whose resources were already scarce and they were no longer able to provide for them. Persons with disabilities have therefore faced extreme isolation and vulnerability in conflict situations and some have been unable to access basic health care, food, water and shelter that are necessary for survival.²⁰⁹

4.6.3 Psychological distress

This is a general term that is used to describe unpleasant feelings or emotions that impact ones level of functioning.²¹⁰ According to the respondents about 2% of disabled persons were faced with psychological distress which its management was a challenge as they sought to cope with 2007/8 PEV aftermath. Although John Dan Muga is involved in running an organization he founded after the PEV, it has been difficult for him to concentrate at his work place. He has never come to terms with the loss of his eye. He said, and I quote;

At times I get so distressed that I am unable to concentrate well on daily duties compared to days before the sad incident. I was a driver to one of the politicians. After losing my one eye, things changed rapidly in my life. My friends began ignoring me as those who used to call me closed. The politician too followed suit upon clearing my hospital bill. I lost my job! I relied on well-wishers for

²⁰⁷ Oral Interview, Moses Audi, Kenyatta Sports Ground, 23/6/2013.

²⁰⁸ Oral Interview, Moses Audi, Kenyatta Sports Ground, 23/6/2013.

²⁰⁹ Disability in Conflict and Emergencies, Fact Sheet (The Atlas Alliance Global Support to disabled people), Pp. 1-2

²¹⁰ S. Ridner Psychological Distress: Concept Analysis. J Adv Nurs. 2004 Mar; 45(5):536-45.

handouts as I underwent counseling at Amani Counseling Center, Kisumu branch.²¹¹

This has been linked with lack of specialized counseling experts to deal with the situation. It was a challenge which Muga faced as he received counseling at an organization specializing in hygiene and Reproductive health. His traumatic aspect was not dealt with thus reason why he experiences depression about his eye problem. However, all is not lost as he is continuing with counseling sessions at Amani Counseling Centre, Kisumu branch, where they have specialized counselors.

4.6.4 The basic need dilemma

Accordingly 3% of those interviewed physically disabled were those who were disabled as a result of PEV and they felt denied of their basic needs as they struggle to fend for their families. John Muga says that it has been an acid test for him coping with the aftershock which left him as a mono eye. He recalls that as an experienced driver his employer terminated his job on the ground that he cannot drive by use of one eye.²¹² This has been a challenge in his new job which does not reflect his profession and at the same time a challenge as it directly changed his household economic status.²¹³ From John Muga's experience, it is important to note that sometimes employers have failed to understand that physical disability developed by their employees does not harbor them from exercising their profession. John Muga still believes that he has what it takes to drive. His dream is to go back to his driving profession within his organization.

4.6.5 Financial incapacitation

This became a clear constrain because according to the interviews 5% of the physically disabled persons found it tougher accessing finances to help initiate small-scale businesses. Those who had managed to begin businesses had at a point collapsed thus

²¹¹ Oral Interview, John Dan Muga, Kenyatta Sports Ground Kisumu on 23/6/2013

²¹² Oral Interview, John Dan Muga, Kenyatta Sports Ground Kisumu on 23/6/2013

²¹³ P. Justino, The impact of Armed Civil Conflict on Household Welfare and Policy Response in Richard Kozul-Wright and Piergiuseppe Fortunato (eds.), *Securing Peace: State-Building and Economic Development in Post-Conflict Countries*, Bloomsbury Academic in association with the United Nations 2011, pp 21-45.

forcing them to begin from scratch. Lilian Adhiambo, a physically disabled woman who moves by use crutches on being interviewed adduced;

I have lived with disability for quite a long period. Before the 2007/8 PEV I was selling sweets and fruits at Kondele shopping center. My business was brought to a rude end when the violence erupted as protesters looted. I was injured in the process but thank God a Good Samaritan took me to hospital for treatment. Upon being discharged from the hospital I did not know where to begin. I resorted to begging on the streets at Kondele and after two months I managed to save Ksh 500. I started selling sweets again but all did not go well as business collapsed. I had no other source of income so I am back into begging again near Kenyatta Sports Ground. I hope to get enough capital and set up another business.²¹⁴

About 3% of the physically disabled persons that were interviewed did not wish to be beggars. For instance, financial constrains is what forced Adhiambo into begging which was against her wish. She had vowed not to be involved in begging because she believes that her disability is not inability and that she can still manage any business she will set up.

4.6.6. Competition for potential donors

This has been the biggest struggle for the disabled persons who have to compete with street children who quickly identify the potential donor. This is due to the fact that 60% of the physically disabled persons have in most cases remained seated at strategic points where they only collect little from the public and this has never been enough for them to cater for their needs. At Kenyatta Sports Ground, Veronica Bosibori said;

It has been hard for me begging. From morning till midday I have only received ten shillings. Sometimes I sleep on streets so as to get extra coins from passers-by because I cannot move freely from one point to another like the street children who are more advantaged than we the disabled persons who have to sit at one point all day long. At this particular corner we are three disabled persons. It is a big challenge to us.²¹⁵

²¹⁴ Oral Interview, Lilian Adhiambo, Kenyatta Sports ground on 23/2013.

²¹⁵ Oral Interview, Veronica Bosibori, Kenyatta Sports Ground on 23/6/2013.

Indeed competition is common in life but for this vulnerable group it has turned out to be a challenge as some of them are forced into begging as a result of the PEV. Furthermore it was also argued by 23% of the interviewed disabled persons that they faced rivalry from the able bodied street children who hindered them from collecting alms as they cannot quickly identify and reach potential givers as they strive to cope with aftermath of the conflict.

In connection to that, those running small-scale businesses have been faced tough competition from mega businesses such as Nakumatt, Turskys, and Ukwala supermarkets which sell goods at reduced prices. About 6% of disabled persons who were interviewed sell sweets which they mainly buy from these supermarkets. This makes them sell at a higher price than the supermarkets thus translating to fewer buyers. Felex Oduor one of the disabled respondent said; “I sometimes end up consuming the sweets because some passers-by see them as dirty.”²¹⁶ This public mentality has been a challenge to the disabled persons as they strive to cope with the PEV effects on the ground that they do not understand that it is a coping mechanism for the disabled person to sale sweets as means to forget the 2007/08 PEV experiences.

4.6.7 Illiteracy and Ignorance

The level of illiteracy and ignorance among the disabled persons in Kisumu was rated at 39% according to the respondent. This is for the reason that some of them do not know their rights and have remained ignorant. Indeed 18% of the disabled persons who were interviewed were not aware of organizations that offer support to persons with disabilities in Kisumu. They also do not understand counseling as a healing process from the trauma associated with the PEV. Thus illiteracy and ignorance has hindered the disabled from coping with the PEV effects.

4.6.8 Physical facilities

Physical facilities in Kisumu were not tailored to contain or for easy access by the disabled person, for instance, some toilets, pavements, vehicles, buildings did not favour the physically disabled. This challenge were most felt by the physically disabled persons

²¹⁶ Oral Interview, Felex Oduor , Kisumu Bus Station, 20/6/2013

on wheelchairs and those using supportive devices such as crutches. As a result they contributed to injuries sustained by physically disabled persons who could not move quickly up or down the physical facilities that did not favour their movements. One disabled informant reported that;

I could not move quickly with my wheelchair from the veranda where I worked as a cobbler and a shoe shiner when violence erupted.²¹⁷

The accessibility in Kisumu was only convenient for the physically able bodied persons and this denied the physically disabled persons in Kisumu city to access to facilities where they could seek for help to enabling them survive during and after the PEV.

4.6.9 Accessibility to social amenities

Similarly, it was argued by the responded that about 15% disabled persons were faced with the challenge of accessing social amenities for support and treatment. For instance, the disabled persons living with HIV/AIDs were further disabled by the violence which made it difficult for them to access medical centers for treatment. It was emphasized by one respondent that those who lost their sight and needed support from the community to access the social amenities for treatment found it challenging.²¹⁸ This was due to the fact that the violence limited the movement of the people within the town and its suburbs thus difficulty in aiding the visually impaired the disabled HIV/AIDs patients to their respective treatment centers for regular check-ups and medication.

4.7 Conclusion

It is interesting to note that when given an equal opportunity, the disabled persons are as creative as any other able-bodied persons. They are keen at planning ways to help them avoid the negative situation and survive in all ways. Some have been known to exploit all the tricks at their disposal to save their lives and acquire basic needs as they embraced the motto disability is not inability to cope with the violence in Kisumu. The basic need theory which this study is based on suggests that the disabled persons during conflict situations most of their basic human needs were often interfered with as they tended to be

²¹⁷ Oral Interview, Maurice Obiero, Kisumu Town , 23/6/2013

²¹⁸ Oral interview, Jackline Awinja, Nyalenda, 21/6/2013.

ignored and neglected by the public that left them to reclaim themselves back using alternative means.

However, those who have survived in conflict situations have always adopted coping mechanism that would overshadow their disability such as being good mobilizers and moving to the streets in support of the protesting or demonstrating able-bodied persons. Correspondingly, after the violence, the disabled persons have remained miserable as they have lost virtually everything including their assisting devices. Beginning a new life for the disabled during the conflict and those who got disabled more has been the concern of this vulnerable group. This has been based on the ability of each disabled person and the challenge he is faced with. The Government of Kenya should therefore show concern for this vulnerable group that has struggled to survive during and after the 2007/8 Post-Election Violence and elevate them from the state of vicious poverty that they are entangled in. The inclusion of the disabled persons into decision making process and empowerment will be a score in their lives.²¹⁹

This chapter has also exposed that the disabled persons settled for counseling as a coping mechanism. This helped them heal from the trauma and accepted disabilities inflicted in their lives as a result of PEV. This therapy proved to be a success for them as it helped them adapt other coping mechanisms. Secondly the study has presented the coping mechanism developed by the disabled persons in Kisumu County as essential for their well-being as they have helped them reconstruct from the PEV. They have been involved in activities such as small-scale businesses, shoe shining and repair, peace building, and formation of organizations which have brought together a number of disabled persons affected by the PEV.

The coping mechanisms developed during and after the 2007/8 PEV in Kisumu County by the disabled persons were not that easy since they were faced with some challenges as noted in this chapter. These challenges include financially incapacitated, faced tough competition from mega businesses, illiteracy and ignorance, discrimination and stigma

²¹⁹ Oral Interview Moses Audi, Kenyatta Sports Ground on 23/6/2013.

from the society, psychological distress, food scarcity and inaccessibility to social facilities. The chapter therefore upholds that though the disabled persons have tried to cope with the PEV situation they have also faced challenges in the process while they struggled to cope.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

This project was theorized around the conception of the coping mechanisms developed by the disabled persons in armed conflict situations. It first discusses their involvement as victims or perpetrators in a conflict situation. Though it has widely been considered that in any armed conflict or violence situation, the disabled persons are victims, this project has substantiated that the disabled persons as any other human being have feelings and can express their grievances when the situation arises thus becoming active perpetrators in a conflict situation. The study also set out to examine some of the conflicts that were experienced in Kisumu City right from 1969 that helped build the history of the conflicts in the City. This was the starting point of the study with the main objective being to examine the coping mechanisms developed by the disabled persons during and after the 2007/8 PEV in Kisumu City.

To achieve this, the study brought into discussion the history of conflicts in Kisumu since 1969 by singling out the assassinations of Argwings Kodhek and Tom Mboya in January and July 1969 respectively and the Kisumu massacre in the same year. The study also looked at the violence experienced following the deaths of JM Kariuki in 1975, Dr. Robert Ouko in 1990, Dr. Crispin Mbai in 2003 and Shem Onyango in 2012. Similarly, the study introspected at the terror unleashed by the Baghdad Boys in 1992, PEV 2007/8 and the 2013 violence which seemed unprecedented. The research intended to deduce that the disabled persons were caught in violence and conflicts in Kisumu City thereby developing coping mechanisms for their survival. The research noted that there have been coping mechanisms developed by victims of conflicts in Kisumu City and more significantly the unexplored coping mechanisms developed by the disabled persons during and after the conflict/violence which were key to this study.

The research set out to achieve three objectives; analyzing the roles of the disabled population in Kisumu City during the conflict, analyzing the coping mechanisms developed by disabled persons in the City during and after 2007/8 PEV and assessing the

challenges faced by the disabled persons in the City on their coping mechanisms during and after the conflicts.

The research revealed that conflicts in Kisumu were associated with political incitement, political expediency aimed at attaining benefits that are accrued with the presidency, ethnic polarization and mobilization, struggle and thirst for power associated with the eagerness of the public to know the verdict made on their expected leader. The resulting tension was a way of expressing the dissatisfaction by the people in Kisumu City. The consequences to the disabled persons did not bother the crowd. Discussing the conflicts in Kisumu City was of significant value as it revealed how the disabled persons struggled to cope as victims or perpetrators during and after the violence.

The research within the period of the study discussed the disabled persons, the roles they played and how they were regarded during the conflict situation in Kisumu City. The study brought out the disabled as perpetrators and as victims in equal measures. It disaggregated their participation and effect of the violence which varied in intensity.

The study noted the activeness and inactiveness of the disabled persons in PEV as highlighted in the discussion, their role as perpetrators and as victims in the conflict. The study elaborates that the disabled persons were involved in the PEV following the declaration of Mwai Kibaki as the President-elect sparking protests that turned violent in the subsequent days. This explains the reason why and how Kisumu people who lived in tranquility rose up in arms against each other due to different political preferences and struggle for leadership. The disabled persons played the role of perpetrator as they were involved in stone throwing, demonstrations, mobilization, and informers to the violent crowd. The disabled persons were victims as they bore the brunt of the violence that rocked Kisumu City.

The study noted that the disabled persons were perpetrators basing on their fact that they felt marginalized and not involved in decision making policies, lacked economic empowerment and political synergy that does not alienated them. It also observed that the disabled persons in Kisumu City were victims of displacement, physical injuries that

disabled them more, sexual harassment/abuse, psychological trauma, loss of property and unable to access food and water. The study therefore exemplifies the presence of perpetrators and victims in the PEV which was identified in the coping mechanisms of the disabled persons in Kisumu.

This study revealed that the disabled persons are as creative as any other person given a chance. In Kisumu PEV the disabled were keen at planning ways to help them avoid the negative situation and survive the violence in all ways. They demonstrated their coping mechanisms to survive the conflict situation by developing mechanisms that overshadowed their disability such as mobilizing crowds. As the study reveals that some of the disabled persons remained miserable during and after the PEV as they lost virtually all they had including their assisting aid. This forced them to seek an alternative means to survive as elaborated in the study. Some of the mechanisms that were employed by the disabled persons to survive were; spying, inciting, seeking support from the community, developing livelihood approach methods, turning to faith, attending counseling, involvement in small-scale businesses, begging on the streets, peace preaching and getting security assurance and both government and non-governmental organization support.

It was also important to look at the challenges that the disabled persons faced in their efforts to cope with the PEV. Some of these challenges were; discrimination and stigma, scarcity of food and water, psychological distress, the basic need dilemma and financial incapacitation, competition from the mega businesses, illiteracy and ignorance, lack of physical facilities and inaccessibility to social amenities. The study emphasized on the inclusion of the disabled persons into decision making process and that the need to be socially and economically empowered to enable them lead successful lives. The study therefore has presented the coping mechanisms developed by the disabled persons in Kisumu as essential for their well-being as they helped them recover from the PEV hazards.

The study has also provided a theoretical framework of basic human needs in a conflict situation based on the works of John Button who argues that basic human needs are the

centre of peace and conflict resolution; and Christopher Mitchell with his argument that conflict has been due to the existence of basic human needs in individuals, communities and groups. Following the arguments of J. Button and C. Mitchell in this study the disabled persons were involved in the conflict because their basic human needs were not fulfilled while on the other hand they survived the conflict by prioritizing some of their basic human needs which helped them to cope with the violence situations hence the study brings out the disabled persons as a unique group that became creative in their coping mechanisms. The satisfaction that the disabled persons in Kisumu attained in their coping mechanisms were therefore as a result of embracing the basic human needs so that they could live positive life free from violence hence the study achieving its objectives.

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APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
MASTERS IN ARMED CONFLICT AND PEACE STUDIES

Dear respondent,

I am a masters student from the University of Nairobi pursuing my Masters Degree in Armed Conflict and Peace Studies. I request for the information on armed conflict and coping mechanisms for the disabled persons during and after the Post-Election Violence (PEV) that will assist me complete the study. The information is strictly for academic purposes and if anonymity is requested, I will do observe it.

Thank you in advance.

Questionnaire

PART ONE

Name.....Age..... Gender.....
District.....Division.....
Location.....Date.....

PART TWO

1. What is the name of your district?
2. Who are the indigenous inhabitants of this region?
3. When did they settle here?
4. Who are the current inhabitants of this region?
5. Where did they come from and when?
6. Why do you think they came to Kisumu?

PART THREE

7. Who were the main actors in the Post-Election Violence in Kisumu?

8. In your opinion why do you think the disabled were perpetrator in Post-Election Violence?
9. How were they involved in the conflict?
10. Do you think the disabled were among the Post-Election Violence Victims in Kisumu?
11. How were they victimized?
12. Why were they perpetrators and victims?

PART FOUR

13. Has there been any coping mechanisms developed by the disabled persons during the Post-Election Violence.
14. Which coping Mechanism?
15. Has there been any coping mechanism developed by the disabled persons after the Conflict?
16. Which coping mechanism?

17. Were Non-Governmental Organization involved in helping the Disabled to cope with the conflict?
18. How were they involved?
19. Did they have any impact on coping mechanism for the disabled?
20. How did they impact?

21. Did the security agents play any role in developing coping mechanisms for the disabled during the Post-election violence?

22. What are some of the challenges that the disabled faced when coping with the aftermath of the conflict in Kisumu?