



**UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI  
FACULTY OF ARTS**

**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY AND ARCHEOLOGY**

**SURVIVING DISPLACEMENT: THE CASE OF “INVISIBLE  
INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS”, KISUMU COUNTY, 1991-  
2011.**

**FREDERICK MUISA WAKHISI  
REG NO: C50/60543/2010**

**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS, ARMED CONFLICT AND PEACE STUDIES,  
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

**OCTOBER 15<sup>TH</sup> 2015**

**DECLARATION**

THIS IS MY ORIGINAL WORK AND TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, HAS NOT BEEN PRESENTED FOR A DEGREE IN ANY OTHER UNIVERSITY

\_\_\_\_\_  
**FREDRICK M. WAKHISI**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**DATE**

THIS STUDY HAS BEEN SUBMITTED FOR EXAMINATION WITH OUR APPROVAL AS UNIVERSITY SUPERVISORS

\_\_\_\_\_  
**PROFESSOR VINCENT G. SIMIYU**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**DATE**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**DR. MARY MWIANDI**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**DATE**

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to beloved and cherished Mother, Mayi Norah Naututu Wangia-Wakhisi (NATECHO). I was saddened by your demise before this work saw the light of day, but you knew about it. You meant everything to me. Your memory is hereby interred in this academic endeavor.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my two esteemed supervisors, Professor Vincent G. Simiyu and Dr. Mary Mwiandi who taught and dedicated their time and effort to see me through this project. My special thanks to also go to Dr. Ephraim Wahome and Dr. George Gona who guided me through on Research Methods.

Last but not least, I would like to express my sincere thanks to my family who encouraged me despite many challenges. Special thanks to my beloved wife Yasue, and the children, Reika, Mika and Seika for their patience and prayers.

## **ABSTRACT**

The research set out to establish the existence of “invisible IDPs” in Kisumu County, investigate their challenges and specify coping mechanisms.

‘Invisible IDPs’ are displaced persons who were absorbed by their original communities’ eeking a living. Like fellow displaced in camps, they lost sources of livelihood, security, belongings and sense of belonging. Their experiences, coping mechanisms to myriad challenges have gone unrecorded. Scholars have so far concentrated in research on IDPs in the camp range, not on these “invisible IDPs”. This is the gap in our knowledge which constitutes the research problem of this study.

Self-Efficacy Theory of Albert Bendura informed the Theoretical framework of the Research study. The study was based on two hypotheses; ‘the longer IDPs had stayed away from ancestral homes made it difficult for them to be accepted by kin and kith’ and ‘invisible IDPs’ face similar challenges like IDPs in camps.’

This is a case study by design, qualitative in nature. The research is a descriptive analysis of election related violence and IDP consequence of conflict. The study used both primary and secondary sources of data. The tools used for data collection included; camera and tape recorder. The researcher used purposive sampling method with snowballing effect.

At the re-introduction of pluralism, politically engineered election related violence caused displacement in Kisumu County, spanning from 1991 to 2011.

The displaced faced various challenges; loss of livelihood, loss of loved ones, family breakdown, trauma, cultural dysfunction, security, translocation, disruption of education, destitution and ethnic polarization among others.

These displaced adopted numerous coping mechanisms in surviving displacement, they include; petty farming/fishing, social capital/kin and kith, family separations, religion, sports, entrepreneur, child labour, self-help groups among others.

The project makes two types of recommendations; academic and policy.

## **LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>CIDCM</b>	Center for International Development and Conflict Management
<b>ECK</b>	Electoral Commission of Kenya
<b>FORD – K</b>	Forum for Restoration of Democracy – Kenya
<b>HPG</b>	Humanitarian Policy Group
<b>HRW</b>	Human Rights Watch
<b>ICC</b>	International Criminal Court - the Haque.
<b>IDMC</b>	Internal Displacement Monitoring Center
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Person
<b>IPPG</b>	Inter – Party Parliamentary Group.
<b>JRS</b>	Jesuit Refugee Service
<b>KANU</b>	Kenya African National Union
<b>KHRC</b>	Kenya Human Rights Commission
<b>KRCS</b>	Kenya Red Cross Society
<b>LDP</b>	Liberal Democratic Party
<b>MOU</b>	Memorandum of Understanding
<b>NARC</b>	National Alliance Rainbow Coalition
<b>ODI</b>	Overseas Development Institute
<b>ODM</b>	Orange Democratic Movement
<b>ORIN</b>	Integrated Regional Information Networks
<b>PNU</b>	Party of National Unity
<b>RCK</b>	Refugee Consortium of Kenya
<b>UN OCHA</b>	United Nations’ Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNSCR</b>	United Nations Security Council Resolution

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>DECLARATION</b> .....	<b>i</b>
<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 Background of the Study .....	5
1.3 Goals and Objectives of the Study.....	7
1.4 Justification of the Study .....	7
1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study.....	8
1.6 Literature Review.....	8
1.7 Theoretical Framework.....	17
1.8 Research Hypothesis.....	19
1.9 Methodology.....	19
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>ELECTION RELATED CONFLICT AND DISPLACEMENT IN KISUMU COUNTY, 1991- 2011</b> .....	<b>21</b>
2.0 Introduction.....	21
2.1 Election Related Violence and Displacement.....	22
2.2 The Causes of Election Related Violence.....	29
2.3The Impact of Election Related Violence .....	34
<b>CONCLUSION</b> .....	<b>40</b>
<b>CHAPTER THREE</b> .....	<b>42</b>
<b>THE 2007 POST ELECTION VIOLENCE AND THE RISE OF “INVISIBLE IDPS” IN KISUMU COUNTY</b> .....	<b>42</b>
3.0 Introduction.....	42
3.1 The Rise of ‘Invisible IDPs’ .....	42
3.2 Impact .....	47
3.2.1 Loss of Life .....	50
3.2.2 Geographical Translocation.....	52
3.2.3 Loss of Livelihood. ....	53
3.2.4 Safety and Security .....	55
3.2.5 Disruption of Education.....	56
3.2.6 Orphans .....	57

3.2.7 Sexual Violence .....	58
3.2.9 Cultural Disfunction.....	59
3.3 Ethnic Polarization.....	61
3.3.2 Social Ills .....	63
3.4 Conclusion .....	64
<b>CHAPTER FOUR.....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>COPING MECHANISMS.....</b>	<b>66</b>
4.0 Introduction.....	66
4.1.1 Coping Assertively.....	66
4.2 Kith and Kinship.....	68
4.2.1Family Separations.....	70
4.3 Religion.....	72
4.4 Entrepreneur.....	75
4.4.1 Commercial Sex Workers .....	78
4.4.2 Child Labour .....	80
4.5 Petty Farming.....	81
4.6 Fishing.....	83
4.7 Sports. ....	84
4.8 Self-Help groups. ....	85
4.9 Re-Marrying.....	86
4.10 Employment.....	88
4.12 Conclusion .....	89
<b>CHAPTER FIVE .....</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>SOURCES.....</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>QUESTIONNAIRE .....</b>	<b>106</b>



## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

Many people have been displaced with conflicts ending up in ‘ancestral homes’ directly or indirectly via camps. These displaced took up residence with friends or relatives or rented accommodation. This made their presence go unnoticed as they mixed up with the general population. Thus their oblivion made them ‘invisible IDPs’.

These ‘invisible IDPs’ are not researched on, yet displaced. These displaced do not come to academic forums and are not recognized by the government hence the ‘invisibility’. The manners in which these displaced have been challenged, coped, or were impacted on by the violence and subsequent displacements are a good case references and learning points for conflict resolution practitioners. This is a case study of Kisumu County.

Kisumu County is one of the 47 counties in Kenya lying in the western region. Kisumu is the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest city in Kenya, but for a long time was seen as the little Bombay (Mumbai) due to Indian predominance of the city’s economic landscape.<sup>1</sup> The county is bordered by Homa Bay County, Nyamira County and Kisii County to the south, Vihiga County and Nandi County to the North, Kericho County to the East, Kakamega County to the North West and Siaya County and Lake Victoria to the West. The County covers a total area of 2426.7 sq km with a population of 898,843 people,<sup>2</sup> predominantly Luo ethnic in rural but cosmopolitan in the city.

This election related violence and displacement advanced through successive presidential elections since the onset of political pluralism in 1991.<sup>3</sup> The Presidency brought advantages for President’s ethnic group and made his community willing to exert violence to attain and keep power, a key motivation amongst top presidential candidates. This increased personalization of power around the Presidency that facilitated election related violence.

---

<sup>1</sup> Government of Kenya, 2009 Kenya Population and Housing Census, Vol.1A, Government Printers, Nairobi, 2009.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Throup.D.W and Hornsby, “The Creation of the Moi State;The Kenyatta and Moi States and Triumph of the System in 1992 Election”, Oxford University Press, 1998, p.26.

The Moi regime was forced by external pressure (the Western Powers, and the Donor Community) and internal pressure (the Civil Society, Academia, Media and Religious Society) to repeal Section 2A of the then Constitution. The civil societies promoted civic education, while media and academia informative publications. Some publications like Mwakenya, Pambana and Mkombozi took a clandestine dimension to avoid treasonable charges. The clergy used the pulpit and pastoral letters to advance this course. These bore fruit in November 1991, when political pluralism was restored through the repealing of Section 2A of the then Constitution.<sup>4</sup>

Many political parties were formed promising democracy and good governance.<sup>5</sup> These new parties tended to be organized around either a regional identity or political personality albeit party policies/ideology'.<sup>6</sup> Political party leaders thus reflected ethnic identity and sub-nation. Moi's Kenya Africa National Union (KANU) symbolized Kalenjin sub-nation. Oginga's Forum for Restoration of Democracy –Kenya (FORD-K) symbolized the Luo sub-nation. Kibaki's Democratic Party (DP) symbolized the elitist Kikuyu sub-nation. Matiba's Forum for Restoration of Democracy symbolized the generalize Kikuyu sub-nation.

This drew battle line between ruling regime-KANU and leading opposition political parties as exemplified by cases of violence in Meteitei - Nandi District, and Thesalia, in Kericho District, where non Kalenjins were displaced into camps from where many joined kin and kith becoming 'invisible IDPs', in the run up to 1992 presidential elections.<sup>7</sup> By leaving camps they missed out on being registered as IDPs thus going unrecorded. This entrenched their invisibility thus could not be recognized nor receive support. Similar pattern and trend followed in the run up to 1997 presidential elections albeit absence of Oginga and Matiba, plus inclusion of Social Democratic Party, that ha

---

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, p. 23

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 87

<sup>6</sup> Karuri.L.G; Kenya Private Sector Alliance; presentation to the Parliamentary Leaders' Retreat, Machakos, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2006.

<sup>7</sup> Norwegian Refugee Council – "Global IDP; Profile of Internal Displacement": Nairobi, Kenya. November, 2004.

no ethnic identity performing disastrously. Regional outlook of political parties promote strong ethnic identity, a recipe for conflict.

Hundreds of displaced people transformed into “invisible IDPs” clandestinely due to dictatorial KANU regime who considered such people a security risk.<sup>8</sup> They lived amongst kin and kith with a public face of normalcy yet internally wounded. Regional outlook of political parties promote strong ethnic identity, a recipe for conflict.

The 2007/8 post polls violence proved to be the mother of all displacements. The displaced population hit the apex. Kisumu County received 129,000 IDPs, of which over 20,000 joined kin and kith. They became destitute, having lost all livelihoods. Their presence went unnoticed as they mixed with general population. ‘Invisible IDPs’ is not only a social problem but a scholarly problem that has not been researched.

Politically engineered ‘Ethnic land clashes’ facilitated displacement of people from their homes, businesses and work places into camps as IDPs. Many of these displaced subsequently moved from camps joining kin and kith in ‘ancestral homes’ becoming ‘invisible IDPs’. After the elections, most of the victims returned while the rest remained in their communities out of fear induced by displacement experience.

The IDP issue was an eye sore for the government in light of International Community. As such the government strove to keep the issue under control. In an attempt to diffuse IDP issue the ruling regime dispersed IDPs out of camps making them ‘invisible’.<sup>9</sup> The increase of displaced persons had implications in terms of poverty, social mistrust and indifference plus other psychological related disorders. This ultimately led to cultural dysfunction.

The issue of displacement is apparently pegged on land, yet livelihood goes beyond land. Land ownership is male oriented due to patriarchal societal nature. This disenfranchised those displaced from townships as well as single women, because displacement is a

---

<sup>8</sup> Human Rights Watch (HRW), “Failing the Internally Displaced: The UNDP Displaced Persons Program in Kenya”, Nairobi, 1997, p.40.

<sup>9</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC); “Kenya: No durable Solutions for Internally displaced yet”, 2008, p.36

function of livelihood. This means that there are various categories of the displaced, who suffered similar challenges as those displaced from land, for example loss of livelihood, relationship and disruption of life.

The 1991-2 General Election saw the displacement of Thesalia people. Thesalia people were Luo who inhabited land in Kericho since 1918,<sup>10</sup> upon employment as laborers on European owned sisal plantation. In 1971 they cooperated and purchased the land, only to be displaced in 1991. Similar incident happened to the Luo in Mateitei, Nandi.<sup>11</sup> Only those displaced from land were deemed genuine IDPs, alienating those displaced from urban centers for not meeting IDP threshold. Such displaced were not considered genuine IDPs, thus perceived as security risk.<sup>12</sup>

The 2002 general elections ushered in regime change that altered previous election related violence and displacement nemesis from Kalenjin versus Luo to Kikuyu versus Luo in 2007/8; Kikuyu enjoying the incumbency. The 2007/8 post-election violence and displacement was intense and widespread to the extent that the majority victims did not return.<sup>13</sup> The violence started as a conflict politically between PNU and ODM supporters before progressively transforming into ethnic dimension- Kikuyu versus Kalenjin/ Luo and ultimately taking economic twist: haves versus have not.

The displaced suffered devastating impacts and challenges including; loss of life, loss of livelihood, loss of long established relationships, geographical translocation, disruption of education, ethnic polarization, cultural dysfunction, destitution, orphaned and safety and security. The path of displacement was cruel, ruthless and painful.

Consequently, these 'invisible IDPs' took up various occupations including; farmers, transporters, fishermen, artisans, brokers, food vendors or beauticians in the name of eking a living among kin and kith.

---

<sup>10</sup> Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN), "Kenya: Nyanza's forgotten IDPs", February 2011.

<sup>11</sup> Lee.S.W and Pitsch.A; Centre for International Development and Conflict (CIDC): "Kikuyu, Kisii, Luhya, and Luo in Kenya," July, 2002.

<sup>12</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC), "Speedy reform needed to deal with past injustices and prevent future displacement", Nairobi, 2010, p.42.

<sup>13</sup> The Kenya Red Cross Society: Kenya Humanitarian Forum Meeting, March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2008, Nairobi.

Previous election related displacement victims may have subsequently returned to their former abodes. However, the 2007/8 post polls violence victims never returned. They went to camps as IDPs from where many joined kith and kin in ‘ancestral homes’. Their presence went unnoticed as they mixed up with the general population becoming ‘invisible IDPs’. Such people had kept close links with families back home through rites of passage and regular visits. Such social capital comes in handy in times of crises like election related violence and displacement. The nature of African families though nuclear in nature has communal tendencies facilitating webs.

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

According to Luo popular history, the land around the gulf of Winam was conquered some four generations ago by Okore Kogony for the Kisumu clan. Okore, son of the Ogendero, famous for his prowess and skill in manufacturing weapons, initiated a series of battles, with the neighbouring tribes. He first drove the Nandi and Nyangori out of the plain surrounding the Bay into the nearby mountains. He then chased the people from Kano, a Luo clan, eastwards across the Kibos River. The people of another Luo clan, Kajulu, he drove north-eastward. His courage and leadership once and for all made the land around the Bay, including Ugowe, what it has been ever since Luo land belonging to the Kisumu clan.

To a larger extent traditional Luo culture is deeply embedded amongst natives of Kisumu County. The culture has strong attributes of communal African lifestyle, extended family in nature. This is social capital, a vital asset that influenced ‘invisible IDP’ phenomenon. The culture enhances strong sense of belonging especially in moments of tragedy like the post-election violence. The County hosted numerous IDP camps in Ahero, Awasi, Kisumu town and Koru, which only acted as reception bases for returning IDPs. From

these bases IDPs metamorphosed into ‘invisible IDPs’ amongst kith and kin,<sup>14</sup> communal lifestyle.

Conflict and displacement influenced migration, dispersion and subsequent settlement in Kenya generally and in Kisumu County in particular. Initial colonial land dispossession in early 1900 was mainly centered in White highlands comprising Central and Rift Valley Provinces. Further alienation of fertile land was carried out at the end of the Second World War,<sup>15</sup> to reward British and Indian Second World War veterans covering Nandi on the border of Rift Valley, Nyanza and Western Provinces.

Upon independence, such land was returned to the government and disposed of through free market system.<sup>16</sup> Such land later became theatre of the infamous ‘ethnic land clashes’ upon restoration of political pluralism in 1991. The 1991 case of Mateitei people in Tinderet, Nandi,<sup>17</sup> initiated ‘invisible IDPs’ in Kisumu County. 2007/8 post polls violence produced over 20,000 ‘invisible IDPs’, of both gender.<sup>18</sup> The principle of ‘ancestral home’ is a function of African philosophy embedded in communalism and hospitality.

## **1.2 Statement of Research Problem**

The 2007/8 post polls violence drew attention to internally displaced persons (IDPs) and their plight. ‘Invisible IDPs’ issue is not only a social problem but a scholarly problem not yet studied. Many people have been displaced with conflicts ending up either in the camps from where they joined kith and kin becoming ‘invisible IDPs’. These “invisible” IDPs are not researched on, yet displaced. These displaced do not come to academic forums and are not recognized by the government hence the ‘invisibility’. Displacement

---

<sup>14</sup> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the internally Displaced Populations in Kenya, Western and Rift Valley Provinces: “A Needs Assessment and Programme Proposal for Rehabilitation”, Nairobi 2002, p.12.

<sup>15</sup> Lee.S.W and A. Pitsch, Centre for International Development and Conflict (CIDC): “Kikuyu, Kisii, Luhya and Luo in Kenya,” July, 2002.

<sup>16</sup> Norwegian Refugee Council – Global IDP; Profile of Internal Displacement: Nairobi, Kenya, November, 2004.

<sup>17</sup> Lee.S.W and Pitsch.A, Centre for International Development and Conflict (CIDC): “Kikuyu, Kisii, Luhya and Luo in Kenya, Nairobi, July 2002, p.4.

<sup>18</sup> Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN); Kenya: “Nyanza’s forgotten IDPs”, February, 2011.

is apparently pegged on land, yet livelihood goes beyond land. The manner in which they have been challenged, coped, or were impacted on by the violence and subsequent displacement are a good case references and learning points for conflict resolution practitioners.

Existing literature concentrates on the displaced living in IDP camps. Yet majority of the people displaced from their homes, houses, farms and businesses during the conflict, having lost the livelihoods settled among relatives (kin and kith) and in towns. Because they are not in camps, their experiences, coping mechanisms to myriad challenges go unrecorded and researched. As part of the large IDP consequence of conflict, their “invisible” story need to be told and this is what this project endeavors to do. There is a gap in the scholarly knowledge about these people.

### **1.3 Goals and Objectives of the Study**

The overall goal of this research was to examine the ‘invisible’ Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) problem in Kisumu County.

The specific objectives are:

1. To establish the existence of the “invisible IDPs” in Kisumu County.
2. To investigate the challenges of “invisible IDPs” in Kisumu County.
3. To examine the coping strategies of “invisible IDPs” in Kisumu County.

### **1.4 Justification of the Study**

Despite their experiences, coping strategies and myriad challenges in displacement, not much has been recorded about ‘invisible IDPs’. There is no knowledge base about the subject. The study filled a gap in our knowledge about ‘invisible IDPs’ in Kisumu County. The study is of value addition to policy makers and development in displacement contexts. There is also intrinsic value, that is; knowledge for own sake. Knowledge that is important to progress as philosophical explanation or debate around displacement issues.

### **1.5 Scope and Limitation of the Study**

Chronologically, the study is limited to the period from re-introduction of political pluralism in 1991 up to and including 2011. This period was characterized election related violence and displacement. Geographically, the study covers Kisumu County. The study was challenged by limitations in language, funds, time and suspicion as well. This was however surmounted with the support of research assistants who were natives in terms of language, time and suspicion.

### **1.6 Literature Review**

Existing literature concentrates on the displaced persons living in camps. Yet majority of the people displaced from their homes, houses, farms and businesses during the conflict, having lost the livelihoods settled among relatives (kin and kith) in ancestral homes or towns. Thus existing literature on displacement general was reviewed in order to decipher and unravel the invisibility as the flip side.

Brun's<sup>19</sup> article discusses different conceptions of space and place in displacement studies, especially contributions from anthropology and geography. A main distinction is drawn between two understandings of pace and place; an essentialist conception, stating a natural relationship between people and places and an alternative conception attempting to de-naturalize the relationship between people and places. The consequence of applying different conceptions of space and place for the development of displace policies and representations of displaced persons are addressed.

For many displaced persons, displacement is experienced as being physically present at one place, but at the same time having a feeling of belonging somewhere else. It is argued that through attempts to de-naturalize the relationship between people and places have been important for how the displaced experience is conceptualized, there has been too much focus on immigration accompanied by a neglect of the local perspective of migrants and displaced people are emphasized.

---

<sup>19</sup> Brun, C, "Reterritorialization and relationship between people and place | Refugee studies". Geogr. 2001.



Especially the attitudes from the host communities,<sup>20</sup> the policy environment that displaced people are part of, and their livelihood opportunities are the focus regard. “Territoriality” and “Reterritorialization” of the relationship between people and places are discussed as tools to analyze the local perspective of forced migration and strategies of internally displaced persons and their hosts.

Brun’s work is significant to the general conception of internal displacement but does not discuss the invisibility of IDPs. ‘Invisible IDPs’ do not necessarily have emotional attachment to their ‘original homes’.

Weiss<sup>21</sup> argues that nationalistic, ethnic and communal tensions have become predominant factors in war and displacement in the Post-Cold War World. This exposes civilians to untold risks since they are not in refugee camps but in war zone IDP camps. His main concern is lack of formal protective systems and instruments from the necessary authorities. His argument focuses on offering some possible avenues for protection of Internally Displaced Persons. The literature acknowledges that currently Internally Displaced Persons outnumber refugees and hence the necessity for paradigm shifts in displacement coping strategies. The literature further addresses the issue of coping strategies which is an objective of this study.

The literature adds value to this study in terms of IDP dynamics over time but does not discuss invisibility.

Klopp<sup>22</sup> elaborates that even before the December, 2007 post-election violence crisis; grievances over land had generated over 350,000 IDPs in 1992 and 1997 election related violence. Out of these displaced, 175,000 ended up in IDP camps but the rest who formed the majority ended up as ‘invisible IDPs’. That is not documented, thus necessitating carrying out of this research study. Displacement is thus not a new

---

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. p.15.

<sup>21</sup> Weiss.Thomas.G, “Whither International Efforts for IDPs?” Article in journal for Peace Research,vol.36,No.3.1990,

<sup>22</sup>Klopp.J., “Kenya’s Internally Displaced: Managing Civil Conflict in Democratic Transitions” in D.Bekoe (eds.), East Africa and the Horn: Confronting Challenges of Good Governance, (Boulder,C.O; Lynne Rienner, 2006)

phenomenon, and portraying return as a durable solution in the absence of clear processes to resolve the underlying issues giving rise to it risks embedding the conditions for further violence in future. If a durable solution is to be achieved, historical grievances must be acknowledged and addressed. Klopp argues that the problem is not just land, but lack of alternative livelihoods. The issue of Internally Displaced Persons is an attribute of political power.

The literature avails the requisite background for the study.

According to Klopp<sup>23</sup> Corruption and Ethnic politics supported patronage networks and favored certain communities, particularly the Kikuyu, who settled in the fertile areas of the Rift Valley, at the expense of others, such as the Luo, the Maasai and the Kalenjin, due to political patronism. The Rift Valley is alleged to be Maasai and Kalenjin ‘ancestral homeland’, hence the claim over land. These land tensions were further exacerbated by Kenyatta’s successor, President Daniel Arap Moi, as he extended that policy. In response to the political threat posed by the advent of multiparty politics in the 1990s, Moi sought to portray the opposition as Kikuyu led, and multiparty politics as an exclusionary ethnic project to control land occupied in the Rift Valley. The question of different communities reacting to different issues- social, political, economic or ethnic comes out clearly. These issues intersect or triangulate resulting in violence and displacement. This is politicization of the land issue with the intention of fanning violence and displacement. Increasing personalization of power around the Presidency facilitated election related violence. This was due to a belief that Presidency brings advantages for President’s ethnic group, makes communities willing to exert violence to attain and keep power. Accordingly, IDPs are a product of a political process as they peaked with successive Presidential elections.

For Klopp, IDPs are a result of political pluralism, though paradoxical. It should be understood that political power is an undercurrent of the election related violence and displacement. However, neither IDPs nor ‘invisible IDPs are discussed. Klopp provides hindsight for the study.

---

<sup>23</sup> Klopp,J, “Can Moral Ethnicity Trump Political Tribalism? The Struggle for Land and Nation in Kenya”, *African Studies*, vol.61, no.2, 2002.

Huggins<sup>24</sup> argues that even where land is not a central driver, secondary conflicts can emerge; particularly if there is protracted displacement and land is occupied opportunistically. The result is often overlapping or competing land rights and claims, lost or destroyed documents, lack of adequate housing stock and increased land pressure, often in the absence of an institutional framework that can effectively resolve these conflicts.

The issue of land tenure/ownership is critical in Kenya since the economy is agricultural oriented. Even major industries are agriculturally based. The land issue is emotive and volatile, that could easily bring about conflict where there is displacement overlap and subsequent multiple occupation. Though the primary cause may not be land, it remains critical.

Land remains the main source of livelihood for most Kenyans and traditionally, a cultural heritage. It is an emotive and sensitive issue. The ethnic nature of post-election violence has elevated ethnic fears and hatred in importance, the core of displacement. The issue of land tenure system comes to the fore. For a long time the issue of communal land and individual title deeds acquisition of land by non-community members has caused conflict and displacement. As ‘invisible IDPs’ are absorbed by kin and kith, suspicions on land tenure are beginning to emerge. Huggins hints that most of ‘invisible IDPs’ were displaced from their livelihoods that were not necessarily directly based on land. This is indeed very useful for this study.

Kamungi<sup>25</sup> in her article argues that with the return to pluralism in December, 1991, violence referred to as ‘ethnic cleansing’ or ‘ethnic land clashes’ erupted in many parts of the country. The most affected areas included multi-ethnic regions in the Rift Valley, Coast and Western Provinces. Tensions that often resulted in violence were also prevalent in areas of common borders.

---

<sup>24</sup> Huggins.C; “Land in Return, Reintegration and Recovery Process: Some Lessons from the Great Lakes Region of Africa: Land Conflict and Humanitarian Action”, Nairobi 28<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

<sup>25</sup>Kamungi.P.M, “The Current Situation of Internally Displaced Persons in Kenya”; Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS), Nairobi, March 2001.

It is a matter of ethnic territoriality politically camouflaged. This violence caused the displacement of thousands of people and undermined their civic and political rights, especially their right to vote. The literature points to ‘ethnic land lashes’ as one of the causes of displacement and subsequent IDPs including ‘invisible IDPs’ but does not discuss these IDPs nor ‘invisible IDPs’. Kamungi is indicative of existing lacunae in existing literature and a pointer to a research potential.

Kanogo<sup>26</sup> postulates that although subsidized by the British, settler land transaction placed a financial burden on the domestic economy and aroused dismay and anger among former Mau Mau fighters and other landless Kikuyu. Kanogo emphasizes that these groups had come to equate Kenyatta’s release and person with the inception of millennium that would be epitomized by redistribution of ‘the stolen lands’. The resulting perception of betrayal would later return to trouble Kenyatta and his successor, Daniel arap Moi. The literature provides the foundation for displacement, thus value addition.

Oyugi<sup>27</sup> avers that the problem of ethnicity, having emerged during the colonial period, has been progressively accelerated since independence with the emergence of ethnicity as a factor in national politics. Ethnicity in Kenya became a national concern as early as the colonial period but was accentuated in the post-independence period during the implementation of the policy of Africanization. Ethnic tensions developed especially around the structures of access to economic opportunities and redistribution of resources owned by the white settlers. Most of the land in question was in the Rift Valley province and was historically settled by the Kalenjin and the Maasai. The other area that was affected was by colonial settlement was Central province of Kenya.

But the crisis was aggravated during the mid-1950s when forced land consolidation took place during the emergency period, which benefited mainly the pro-government group that had not fought Mau Mau revolt. When the state of emergency was lifted at the end of

---

<sup>26</sup> Kanogo.S, “Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau”.

<sup>27</sup> Oyugi.W.O, “Conflict in Kenya: A Periodic Phenomenon”, December, 2002.

of the 1950s, most of the detainees returned home to find that they had lost their land to loyalists. Some moved to urban centres in search of wage and employment. A large wave of this group moved to the Rift Valley in anticipation of what was expected to be land distribution after independence.

A large number of them joined relatives and kinsmen who had moved to the Rift Valley many decades earlier and were staying in some of the settler owned land as squatters. When redistribution of some of the land formerly owned by the white settlers began, it was this squatters that became instant beneficiaries of the allocations. Those who sought wage and self-employment remained 'invisible'. The literature speaks to the study.

Lonsdale<sup>28</sup> captures the poignant dilemma confronting the young Mau Mau veterans:

*"On emerging from the forest or detention, they were landless still, indeed more so than before in a rural world now realigned by land consolidation and freehold title. They remained debarred from the creation of order, outside their boundary fence"*<sup>29</sup>.

This brings out the issue of landlessness and restlessness among a generation of youths whose parents did not get land after independence. This is how the Kikuyu inhabited Rift Valley. In Kenya displacement is pegged on land making it a critical. Some Mau Mau veterans moved to urban centers in search of wage and self-employment, a large wave of this group moved to the Rift Valley in anticipation of what was expected to be land redistribution after Independence. A number of them joined relatives and kinsmen who had moved to the Rift Valley many decades earlier and were staying in some of the settler owned land as squatters. Lonsdale brings up the phenomenon of landlessness, hopelessness, despondency ultimately restraint, conflict and displacement. The literature does not discuss invisibility, but highlights the drivers of displacement. This adds value to the study.

De Waal<sup>30</sup>, avers that conflicts over land often drive complex emergencies, particularly in agrarian societies where land is central to livelihoods. Forced displacement and

---

<sup>28</sup>Lonsdale, J. Mau Mau of the Mind: "Making Mau Mau and Remaking Kenya," *Journal of African History* 31, 1990.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p.120.

appropriation can be a means to reward allies, acquire or secure access to resources, manipulate elections or create homogeneous areas.

De Waal raises in this article the aspect of political engineering/wheel dealing which fuels and energizes displacement. Displacement is hinged on livelihood and not just land per se. Most of those displaced in 2007/8 violence were not displaced from their land but occupation.

The literature underscores the underlying issues in politically driven displacement without discussing invisibility.

Okwaro<sup>31</sup> argues that in Kenya internal displacement has occurred regularly since the onset of multi-party politics in 1991. The Rift Valley Province has borne the brunt of both violence and displacement.

This has been despite strong official pronouncements by the State against acts of violence and disruption of people's lives during elections. Violent conflict and displacement in Kenya's Rift Valley has usually taken on a distinctly ethnic character.

The literature discusses displacement which is important to the framework of the study. However, the literature does not address invisibility.

Miller and Yeager<sup>32</sup> aver that Jomo Kenyatta's commanding presence dominated Kenyan politics for fifteen years of independence. The Kenyatta era is important to understand not only because the political economy he set in place has survived his passing but also because Kenyatta's legitimation and extension of the new order's entrepreneurial legacy has lent intensity to individual and group conflicts in the time since his death.

This provides a vital background for the study.

---

<sup>30</sup> De Waal.A, "Why Do Humanitarian Agencies Need To Tackle Land Issues?: Land, Conflict and Humanitarian Action", Nairobi 28<sup>th</sup> February 2008.

<sup>31</sup> Okwaro, B.M.; "Internally displaced persons and the Dilemma of the right of return: A case study of Vumilia Eldoret, Jikaze and Vumilia Narok, IDPs in Mahi Mahiu in Kenya's Rift Valley Province 2007-2010", M.A. Project, Dept. of History, University of Nairobi, 2010.

<sup>32</sup> Miller.N, and Yeager.R, "Kenya: The Quest for prosperity", Oxford, Westview Press, 1994.

Maathai<sup>33</sup> gives example of of Neylon's farm. The farm drew labour force from diverse local communities. They included Luo, Kipsigis, and Kikuyu workers. These same communities could not live in close proximity to each other. The Kikuyu worked in the fields, the Luo labored around the homestead as domestic servants, and Kipsigis took care of the livestock and milking. Thus a Kikuyu village was separate from a Luo one which in turn separate from a Kipsigis counterpart. In a way this practice contributed to the emergence of specific ethnic stereotypes and at the same time perpetuated inter-ethnic exclusivity. This laid the pre-foundation for future ethnic clashes and displacement.

This provided the basis for the study.

Ogot<sup>34</sup> argues that Europeans monopolized fertile parts of Kenya highlands while other European settlements were planted in border areas in order to separate and isolate different African groups from one another. For instance, buffer zones of European settlements were established between the Kipsigis and Gusii, the Kipsigis and and the Nandi, the Kipsigis and the Luo, the Luo and the Terik (Nyang'ori) and between the Kikuyu and the Maasai.

This weakened the pre-colonial intermingling which existed among many communities. The strategy also helped to intensify and fossilize ethnic consciousness amongst the different communities and ended up promoting feeling of exclusiveness and eventually planted the seeds of ethnocentrism and the urge for ethnocracy.

The literature underscores the undercurrent of displacement, a key component of the study.

Wily<sup>35</sup> in his article states that policy responses usually favor returning populations to their areas of origin or habitual residence and the restitution of land and property. Often, however, displaced people have no land to return to or are unable to access their previous

---

<sup>33</sup> Maathai. W, "Unbowed: Memoir", New York Anchor Books. 2006.

<sup>34</sup> Ogot.B.A, and Ochieng' R.W, "Kenya: The Making of a Nation: 1985-1995", Nairobi, 2000.

<sup>35</sup> Wily.L.A, "It's more than About Going Home. Land in Emergency Development Transitions in Conflict States: Who should do what"? Paper presented to humanitarian Policy Group. Nairobi February 28th 2008.

properties. They may have had no alternative but to occupy someone else's land with other groups.

Wily's argument is that livelihoods determine displacement. Displacement populations are often Diaspora in nature, with areas of origin out of question and habitual residence in contention, thus no land to return to or unable to access their property. The property is either confiscated or destroyed in conflict.

The land use is further limited by the vagaries of nature that limits production to a season. In some cases the land is subjected to growing the community's staple food crop thus inhibiting its potential productivity. Livelihood deficit eventually forces people to seek alternatives often in other Counties. In times of conflict, such habitual residences come into contention. Wily raises the issue of alternative livelihood, a function of 'invisible IDPs'. This informs the undercurrents of invisibility. Why some go to urban centres while others to peri-urban areas. This informs the study.

Lonsdale<sup>36</sup>, argues that relocating IDPs to so-called 'ancestral homelands' is of particular concern. While this may offer a temporary refuge for communities that have retained strong families with their extended families, most host families are starting to reject the continued presence of displaced people for fear that they will make claims on their land. In the first place the displaced had emigrated in search of greener pastures. Relocation back to 'ancestral homelands' is a setback.

Resettlement in areas of ethnic kinship also sets a dangerous precedent as it implicitly supports the goals of those engaged in violence and displacement as a means of ethnically cleansing certain regions. It also fails to take into account that the concept of 'ancestral homeland' is often artificial construction of the colonial state, rather than a reflection of historical rootedness. Lonsdale acknowledges existence of strong families with extended family tendencies, a key component of kin and kith. This is social capital and backbone

---

<sup>36</sup> Lonsdale, J., "Soil, Work, Civilization and Citizenship", in Kenya's Journal of Eastern African Studies, 2008,



of invisibility. He acknowledges existing constraints. The literature strongly informs the study.

South Consulting Report<sup>37</sup> states; the so called “integrated” IDPs, namely IDPS in urban and peri-urban areas who took up residence with friends and relatives, or rented accommodation did not access humanitarian assistance. Their presence went unnoticed as they mixed with the general population, thus invisibility.

The literature informs the core of the study.

## **1.7 Theoretical Framework**

The study utilized Self – Efficacy Theory of Albert Bendura.

### **Self – Efficacy Theory.**

Self-Efficacy Theory explains how individuals psychologically cope with their difficult moments. This theory has been used to explain how Iranian refugees in Sweden coped with traumatic life experiences as soldiers, political prisoners or as victims of torture and displacements.<sup>38</sup> Albert Bendura argues that individuals are self-organizing, proactive, self-reflecting and self-regulating rather than reactive organisms shaped and guided by environmental forces or driven by concealed inner impulses.<sup>39</sup> To Bendura, human behavior is as a result of a dynamic interplay of personal, behavioral and environmental influences. He emphasizes that cognition is of a central importance in individuals’ capability to construct reality, self-regulate, encode information and perform behaviors. What motivates individuals is the inner belief rather than what is objectively true and this builds their self-efficacy.<sup>40</sup>

---

<sup>37</sup> South Consulting, “A Situation Analysis of Post-Election Violence (PEV)”, <http://www.italnal-displacemnt.org>. January 2010.

<sup>38</sup> Mehdi Ghazinour, “Trauma and Resiliency: A case study of Refugees from Iran Resettled in Sweden”, Umea University Medical Dissertation, 2003.

<sup>39</sup> Bandura.A, “Self-Efficacy: Towards a Unifying Theory of Behavior Change”, *Psychological Review*, Vol.84, 1977, p.92

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

Perceived self-efficacy affects how individuals persist in the face of obstacles and aversive experiences.<sup>41</sup> The stronger the perceived self-efficacy of an individual, the more he actively copes with his situation. Individuals who persist in subjectively threatening activities will eventually eliminate the ambitions through corrective experience, whereas those who avoid what they fear or who cease their coping efforts prematurely, will retain their self-weakening expectations and defensive behavior.<sup>42</sup>

According to Bandura there are four major sources of self-efficacy: mastery of experiences where an individual performs and accomplishes a task successfully thus building his sense of self-efficacy. However, failing to adequately deal with a task or challenge can undermine and weaken self-efficacy; social modeling where one witnesses others successfully dealing with a challenge raises observers' beliefs that they too possess the capabilities to cope with the same challenge; social persuasion where the skills and capabilities to succeed and psychological responses where moods, emotional states, physical reactions, and stress levels impact on how an individual feels about their personal abilities in a particular situation.<sup>43</sup> The theory was used to explain coping mechanism.

The effects of 2007/8 post polls violence affected invisible IDPs in Kisumu County psychologically and physically. The violence caused loss of lives, relationships, properties, livelihoods and disruption of lives through displacement. The displaced were forced to live in different uncomfortable environments.

Self-efficacy theory helped to understand the reasons behind the coping strategies. It helped explain how 'invisible IDPs' managed their challenges of displacement and what motivated them. The mastery of experience acquired in the course of post polls violence, social persuasion where community discourage going to IDP camp through community absorption, social modeling by watching others coping with their situation, and therefore

---

<sup>41</sup> Bandura, A, and Adams, N.E, "Analysis of Self-Efficacy Theory of Behavioral Change, Cognitive Therapy and Research" , Vol.1, no.4, 1977, p.288.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Bandura, B, "Self- Efficacy: Towards a Unifying Theory of Behavior Change", Psychological Review, Vol.84, 1977, p.192.

building their resolve, or psychological responses where the displaced intrinsically encourage themselves.

### **1.8 Research Hypothesis**

The study is based on two hypotheses;

1. Longevity of their stay is determined by their acceptability amongst kith and kin.
2. 'Invisible' IDPs face similar challenges as the obvious IDPs.

### **1.9 Methodology**

The study employed both secondary and primary data. Secondary sources comprised of books, articles from scholarly journals, newspapers reports and magazines. The data was sourced from the University of Nairobi library and other public libraries. In addition, the study made use of relevant conference/seminar papers/presentations on internal displacement in particular and refugee hood in general.

Primary sources include; oral interviews, questionnaire (highbred of structured and unstructured). Print media involved both the standard and the daily nation. Electronic media involved Kenya Television Network (KTN) and the Nation Television (NTV). The unstructured questionnaire facilitated the interviewee to give answers from own point of view rather than that of interviewer.

We used purposive sampling method. We identified a key person who was in Nairobi and had prior knowledge about this type of IDPs. He had even published an article in the Daily Nation.

We used him to identify other informants using this guided sampling method, one informant ('Invisible IDP') led to the next informant who was on site. This initial informant on site was an 'invisible IDP' willing to participate in the research as a second research assistant. Subsequently, we took him on board as a research assistant. Thus the key informant and informant on site played the roles of research assistants.

With the two research assistants, interviews were conducted in Ahero, Awasi, Kisumu, Koru and Maseno stations, in Kisumu County. Thus some interviews were done on the

same day but different places/stations. The two research Assistants played a critical role in making this research work a success by efficiently carrying out the roles of moderator, mediator, interpreter, guide and interviewer.

The research data collection process spiraled into snowballing effect up to 61 informants by the end of the two weeks exercise. These informants comprised of ‘invisible IDPs’, humanitarian/relief staff (Kenya Red Cross Association and Care International), government officials, security agents and Clergy. ‘Invisible IDPs formed the bulk.

The tools to facilitate the research work included book for taking notes, pen for writing, camera for photographs, tape recording – to save time for those who permitted to be recorded. Tape recordings have the advantage of saving time and maintain accuracy. There was listening and taking notes. Patience was vital here.

This is a case study by design. The study was qualitative in nature, delving into issues of observations, perceptions, feelings, attitudes, disposition, and valuations. This involved analysis of the events as narrated by the respondents. Qualitative data analysis method known as thematic analytic technique, whereby related topics/subjects are categorized in a group (thyme) was applied.<sup>44</sup> The field study was undertaken in a period of two weeks and subsequent project write up.

---

<sup>44</sup> Kombo.D.S, and Tromp. D.L.A, “Proposal and Thesis Writing”: An Introduction, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 2006, p.119

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **ELECTION RELATED CONFLICT AND DISPLACEMENT IN KISUMU COUNTY, 1991- 2011**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

Tensions and structural conflicts related to land have simmered in many parts of Kenya since independence and many land –related problems have degenerated into social unrest. For many Kenyans, land is the basic, and in most cases, the only economic resource from which they eke out a livelihood. The ability to access, own, use and control land has profound impact on Kenyans’ ability to feed and provide for their families and to establish their social economic and political standing in society. The restoration of political pluralism in Kenya in 1991,<sup>45</sup> ushered in the phenomenon of election related conflict often referred to as “ethnic land clashes” leading to displacements of persons.

The displaced ended up camps from where many plus others coming directly from displacement, joined kin and kith in ‘ancestral homes’. In the ‘ancestral homes’, these displaced took up residence with friends or relatives, or rented accommodation becoming ‘invisible IDPs’. Their presence went unnoticed as they mixed with the general population, hence invisibility. This is attributable to social capital.

On the other hand, obvious IDPs are the displaced who ended up in camps. The camps are separate from general population. These camps are recognized by the relevant government authorities, thus legitimacy. Whereas ‘invisible IDPs’ enjoy social capital, their counterpart obvious IDPs enjoy legitimacy.

The number of ‘invisible IDPs’ increased with successive presidential elections except for regime change situation in 2002. The 2007/8 post polls violence proved to be the mother of all displacements with serious social, economic and political consequences on Kisumu County in particular and Kenya generally. The population of ‘Invisible IDP’ sky-rocketed from few hundred in 1992 to over 20,000 in 2007/8 post-election violence.<sup>46</sup> The causes, impact and the consequences are subject of interrogation in this chapter.

---

<sup>45</sup>Lee.S.W and Pitsch.A Centre for International Development and Conflict (CIDC); “Kikuyu, Kisii, Luhya and Luo in Kenya.” July 2002, p.4.

<sup>46</sup> Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN); “Kenya: Nyanza’s forgotten IDPs”, February, 2011.

## 2.1 Election Related Violence and Displacement

Election related violence led to displacement of people, some of whom mutated into ‘invisible IDPs’, upon joining kin and kith in ‘home areas’.<sup>47</sup> They arrived from various parts of the country upon displacement bound by their ethnicity as identity that acted as a common denominator leading them into Kisumu County. The displaced from various different ethnic backgrounds were led to their respective Counties guided by the same principle.<sup>48</sup> They returned in truckloads under escort of disciplined security forces to uncertain future in displacement without anything. Displacement had rendered them destitute subjecting them to indignity and humiliation. The hosts received those displaced without considering long term ramification, especially land tenure claim suspicions.<sup>49</sup> However, I will hasten to state that some of the humanitarian forum reports may not be to the exactitude, due to activism nature of the civil society organizations.

The causes of the violence and displacement was political, economic or ethnic and sometimes a combination of all the above. Different communities were reacting to different issues centered on these three factors. Since the restoration of political pluralism in 1991, election related violence often referred to as ‘ethnic land clashes’ advanced with consecutive general elections, culminating into the mother of all displacements in 2007/8. The effects gave rise to over 20,000 ‘invisible IDPs’ flowing into the County.

Election related violence is associated with the restoration of political pluralism that led to proliferation of political parties. However, these newly formed political parties tended to be organized around either a regional identity or a political personality albeit political party policies.<sup>50</sup> Regional outlook of political parties tended to promote strong ethnic identity, a recipe for conflict as witnessed in subsequent Presidential polls. ‘Invisible IDPs’ took regional ethnic outlook as well.

---

<sup>47</sup> Kenya Red Cross Society – Report: Kenya Humanitarian Forum Meeting, 28<sup>th</sup> March, 2008.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Lonsdale.J “Soil, Work, Civilization and Citizenship”, in Kenya’s Journal of East African Studies, 2008, p.70.

<sup>50</sup> Karuri.L.G, Kenya Private Sector Alliance; presentation to the Parliamentary Leaders’ Retreat, Machakos, February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2006.

In 1991, Kenya experienced the first election related conflict following the restoration of political pluralism.<sup>51</sup> Many people lost lives; were maimed, severed established relationships, or were displaced; losing livelihood and properties as they groped for safety ending up in camps. Many displaced later left camps getting absorbed by their communities, becoming ‘invisible IDPs’, in ‘ancestral home areas’ or township.

Clashes were first reported on October 29<sup>th</sup>, 1991, at Meteitei farm in Tinderet, Nandi District, on the frontier of Rift Valley, Nyanza and Western Provinces, when Kalenjin warriors attacked the Luo community.<sup>52</sup> Although the incident began as a land dispute, the fighting had escalated within days. The victims claimed that the attackers intended to expel non-Kalenjins and political opponents from Rift Valley Province. After violence broke out, leaflets signed by a group calling itself The Nandi Warriors, were distributed in the area telling the non- Kalenjins to leave the area by December 12, 1991. Due to fear infused by the clashes, no-Kalenjins left in a mass exodus. Most of those displaced went to camps and later metamorphosed into ‘invisible IDPs’.

On November 18<sup>th</sup>, 1991 the Kalenjin attacked hundreds of the Luo residing in Nandi and Kericho Districts, burning and looting Luo homes, A Luo policeman trying to stop the attack killed a Kalenjin, resulting in further attacks by the Kalenjin.<sup>53</sup> Such a single event had profound ethnic multiplier effect sounding war cry. Some members of the Luo inhabited land in Rift Valley since 1918, when they were employed as laborers on European owned sisal plantation in Thesalia, Kericho County.<sup>54</sup> In 1971, Thesalia people then squatters, came together and purchased the land. They were displaced in 1992 into IDPs ending up as ‘invisible IDPs’ in Koru, Kisumu County

---

<sup>51</sup>Throup.D.W and Hornsby.C, ‘The Creation of the Moi State; The Kenyatta and Moi States and the Triumph of the System in 1992 Election”, Oxford University Press, 1998, p.31.

<sup>52</sup> Lee.S.W, and A. Pitsch, Centre for international Development and Conflict (CIDC): “ Kikuyu, Kisii, Luhya and Luo in Kenya,” July 2002,p.4

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

These attacks targeted people from certain communities perceived to be supporters of the main opposition parties; Odinga led Forum for Restoration of Democracy – Kenya (FORD-K), Matiba and Shikuku led Forum for Restoration of Democracy – Asili (FORD-A) and Kibaki led Democratic Party (DP). The targeted communities were Luo, Kikuyu, Luhya and Kisii who felt marginalized by Kenya African National Union (KANU) - ruling regime.<sup>55</sup> Through displacement, they were transferred from areas of registration thus ineligible to vote. This damaged the opposition strong hold in what appeared as pre-election rigging, substantially reduced opposition support. Come elections and KANU won with 40% support while fragmented opposition parties shared out the 60% losing the battle.<sup>56</sup>

The second multiparty general election was slated for December 1997. However, a new phase of election related violence started in numerous previous trouble spots early in 1997. These areas included Mateitei farm in Nandi and Thesalia in Kericho.<sup>57</sup> For many of them these farms are what they had known as home in much of their entire lives and their livelihoods had been pegged here. At the same time the least expected a repeat of election related violence. On the other hand the ruling regime had never come to terms with the dawn of political pluralism despite having won the previous general elections. In that election, parliamentary results did not totally reflect the expectations of the ruling KANU regime in terms of parliamentary seats, as demonstrated by some unexpected loss in strongholds.

The ruling regime thus resorted to political engineering of election related violence that appeared in form of ‘ethnic land clashes’ in the run up to 1997 general elections. Once more the Luos on Mateitei farm were displaced. They retraced back to their ‘ancestral homes’ with the minimum attention. Those who had returned to Thesalia were also displaced. Thesalia people were a combination of those who settled there and those born

---

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC);” Kenya: No Durable Solution for Internally Displaced Yet”, 2008,p.36



there. Those born there only knew Thesalia as home but with the help of those settled there, they could reconnect to kith and kin.

On July 7<sup>th</sup> 1997 the opposition in conjunction with the civil society organized country-wide pro-reform rallies dubbed Saba Saba,<sup>58</sup> in commemoration of Saba Saba 7<sup>th</sup> July, 1991 anniversary. However, these rallies were repressed by members of the disciplined security forces. A total of 13 people were killed country wide and hundreds displaced. A number of displaced found their way back to ‘their original communities’ in Kisumu county as ‘invisible IDPs’ while others moved into other urban areas to start life afresh.<sup>59</sup> In August 1997, politically motivated violence broke out in the coastal region claiming 70 lives, while hundreds of people were displaced. The majority of these victims originated from Western Kenya. Many of the displaced ended up in Kisumu County as ‘invisible IDPs’, having lost all livelihoods. They joined their kin and kith to eke a living.

Towards election date, the main opposition parties namely FORD-K, FORD-A and DP suffered political setbacks via internal squabbling driven by suspicion and distrust.<sup>60</sup> Raila decamped from FORD-K to hitherto unknown National Development Party (NDP). In FORD- A, there was a fall-out between Matiba and Shikuku, rendering the party politically redundant. Ngilu left DP for little known Social Democratic Party (SDP). These events made all opposition parties more ethnic in outlook than before. Opinions create perceptions and subsequent expectations, and that is what the ruling party cashed on in order to appear national. At the same time the regime unleashed election related violence displacing many would be voters in opposition zones. During the December 1997 elections KANU once again carried the day with a third of total votes cast.

---

<sup>58</sup> R.F, Kennedy Memorial Centre for Human Rights, “Reforms in Kenya”, University of Pennsylvania, December, 1998

<sup>59</sup> Ibid

<sup>60</sup> Ibid

The 2002 presidential contest had no ethnic appeal, with focus on regime change. The main contenders namely, Mwai Kibaki and Uhuru Kenyatta were of the same ethnic background, drastically undermining ethnic animosity.<sup>61</sup>

The absence of violence in 2002 could be attributed to various factors. The unification of a dozen political parties into one pre-election coalition meant that communities that were conflicting drew closer on the same side. The main parties were National Alliance of Kenya (NAK), Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), FORD-K, DP and SDP and a conglomerate of small parties, who together became NARC. The ones who had lost to KANU before seemed to have learnt a lesson for not uniting. With the weakening of KANU and subsequent defections, politicians' loyalties were divided, especially because they were uncertain how the incoming government would treat the issue of impunity for electoral violence.<sup>62</sup>

Besides, those who had instigated the ethnic clashes were afraid of being exposed by those who had defected from the party, widely associated with the conflict. The electorate shunned violence and militant politicians due to painful memories of the negative effect bloodshed had on their livelihoods.<sup>63</sup>

Therefore aspirants were unable to influence people to engage in violence, in spite of existing differences that could easily have been manipulated. The youth and other idle persons who had been used to perpetrate violence in 1992 and 1997 are said to have 'refused to be used' because the promises made to them then – employment, had not been honored. These ensured no displacement in 2002 general elections.

National Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NARC) defeated KANU in 2002 general elections, ushering in Mwai Kibaki as the 3<sup>rd</sup> President of the Republic of Kenya, amidst pomp,

---

<sup>61</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC); "Kenya: No Durable Solutions for Internally Displaced Yet", 2008, p.36

<sup>62</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC): Speedy reform needed to deal with the past injustices and prevent future displacement, Nairobi, 2010, p.33.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid

colour, euphoria and unprecedented public hope.<sup>64</sup> This was the benefit of a dozen political parties coming together to form a coalition.

The coming together of a dozen political parties had a lot to do with what each political leader will get in terms of pecking order and accompanying resources. It was that kind of thinking that had informed the coalition formation pact often referred to as Memorandum of Understanding- (MOU). Some of the pledges in the MOU could not be met as they exceed the law statues, for example the premiership. The government has de-limitation scope as concerns the size of the cabinet. Those whose expectations were not met became discontented, thus sustained restrained working relation with NAK allied colleagues in the cabinet while seeking for the opportune moment to strike. This was well exemplified by the standoff during the Bomas constitution making forum, which ended with the referendum.

### **2.1.2 2005 Referendum**

The constitution making process at Bomas of Kenya seemed to provide a perfect set up for LDP leadership to settle scores with the NAK wing. However, a number of LDP ministers like Saitoti and Awori were comfortable with NAK colleagues. This played out openly in the Bomas constitutional making process, as lieutenants of Kibaki and Raila locked horns on which government system to be adopted by the new constitution; Parliamentary or Presidential. This ended in a stalemate necessitating a referendum to unlock.

To unlock this contention, a referendum was called to ratify 2005 Bomas draft constitution that preferred Presidential to Parliamentary system, presided over by The Electoral Commission of Kenya (ECK). The Commission adopted banana symbol for those for the draft constitution and orange for those against the draft constitution. The run up to referendum split NARC right through the middle as the two groups locked horns during the referendum to ratify the 2005 Bomas Draft Constitution.

---

<sup>64</sup> Maupeu.H, "Religion and the Elections", in Maupeu et al, The Moi Succession Election2002, Nairobi (IFRA) Transafrica Press, p.59

The Kibaki led side-Banana supported the draft while the Odinga led side opposed the draft. The two sides' traversed across the national landscape seeking for support. The Odinga led side won the referendum contest avenging the MOU hoax in a seemingly intra contest. A new political order was born as a result.<sup>65</sup>

Things had fallen apart. NARC was no longer NARC, the disintegration within – NARC led to formation of several new political parties namely; National Alliance Rainbow Coalition Kenya (NARC-Kenya), led by Karua and Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), spearheaded by luminaries Odinga, Mudavadi, Musyoka, Ntimama, Balala and Uhuru. The composition of ODM luminaries gave the movement a national outlook and likeness. These parties were centered on feuding personalities and camps within the NARC government.<sup>66</sup> However, with such contestation, it was cumbersome for constitution making. Constitutions are set by political and socio-economic factors of the time. In this case, political and socio-economic renewed confidence, trust and hope.

Thereafter, the cabinet was dissolved leaving only the President and his deputy. Soon after a new Cabinet of the Government of National unity was constituted minus Ministers who opposed the draft constitution. The Ministers who supported the Orange had violated the principle of collective responsibility a tenet of the cabinet. At the same time, constitution making process was relegated to the shelf by this standoff. The political climate made the environment hostile and volatile. All these events foreshadowed the 2007 general elections and post-election violence – settling scores by the protagonists. The stage for battle royal had been set. The environment was not conducive for constitutional making. Constitutions are set by political and socioeconomic factors of the time, in this case renewed confidence, trust and hope that had been squandered.

---

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC); "Speedy Reforms Needed to Deal with the Past Injustices and Prevent Future Displacement", Nairobi, June, 2010, p.36.

The journey to the 2007 general elections was shaped by effects of dishonored MOU, the Bomas constitution making process and the 2005 constitution referendum. They all contributed in setting the stage for election related violence through heightened tension and national polarization.<sup>67</sup>

By the time of the elections the tension was very high polarizing the nation and raising tension between the supporters of the protagonist. It was apparent that none of the protagonist was willing to concede defeat.

## **2.2 The Causes of Election Related Violence**

Election related violence is a classic example of the internal conflicts that center on ethnicity, politics, and economics. Ethnicity is an identity. In many situations ethnicity overrides ideas as even the most educated or civilized of the society succumb to it. Ethnicity remains a very powerful force and tool especially in pursuit of resources.

Different ethnic communities were reacting to different issues. Klopp raises the issue of moral ethnicity and political tribalism at the heart of election related violence.<sup>68</sup> We see moral ethnicity in Thesalia people - A Luo community raising money to legitimize the land occupied by buying it. However this land is on the frontier between Kisumu and Kericho counties. The Kipsigis assert that the land belonged to their forefathers. The Kipsigis are part of the larger Kalenjin community who by 1980s were in the ruling KANU regime. Motivated by political clout wielded, the Kalenjin displaced the Luos from land legitimately acquired.

This is territoriality at play motivated by a combination of ethnicity and political tribalism. Klopp states that in response to the political threat posed by the advent of multiparty politics in the 1990s, Moi sought to portray the opposition as Kikuyu led, and multiparty politics as an exclusionary ethnic project to control land occupied in the Rift Valley<sup>69</sup>

---

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Klopp, J., "Can Moral Ethnicity Trump Political Tribalism? The Struggle for Land and Nation in Kenya"; *African Studies*, vol.61, no.2, 2002.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

In any given institution or social set up, there are always three factors at play normally, politics, economics and social-cultural. Politics is about ideas and activities used by people within a particular group to try get power-control. In looking at how politics caused election related violence, we must remember that our society is driven by political tribalism. Those tribes not part of the political system are marginalized.

Economics is centered on resources<sup>70</sup>. The issue of a particular group trying to get power is but to control existing available resources. Since colonial times, fertile land proved to be an essential resource as a factor of production. It was to be the gateway of economic freedom. The land surrounding election related violence is the most fertile of the arable land available. Due to its preciousness, land as an economic factor may lead to displacement. This is best exemplified by Thesalia case. Legal owners of the land were displaced by claimant community. Such cases could result in multiple occupation of land, a source of conflict.

From a socio-cultural point of view<sup>71</sup>, land is of great cultural value. In agrarian communities, it is the only economic resource from which to eke out a livelihood. This could be through crop farming, livestock keeping or fishing. It is the main source of livelihood in agrarian societies like Kenya.<sup>72</sup> Land is the framework for ethnic community territorial parameters, thus a cultural object. Culturally, land is sacred as the home of divinities, spirits and the living dead in addition to the living and those yet to be born.<sup>73</sup> This means land is at the heart of society, thus an emotive thorny issue.

The development of society is a reflection of its people.<sup>74</sup> When people are oppressed, social, political and economic development too is oppressed making the people poorer. The people lack access to food, shelter, clothing, water and sanitation, exposing them to

---

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Huggins.J.C, Land in Return, Reintegration and Recovery Process: Some Lessons from the Great Lakes Region of Africa: Paper Presented to Humanitarian Policy Group Conference “Unchartered Territory, Land Conflict and Humanitarian Action”, Nairobi, 28<sup>th</sup> February 2008

<sup>73</sup> Mbiti.J.S, “Introduction to African Religion,”East African Educational Publishers Ltd, Nairobi, 1991, p,72.

<sup>74</sup> Omosa.M, Njeru.G, Ontita.E and Nyarwath.O, “Theory and Practices of Governance in Kenya, Towards Civic Engagement”, Nairobi: University of Nairobi Press. 2006, p.33.

environmental risk and disease. As a result people are forced to seek livelihood elsewhere beyond their community.

Retarded development means lack of infrastructure, social amenities, and poor sanitation. Infrastructure like education facilities is critical in enhancing human resource quality and subsequent skills. In the absence of such development, many youth end up migrating to comparatively more developed counties in search of livelihood, mainly in informal sectors. In times of election related violence these emigrants are susceptible to displacement.

The Moi led KANU ruling regime and the newly formed parties; Odinga led FORD-K, Matiba/Shikuku led FORD-A and Kibaki led DP viewed each other as enemies rather than partners in establishing a culture of political pluralism. Such deficiency in the spirit of multipartism contributed to heightened tension between their supporters and subsequent election related violence. Ethnic based political parties tended to care of own ethnic interest and thus polarized the nation into minority and majority groups. Majority ethnic groups tended to be associated with the opposition.

Well calculated political engineering was executed in 1990-2 to expel those of majority ethnic groups in parts of Rift Valley, Western and Coast Provinces. The plot targeted members of Luhya, Luo, Kikuyu and Kisii ethnic backgrounds.<sup>75</sup> This rendered them redundant as far as voting was concerned because of being away from voter registration stations which served as polling stations during voting.

Many Luos working on tea farms in Kericho and Nandi Counties were displaced back to Kisumu County in the run up to 1992 multiparty elections.<sup>76</sup> Many of these displaced joined their kin and kith becoming ‘invisible IDPs’.

The Government had not been serious, not willing to address generic issues or underlying causes of violence. Violence surrounding elections had been ethnically

---

<sup>75</sup>Lee.S.W and A. Pitsch.A, Center for International Development and Conflict (CIDC): “Kikuyu, Kisii, Luhya, and Luo in Kenya”. July, 2002, p.4.

<sup>76</sup> United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), “The Internally Displaced Populations in Kenya, Western and Rift Valley Provinces: A needs Assessment and Programme Proposal for Rehabilitation”, Nairobi, 1993, p.12.

directed, increasing distrust and subsequent conflicts among different ethnic groups. There was increasing personalization of the power around the Presidency facilitating election related violence.<sup>77</sup> This was out of the belief that the Presidency brings advantages for President's ethnic group making communities willing to exert violence to attain or keep power. While in power such ethnic group enjoyed impunity. The main perpetrators of systematic violence have never been prosecuted.

Since the 1991 restoration of political pluralism, election related violence had become a tradition of general elections, particularly the presidential election. The 2007 election and post-election violence were different in scale only, but similar to previous cases.

The polarization of the nation around ODM friendly communities and government friendly ones after 2005 referendum, raised temperatures in protagonist camps causing tension along emerging fault lines. This tension tended to assume ethnic dimensions promoting resentment among Kenyans. In the end, it only required a spark to ignite the fire, and the controversy surrounding presidential elections did exactly that.

Perceived vote rigging was a contributory factor.<sup>78</sup> The decision by Kivuitu led Electoral Commission of Kenya to relay live transmission of election results via electronic media enhanced credence of the electoral process. On the second day ODM party had opened a lead with over a million vote gap. Suddenly, live transmission developed hiccups before coming to an abrupt end. However, sudden change in the vote count with PNU closing the gap seemed suspicious creating a sense of doubt in the credibility of the results. This led to short lived skirmishes in parts of Coast, Nyanza and Rift Valley on December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2007. The government decision to stop electronic media live transmission seemed to vindicate those in doubt, crowning the tension that had been ongoing. The declaration of President Kibaki on December 30<sup>th</sup>, 2007 as the presidential winner raised eye brows due to acrimony of the protagonists witnessed at KICC. Though this appeared sweet revenge of the 2005 referendum for President Kibaki, the ensuing catastrophic post-election violence was a bitter pill and blot to his legacy.

---

<sup>77</sup> Government of Kenya, " Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence", Nairobi, October, 2008, p.

36

<sup>78</sup> Human Rights Watch, January, 2008.



Lack of ethos in the political arena had its share too. Apparently, politicians have made violence the method of choice to resolve political differences and to obtain power.<sup>79</sup> The tenets of democracy and good governance remained lip service slogans while party manifestos seemed to be mere decorations. Violence surrounding elections has been ethnically directed, increasing distrust among different ethnic groups. The ethnic nature of post-election violence elevated ethnic fears and hatred in importance. Unfortunately, most party manifestos condemn violence hence double speak.

Increased democratic space enhanced media freedom.<sup>80</sup> Vernacular Fm Stations owned by some Media Houses abused this media freedom by not adhering to professional ethics in Broadcasting. Some Media Houses, particularly vernacular radio stations like Kass FM engaged in ethnic stereo types. These stereo types did not go down well with targeted groups who felt insulted. This caused resentment amongst different ethnic communities inconsiderate of possible consequences. Members of Kikuyu Community felt slighted. This acted as a catalyst in an already supercharged political atmosphere raising further ethnic tensions and subsequent violence in otherwise peaceful areas. The 2007/8 post polls violence was spontaneous but irresponsible part of media prompted more protests in otherwise peaceful areas.

Economic marginalization suppresses and oppresses the people forcing them to seek alternative livelihood elsewhere.<sup>81</sup> All the ‘invisible IDPs’ in Kisumu County had immigrated to various parts of the country in search of greener pastures. These immigrants in the context of those communities formed ‘others’. In cases of ethnically spiced violence, such emigrants became obvious candidates of displacement.<sup>82</sup>

---

<sup>79</sup> Government of Kenya, “Report of Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence”, Nairobi, October, 2008, p.36

<sup>80</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC); “Speedy Reforms Needed to deal with past Injustices and Prevent Future Displacement”, Nairobi, June, 2010, p.33

<sup>81</sup> Omosa.M, Njeru.G, Ontita.E, and Nyarwath.O, “Theory and Practices of Governance in Kenya, Towards Civic Engagement”, Nairobi: University of Nairobi Press, 2006, p.32.

<sup>82</sup> Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN); “Kenya: Nyanza’s forgotten IDPs”, Nairobi, February, 2011.

### **2.3 The Impact of Election Related Violence**

The impact of 1992 election related violence took social, economic and political dimension quite reflective of the causes. From political parties formed along ethnic lines tended to divide rather than unite the people as a nation. There was destruction of economic and social infrastructure as well as personal properties. On social dimension, there was “ethnic cleansing” resulting in hundreds dead leaving orphans, maimed and broken families, and society dysfunction due to distrust. This is because each individual is a critical building block of the larger society. It was difficult to get accurate statistics in atmosphere of dictatorial regimes.<sup>83</sup> The violence led to displacement of about 300,000 IDPs of which 175,000 were traced to IDP camps.<sup>84</sup> The rest ended up as ‘invisible IDPs’ joining their communities in ‘ancestral homes’. Some of the displaced could have returned to former abode thereafter elections, perpetuating the standoff.

These displaced lost everything from livelihood, relationships, their lives drastically disrupted and destinies altered forever. Their lives were seriously disrupted economically, socially and politically. The displaced had been transformed from bread winners to destitute marking the emergence of ‘invisible IDPs’ phenomenon. They returned to their ancestral homes to eke a living, sharing the little available resources from kin and kith. This accentuated the already prevailing high levels of poverty. Poverty undermines the dignity of those affected.<sup>85</sup> As aforementioned these statistics were fluid since they were given in the process rather than thereafter.

In 1997, the displaced went to IDP camps from where some IDPs retreated to their ancestral homes joining kin and kith automatically becoming ‘invisible IDPs’<sup>86</sup>. For some, it was not their first experience having defied previous displacement by returning back. The displaced had lost all their livelihoods; savings, properties, working capital.

---

<sup>83</sup>Thoup.D.W and Hornsby.C, “The Creation of the Moi State. The Kenyatta and Moi States and the Triumph of the System in 1992 Election”, Oxford, Nairobi, Athens, James Curry, 1998, p.38

<sup>84</sup>Klopp.J, “Kenya’s Internally Displaced: Managing Civil Conflict in Democratic Transitions” in D.Bekoe (eds.), East Africa and the Horn: Confronting Challenges of Good Governance, (Boulder,C.O; Lynne Rienner, 2006

<sup>85</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC); “Kenya: No Durable Solution for Internally Displaced Yet”, 208,p.36.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

Long established relationships comprise blood relations and social capital both vital in the individual welfare. Their moral and ethical infrastructure had not only been shaken but dented. They underwent live style adjustment from provider to dependent. Their lives had been disrupted drastically changing their destinies out of experiences undergone. All victims of displacement were traumatized to the level of dysfunction. Their retreat to ancestral homes enhanced the already existing poverty levels. Destitution stared into their faces, a reality check.

In times of violence and displacement, confusion is the order of the day<sup>87</sup>. In such circumstances, ethos governing society is trodden upon. Many victims of election related violence were maimed physically or psychologically. For example sexual violence is 'silent' and 'preying' because it is 'underreported, under-investigated and insufficiently addressed'.<sup>88</sup> This is a critical destructive agent of social institutions like the family and subsequent community. Such institutions are built over long period of time and involve emotional investment. Things like time and investment cannot be recovered once lost.

Generally there was disruption of life through such violence and displacement. Kisumu County was recipient to hundreds of displaced from Mombasa, Nandi, Kericho, and Trans Nzoia. The unlucky ones perished. Perpetrators of election related violence on hire seemed to perfect their act. Such election related violence was sort of clandestine and thus induced fear and subsequent displacement, at times silently.

There were deaths as hundreds of violence and displacement victims lost their lives. Due to the prevailing political atmosphere then, statistics tended to be fluid.<sup>89</sup> This is attributable to firm control of information by the then ruling KANU regime. The regime viewed IDPs as a security risk and even dispersed some in Nakuru and Narok camps into invisibility.<sup>90</sup>

---

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Government of Kenya; "Commission on Inquiry into Post -Election Violence", Nairobi, October,2008,p.42.

<sup>89</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC); "Kenya: No Durable Solution for Internally Displaced Yet", Nairobi, 2008, p.72.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

There were those who were maimed in the process but survived. Those who survived displacement ended up in the camps, with some joining kin and kith in ancestral homes due to social capital, becoming ‘invisible IDPs’. This category of IDPs has progressively been cumulating since its advent with the restoration of political pluralism. It is kind of a hidden dimension of displacement.

The impact of 2007/8 post-election violence had social economic and political dimensions<sup>91</sup>. These dimensions could be catastrophic to any given society since they are at the core and lifeline of very society. From the social perspective, there were reported deaths in this conflict. When an individual is destroyed, it spirals to the community and the entire society causing helplessness, hopelessness and despondency. Hope and confidence is replaced with fear and despair.

In situations of ethnic related violence “diaspora communities” became obvious targets of displacement. Many Luo who were living among other communities in Rift Valley, Central and Nairobi Provinces became victims of election related violence. They filtered back to ‘ancestral homes’ from camps or directly, having lost all livelihoods<sup>92</sup>. Their lives had drastically been disrupted and dreams of greener pastures shattered. In addition, some were wounded either emotionally, psychologically or both.

In addition, cases of ‘ethnic cleansing’ tend to have a spiral effect, affecting all institutions creating bad blood between perceived ethnic victims and ethnic perpetrators that could fuel further conflicts as history attests. This is well exemplified Tutsi/Hutu case in Rwanda. It even goes beyond their national boundaries into diaspora. Relations are established from lifelong investment that cannot be replaced once lost. Once lost, a relationship may hinder or affect future relations. Loss of life constitutes loss of human resource, undermining sustainable development and humanity as a whole.

From the economic view point, there was destruction of social-economic infrastructure. Properties were destroyed undermining people’s sustained long term savings and

---

<sup>91</sup> Ibid

<sup>92</sup> Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN); “Kenya: Nyanza’s forgotten IDPs”, Nairobi, February 2011.

investment.<sup>93</sup> Some of these investments employed significant others, thus a source of livelihood for many. These investments contributed immensely to the national economy by virtue of being tax payers. Destruction of properties undermined economic growth, development and sustainability.

Loss of livelihood incapacitates those affected, denying them access to goods and services necessary for day to day upkeep. It also hampers/limits them in economic sustainability and participation in activities governing their lives due to abject poverty. Poverty promotes loss of dignity dehumanizing the individual and lack of self-esteem.

From a political perspective there was political tribalism. Political tribalism coupled with increasing personalization of the power around the presidency can be potent.<sup>94</sup> A ruling regime of such combination is dangerous. Such regime tend to take care of own interests, as such promote inequality and inequity in various sectors of society. This fuels and enhances conflicts. This paints a clear picture of Kenya during the 2007/8 post-election violence.

The violence and displacements of the 1990s were projects of the ruling regime with ethnic base in Rift Valley. Some of their victims were Luo. The perpetrators of 2007/8 violence and displacement were ruling regime elites from Mount Kenya region with Luo as victim. There was shift in perpetration with victim remaining constant. The perpetrators have always been the status quo whiles the victim, claimant to the status quo<sup>95</sup>. The 2007/8 post-election violence left Kisumu a shaken and devastated city due to distrust, suspicion and damage among different communities. Each community was perceived to be reacting to different issues; land, political power, resources or ethnic territoriality. Such tendencies weaken the social fiber of the county exposing her to cohesion and integration challenges.

---

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Government of Kenya; "Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence", Nairobi, October, 2008, p.36.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

The economic domination by Indian Community through well entrenched commercial enterprises is something the locals had never taken kindly.<sup>96</sup> The natives attributed their economic challenges to the Indian commercial success. The post-election violence provided the right environment for the natives to hit at the Indian Community. The violence in Kisumu City targeted socio-economic infrastructure owned by Indians. For example, Ukwala Supermarket was broken in, looted and eventually set ablaze.<sup>97</sup> In a situation of instability like the one provided by election related violence, lawlessness characterized by arson and looting are inevitable.

The violence and displacement was ethnic in nature, giving rise to the notion that there were many nations within the State of Kenya<sup>98</sup>, for example, the Luo Sub- nation, Kalenjin sub-nation. In the context of the 2007/8 post-election violence, the Luo and Kalenjin sub-nations were perceived as friendly. However, the narrative was different between the Luo and Kisii sub-nations. The Kisii were displaced from Kisumu simply because the community did not vote as a block. The community voted 50/50.

Those Sub-nations from Mount Kenya region were perceived as outright belligerents<sup>99</sup>. Members of these sub-nations were displaced, leaving Kisumu under escort of disciplined security forces. Even Mrs. Onyango who hails from Kiambu, too was displaced despite her marital status to a native. This was a clear demonstration that there are many nations within the State of Kenya. An indicator of the great challenge to national-hood of the State of Kenya

Kisumu County accounted for 129,929 internally displaced persons.<sup>100</sup> Many of this displaced were in their prime age, thus essential in nation building. The human resource is the most important asset of any given nation. Loss of life thus undermines the availability of human resource. These people earned their livelihood here contributing to

---

<sup>96</sup> Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN): "Nyanza's forgotten IDPs", Nairobi, February 2011.

<sup>97</sup> The Kenya Red Cross Society – Report: Kenya Humanitarian Forum Meeting, March, 2008, Nairobi.

<sup>98</sup> Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN): "Nyanza's forgotten IDPs", Nairobi, February 2011.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid

<sup>100</sup> Government of Kenya, "Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence", October, 2008, Nairobi.p.271.

Kisumu's welfare. Much of what they owned and had was destroyed in the violence, thus promoting poverty. Most of those killed in the violence were in their career formative stages, laying their requisite necessary foundations; such foundations were nipped in the bud.

Some of those killed had dependents who became orphans. Some of the orphans were taken in by relatives while others metamorphosed into street children and subsequently hardened into hardcore criminals.<sup>101</sup> This ultimately manifests insecurity which is not good for both perpetrators and victims. Increased insecurity keeps away investors denying the country the necessary capital injection and subsequent economic growth and development. This promotes the vicious cycle of poverty. Poor people were a social class. Poverty had no ethnicity or race.

There was destruction of moral and ethical infrastructure which is the requisite software necessary for societal normalcy<sup>102</sup>. There was killing, maiming, rape and other related sexual offences and inhuman acts. There was wanton destruction of properties, capital and social infrastructure. This only tells how low human beings can stoop. The religiosity of Kenyans was on the line as these activities contravened the basic tenets of religion, for example; do not steal or respect for elders.

Kisumu city topped in terms of destruction of capital and social infrastructure, Ukwala Supermarket was broken in, looted, and eventually set ablaze.<sup>103</sup> This was just one example, there were many other investments that suffered same fate, as Kisumu was razed to a ghost town. This was a chilling message to would be investors. When investment infrastructure is destroyed, the future of would be beneficiaries locally, hangs in balance. The driver of this violence is quest for livelihood, yet they destroyed the very lifeline.

---

<sup>101</sup>Kamungi.P, "The Current Situation of Internally Displaced Persons in Kenya," Jesuit Refugee Service -2 March, 2001,p.20.

<sup>102</sup> Mbiti.J.S, "Introduction to African Religion", East African Publishers Ltd, Nairobi, 1991,p.198.

<sup>103</sup> The Kenya Red Cross Society- Report : Kenya Humanitarian Forum Meeting, March, 2008, Nairobi

Out of 1133 deaths country-wide, Kisumu accounted for 81 deaths, mostly as a result of gunshots from security agents attempting to quell the violence.<sup>104</sup> Most of these casualties were of young age and thus the future leaders. Death causes irreplaceable loss, leaving bitter memories amongst kin and kith.

At the same period of time, many sons and daughters of Kisumu County displaced elsewhere, were on their way back 'home', having lost everything. Yet the backyard they were returning to was burning.

### **CONCLUSION.**

Kisumu County experienced displacement since the restoration of political pluralism in 1991. Many people were displaced into camps. From these camps some left to join kin and kith in ancestral homes becoming 'invisible IDPs'. In this category also were the displaced that went directly to ancestral homes. The move to ancestral homes is attributed to existing social capital. The number of "invisible IDPs" accumulated with subsequent elections, hitting the apex with the 2007/8 post-election violence, whereby the county received over 20,000 displaced persons.

Election related violence is internal conflict centered on economics (resources), politics, and socio-cultural identity (ethnicity). Economics is all about resources, opportunities, facilities and prerogatives (use of influence which would not be possible normally). Socio-economic needs lead to competition of scarce resources, thus ethnic competition. Politics is all about social influences. Ethnicity is about connectivity of human beings working together – people-hood, with a common descent, language and thus collective interests. In essence the conflict was politically engineered but in aspect looked like ethnic clashes.

The impact of election related violence was devastating. Many people died in the process creating bad blood between victims and perpetrators as the conflict appeared ethnic even

---

<sup>104</sup> Government of Kenya, "Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence", October, 2008, Nairobi, p.271.



though political in essence. Such bad blood could fuel further conflicts. Loss of life constitutes loss of human resource and undermines development and humanity as a whole. Many people were left orphaned and destitute altering their destinies. Other people were maimed or injured.

Many women were raped in the presence of their families leading to separations and in some cases divorce, a cause of family and cultural dysfunction.

There was loss of livelihood that enhanced poverty. Poverty promotes loss of dignity, dehumanizing the individual. Destruction of socio-economic infrastructure like schools, health clinics and markets undermined all past efforts towards sustainable economic growth and development.

Proliferations of ethnic based political parties who take care of their own interests promote inequality and inequity, entrenching political tribalism. Political tribalism centered on ethnicity encourages ethnic enclaves reducing the State to a conglomeration of ethnic sub-nations. This is a recipe for further future conflict and displacement

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **THE 2007 POST ELECTION VIOLENCE AND THE RISE OF “INVISIBLE IDPS” IN KISUMU COUNTY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

The 2007/8 post-election violence displaced over 650,000 people country-wide. Kisumu County accounted for 129,000 out of which over 20,000, due to social capital ended up in ancestral homes and urban centres as ‘invisible IDPs’.<sup>105</sup> Whereas obvious IDPs are the displaced within their own countries living in camps and officially recognized by the relevant authorities, ‘invisible IDPs’ constitute the displaced who returned to ancestral homes directly or via camps, joining kith and kin in ancestral homes and urban centres and are not recognized by the relevant authorities.

The obvious IDPs and ‘invisible IDPs’ have a common denominator of being casualties of election related violence and displacement and the associated stigma, impact and myriad challenges. Whether in the camp or ancestral homes, they have succumbed to lower lifestyle standards than before, though many are arising. Many people were killed leaving behind orphans and destitute while others were maimed or injured. Properties were destroyed or lost in the mayhem.

The ‘invisible IDPs’ are not the only victims of the post-election violence. From Kisumu to Eldoret to Nairobi, some Kenyans are trying to cope with the scars of burns, rape, forced circumcision and nudity or absence of a loved one and trauma.<sup>106</sup>

#### **3.1 The Rise of ‘Invisible IDPs’**

The victims of election related violence are products of the restoration of political pluralism in Kenya in 1991,<sup>107</sup> by KANU regime under then President Moi. In response to the political threat posed by the advent of multiparty politics, Moi sought to portray the opposition as Kikuyu led, and multiparty politics as an exclusionary ethnic project to

---

<sup>105</sup> Integrated Regional Information Network (IRIN): “Nyanza’s forgotten IDPs”, Nairobi, February 2011.

<sup>106</sup> Klopp.J & Sheekh Nur.M; “The displaced: Kenya’s Post-Election Violence Victims are still leading Wretched Existence”, Daily Nation, December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2011, p,11.

<sup>107</sup> Lee.S.W and Pitsch. A, Centre for International Development and Conflict (CIDC); “Kikuyu, Kisii Luhya and Luo in Kenya.” July 2002, Nairobi, p, 4.

control land occupied in the Rift Valley by the Kikuyu.<sup>108</sup> This standoff set the stage for the battle between the incumbent regime's ethnic base and claimants to the throne, precipitating and spicing election oriented violence.

Thousands of people were displaced to IDP camps, from where they joined kith and kin to seek alternative livelihood becoming 'invisible IDPs'. The same trend was replicated in the run up to 1997 General Elections. In the absence of democratic space and press freedom such events went unreported, seemingly insignificant. The actual magnitude of displacement then remained quite unclear.<sup>109</sup> However with the increased democratic space and press freedom, the 2007/8 post-election violence and displacement, 'invisible IDPs' were very conspicuous and widely reported both locally and internationally.

Campaigns for the 2007 elections were launched in earnest at the 2005 referendum Orange victory. Orange, symbol of those opposed to the Bomas draft constitution represented an alternative to the then NARC ruling regime. A sign that were general elections to be called then, Orange had very high probability to emerge winners. Exalted by the victory and its euphoria, Orange suddenly transformed into a movement and subsequently a political party enticing all those dissatisfied by the ruling Kibaki regime. The movement brought together Raila, Mudavadi, Musyoka, Ruto, Balala, and Ntimama, thus giving a picture of almost the face of Kenya.<sup>110</sup> These leaders criss - crossed the entire national landscape from 2005 till 2007 elections. On the other hand the newly formed coalition party- Party of National Unity reflected Mount Kenya region but enjoyed the privileges of incumbency. Towards election date, there was mounting tension between the protagonist camps as well as their support bases. The use of mobile phone short message services (sms) further fuelled the situation through digital propagation of incitement and rumor messages.

In the 27<sup>th</sup> December, 2007 elections and ODM carried six out eight provinces but lost on overall presidential vote count in a hotly contested poll. ODM cried foul, claiming the

---

<sup>108</sup> Klopp.J, "Can Moral Ethnicity Trump Political Tribalism? The Struggle for Land and Nation in Kenya"; African Studies, Vol.61, no.2, 2002.

<sup>109</sup> Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC): "Speedy Reforms needed to deal with the Past Injustices and Prevent future Displacement", Nairobi, June,2010, P.72.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

election had been rigged/stolen, thus rejected outcome while PNU retorted that the outcome was disputed. In the meantime violence broke out in ODM strongholds country wide targeting people from the Mount Kenya communities residing in those areas. Worst affected were Luo Nyanza, Western Province, North and South Rift, and cosmopolitan cities like Nairobi, Mombasa, Nakuru, Eldoret, Naivasha and others.

Members of Mount Kenya communities living in affected areas were displaced from their farms, business premises, homes and residences moving into chiefs' camps, churches, police stations, stadiums and show grounds acting as temporary camps.<sup>111</sup> They were IDPs. These temporary camps faced several challenges ranging from lack of shelter, food, sanitation, or security yet they were the only alternative available. Many children succumbed as a result of epidemics arising from environmental hazards; girls and women were raped, while the displaced survived on well-wishers and humanitarian teams for food. Those behind the displacement tormented and taunted the displaced promising to strike at them further at the camps.

Kisumu was and still is an ethnic base for ODM. The post polls violence here was intense and devastating, ethnically targeting the Kikuyu and Kisii communities. The Indian community was a mere casualty of crossfire.<sup>112</sup> Kisumu for a long time was home to a substantially large Indian community and was often referred to as the little Bombay (Mumbai).

The Kikuyu community was the main target for two main reasons; First, for being perceived as behind marginalization of the Luo during Kenyatta regime. Second, for stealing 2007 elections that denied their local son Raila from ascending to the presidency. The violence went beyond targeting Kikuyu community roping in Meru, Embu, and Tharaka peoples living in those ODM stronghold communities. The displaced camped in police stations or in secured secluded compounds under police watch.<sup>113</sup> They were subsequently transported out of Kisumu in several Lorries under heavy Police escort.

The Kisii community became displacement targets for failure to give ODM wholesome support.

---

<sup>111</sup> Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN); "Nyanza's forgotten IDPs", Nairobi, February 2011.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Mwololo.M, "Picking up the pieces", Daily Nation, August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2011, Living, p.4, 5.

The large Indian community in Kisumu was also affected with most businesses and industries looted or burnt to ashes.<sup>114</sup> Kisumu was reduced to a desolate ghost town. In an attempt to quell the violence, security forces of the Kenya Police ended up carrying out extra judicial executions, with more than 100 civilians shot at and killed.<sup>115</sup>

The natives blamed their economic woes on the Indian community that dominates Kisumu's economic landscape. The violence provided the right environment to teach them a lesson, which was destructive rather than constructive. The Indian community tends to be cohesive facilitating economic power amongst them. Culturally they have very strong and effective family relation networks and communal lifestyle.

On the economic tier, they mainly operate at secondary level (manufacturing industry) and tertiary level (service hospitality industry and commerce). This well exemplified by Ukwala chain of supermarkets. This is quite contrary to the case of most Africans who economically operate at primary level agriculture at subsistence. The operation level of Indians facilitates access facilities like insurance.<sup>116</sup>

Due to their social cohesion and economic power, during the violence and displacement they moved in elsewhere with families, relatives or friends as 'invisible IDPs' but as soon as things settled they returned making insurance claims for whatever loss incurred during the violence. They were fully compensated. In most cases they insure with Indian owned insurance companies, making it an in house affair.

Increased media freedom ensured nation-wide coverage of the entire happenings. On receiving the news, Kikuyu community in Kiambu, and Muranga, host to members of Luo and Luhya working there, were incensed by the suffering of their kinsmen in Luo Nyanza, Western and North Rift. The Luo and Luhya had migrated there in search of better economic prospects and enhancement of social-economic status, but that was now

---

<sup>114</sup> The Kenya Red Cross Society - Report: Kenya Humanitarian Forum Meeting, March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2008, Nairobi.

<sup>115</sup>[ICC - OTP - 20101215 - PR 615]: "Kenya's pos Election Violence: Prosecutor presents cases against six individuals for crimes against humanity", ICC Press Release 15.12.2010.

<sup>116</sup> Kenya Red Cross Society - Report: Kenya Humanitarian forum Meeting, March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2008, Nairobi.

at stake. The locals of Mount Kenya region launched retaliatory evictions of perceived ODM members namely the Luo, the Luhya and the Kalenjin.<sup>117</sup> The Luo and Luhya working in Coffee farms in Murang'a, pineapple plantations and industries in Thika, tea farms in Limuru, flower farms, hotels, fishing, industries, wheat farms, dairy farms and garages in Naivasha and Nakuru were either killed or displaced. The displaced first moved into Chiefs' camps, Churches, Police Stations, and prison grounds and show grounds for safety.

The displacement was violent and in the process people were reported killed, girls and women raped- some in full view of family members. Some men were forcefully circumcised as reported in Naivasha.<sup>118</sup> Ugly situations like subjecting victims to public nudity just to humiliate them were reported. There was arson committed on premises occupied by perceived ODM supporters/sympathizers, leaving some members injured and others burnt to death. The on goings could be summarized as horror episodes, traumatizing and tormenting to the victims as well as observers. It was devastating. The worst areas were Naivasha and Nakuru.

In the new make shift camps, the displaced faced various challenges varying from lack of food, sanitation, security and shelter. They faced security risks from local community who did not want them anywhere near. They trooped into these camps with virtually nothing, having lost all livelihoods. They camped there as destitutes. The hope was to be relocated to their 'ancestral homes'. To them life was much more precious than what they had lost. Thus the government through the provincial administration provided Lorries for transportation under security escort to take them to their 'ancestral homes'. Displacement was mainly out of fearing for life being amongst other people, eviction and intimidation. Here, the issue of 'othering' others was very pronounced. Majority of them were from Nyanza and Western Provinces. They were subsequently transported to Western Kenya.<sup>119</sup> They formed the bulk of the displaced who returned to 'ancestral homes', mixing up with general population, thus going unnoticed.

---

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

Back in their ethnic ‘constituency’ (ancestral home), the displaced were delivered to local make shift camps as IDPs. From these camps they moved out to join kin and kith, transforming into ‘invisible IDPs’. These camps in Kisumu region were in Awasi, Koru, Ahero, Kisumu and Maseno.

Over 20,000 displaced persons received in Kisumu, joined kin and kith becoming ‘invisible IDPs’.<sup>120</sup> At the same time and context, more than 150 perceived ODM sympathizers were killed at road blocks manned by militia groups associated with PNU as they attempted to travel across Naivasha towards Nairobi or Western Kenya.<sup>121</sup>

Most of these “invisible IDPs” were skilled in various aspects like artisans, fishermen, or mechanics which could be beneficial economically but had no tools and infrastructure. Their skills lay idle due to displacement, indeed a very high opportunity cost. These ‘invisible IDPs’ returned to what was considered safer grounds but have potential (latent skills lying idle). Their potential could be very useful to themselves as well as the larger society. These ‘invisible IDPs’ returned to economically more challenging situations (environments), complicating the local economic landscape. The bread winners had become destitute.

Most of these ‘invisible IDPs’ of Kisumu County had remained in touch with their ancestral homes through regular visits and attending rites of passage. Some of them had land and houses back home while others had families to return to. They returned to safer grounds; ‘home areas’.

### **3.2 Impact**

There was destruction of moral and ethical infrastructure which is the requisite software necessary for societal normalcy. There was killing, maiming, rape, other related sexual offences and inhuman acts. Many of the acts were abominable to human nature. There was wanton destruction of properties, capital and social infrastructure.

---

<sup>120</sup> Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), “Kenya: Nyanza’s forgotten IDPs”, February, 2011.

<sup>121</sup> [ICC – OTP – 20101215 – PR 615]: “Kenya’s Post- Election Violence: Prosecutor presents cases against six individuals for crimes against humanity”, ICC Press Release, 15.12.2010.

The post polls violence disrupted lives of those caught up in the middle. Though the county had experienced the so called ‘ethnic land clashes’ before, this was something beyond expectation and devastating. There was wanton destruction of properties as well as infrastructure. Human activities almost came to an abrupt halt as people scampered for safety. The focus shifted to saving one’s life, not only in Kisumu County but all parts of election violence prone areas. Violent conflict is destructive to social, economic and political infrastructure, impeding their goals and objectives. Kisumu was a shaken and devastated city due to the violence and displacement. Each community was perceived to be reacting to different issues; land, political power, resources or ethnic territoriality. Such tendencies weaken the social fiber of the County exposing her to cohesion and integration challenges.

The 2007/8 post- election violence affected or touched many people of all walks of life directly or indirectly, particularly those in Kisumu County.

Jonathan Otieno was a government officer. He said;

*“Never before had such a devastating disaster occurred in this county during my tenure here. In previous displacements, there were hundreds of IDPs, but trickled in individually or by family quietly joining kin and kith. In 2007/8 post-election violence the displaced arrived in thousands, gender inclusive. They came in truckloads escorted by security forces of the Kenya police. They were received at chiefs’ camp that acted as temporary camp. Temporary camps had many challenges right from shelter, food, sanitation and human resource. They arrived tired, weary, hungry and even sick. They were coming from temporary camps of displacement localities. We were challenged logistic-wise. Sometimes we requested boda- boda operators to ferry some of the victims to kith and kin once verified. It was a heart breaking scenario”.*<sup>122</sup>

---

<sup>122</sup> Otieno.J, Government Officer (Chief), interviewed at Awasi, 4<sup>th</sup> August,2011.



Kisumu city topped in terms of destruction of capital and social infrastructure, Ukwala Supermarket was broken in, looted, and eventually set ablaze.<sup>123</sup> This was just one example, there were many other investments that suffered same fate, as Kisumu was razed to a ghost town. This was a chilling message to would be investors. When investment infrastructure is destroyed, the future of would be beneficiaries locally, hangs in balance. The drivers of this violence were searching for livelihood, yet they destroyed the very lifeline.

Derick Owino was a humanitarian staff. He said;

*“Normally, there was not many humanitarian staff in the country-side. When the 2007/8 post-election violence broke out in Kisumu city, we were mobilized to go there for humanitarian relief services provision. The major challenges here were Shelter and sanitation. This is because good Samaritans joined in provision of food stuff, water, blankets and even some medicine. However, within the Week, I was among those mobilized to one of the various temporary camps to receive returning IDPs. Truckloads full of IDPS started arriving; putting entire staff in confusion. I had never experienced a disaster of such magnitude. First, the temporary camp was under staffed and under equipped. Being in rural setting, the locals were generous but economically and financially challenged. Secondly, the displaced had gone without sleep, food, water, and proper sanitation since displacement thus distraught, weak, sickly and helpless. The local temporary camp had similar challenges like the previous. The best and easiest way out was to verify their ancestral home status and get them to their kith and kin, but encountered logistical challenges. Eventually, some boda boda operators offered to facilitate transport where possible”.*<sup>124</sup>

---

<sup>123</sup> The Kenya Red Cross Society- Report : “Kenya Humanitarian Forum Meeting”, March, 2008, Nairobi

<sup>124</sup> Owino.D, A humanitarian staff, Interviewed in Kisumu, 8<sup>th</sup> August,2011.

According to Daniel Okoth, a security officer in the area, security was an important issue for these IDPs. He said,

*“The displaced desired for security since most of them ended in displacement due to insecurity. The presence of security was a source of hope. However, they were tired and hungry and needed food, water and sanitation which were scarce. That seemed to overshadow their obsession for security. Emergencies of large magnitude had never been experienced here and thus the local could not understand this obsession with security among the IDPs. Even in sending them to kith and kin they still wanted to feel the security presence right in the village. The journey to ancestral homes was traumatic”.*<sup>125</sup>

Out of 1,133 deaths country-wide, Kisumu accounted for 81 deaths, mostly as a result of bullet wound from members of the disciplined forces.<sup>126</sup> Most of them were young age and thus the future of this county.

Despite the above, many sons and daughters of Kisumu County were displaced elsewhere and were on their way back home, having lost everything. Yet the backyard they were returning to was burning. Kisumu County scenario is a case of self-inflicting pain with the intention of hurting your neighbor. Though, there are generic issues/ underlying causes, the conflict was politically fuelled and driven.

### **3.2.1 Loss of Life**

The 2007/8 post- election violence resulted in loss of life. The official death toll stood at 1,133 country-wide.<sup>127</sup> Out of this number Kisumu County accounted for 81, many of whom fell by bullets from security agents while others at the hands of belligerent post-election rivalry. Though it appears that the conflict was between the perpetrators and displaces, disciplined forces appeared as a hidden hand in the violence and displacement operations. Some tales from post-election violence victims are heart rending. Benard

---

<sup>125</sup> Okoth.D, Security officer- Kenya Police, interviewed at Ahero, 9<sup>th</sup> August, 2011.

<sup>126</sup> Government of Kenya, Commission of Inquiry into Post Election Violence, October, 2008, Nairobi, p.271.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

Ndege lived in Naivasha with his family of nine people prior to election violence. He considered Naivasha his alternative home till post-election mayhem broke loose.

He explained;

*“When violence broke out in Naivasha, our family locked selves in the house with a view of securing our lives. That action turned out to be death sentence for nine family members, as our house was doused with fuel and set ablaze. We struggled in agony to escape, but I am the only one who managed to escape as my entire family perished, bodies never retrieved for burial. I sustained serious burns and injuries, lost family and entire livelihood. I started life all over again from scratch. In normal circumstances the dead are given a sent off no matter how humble, but not the case of my family members. Even though I returned back in ancestral home and re-married, those events still torture and traumatize me. Despite their assistance, community members take me for an outcast. I regret to have escaped, for it would have been better if I died with my family”.*<sup>128</sup>

There was the case of Sarah Odek who lost her husband in the violence also in Naivasha.

She states;

*“My husband had been on night shift at his work place. On his way back home in the morning, he was attacked by a gang of men. They tortured him ultimately chopping off his head. Word went around of a young who had been killed in the morning violence, creating a sense of fear and terror. I went to see what had happened only to find my head-less husband’s body, with the head nearby. I picked the head and headed to the Police station wailing. The Police came and took the body to mortuary. Bereavement in displacement movement was a tremendous challenge. At such moments there was minimal or no socio-cultural support- a symbol of African communalism. It was not possible to organize for funeral amidst the now escalating mayhem. Fortunately a civil society group facilitated funeral and burial”.*<sup>129</sup>

---

<sup>128</sup> Ndege.B, interviewed at Ahero, August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

<sup>129</sup> Odek.S, Interviewed at Awasi, August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

Such torture and deaths and surrounding circumstances did not go down well with kin and kith, who attribute blanket blame on the entire ethnic group of perceived perpetrators. It was these kinds of scenario that fuelled and energized ethnic animosity. That kind of news spread around the country like wild fire via short message services (sms) and electronic media (FM radio stations). Very little was known about those injured, and those who succumbed as a result of injuries thereafter, but they are bound to be many. Death caused irreplaceable loss, leaving bitter memories of resentment in the minds of survivors. It also changed destinies of the orphans and destitute and re-molded social landscape.

### **3.2.2 Geographical Translocation**

This involved movement from one area to another. In the case of the displaced it was sudden and shocking. They were evicted from their abodes, neighborhood, community, and social environment where they were making a decent living to their ancestral homes. They went with nothing, their lives transformed from meaning to meaningless as far as livelihood was concerned. They went back to previous poverty and misery at home where they belonged. They moved from a more rewarding geographical location to a lesser one.

All the ‘invisible IDPs’ experienced geographical translocation. One’s environment could be enabling or hindering for certain occupational activities for example the type and kind of business engaged in; there was minimal hawking in the village. The displaced had moved to where they were because of certain enabling environmental factors. Such factors did not exist in ‘ancestral homeland’. Children were suddenly removed from familiar environment to unfamiliar and hostile environment of displacement. Monica Akinyi was living with Akoth, a single mother who had been deserted by the husband in kiambu. Unfortunately Akoth died in the post-election violence leaving her two children with Akinyi, a mtumba merchant.

Akinyi narrates;

*“I and the children were displaced to the camps and eventually transported to ancestral home under security escort, joining kith and kin to eke a living. During the violence and displacement I lost all my merchandise at the same time savings. The children were already*

*traumatized upon return. However, the biggest challenge lay with how to make alternative livelihood under prevailing circumstances. Though acquainted with Mtumba business, it was not viable here, due to high poverty levels. I had to adjust my livelihood from merchandising to subsistence farming. Some activities are just not viable in certain geographical locations".*<sup>130</sup>

Conflict and concomitant population displacement was accompanied by disruption of trade and other economic activities that form the basis of a community's livelihood. Overcrowding in safer regions put pressure and strain on the land and other already scarce resources in the new settlement and caused of conflict among the displaced. Loss of livelihood translated into increased dependency because alternative means of survival are limited.

All economic activities cannot be carried out everywhere but in context. For example a banker without a bank or a fisherman without water mass makes the trade cumbersome. Economic translocation resulted in occupational loss necessitating re invention. 'Invisible IDPs' have suffered economic translocation, exposing them to economic hazards, making it very hard for them to survive.

### **3.2.3 Loss of Livelihood.**

All those displaced suffered loss of livelihood. Livelihood energizes and drives day to day lives without which could result in destitution. Loss of livelihood hampered the displaced forcing their dependants out school, leave alone holding together as a family. Loss of livelihood enhances poverty. Poverty in turn causes erosion of dignity of those affected. These displaced were the very bread winners of their loved ones – the families. This complicated the lives of their dependents. In the meantime some of the displaced sent their children to live with relatives. Some 'invisible IDPs' had land, houses and even families back home. They just returned but empty handed. Joyce Amondi, a private school teacher was displaced from Kiambu. She explained the events of that time;

*"The moment I heard over the radio that members of Kikuyu community were being evicted in Luo Nyanza, Western and parts of the Rift Valley*

---

<sup>130</sup> Akinyi.M, Interviewed at Koru, August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

*Provinces, I decided to move with my children to the nearby Police Station. I knew it would be a matter of few hours before the host community starts retaliatory evictions which could turn brutal and violent. The die had been cast. I arrived at the Police station with my children only to find many members of my community and neighborhoods, taking cover there. This was before retaliatory evictions, violence and displacement commenced. All those camped at the Police Station had moved there out of fear of retaliatory attacks and none was taking chances. In such situations ethnic identity becomes pronounced. They hardly carried anything so as not arouse curiosity of the locals hence violence. After 3-4 days arrangements for transport to ancestral home was made. I returned with my school going children<sup>131</sup> to join kin and kith. My children were kept out of school pending enrolment and registration since most schools were full, but above all I had no money for school basic requirements like uniform. We depended on relatives for everything and it was becoming a bother as relatives started despising and bad mouthing us. I had to do all kinds of work to eke a living. My children could not understand all these turn of events suddenly”.<sup>132</sup>*

Loss of livelihood is devastating as it diminished ones social status, thus dignity. It is unfortunate that dignity is pegged on extrinsic (external) rather than intrinsic (internal) values. Positions, cars, houses and bank accounts apparently determined who and what we are. Somebody who was a genuine mechanic/farmer/artisan suddenly became an outcast due to displacement resulting into loss of livelihood. A dependent without a guardian/caretaker is a destitute. The displaced had dependents thus multiplying and compounding the phenomenon of destitution.

---

<sup>131</sup> Amondi.J, Interviewed at Awasi, August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

<sup>132</sup> Odunga.D, Internal refugee camps laying bare adult pursuits to children, Daily Nation, December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2010, p.2.

### 3.2.4 Safety and Security

Lack of safety and security are the root causes for violence and displacement that gave rise to IDPs in camps while others joined kith and kin in ancestral homes via camp or directly. These displaced returned to ancestral homes due to social capital and became ‘invisible IDPs’. Joshua Waigalla was displaced from Kiambu in the post-election violence into the camp and subsequently moved to ancestral home in Kisumu joining his kith and kin.

He explains;

*“The moment skirmishes broke up in Luo Nyanza, Western and parts of Rift valley many short messages services (SMS) splashed around warning of retaliatory attacks. Electronic media particularly the TV aired raw pictures of the ongoing skirmishes. These instilled fear and terror amongst those living in the communities that were being attacked. It was out of this fear that I decided to move to the nearest police station for security purposes. At the police station I met many people from my community and neighbouring community. Out of fear they had sought refuge at the police station for security purposes. Many of the people displaced from Kiambu and Murangá had sought refuge in police stations, chief’s camps, and churches/mosques/temples without necessarily having been attacked. Thus the cause of the displacement was hinged in fear rather than on violence being unleashed. However, in few areas there was actual violence. This is because I was one of them and thus had first-hand information”.*<sup>133</sup>

Violating or overstepping others creates an environment for revenge. Stepping on others to get to the top, people you stepped on always wait to pay back. In the process there is the likelihood for establishing and building a culture of violence if the situation is not curtailed early through some form of reconciliation internally or externally.

An overwhelming majority of respondents cited life – threatening insecurity. Such anxiety and insecurity prompted their displacement.

---

<sup>133</sup> Waigalla J. Interviewed in Kisumu on August 3<sup>rd</sup> 2011

### 3.2.5 Disruption of Education

Education is the process of providing people with what is thought valuable, or an activity of educating people in schools, colleges and universities. Education comes in two phases, namely, education of the heart and norm, focusing on know why and academic education focusing on know how (physical, technical, intellectual education).

Education of the heart and norm (know why) is given informally within family and community set up in the event of family or community displacement, this education is disrupted. This interferes with the individual's moral and ethical educational development. Many 'invisible IDPs' had children who were thus affected. Darcy Omondi, a teacher was displaced from Kiambu.

She narrates;

*"I had done my best to raise my children with humility and respect to all, especially the elders. My children were quite good generally until they experienced life in displacement at the Police Station. That seemed to erode all the gains of values I had inculcated in them over time. They could no longer see the need for such virtues when the world was crumbling down on them. In such times, social order crumbles bringing down entire social fabric of ethos and values".*<sup>134</sup>

Moral and ethical education inducted within family/community set is very important for society's wellbeing. While academic education enhanced the quality of human resource that promotes social, scientific and technological development, education of heart and norm enhances values and principles that make human beings humane. These IDPs had school going children and displacement interfered with their schooling. Displacement relegated school going children to village schools exposing them to cultural shock in addition to displacement shock and trauma.

This is Mary Agwanda's narrative;

*"Upon displacement, I returned to ancestral home with adopted children, who were unaccepted by kinsmen. The children's father had deserted while the mother had succumbed leaving them in Agwanda's hands. These*

---

<sup>134</sup> Omondi, D. interviewed in Kisumu on August 9<sup>th</sup> 2011



*children had undergone so much. When I tried to enroll them in the local primary school, they refused to go. In some village schools, some classrooms were mud walled and general hygiene wanting. This was the contrary of the school they had attended previously. My children had undergone tremendous traumatic experiences causing some of these reactions. Their hopes had been replaced by fear and despondency”.*<sup>135</sup>

There were cases where some ‘invisible IDP’ children refused to attend school in ancestral homes.

### **3.2.6 Orphans**

Many orphans were born during and after displacement without knowledge of their homes other than displacement.<sup>136</sup> Many others were born during and after displacement, and have no knowledge of their homes other than in displacement. They were unaware of the circumstances that caused the displacement of their parent/ parents. Some lost or were separated from their parents/relatives, and had no one and no place to return to. Some men abandoned their wives and children during or shortly after displacement; hence their children became orphans.

Mary Agwanda is an ‘invisible IDP’ in Ahero.

She said;

*“My friend Akoth, whose husband deserted her at the onset of the violence, succumbed during the violence. She and her two children were living with me by then. I returned to ancestral home, joining kith and kin with these children. I was welcomed but there was reservation about the children. Thus I am an ‘invisible IDP’ carrying along ‘invisible IDPs’ with me. This put me in dilemma, because many ‘invisible IDPs’ children face socio-economic and psychological hardships, increasing their vulnerability to HIV infection”<sup>137</sup>. A large number of children have become AIDS orphans. This also leads to proliferation of street children. Most*

---

<sup>135</sup> Agwanda.M, Interviewed at Ahero, August 14<sup>th</sup>,2011.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid.

<sup>137</sup> (UNAIDS, Refugees and AIDS: UNAIDS point of view may, 2007)

*orphans are on the streets while others are offering manual labor on nearby farms. Despite pressure from my kinsmen to get rid of them, I just cannot betray friendship of my departed friend. I have sought means and ways to fend for these children, including doing manual work”.*<sup>138</sup>

Indeed this is a classic example of loyalty to the absent, a very important virtue. Loyalty to the absent is both constructive and developmental.

### **3.2.7 Sexual Violence**

When a mother is raped before the very eyes of family members, is very humiliating and hurting. This destroys the dignity, self-esteem and respect of the individual as well as that of the helpless husband and offspring. This intrinsically destroys the victim. The husband is perceived as symbol and source of authority and security. So when that is watered down, then things fall apart. Mrs. Maria Okello’s Family experienced this and subsequently broke up. She explains;

*“On that fateful day we prayed together the whole family and hoped for the best. Mid-morning a group of violent gang struck at our house assembling all of us in the living room and threatening to kill us. The harassment went on for long before they raped me before the rest of the family. I was so humiliated and embarrassed. How was I going to relate to my family now and onwards? Each day my feelings were getting heavier and heavier without anyone to share. As the feelings got heavier I drifted away from rest of family losing emotional connection. At the same time I did not know or bother to find out how they felt. Soon the family relation was reduced to empty shell and subsequently separation. Any efforts to resolve separation issue ended up fruitless, since those attempting did not know the underlying issues”.*<sup>139</sup>

---

<sup>138</sup>Agwanda.M, Interviewed at Ahero, August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

<sup>139</sup>Okello. M Interviewed at Maseno, August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011.

Culture does not allow such issues discussed publicly nor shared. Discussing sexual issues is a taboo in African culture. A problem shared is a problem half solved. Thus sharing it with a professional guide/counselor goes far towards resolution. Most of the ‘invisible IDPs’ have put behind their past woes and moved on despite the impact which eventually transforms lives.

### **3.2.8 Corruption**

About eight billion shillings was allocated for IDPs as startup fund and reconstruction among others.<sup>140</sup> The bulk of this amount was misappropriated, embezzled or stolen and the government seems hesitant to act against the responsible officers in the provincial administration. The act was executed in collusion with IDPs, including “Invisible IDPs”. Some IDPs (‘invisible’ included) became part and parcel of this immoral and unethical act for survival. The youthful Peter is an ‘invisible IDP’.<sup>141</sup> During the one week field work in Kisumu, Peter was very helpful as research assistant. His open minded attitude endears him to many, both displaced and others. His true identity came out clearly when meeting State officer charged with registration of IDPs, especially. This was when it was realized that he could have anybody registered as an IDP, confirming existence of career IDPs.

Misappropriation, embezzlement and stealing of funds constitute abuse of office and thus economic crimes.

### **3.2.9 Cultural Disfunction.**

Displacement meant loss of a home, friendship and other relationships, economic and personal built over many years, dispersal of relatives, and a loss of memories that constitute ones being. The family is the basic unit of society

Nehema Atieno is a Luo who was married to a Kikuyu living in Naivasha prior to the 2007/8 post-election violence. She Explained;

---

<sup>140</sup> Aluanga.A, Resettlement Programme Causing more Divisions than Healing, Sunday Standard, January 16th 2011, p.11

<sup>141</sup> Odhiambo.M, Interviewed in Kisumu, August, 2011.

*“My husband deserted me and children at the onset of the violence. The violence took ethnic dimensions forcing me and the children to take cover in camp and eventual displacement to ancestral home in Awasi, Kisumu County, joining kith and kin. The journey through the camp then journey to ancestral home was painful and horrible. We were traumatized by the experiences. My children spoke Kiswahili, English only thus posing a language challenge. The children were too traumatized to go to village school. This forced them to stay out of school for a while”.*<sup>142</sup>

By the time of interview Atieno was unsure if she will ever get together with the husband. She had no livelihood, husband-less and more responsibilities of fending for self and children in displacement. Though received back home, but with reservations making her regret having married across culture.

Mary Agwanda’s case was even more complicated. Her Luo friend, Darcy married to a Kikuyu died in the thick of the post polls violence leaving Akinyi with the two children since the husband had deserted.

Agwanda narrated;

*“Though I had no children of my own, I returned to Ahero with my friend’s two orphaned children. This created so much suspicion and gossip. Despite that I took good care of them. This was the only way to honour my departed friend. These children were not even my relatives, but I was the only one closest then”.*<sup>143</sup>

The family is the basic unit of the society. The moment this basic unit dysfunctions, the effects have a multiplier effect on the larger society, destabilizing the social fabric.

Cases of separation due to inter-ethnic marriage were many. There were cases whereby Husband left wife and children for his own safety. The displaced wife and children went

---

<sup>142</sup> Atieno.N, interviewed at Awasi, August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

<sup>143</sup> Agwanda. M, Interviewed at Ahero, August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011

back to ancestral home with children perceived to belong to enemy ethnic group. The community found it hard to adopt such children especially giving them community land. At the onset of violence most casualties suffered psychological abuse (violence).

Psychological abuse included, daunting, insulting, rape in the presence of next of kin, undressing people exposing them to public nudity or public rape. Such atrocities were targeted at women who are perpetrators and carriers for the society's posterity. By humiliating and dehumanizing women, meant the entire society/community.

According to the Waki Commission,<sup>144</sup> thousands of women, men and children were raped during the violence. Some women even conceived and borne children out of these experiences. Some children have since tested HIV AIDS positive. Some cultures are against killing such children or even giving them to a children's home, for the simple reason that children are gifts from God. These children are a living constant reminder to the mother about that abominable ordeal.

### **3.3 Ethnic Polarization**

The 2007/8 post-election violence was a political problem triggered by the Presidential election results. There was ethnic chauvinism leading to unprecedented violence and massive displacement of people, causing resentment. A slogan doing rounds during that period clearly stated: 42 minus one, meaning tribes minus one.<sup>145</sup> This was an indicator that there were many nations that form the State Kenyan State. There was a conflict between 41 ethnic groups versus one ethnic group.

William Odundo narrates;

*“Prior to the 2007 elections, I had a good job in Naivasha. My family was very comfortable with high hopes for the future. During 2007/8 post polls violence my family became victims of sexual related violence. My wife was raped before the very eyes of the entire family leaving bitterness and resentment. My family ended up becoming the guinea pig of the 42minus*

---

<sup>144</sup> The Commission of Inquiry on Post-Election Violence (CIPEV), Nairobi, 2008,p.53

<sup>145</sup> Odundo,W, interviewed at Koru, August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

*I slogan. This caused family separation that even has affected our extended family too. My community is resentful to perceived perpetrator's community as a result".*<sup>146</sup>

The ensuing resentment had a spiral effect taking ethnic dimension. This is further amplified by politicians. Rather than seeking ways of resolving conflicts, politicians blame certain communities and incite the people into confrontations.<sup>147</sup> The consequences could be devastating. The victims were simply the grass that suffers when two elephants fight. The victims are languishing in hopelessness and helplessness spicing resentment. The key issue here is that political reconciliation must be put above the pursuit of justice.

The root cause of post poll chaos must be addressed.<sup>148</sup> The underlying issues must be brought to light. This is where healing begins. It is on the foundation of healing that aggrieved parties can establish sense of purpose and direction in their lives.

The idea of 'invisible IDPs' may be a short term solution. In the long run, this could result in ethnic polarization. This is because 'invisible IDPs' have retreated into ethnic cocoons under the guise of re-integrated IDPs causing ethnic bigotry. Keeping a large number people riddled with problems of similar nature and kind only fuels and multiplies an already poisoned situation. Having numbers could even legitimize the illegitimate, for example, ethnicized an issue yet even other ethnic groups were affected. Perez A. Ogotu was a sales man in Nakuru before displacement. He explains;

*"Upon displacement to the camp I met people of diverse ethnic background. When the time for boarding vehicle for ancestral home came, we found ourselves in ethnic enclaves. Under security escort we travelled to ancestral home. The violence and displacement easily and simply sieved*

---

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Kimungi.P.M, "The Current Situation of Internally Displaced Persons in Kenya," Nairobi, March 2001,p.14.

<sup>148</sup> Aluanga.L ; Resettlement programme causing more divisions than healing, Sunday Standard, January16th ,2011.p.11

*us into ethnic pockets, something not easily achievable under normal circumstances.*

*I reached Kisumu and sought alternative livelihood, thus becoming an “invisible IDPs” in Kisumu. Along the journey to displacement, i experienced people of other ethnic communities undergoing same problem. The idea of returning to ancestral homeland is retrogressive since it Balkanizes and narrows perspectives and understanding resulting into ethnic chauvinism. At the same time entrenches and re-enforces ethnicity, instead of de-constructing. This promotes Luo sub-nation or Kalenjin Sub-nation at the expense of national State, Kenya”.*<sup>149</sup>

Though victims, they are part and parcel of the problem. This is a pointer to the need for an introspection leading to an honest and sincere national conversation.

### **3.3.2 Social Ills**

Violence leads to loss of life and property as crops and livestock are looted or destroyed. This abandonment of economic activities amount to loss of livelihood for the affected population, hence impoverishment and destitution. Movement of displaced people into market centres has put pressure on social amenities like housing, hospital and schools.

This is Reagan Omondi’s narrative;

*“I returned to Kisumu upon displacement from Mombasa joining kith and kin in Kisumu, doing odd jobs. In Mombasa I was self-employed, but displacement dealt me a heavy blow, losing livelihood and shelter ending up in camp. From the camp I was transported alongside fellow displaced persons escorted by disciplined security force to Kisumu, joining my brother who lived there. I later moved to Obunga slum where I developed interest in transport industry, Boda-boda. Eventually I borrowed my brother’s bicycle and started transport business but quite challenging. As a result of the challenge, I sometimes participated in crimes to make ends meet, especially when business was at the lowest”.*<sup>150</sup>

---

<sup>149</sup> Ogutu. P.A, interviewed in Kisumu, August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

<sup>150</sup> Omondi. R, interviewed in Kisumu, August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

This kind of business intersects with the poor as convenient mode of transportation.”

A large number of slum dwellers are beggars, thieves, hawkers, prostitutes or drug dealers’,<sup>151</sup> thus very easy to lure boda-boda operators.

### **3.4 Conclusion**

The research was able to establish the existence of ‘invisible IDPs’ in Kisumu County. These were people who migrated to Mount Kenya region in search of greener pastures so as to enhance their socio-economic status. However, they fell victim to 2007/8 post-election violence and got displaced to camps as IDPs. They were later to be ferried in truckloads back to ancestral homes, escorted by security forces of Kenya Police up to local camps as IDPs. They subsequently moved from these camps to join kin and kith to eke a living, becoming ‘Invisible IDPs’. They are gender inclusive. The differences lay with their myriad challenges as a result of the violence and displacement impact due to individual uniqueness.

The 2007/8 post polls violence had tremendous impact on the ‘Invisible IDPs’ in Kisumu County. The violence and subsequent displacement resulted in loss of life. From the official country-wide death toll of 1133, the county accounted for 82. This rendered many orphaned or destitute with destinies drastically altered. Killing of an individual has a spiral effect to the community and subsequently, the entire society, enhancing distrust and resentment. ‘Invisible IDPs’ made sudden departure and flight to protect lives. In the process they witnessed numerous atrocities including helplessly watching kin and kith lose their lives in very inhuman circumstances, like mob justice, being set ablaze and in some cases being chopped like a tree, using machetes and crude weapons, rape or public nudity. There were cases of Family breakdown as a result of rape and sexual related violence. Many others suffered bullet wounds and other physical injuries. Wounds and injuries eventually heal leaving scars as a permanent reminder of those events. However,

---

<sup>151</sup>Kimungi.P.M, ; “The Current Situation of Internally Displaced Persons in Kenya,” Jesuit Refugee Service-2, Nairobi, March, 2001, P.20.



psychological wounds heal hard. This could embitter social relations that eventually melt down to ethnic resentment towards purported executioners.

‘Invisible IDPs’ lost all livelihood and suffered disruption of life, thus rendering them destitute, losing their dignity and self-esteem. Some Invisible IDPs became social misfits having lost social status and unwilling to accept the new status designed and assigned by displacement. The challenges include; geographical translocation, safety and security challenges, sexual violence, rape and other forms, cultural dysfunction, resentment, orphans, poverty, crime and other social ills, disruption of education, ill treatment, ethnic polarization, displacement stigma, and trauma.

Psychological wounds are much more complicated than physical wounds, since cannot be seen despite their existence. Those who witnessed their mother raped were silently hurting. Memories of the violence have turned traumatic, haunting and daunting, as many witnessed murder, gang rape and arson depicted horror.

There was the case of lost investment in terms of homes, friendship and other relationships, economic and personal, built over many years, loss of memories constitute one’s being. In some cases, members of the same family were split up or even a mother lost child during flight. Most of the displacement was violent in nature thus aggravating the loss.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### COPING MECHANISMS

#### 4.0 Introduction

Many ‘invisible IDPs’ have picked bits and pieces and are now searching for a living by engaging in trade, including buying and selling vegetables, second hand clothes and shoes, food items, fuel (paraffin, charcoal, firewood), others engage in sports, small retail shops and boda-boda transport. Others were engaged in petty farming, fishing, and evangelism. Many ‘invisible IDPs’ were sometimes assisted by their children. Displacement seems to have ushered them into a new world of opportunities.

Human beings are self-organizing, proactive, self-reflecting and self-regulating rather than reactive organisms shaped and guided by environmental forces or driven by concealed inner impulses.<sup>152</sup> Behavior is a result of a dynamic interplay of personal, behavioral and environmental influences. What motivates individuals is the inner belief rather than what is objectively true and this builds their self-efficacy.<sup>153</sup>

Many psychologists today focus on factors that allow individuals to remain resilient rather than on those factors causing a person to break down.<sup>154</sup> Even in the face of major stressors – whether bereavement, displacement severe illness or being held hostage by terrorists – people show surprising ability to cope. Under severe stress, many people in everyday life also more than rise to the occasion – thus helping to protect their physical and mental health.<sup>155</sup> All these challenges require coping mechanism for survival.

#### 4.1.1 Coping Assertively

This refers to constructive attempts to deal with stress. Often such responses take the form of direct attempts to change the stressful situation. Whether the stress is as mundane as a flat tyre that will make us late for an appointment, as challenging as loss of

---

<sup>152</sup> Bandura.A, “Self-Efficacy: Towards a unifying Theory of Behavior Change”, *Psychological Review*, Vol.84, 1977, p.92.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> Segal.J, “Winning life’s toughest battles: Roots of human resilience”, New York: McGraw Hill, 1986, p.45.

<sup>155</sup> Lazarus.R.S and Folkman. S, “Stress, appraisal, and coping”, New York: Springer, 1984, p.17.

livelihood, or as harrowing as disruption of lives through violence and displacement, we can usually do something to prevail over our predicament. A motorist frustrated by a flat tyre can get busy changing it or find a phone to seek help. An employee who has lost livelihood can seek to acquire and enhance useful skills required by the job market. Even disrupted lives brutally stripped of every physical and psychological means of defending themselves, have found ways to change dire situations.

There are a number of invisible IDPs offering voluntary service to IDP camps in Ahero and Koru of Kisumu County. Their stories are both encouraging and transformative. Paul Ogutu was displaced from Nakuru and subsequently returned to ancestral home in Ahero, Kisumu. Initially he was unsettled and idle due to fresh memories of the violence and displacement that kept him captive. This changed when a neighbor invited him to give a helping at Ahero IDP Centre. He explains;

*“This move shifted my mind and focus to my new found activities and friendship, giving meaning and purpose to my otherwise tattered life. Despite the fact that it just provided for my upkeep, being involved in voluntary service provided hope and sense of fulfillment, once again breathing new life into me”.*<sup>156</sup>

James Ondijo served as a research assistant to this study though he was an ‘invisible IDP’. Though displaced and returned to his community, he seemed not to be attached to the world he was displaced from. He narrates;

*“I see life as an opportunity to act responsibly. I returned with an open heart and mind ready to embrace challenges and opportunities that are the hallmark of daily life despite mishaps. I am slowly but surely establishing networks that could surely land me far, despite displacement setback. Living as an ‘invisible IDP’ is not something great but that is what I am, an ‘invisible IDP’”.*<sup>157</sup>

---

<sup>156</sup> Ogutu.P, Interviewed at Ahero, August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

<sup>157</sup> Ondijo. J, Interviewed in Kisumu, August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011.

He served as an informant, translator, as well as research assistant. He is one person who vividly tells the story of an ‘invisible IDP’ live and real. This is assertive coping. There is no complain nor grumbling as he re-lives those experiences like a movie. He lived in Nakuru prior to the violence. He once commented; ‘invisible IDPs’ are like tea bags. Tea bags do not know their strength until they get into hot water.<sup>158</sup>

There are constructive ways of dealing with the stresses of everyday life. For example, when experiencing frustration due to blocked motive. There is a sense to feel bad about the situation and might even suffer intense anger amounting to rage, setting the stomach churning. Yet, keeping wits may perhaps somehow manage to overcome the obstacle. ‘Invisible IDPs’ can face up the difficulty and try to find some way through or around stresses and thus ways of coping. These include: changing environment, behavior, or managing internal wear and tear.

#### **4.2 Kith and Kinship**

Social support network include devoted family, friends, colleagues, or fellow members of organizations (religious, socio cultural or corporate). This is social capital. Indeed the whole concept of IDPs being absorbed by community is anchored in social support. All ‘invisible IDPs’ are as a result of social support network (community) which in turn is threaded in blood relations/kinship. Social support network appears to offer one of the most effective avenues through which people can escape the damaging consequences of stress. Talking to others who share your problems can be therapeutic.

Availability of social support appears to “inoculate” against depression among people facing difficult life events.<sup>159</sup> Such major stressors as family break up and incredibly hideous conditions of Nazi concentration camps during World War II. Combat veterans of the Vietnam War who returned home to supportive family and friends, were relatively

---

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Holahan.C.J, & Moos.R.H, “Life stressors, personal and social resources, and depression: A 4-year structural model”. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 1991, p.100.

free from post-traumatic stress problems that so heavily afflicted their comrades, who did not have social capital.<sup>160</sup>

‘Invisible IDPs’ who returned to their receptive families quickly adjusted to normal life. Much of their displacement effects were minimized as they went about life as usual.

Benard Ndege<sup>161</sup> was displaced from Naivasha in January 2008. With the help of security agents he made it to his ancestral home in Kisumu, joining kith and kin though devastated.

He remarks;

*“Having strong kinship links (social capital) is a crucial asset especially in times of crises. My kinsmen welcomed me, accommodated me, facilitated my re-marriage and through community spirit, put up a house for me plus farmland for subsistence. This encouraged me and giving a strong sense of belonging. My kinsmen helped prepare the land, plant and cultivate in the spirit of communal life. From the harvest I was able to sustain my family. I have now adapted to normal village life. My local church community is of great assistance spiritually and physically inspiring hope”.*<sup>162</sup>

Ndege carries stigma of severe burns, displacement and loss of family member, and above all, “invisible IDP” yet that has not impeded his resolute to move on buoyed by social capital

John Omollo returned to a receptive family in Kisumu upon displacement. Though he had lost everything in displacement, getting back to family meant everything. Omollo remarked;

*“Never before had my family received with overwhelming emotions and passion. The fact that I returned alive and healthy is all that mattered.*

---

<sup>160</sup>Martin.J.L, “The effects of social support on Psychological distress among Vietnam veterans and their peers”. Paper presented to the annual meetings of the American Psychological Association, Washington, DC, August 1982.

<sup>161</sup> Ndege. B, Interviewed at Ahero, August 8<sup>th</sup> 2011.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

*My siblings displayed high level magnanimity and benevolence through willing to share their clothes with me. For the first time a felt a strong sense of love and belonging to the family. Indeed, the family is the basic school of love and peace when norms and virtues are harnessed. Being young and single was advantageous due to less baggage”.*<sup>163</sup>

In comparison with adults, children easily adjust to new environments. The children among the displaced adjusted faster to their new home environment despite having been greatly challenged initially. They were fast in suppressing the notion of being ‘invisible IDPs’ and easily intermingled amongst locals with innocence. This demonstrates that innocence and humility are important virtues. They joined local schools albeit initial struggles but eventually settled.<sup>164</sup> There are cases whereby displaced parents sent their children to live with relatives due to economic challenges. This is informed by kith and kinship enshrined in communal lifestyle

Members of a social network can provide support in a variety of ways including,<sup>165</sup> companionship and assistance with daily tasks and hassles; reassurance and emotional strength; practical advice guidance; and perhaps, most critical, the sense that one is important, valued, and cared about. Social institutions here include religion (Church, Temple or Mosque). Just the simple act of confiding one’s thoughts and feelings can have a potent stress reducing effect. Survivors were healthier if they managed to talk to someone about the event. A problem talked is a problem half solved, hence the necessity for disclosure.

#### **4.2.1 Family Separations**

Family is the basic unit of society and one of the oldest institutions. It is within family set up that each one is born and socialized. The family lays the foundation that nurtures and shapes character of off springs. The traditional African family is extended by nature,

---

<sup>163</sup> Omollo.J, interviewed in Kisumu, August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

<sup>164</sup> Akinyi.M, Interviewed at Koru, 10<sup>th</sup>, August 2011,

<sup>165</sup>Rook.K.S, “Social support versus companionship: Effects on life stress, loneliness, and evaluations by others”. Journal of personality and social psychology, 1987, p.11-32.

allowing many significant kin and kith to add value. Thus going to stay with uncle, aunty, granny or grand does not constitute family separation. It is considered further socialization. Many ‘invisible IDPs’ parents sent their children away to live with relatives or else go out living elsewhere ..... anywhere. This was precipitated by lack of basic necessities.

In situations where parents sent children to live with relatives, it was mutually agreed thus a win-win situation. Olivia Achieng was one such ‘invisible IDP’, since she could meet daily needs.<sup>166</sup> She explains;

*“Since displacement and return to ancestral home, life became unbearable, particularly for my two children. However, my aunt offered to take them in allowing me space to re-organize. Although I miss out on them and vice versa, it was the better option for then. Life away from prevailing situation was likely to mold them into better persons. ‘Invisible IDPs’ hardly meet their children’s dietary needs leave alone their schooling expenses and upkeep”.*<sup>167</sup>

Other family separations are driven by shame inflicted during the violence. There were situations whereby the lady of the house was raped in front of the husband and off springs. William Odundo was such an example. He laments;

*“It was a humbling and humiliating experience for the entire family that inflicted unspoken internal accusations and sense of guilt on family members. Being the head of the family am constantly haunted and traumatized by the events of that day. Each family member had so much unspoken. There was always a feeling of rising tension within family relations. I felt inadequate and unworthy as the head of the family and did not care what other family members felt nor thought. Ultimately this eventually led to separation as a way of suppressing and forgetting the*

---

<sup>166</sup> Achieng.O, Interviewed at Koru, August 2nd, 2011.

<sup>167</sup> Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN); “Kenya: Nyanza’s forgotten IDPs”, February, 2011.

*humiliating, hurting and painful experiences. Our togetherness served as a reminder of that painful experience”.*<sup>168</sup>

Such separation is at the same time a coping mechanism.

### **4.3 Religion**

Majority of ‘invisible IDPs’ interviewed in the five different stations (Ahero, Awasi, Kisumu, Koru and Maseno) confessed attending religious services regularly. Religion has been explanatory and given them meaning after 2007/8 post polls violence.

Being a social agent, religion integrates people making them equal in the eyes of the creator.<sup>169</sup> Religion contributed immensely in having ‘invisible IDPs’ acceptable amongst host, a communal lifestyle that is an attribute of African religion - Community centered. This gives every individual a sense of belonging and thus integral part of the whole.

The circumstances surrounding election violence and displacement were beyond understanding. In its explanatory role religion makes people accept the unacceptable by explaining why and thus inspiring hope.<sup>170</sup> For example an assertion like this was an act of God. God is great Father, creator, savior and provider and is in charge. Through religion most “invisible IDPs” accepted their situation and started picking up bits and pieces, moving on.

An upbeat, positive view of life can significantly enhance well-being and perhaps even longevity. Attitudes under stress may indeed affect the ways in which the body responds. It has been found, for example, that members of fundamentalist religious groups have more optimistic attitudes than those of moderate or liberal groups.<sup>171</sup> The differences may well be accounted for by the relatively hopeful attitude toward life that fundamentalism engenders, along with the greater optimism reflected in actual content of religious services.<sup>172</sup> According to St. Thomas Aquinas, religious faith is a mystery that helps even if cannot be understood. This is the mystery and secret of the providence.

---

<sup>168</sup> Odundo.W, Interviewed at Koru, August 3rd 2011.

<sup>169</sup> Mbiti.J.S, “Introduction to African Religion”, East African Educational Publishers Ltd, Nairobi, 1991, p.198.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid.

<sup>171</sup> Sethi.S, & Seligman.M.E.P, “Optimism and fundamentalism. Psychological science”, 1993,p.256-59

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.



Sarah Odek a widow is an ‘invisible IDP’ who attributes her being alive to optimism. She laments;

*“The very nature of traditions is patriarchal de-franchising women from inheriting land from their parents. Since return upon displacement, I live and work on an ACK church farm. The Church hosted me since displacement and even sublet me a small portion of the church compound to grow crops for my subsistence thus livelihood. I consider myself lucky to have come thus far, because it is difficult to have hope as an ‘invisible IDP’. I know of fellow ‘invisible IDPs’ who succumbed already due to hopelessness. Hope disappoints not”.*<sup>173</sup>

There is growing evidence that thoughts, expectations and hopes affect the body’s stress reactions more than the actual stressful experience itself.<sup>174</sup>

Shem Ondiek returned to Kisumu via the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCCK) Koru; a relief centre run by NCCCK. He explains;

*“Security agents in Nakuru rescued me during the January 2008 violence and even facilitated my safe passage to Koru. In Koru, there was an IDP relief centre associated with NCCCK. The centre officer even traced my ancestral home. Meanwhile, the camp facilitated my accommodation, meals, and guidance and counseling services. Eventually the camp center facilitated my return home, but kept constant touch with the centre acquiring survival and social work skills. This enabled me to become a social worker. I am now a member of staff at Koru relief centre, serving the local community as social worker and earning a living. I have both skill coupled with practical experience of violence, displacement and “invisible IDP”. I move around the County sharing my experience and*

---

<sup>173</sup> Odek.S, Interviewed at Awasi, August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

<sup>174</sup> McClelland. D.C, “Motivational factors in health and disease”. American psychologist, 1989, p.675.

*skills especially among the over 20,000 ‘invisible IDPs’ in the County inspiring, encouraging and imparting hope”.*<sup>175</sup>

This is a classic example of opportunities that came with ‘invisible IDP’ challenges.

The Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK), Kisumu Diocese set up camp with tents at their Kisumu Diocese premises to cater for those escaping violence and displacement in Kisumu outwardly and inwardly.

Among those escaping inwardly was James Odongo. He narrates;

*“I escaped violence in Nakuru where I was a factory laborer and managed somehow to make my way with the help of security apparatus who deposited him at the camp. Eventually they traced my roots and facilitated my return. The church organized orientation with community members so as to rehabilitate me, but soon the church started socio economic activities to empower ‘invisible IDPs’ like me. I was the first beneficiary of assistance to start a poultry venture which has successfully taken off. The church now uses my venture as a model to other ‘invisible IDPs’. From an invisible IDP, I am now a rising model of poultry farming in my village”.*<sup>176</sup>

He has moved on and is enjoying better status than before displacement. It is a big lesson that big things normally start from a simple but concrete ideas. Amidst challenges are many great opportunities.

Theselia Camp in Koru is run by the Catholic Church. It is not a camp for keeping IDPs permanently but kind of a transit camp. A good number of the displaced, rescued by security apparatus ended up in this camp from where they moved to join kith and kin in ancestral homes. Thomas Tindi is one such example of “invisible IDPs” who benefitted from rehabilitation programs offered here. Tindi states;

---

<sup>175</sup> Ondiek.S, Interviewed in Kisumu, 9<sup>th</sup> August,2011.

<sup>176</sup> Odongo.J, Interviewed in Kisumu, 1<sup>st</sup>. August, 2011.

*“I set up tailoring business at Koru courtesy of skills acquired through Thesalia. I started off with guidance and counseling sessions just to get behind the displacement events. I was made to understand that life must continue and I had to do something that sustains life. Upon completing my tailoring lessons, the centre donated a sewing machine to me. Having no dependants, the tailoring work is comfortably sustaining me. The church has not only given me meaning, purpose and direction but literally lifted me from disaster”.*<sup>177</sup>

#### **4.4 Entrepreneur**

Coping assertively with the environment consists of making a meaningful attempt to change the situation in a constructive way that has a reasonable chance of success. Even though the attempt may fail, the effort itself seems to combat the damaging effects of stress. The ‘invisible IDP’ helping out (working) in Ahero camp was giving a human face, thus alleviating stigma of IDP camps. Winston Okumu narrates;

*“Being an ‘invisible IDP’ and working in IDP camp is not an enviable task at all. It is like a patient working in hospital. However, this is a necessary social enterprise whereby self-efficacy is infused from within rather than from outside. I am building bridges of hope amongst fellow displaced as well as between local community and displaced camp. The local community views the camp and its residences as an abomination. On individual level I am demonstrating that IDPs in camps are normal people and useful to society. This will help change the general notion of IDPs. My activities and services are giving value and fulfillment at the same time touching and transforming lives”.*<sup>178</sup>

In many cases, the stress suffered is not so much from the environment as from own behavior. Thus at times the only effective way to reduce stress is through behavioral change, for example displaced people have lost livelihood and thus financially

---

<sup>177</sup> Tindi.T, interviewed at Koru, 4<sup>th</sup> August, 2011.

<sup>178</sup> Okumu.W, interviewed at Ahero, 10th August, 2011.

challenged. They have to set up a strict budget and resisting to spend. Behavior change influences lifestyle.

Indeed people who seek counseling or therapy of any kind are in effect asking to help in changing their behavior and attitude. In this case a shift from normal person responsibility to that of ‘invisible IDP’ responsibility. From there, challenge and overcome, regaining normal status.

Kenneth Adeki was a mechanic running a jua kali garage in Naivasha prior to the violence.

He remarks;

*“During the violence and displacement, I lost all livelihoods, but thank God my life was spared. With life I can re-invent self and more on. By the very nature of my business, I did not have much in terms of savings; the tools of work were destroyed or looted leaving me only with the skills of the trade intact. Here at home in Awasi very few people own vehicles. Motor cycles and bicycles, used for boda-boda transport are dominant. Jua kali garage business is not as profitable as was the case in Naivasha, but this is the better alternative livelihood out here. For that reason, I opted for it despite its low earnings. I have had to draw up strict budget and control spending”.*<sup>179</sup>

Certainly behavior change influences lifestyles.

Loise Auma was running a beauty Salon in Nairobi prior to the violence.<sup>180</sup> Displacement left her with no alternative but return her ancestral home in Koru - Kisumu. She managed to salvage none of her belongings except for her skills and expertise intact. However, in the county side, there is no infrastructure for beauty salon other than the open air market. She states;

---

<sup>179</sup> Adeki,K, Interviewed at Awasi, August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

<sup>180</sup> Auma.L, Interviewed at Koru, August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011.

*“At first I grappled with either taking up subsistence farming or set up a Salon to the standards of the local environment, including low turnover and returns. I opted for the familiar territory of beauty Salon despite local limitations, especially clientele. Though slow, but I earn something by the end of the day. This is what has kept me though hopes are still high for better things ahead”.*<sup>181</sup>

The issue at hand is alternative livelihood back in ancestral home. Many times that alternative is low and humbling.

Eric Owino was displaced from Naivasha to Ahero where he was received by an old time friend since their school days. In Naivasha, prior to the violence and displacement he had been running a wholesale shop that was razed down during the violence. He explains;

*“Much of my savings was actually in the stock destroyed during the mayhem. I was forced to flee upcountry with nothing from savings and investment. My friend offered me accommodation free of charge. With my entrepreneurial skills and host’s support, I started a small retail outlet, kiosk. This is nothing compared to what I operated before, but it is the available alternative livelihood for now.” Above all, I am lucky to have survived violence and displacement that claimed many lives”.*<sup>182</sup>

This is in line with making best out of what is available.

William Odundo lives in Nyando, Kisumu with his parents<sup>183</sup> having been displaced from Nakuru in January 2008.

He narrates;

*“I earned a living selling used clothes often referred to as Mitumba. My business was thriving at the onset of the violence and displacement which*

---

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Owino.E, interviewed at Ahero, August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

<sup>183</sup> Odundo.W, interviewed at Koru, August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

*claimed it, dispatching me to ancestral home to join my kin and kith. I went to IDP camp in Nakuru and subsequently transported to Ahero camp under security escort. From here, I made my way home to the jubilation of my entire family that waited anxiously. My supportive parents in ancestral home have facilitated re-start my Mitumba business despite limited market attributable to challenged purchasing power locally”.*<sup>184</sup>

This brings to the fore the factor that ‘invisible IDPs’ have livelihood skills but lack the necessary starting capital. The need to accept available alternative livelihood is critical in the survival of “invisible IDPs”.

James Ondijo has been living in Kisumu since the January 2008 displacement from Nairobi. He is young, diligent, energetic, charismatic, focused and amazing; qualities that made me take him on board as my research assistant for this work. He narrates;

*“I am a lay reader at the local Church, a leading local civil society activist, political activist, youth leader, event’s organizer, accomplished master of ceremony, Sportsman and ‘invisible IDP’. Locally I am popularly referred to as Jatelo, meaning leader”.*<sup>185</sup>

Amiable and admirable personality locally, Ondijo’s attributes qualify him for a revolving door. Despite being one, he does not show signs of being an ‘invisible IDP’ at all. He is a well-respected person among the locals meaning that he refused to be defined by the post polls violence and displacement. At the time of interview, he was aspiring for a political seat.

#### **4.4.1 Commercial Sex Workers**

A number of sex workers cite displacement, dispossession, and lack of skills for anything else, poverty and idleness for engaging in the practice. Some married women also

---

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> Ondijo, J. Interviewed in Kisumu, August 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011.

practice commercial sex because they have families to fend for and bills to pay and their men are like children (dependants). Displacement experience deconstructed and eroded the dignity of many men making them behave like children leaving family responsibilities to the women folk. This has compelled women to resort to all sorts of means to eke a living. Some women alleged they have to sleep with or bribe policemen to avert arrest for brewing illicit liquor. This is a moral dilemma, riddled with situational ethics.

Maria Okello lives in Maseno, Kisumu West District with her five children. She confesses;

*“The post-election violence and displacement spelt doom to my family which otherwise was doing pretty well in Naivasha. ‘I was raped in the presence of my entire family member. The humiliation and shame that followed was not only devastating but unspoken, driven by internal accusations.’ My husband of over 20 years soon abandoned me and the children on our own. Relations with the children became cold. Here I was with deep emotional scars and a young family to take care of, all by myself. I tried alternative means of livelihood but ended up selling illegal liquor and subsequently became a commercial sex worker to fend for my young family”.*<sup>186</sup>

It sounded stranger than fiction and far from reality but new life had begun. She has since been forced to engage in sex trade to provide for her family as a coping mechanism. This is a domino effect

According to Akinyi,<sup>187</sup> Children who see their mothers in sex trade are more likely to engage in prostitution themselves. This in turn exposes children to human trafficking and will keep them from attending school. There are increasing cases of young girls who are sleeping with men of their father’s age in return for a day’s meal. Sex trade has affected relations between men and wives. Some women have decided to leave their husbands

---

<sup>186</sup> Okello. M, Interviewed at Maseno, August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2011.

<sup>187</sup> Akinyi. E: “Solidarity with Women in Distress”, Africa , Prostitution, War Conflict, Global Women’s news, views and issues, September 2009,p.10.

who are unable to provide for their families, and live with men who can provide. This is a coping mechanism as immoral as it appears on face value.

Dr. Karega further states,

*“Women are saying that if I have no food, and a man is offering that I sleep with him, he will give me food, I will take the risk and feed my children”.*<sup>188</sup>

This is despite the risks involved. This is Mother Nature. Women make great sacrifices for the survival and well-being of offspring. Indeed at the very core of family survival is the mother. Here arises the issue of moral dilemma, underlined by situational ethics.

These immediate effects are foundation for medium and long term psychological effect. With time medium term effects set in initially, returnees were welcome back to ancestral homes but with time the hosts fear that hosted IDPs will make claims on their land. Many returnees have moved away from the phase of displacement to that of earning a living and moving on with life. It is in this stage that fruits of the initial stage begin to show. Some psychological effects are turning physical for example; the man who witnessed the raping of wife abandoned wife and children. One short coming of our society is the very fact that we do not discuss issues to do with sex openly. It is a taboo. However, it should be understood that Light is the best disinfectant. Exposing issues/problems to the light is the best way in resolving them.

#### **4.4.2 Child Labour**

In times of conflict and violence, child labour appears normal. Though statistics are fluid, casual labour goes for between Ksh.30 to 100/= per day doing domestic chores. Wealthy members of host community hire some women and children to perform household chores like laundry, drawing water, fetching firewood and cooking, thus exploiting their vulnerability.

---

<sup>188</sup> Karega.R, “Chairperson of the National Commission on Gender and Development :Africa, Prostitution, War Conflict, Global Women’s news, views and issues”, Nairobi, September 2009.



IDPs in urban areas contend with life's basics, that is; food shelter, water and clothing. Today schooling (education) for the children is also a basic necessity. Many 'invisible IDPs' with their children engage in; - petty trade, buying and selling vegetable, second – hand clothes and shoes (Mitumba), food items, fuel (paraffin, charcoal, firewood), boda-boda. Dan Odhiambo avers;

*“Since I returned here in Koru upon displacement, life has been very challenging to make ends meet. I run a transport business popularly known as Boda-Boda. Whenever am engaged elsewhere, I ask my 12years old son to stand in for me though aware of his being underage”.*<sup>189</sup>

Tom Oredo operates small retail shop in Ahero. He explains;

*“I sometimes have to step out of the Kiosk and need someone to stand in for me. My 10year old son comes in handy to relieve me. Life as an “invisible IDP” is a continuous struggle for entire family necessitating even the underage to chip in and make ends meet”.*<sup>190</sup>

Some children of “invisible IDPs” work in factories. Some “invisible IDPs” have started small businesses such as brewing illicit liquor and tailoring. Their Children work/assist in these activities in order to boost family earnings. It is this collective effort of ‘invisible IDPs’ and their children that facilitate the coping in adversity. In addition, this imparts life skills in these children such that they are capable of facing life's challenges.

#### **4.5 Petty Farming**

IDP life can be very stressful, especially in adjusting to the new occupation. The capacity to exert control is important in reducing the amount of stress experienced in a potentially damaging situation. People with what is termed “hardness” normally have capacity for staying in control. Such people tend to have a sense of being responsible for their own destiny, hence hope. Such people make vigorous attempts to face and solve their problems.

---

<sup>189</sup> Odhiambo. D, Interviewed at Koru, August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

<sup>190</sup> Oredo.T, Interviewed at Ahero, August 4<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

Sarah a widow lost her husband during the violence. Her husband was killed and his head chopped. Despite such challenge, this did not deter Sarah from pursuing the matter with the police; occasionally, she carried the husband's chopped head to the police station. Sarah eventually was assisted to bury her husband in ancestral home by a civil society organization. She narrates;

*“Without capital I started subsistence farming on my shamba. I survive on subsistence farming on shamba and support from kin and kith. With other ‘invisible IDPs’, we have successfully established a self-help group in our local community. This way I educate my two children”.*<sup>191</sup>

This is a classic example of self-efficacy theory in action. There are “invisible IDPs” who walked all the way from Nakuru to Kisumu County, sometimes encountering chopped human heads on the road side but trudged on unperturbed. Despite such condition, situation and circumstances, this displaced remained in control. It is this staying in control that has kept ‘invisible IDPs’ surviving in displacement. Hope disappoints not.

Kennedy Ojoro returned to his family in Awasi upon displacement in January 2008 during the post-election violence and displacement. Though he stayed in Kiambu, he had maintained a home and family back in the village. He explains;

*“I am a veteran “invisible IDP” having been initiated in the run up to 1992 general election related violence. From that time I had a feeling that election related violence were bound to recur with subsequent general elections, should the political party culture remain as was. For this reason I maintained my family at home in my ancestral home doing subsistence farming. I joined them occasionally in land preparation and harvesting as well as on special occasions like rites of passage. When the 2007 post poll violence and displacement occurred, I returned to my ancestral home to my family. Despite loss of livelihood, I had a thriving familiar alternative*

---

<sup>191</sup> Odek.S, Interviewed at Awasi, August 8<sup>th</sup> 2011.

*livelihood back in ancestral home. This is what has kept me going since the latest displacement, surviving on subsistence farming”.*<sup>192</sup>

Ian Odongo suffered displacement too, returning from Nairobi to Koru with family. He states;

*“My parents had a home back in the village. My family returned to our parents in ancestral home upon displacement. Here, I found alternative livelihood in form of subsistence farming on my parent’s shamba, even though I lost all livelihood. I realized that despite the circumstances, parents will always be parents to their offspring irrespective of the age”.*

193

Even though, people move out of their ancestral homes in search of greener pastures, they remain familiar with village livelihood of subsistence farming. Should need arise, that becomes easy fall back plan, as many of them participated in farm work during visits back home, though laborious.

#### **4.6 Fishing**

The Luo are riverine Nilotes. Other Nilotic groups are Highland Nilotes –Kalenjin and Lowland Nilotes- Maasai. River Nilotes are associated with fishing, as a livelihood, thus the lake is a natural resource of livelihood for them. Abuja Ochola was displaced from Naivasha in January 2008, where he lived as a fisherman. He returned to Kisumu, his ancestral home, joining kith and kin. He explains;

*“On arrival in Kisumu upon displacement, I was dejected, hopeless and devastated. With time, I started fishing as a past time hobby but later becoming a source of livelihood. I realized that I could catch enough fish for domestic consumption as well as extra for sell. Buoyed by this turn of events, I joined other fishermen to form a Chama hence boosting fishing*

---

<sup>192</sup> Ojoro.K, Interviewed at Awasi, August 12th, 2011.

<sup>193</sup> Odongo.I, Interviewed at Koru, August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

*equipment and subsequent output. This advent later turned into a serious business venture”.*<sup>194</sup>

Ocholla has been able to incorporate some other fellow ‘invisible IDPs’ into this fishing venture. According to Ondijo,<sup>195</sup> a Luo only seeks a landmass of water plus fishing gear and the rest shall automatically be added.

#### **4.7 Sports.**

Sports have been an important ingredient in alleviating stress among ‘invisible IDPs’ by providing recreation and entertainment. ‘Invisible IDPs’ trekked hundreds of kilometers with hope and arrived. Yet where they arrived, all was not roses but struggle. This struggle on the other hand is physical exercise that keeps them fit.

A group of young displaces came together and formed a football club in Maseno. They train together four times a week and their team participates in the local league. The team has been able to attract sponsorship thus facilitating livelihood for the players. Donald Othoro is a member of the team. He explains;

*“The team gives me a sense of belonging, pride, dignity, raising my self-esteem. The locals no longer view me as ‘invisible IDPs’ but as a rising local soccer star. I am now somebody to be identified with, rather than being shunned as an “invisible IDP.” In addition to being in the local league the team is a source of entertainment locally during the weekend matches, a form of social responsibility. This brings locals together promoting cohesion in the name of supporters. The team has provided me with an opportunity to impact society, something I had never dreamt of”.*<sup>196</sup>

Exercise is highly regarded as a coping mechanism. People of all ages, from early childhood through mature adulthood, who stay fit through exercise show less evidence of

---

<sup>194</sup> Ochola.A, Interviewed in Kisumu, August 12<sup>th</sup>, 2011, Kisumu.

<sup>195</sup> ,Ondijo.J, Interviewed in Kisumu, August 1<sup>st</sup> , 2011.

<sup>196</sup> Othoro.D, Interviewed at Maseno, 12<sup>th</sup> August, 2011

stress when faced with difficult stressors than those who do not.<sup>197</sup> There is evidence that sustained exercise can be an effective way to improve mood. Exercise produces deeper, more relaxing sleep, enhances the individual's sense of worth and self-concept and even raises the level of mood.

#### **4.8 Self-Help groups.**

Self- Help groups often referred to as merry go round may be informal or formal co-operative associations bringing together people of common economical interest. Such groups have existed since time immemorial and operates at all economic levels of life, from lowest to highest with common denominator, in this case 'invisible IDPs.'

Self-Help groups involve pooling resources together and directing them at each member a time. "Invisible IDPs" were economically challenged due to loss of livelihood; however, pooling the little available resources together could make an impact.

Upon displacement Solomon Ogwari returned to Koru, Kisumu County in January 2008 at the height of post-election violence. He narrates;

*"The travel back together with other 'invisible IDPs' enabled bonding that facilitated us to remain in-touch thereafter. A fortnight thereafter, we started meeting weekly and sharing experiences as "invisible IDPs" back in ancestral home. The sharing was a source of inspiration imparting hope and fortifying the resolve to move on. These gatherings soon transformed with time into a chama as we decided to pool together whatever we made in day to day livelihood. Slowly but gradually we started to gain economically".*<sup>198</sup>

Talking to others who share similar problems can be therapeutic. The group became their family such that they religiously keep in touch thus bonding and gelling. This has drastically shaped and transformed such 'invisible IDPs'.

---

<sup>197</sup> Stephens.T, "Physical activity and mental health in the United States and Canada": Evidence from four population surveys Preventive medicine, 1988, p.17.

<sup>198</sup> Ogwari.S, interviewed at Koru August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Necessity is the mother of invention. In Maseno, a group of young ‘invisible IDPs’ came up with a Boda-boda Self-Help group. Their aim was to pool their little resources together and make a difference.

Don Odinga, a founder member of the group remarks;

*“When I brought up this idea with a few colleagues, it appeared impractical. I was trying out prospects in transport business using a borrowed bicycle and that also happened to be the case with the other founder members. These borrowed bicycles transport venture started making some income that accumulated to purchase own bicycles. The transport venture subsequently upgraded to motor cycles now. This has raised earnings for the self-group and its membership. My life as an ‘invisible IDP’ has almost undergone a complete metamorphosis back to normalcy.”<sup>199</sup>*

This is a success story of surmounting adversities of displacement and is re-inventing and re-establishing ‘invisible IDPs’. From the ashes of displacement comes a community bound by election related violence and displacement but driven by hopes and aspirations of success.

Chamas have stood the test of time and comes in handy in times of need since they are less bureaucratic. Being a self-help group, Chama is a mechanism through which individuals strive to pool resources together thus challenge and overcome individual limitations, realizing their hopes and dreams. Such hopes and aspirations are reverberating in the hearts of these beneficiaries.<sup>200</sup>

#### **4.9 Re-Marrying**

Many cross cultural marriages between the belligerent communities’ members broke up as the violence and displacement escalated. In almost all the reported cases, the children went with their mothers yet in most of these cultures, children belong to their Fathers. Many affected men simply took off abandoning their families abdicating responsibilities

---

<sup>199</sup> Odinga.D, Interviewed at Maseno, 12<sup>th</sup> August, 2011.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid

of being the head. Having been abandoned, the women took full brunt of the violence and displacement leaving them bruised and traumatized. They were violated and abused. This has to do with humiliating the women who are perpetrators and carriers for the society's posterity. Such atrocities led to family break-up as well. As time passed these women moved on with life.

Many women victims have re-married starting new life altogether. According to Ms. Obaso, sexual violence hit women worst.<sup>201</sup> This is direct consequence of existing inequalities between men and women, and it affected the way in which husbands responded to the rapes of their wives and daughters. Women raped in front of their spouses and children caused a great deal of stress. This resulted in being abandoned by husbands. Take this case:

*"The man came, the father of the house and when he found that his wife had been raped and the same man raped his daughter and raped his daughter-in law, he said this; I cannot deal with this. I am going to find myself another woman, because this is the biggest taboo in my home and I cannot even be cleansed and who are the perpetrators? Many men with such experiences have remarried and moved on".<sup>202</sup>*

The above foreshadowed what happened to the daughter and daughter in law. The abomination turned them into outcasts, yet this was the moment they needed his care, understanding and love. When significant others in life fail to provide definition and then identity is lost leading to identity crisis. Above all, this is a classic example in clash of civilization and subsequent selective amnesia.

The daughter in law remarked;

*"Here we are defiled by enemies, reviled by loved ones and alienated by extended family. We are completely ruined and internally stigmatized. The beliefs and values of this community have no place for women. Women here are treated like disposable objects. Once they deem to have*

---

<sup>201</sup>Government of Kenya, "Commission of Inquiry into Post Election Violence", Nairobi, October,2008, p.244

<sup>202</sup> Kagan.J, and segal. J, "Psychology, an Introduction", Harcourt Brace, Florida, 1995, p. 453

*outlived use, they get discarded. At heart Father in law is not better than those violent rapist perpetrators. It would have been a different if it was the man or son who was raped”.*<sup>203</sup>

According to Dr. Karega,<sup>204</sup> “many men whose wives were raped have abandoned them.” The domino effect could have far reaching psychosocial effects leading to social dysfunction, as these women are vilified and alienated.

#### **4.10 Employment**

Colleagues consist of those working in the same organization with same status or level of responsibility. A number of teachers working outside their ethnic regions were displaced during the violence. Sharon Owour was such a victim of displacement losing everything. She remarks;

*“Instead of going to my parents, I opted to put up with a colleague in ancestral home. My colleague understood my situation clearly and even put in a word to facilitate my transfer back to her home region. I sought transfer, but also needed my colleagues’ material in re-constructing my notes of work in addition to other material assistance. I returned only with the torn clothes only, thus I needed someone who understood me and my situation “as is where is”. I am very grateful to my colleague for friendship and understanding. I eventually secured the transfer though my success in surviving displacement is attributable to my colleague and friend”.*<sup>205</sup>

Owour is a classic example of ‘invisible IDPs’ suffering displacement effects. On face value, she appears normal but internally impacted. Here is a significant lesson that blood relations binds but should be spiced with friendship.

---

<sup>203</sup> Kagan.J, and segal. J, “Psychology, an Introduction”, Harcourt Brace, Florida, 1995, p. 453

<sup>204</sup> Karega .R, “Chairperson of the National Commission on Gender and Development: Africa, Prostitution, War Conflict, Global Women’s news, views and issues”, Nairobi, September 2009.

<sup>205</sup> Owour.S, interviewed in Kisumu, 3<sup>rd</sup>. August, 2011.



#### **4.11. Problematic Coping**

Unfortunately, not everyone handles stress in a positive fashion, using techniques of assertive coping. Many individuals use less successful ways to deal with the painful psychological consequences of stressful events. Prominent among them are devices called defense mechanisms, first described by Sigmund Freud.<sup>206</sup> Freud regarded these mechanisms as unconscious psychological processes that people develop to relieve anxiety. Unlike assertive coping, defense mechanisms are not deliberate efforts to change the environment or one's own behavior or to deal realistically with stress and anxiety. All defense mechanisms are based to some degree on self-deception and distortion of reality.<sup>207</sup> Yet everybody adopts some of them at one time or another.

Martha Achieng' has never acknowledged being an "invisible IDP" despite being one for stigmatization reasons.<sup>208</sup> Instead, she masquerades as a retiree, working on the farm.

By and large, defense mechanisms are not as effective as assertive coping in dealing with stress. Defense mechanisms serve as stopgaps in an emergency.<sup>209</sup> They may even be practiced over long periods, as a sort of life strategy, with some success and without serious damage. But when carried to extremes, they carry a serious risk. They lie in a sort of gray area between successful coping and downright failure to cope - or, in other words, between normal and abnormal behavior.

#### **4.12 Conclusion**

Individuals are self-organizing, proactive, self-reflecting and self-regulating rather than reactive organisms shaped and guided by environmental forces or driven by concealed inner impulses. Self-efficacy affects how individuals persist in the face of obstacles and aversive experiences. The stronger the perceived self-efficacy of an individual, the more he actively copes with his situation.

---

<sup>206</sup> Kagan.J & Segal.J, "PSYCHOLOGY: An – Introduction", The Harcourt Brace, U.S.A, 1995, p.458.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Achieng' M, interviewed in Kisumu, August 10<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

Coping strategies of 'invisible' IDPS in Kisumu County were numerous. They ranged from social support (religion, remarrying, kith and kinship), enterprise, manual work, child labour, petty farming, fishing, sports, self-help groups, employment and family separations.

Coping mechanisms are closely related to the social economic activities of the community. However social support tended to overshadow the rest of the above mentioned coping strategies.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

The drive and impetus to engage in this study was informed by numerous factors. Firstly, many people were displaced into camps as IDPs. A lot of these displaced went directly or left camps to join the kith and kin in ‘ancestral homes’ becoming ‘invisible IDPs’. They mixed up with the general population thus mutating into oblivion, hence invisibility.

Secondly, existing literature dwells on those in IDP camps (obvious IDPs) with very little said about the majority of the displaced absorbed by their communities, their experiences, coping mechanism to myriad challenges having gone unrecorded. The issue of ‘invisible IDPs’ is a social as well as scholarly problem not yet researched on.

The restoration of political pluralism ushered in an era of increased political space, socio-cultural, economic and media freedom, all of which continue to transform and shape the country. However, political pluralism ushered in a phenomenon of election related violence often referred to as ethnic land clashes. This election violence was linked to presidential elections. The presidency was shrouded with enormous powers in terms of privileges and prerogatives that facilitated political engineering/wheel dealing which fueled and energized displacement. Election related violence phenomenon led to displacement of thousands of people causing untold human suffering and socio economic damage.

The number of the displaced increased with successive elections except for the 2002 election. The absence of election violence in 2002 was attributed to regime change as well as the main presidential contenders sharing same ethnic background. This toned down ethnic tension. There incumbent factor was missing.

The number of the displaced hit the apex during the 2007/8 post- election violence

Many people have been displaced with conflicts ending up in camps or joining kin and kith in ‘ancestral homes’. In ‘ancestral homes’ these displaced mixed with the general population going unnoticed, hence invisibility.

This displaced do not come to academic forums and are not recognized by the government. Because these displaced are not in camps, their experiences, coping mechanisms to myriad challenges go unrecorded. There is no knowledge base about ‘invisible IDPs’

The study is of value addition to policy makers and development in displacement context. There is also intrinsic value, that is; knowledge for own sake. Knowledge that is important to progress as philosophical explanation or debate around displacement issues. The study was limited to the period from re-introduction of political pluralism in 1991 up to and including 2011. Geographically, the study was limited to Kisumu county.

In preparation to carry out the study, I reviewed eighteen displacement related publications as part of literature review. It came to pass that a lot is written about obvious IDPs but very little about ‘invisible IDPs’. Most of these publications alluded to the study while a few spoke to the study. This inspired and added incredible value to the study work carried out.

The study set out with three objectives namely; to establish the existence of ‘invisible IDPs in Kisumu County; investigate their challenges and examine their coping strategies. The study tested two hypotheses as follows; (a) ‘Invisible IDPs’ face similar challenges like the obvious IDPs; (b) Longevity of stay determined acceptability amongst kith and kin. Both of them were affirmed.

The study utilized one theoretical paradigm namely; Self- Efficacy theory by Albert Bendura. According to Bendura there are four sources of self-efficacy namely, mastery of experiences, social modeling, social persuasion and psychological responses. Self- Efficacy theory facilitated to specify coping strategies.

The study employed both secondary and primary data. Secondary data comprised books, articles from scholarly journals, newspapers reports and magazines. Primary data comprised oral interviews, highbred questionnaire

Tools used in the field comprised note book for taking notes, pen for writing, camera for taking photographs, and tape for recording interviewees willing to be interviewed.

The researched applied guided sampling whereby initial informant led to the next informant. The process spiraled into snowballing effect reaching 61 respondents by the end of the two weeks exercise. The interviews were conducted in five stations namely Ahero, Awasi, Kisumu, Koru and Maseno in Kisumu county.

This was a case study by design. The research was descriptive analysis of election related violence, displacement and IDP consequent, particularly ‘invisible IDP’ phenomenon of Kisumu County, 1991-2011 period. Qualitative analysis delves into issues of observations, perceptions, feelings, attitudes, disposition and valuations. This involved analysis of the events as narrated by the respondents. Qualitative data analysis method known as thematic analytic technique was applied. The ‘invisible IDP’ phenomenon is strongly informed by communal life and African hospitality practiced for ages. It is a tenet still rife among the Luo Community.

Kisumu County experienced IDPs since the restoration of political pluralism in 1991. Many IDPs left camps to join kin and kith in ancestral homes mixing with general population thus making their presence go unnoticed. Thus, this displaced become ‘invisible IDPs’. The number of ‘invisible IDPs’ cumulated with subsequent elections, hitting the apex with the 2007/8 post-election violence. The county received over 20,000 displaced persons who joined kith and kin mixing up with general population transforming into ‘invisible IDPs’ in ‘ancestral homes’.

Election related violence is internal conflict centered on economics (resources), politics, and socio-cultural identity (ethnicity). Economics is all about resources, opportunities, facilities and prerogatives (use of influence which would not be possible normally). Socio-economic needs lead to competition of scarce resources, thus ethnic competition. Politics is all about social influences. Ethnicity is about connectivity of human beings working together – people hood, with a common descent, language and thus collective

interests. In essence the conflict was politically engineered but in aspect looked like ethnic clashes.

The impact of election related was devastating. There was ‘ethnic’ cleansing, which creates bad blood between victims and perpetrators that could fuel further conflicts. Loss of life constitutes loss of human resource and undermines development and humanity as a whole. Many people were left orphaned and destitute altering their destinies. Other people were maimed or injured. Many women were raped leading to divorce and subsequent family/cultural dysfunction. There was loss of social cohesion fueled by ethnic distrust. This energizes ethnic polarization and balkanization and inhibits nationhood.

Destruction of socio-economic infrastructure undermined economic growth and development. Firstly, destruction of socio-economic infrastructure like shops, schools or churches is retrogressive. Secondly, reconstruction for the unplanned is costly. Economic retrogression enhances poverty which in turn erodes human dignity.

Proliferations of ethnic based political parties who take care of their own interests promote inequality and inequity. This Balkanizes the Nation State into sub nations for example Kalenjin nation or Luo-nation. The end result could be negative ethnicity and eventually political tribalism. This is a recipe for conflict and displacement.

The research was able to establish the existence of ‘invisible IDPs’ in Kisumu County. These were people who migrated to other regions especially Rift Valley and Central Province in search of greener pastures. Such people migrated in order to enhance their socio-economic status. However, they fell victim to 2007/8 post-election violence and got displaced. They were later to be ferried in truckloads back to ancestral homes, escorted by security forces of Kenya Police up to local camps as IDPs. They subsequently moved from these camps to join kin and kith to eke a living, becoming “Invisible IDPs”. They were gender inclusive. The difference with obvious IDPs lay with the fact that they had social capital to fall back to.

The 2007/8 post polls violence had tremendous impact on the ‘Invisible IDPs’ in Kisumu County. The violence and subsequent displacement resulted in loss of life. From the official country-wide death toll of 1133, the county accounted for 82. This rendered many orphaned or destitute with destinies drastically altered. Killing of an individual has a spiral effect to the community and subsequently, the entire society, enhancing distrust and resentment.

Displaced people made sudden departure and flight to protect lives. In the process they witnessed numerous atrocities including helplessly watching kin and kith lose their lives in very inhuman circumstances, like mob justice, being set ablaze and in some cases being chopped like a tree, using machetes and crude weapons, rape or public nudity. There was family breakdown as a result of rape and sexual related violence. Many others suffered bullet wounds and other physical injuries. Wounds and injuries eventually heal leaving scars as a permanent reminder of those events. However, psychological wounds heal hard. This could embitter social relations that eventually melt down to ethnic resentment towards purported executioners.

There was destruction of socio-economic infrastructure built and established through lots of time and investment. Many shops in trading centres were broken into, looted and finally set ablaze. The same fate faced homes, churches and schools. Many farms under crop like wheat or rice were burnt. Livestock, farm machinery and households were destroyed or stolen.

The moral fabric that threaded society fell apart under violence and displacement. ‘Invisible IDPs’ lost all livelihood and suffered disruption of life, thus rendering them destitute, losing their dignity and self-esteem. Some ‘invisible IDPs’ became social misfits having lost social status and unwilling to accept the new status designed and assigned by displacement. The challenges include; geographical translocation, safety and security challenges, sexual violence, rape and other forms, cultural dysfunction,

resentment, orphans, poverty, crime and other social ills, disruption of education, ill treatment, ethnic polarization, displacement stigma, and trauma.

Psychological wounds are much more complicated than physical wounds, since cannot be seen despite their existence. Those who witnessed their mother raped were silently hurting. This led to family separations in various cases. Memories of the violence have turned traumatic, haunting and daunting, as many witnessed murder, gang rape and arson depicted horror.

There was the case of lost investment in terms of homes, friendship and other relationships, economic and personal, built over many years, loss of memories constitute one's being. In some cases, members of the same family were split up or even a mother lost child during flight. Most of the displacement was violent in nature thus aggravating the loss.

Individuals are self-organizing, proactive, self-reflecting and self-regulating rather than reactive organisms shaped and guided by environmental forces or driven by concealed inner impulses. Self-efficacy affects how individuals persist in the face of obstacles and aversive experiences. The stronger the perceived self-efficacy of an individual, the more he actively copes with his situation.

Coping strategies of 'invisible' IDPS in Kisumu County were numerous. They ranged from social support (religion, remarrying, kith and kinship), enterprise, manual work, child labour, petty farming, fishing, sports, self-help groups, and employment and family separations. In all of them, social capital was dominant.

Coping mechanisms are closely related to the social economic activities of the community. However social support/capital tended to overshadow the rest of the above mentioned coping strategies.

The study makes two types of recommendations; academic and policy.



It is over two decades since the onset of ‘invisible IDPs’ phenomenon in Kisumu. This phenomenon must have brought a new generation. For academic recommendation the study suggests that a research be conducted on a those persons born and bred in ‘invisible displacement’. These are second generation of ‘invisible IDPs’. They are innocent but neutral observers of the impact, challenges, and coping strategies of their parents. They definitely have a bird’s-eye view and understanding of invisibility from within as insiders. From these second generations, so much of the unspoken could be revealed and unraveled.

The displaced faced similar impact during the violence and displacement. In displacement they faced similar challenges too. Their coping strategies were quite similar though different in context.

It is thus imperative that an inclusive and holistic policy be applied towards the displaced irrespective of whether in camps or original communities. They are diagnosed as the displaced.

## SOURCES

### I. PRIMARY SOURCES – INTERVIEWS

#### 1. PRIMARY SOURCES: INTERVIEWED AUGUST 2011

NAME	STATUS	PLACE OF DISPLACEMENT	PLACE OF INTERVIEW	DATE
1. Achieng Martha	IDP	Nairobi	Kisumu	10/8/2011
2. Achieng Olivia	IDP	Mombasa - Coast	Koru	2/8/2011
3. Achieng Sarah	IDP	Mombasa - Coast	Ahero	7/8/2011
4. Adeki Kenneth	Humanitarian Staff		Awasi	4/8/2011
5. Adundo Maureen	IDP	Mombasa - Coast	Maseno	14/8/2011
6. Agwanda Mary	IDP	Muranga - Central	Koru	14/8/2011
7. Akinyi Monica	IDP	Kiambu - Central	Koru	10/8/2011
8. Akumu Mary	IDP	Nairobi	Maseno	9/8/2011
9. Amondi Joyce	IDP	Kiambu - Central	Awasi	14/8/2011
10. Anyango Paulina	IDP	Nairobi	Ahero	7/8/2011
11. Asudi Michael	Security officer (police)		Maseno	14/8/2011
12. Atieno Nehema	IDP	Naivasha - Rift Valley	Awasi	11/8/2011
13. Auma Loise	IDP	Mombasa – Coast	Koru	1/8/2011
14. Koreda Kelvin	Security Officer (police)		Awasi	5/8/2011
15. Malo Agwanda	Humanitarian Staff		Awasi	8/8/2011
16. Ndeda Martha	IDP	Naivasha – Rift valley	Maseno	12/8/2011
17. Ndege B.	IDP	Naivasha - Rift Valley	Ahero	8/8/2011
18. Ngiendo Edward	IDP	Naivasha - Rift Valley	Maseno	1/8/2011
19. Ochieng Andrea	IDP	Nairobi	Kisumu	10/8/2011
20. Ochieng Andrew	Government Officer- Chief		Awasi	12/8/2011
21. Ochola Abuja	IDP	Naivasha - Rift Valley	Kisumu	12/8/2011
22. Ochung'u Peter	IDP	Muranga - Central	Ahero	7/8/2011

23. Odek Sarah	IDP	Naivasha – Rift valley	Awasi	<b>8/8/2011</b>
24. Odhiambo D.	IDP	Muranga - Central	Koru	<b>14/8/2011</b>
25. Odhiambo Maurice	IDP	Nairobi	Kisumu	<b>3/8/2011</b>
26. Odinga Don	IDP	Nairobi	Maseno	<b>12/8/2011</b>
27. Odipo Charles	IDP	Thika - Central	Ahero	<b>5/8/2011</b>
28. Odongo Ian	IDP	Nairobi	Koru	<b>8/8/2011</b>
29. Odongo James	IDP	Nakuru - Rift Valley	Kisumu	<b>1/8/2011</b>
30. Odongo Williamson	Clergy Minister		Kisumu	<b>8/8/2011</b>
31. Odundo William	IDP	Nakuru – Rift valley	Koru	<b>4/8/2011</b>
32. Ogutu Paul	IDP	Nakuru - Rift Valley	Ahero	<b>8/8/2011</b>
33. Ogutu Perez Anyango	IDP	Nakuru - Rift Valley	Kisumu	<b>12/8/2011</b>
34. Ogutu Peris	IDP	Naivasha – Rift valley	Awasi	<b>14/8/2011</b>
35. Ogwari Solomon	IDP	Naivasha - Rift Valley	Koru	<b>14/8/2011</b>
36. Ojoro Kennedy	IDP	Kiambu - Central	Maseno	<b>12/8/2011</b>
37. Ojuang Were	Government Official- Chief		Ahero	<b>5/8/2011</b>
38. Okello Maria	IDP	Naivasha - Rift Valley	Maseno	<b>3/8/2011</b>
39. Okoth Daniel	Security Officer (police)		Ahero	<b>9/8/2011</b>
40. Okumu Winston	IDP	Nakuru - Rift Valley	Ahero	<b>10/8/2011</b>
41. Omollo John	IDP	Kakamega – Western	Kisumu	<b>4/8/2011</b>
42. Omondi Darcy	IDP	Naivasha - Rift Valley	Ahero	<b>5/8/2011</b>
43. Omondi Dianarose	IDP	Machakos - Eastern	Kisumu	<b>9/8/2011</b>
44. Omondi Meshack	Clergy Minister		Kisumu	<b>6/8/2011</b>
45. Omondi R.	IDP	Mombasa - Coast	Kisumu	<b>14/8/2011</b>
46. Omondi Reagan	Government Officer - Chief		Kisumu	<b>9/8/2011</b>

47. Ondiek Fredrick	IDP	Nakuru - Rift Valley	Kisumu	<b>10/8/2011</b>
48. Ondiek Shem	IDP	Machakos - Eastern	Koru	<b>9/8/2011</b>
49. Ondijo James	IDP	Nakuru - Rift Valley	Kisumu	<b>11/8/2011</b>
50. Onyonyi D. Atieno	IDP	Nairobi	Maseno	<b>12/8/2011</b>
51. Opondo Harriet	Humanitarian Staff.		Maseno	<b>13/8/2011</b>
52. Oredo Tom	IDP	Nairobi	ahero	<b>4/8/2011</b>
53. Othoro Donald	IDP	Kakamega – western	Maseno	<b>12/8/2011</b>
54. Otieno Jonathan	Government Officer – Chief		Awasi	<b>4/8/2011</b>
55. Ouma Ben	IDP	Thika - Central	Awasi	<b>4/8/2011</b>
56. Owino Derick	Humanitarian Staff		Kisumu	<b>8/8/2011</b>
57. Owino Edwin	IDP	Muranga - Central	Ahero	<b>9/8/2011</b>
58. Owuor Sharon	IDP	Nairobi	Kisumu	<b>3/8/2011</b>
59. Oyugi Daniel	IDP	Kakamega - Western	Ahero	<b>2/8/2011</b>
60. Tindi Thomas	IDP	Bungoma - Western	Koru	<b>4/8/2011</b>
61. Waigala Joshua	IDP	Kiambu - Central	Kisumu	<b>3/8/2011</b>

## **2. OTHER PRIMARY SOURCES**

Field Interviewees ( respondents)

ICC Press release 15:12.2010 *Kenya's post Election Violence: Prosecutor presents cases against six individuals for crimes against humanity* [ICC- OTP -2010 1215- PR 615]

Kenya family News: *ICC Kenya ruling confirms Uhuru Kenyatta , Ruto and acquits Kosgey, Ali* 23.1.2012.

The Kenya red cross society- Report: *Kenya Humanitarian forum meetings, March 28th, 2008,- Nairobi.*

## **II. SECONDARY SOURCES**

Alden Wily, L.: "It's More Than About Going Home". Land in Emergency to Development Transitions in Conflict States: Who Should Do What? Paper presented at the Humanitarian Policy Group conference Unchartered Territory: Land, Conflict and Humanitarian Action. Nairobi. 2008.

Apiyo, F.O; *The Role of Intra-Military Factors on Performance of Continental Peace Mission: The case of the OAU/AU in Darfur Conflict, Sudan 1967-2007*, MA Research Project, University of Nairobi, 2010.

Bendura. A; *Self-Efficacy: Towards a Unifying Theory of Behavior Change*, *Psychological Review*, Vol.84, 1977.

Bendura. A and Adams.N,E; *Analysis of Self-Efficacy Theory of Behavioral Change*, *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, Vol.1, No.4, 1977.

Government of Kenya: *The Kiliku Commission on land clashes*, 1992.

Government of Kenya: *Report of Judicial Commission Appointed to inquire into Tribal Clashes in Kenya*, Nairobi, 1999.

Government of Kenya: *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Illegal/Irregular Allocation of Public Land, Nairobi, 2004.*

Government of Kenya: *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence,(Waki Commission) Nairobi, October, 2008.*

Holahan,C.J and Moos, R.H; *Life Stressors, Personal and Social resources, and depression: A 4-year structural model. Journal of Abnormal Psychology, 1991.*

Huggins, C, ‘*Land in Return, Reintegration and Recovery Processes: Some Lessons from the Great Lakes Region of Africa*’, *Paper presented to Humanitarian Policy Group Conference Unchartered Territory: Land, Conflict and Humanitarian Action. Nairobi. 2008.*

Human Rights Watch (HRW), *failing the internally displaced: The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Displaced Persons Program in Kenya, Nairobi, 1997. Human Rights Watch, January 2008.*

Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRINI); Kenya: *Nyanza’s forgotten IDPS, February 2011.*

Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC); Kenya: *No durable Solutions for Internally displaced yet, 2008.*

Internal Displacement Monitoring Center (IDMC); *Speedy reforms needed to deal with past injustices and prevent future displacement, 2010.*

John Rogge Reports, UNDP, 1993/1994.

Kamungi, P. *The Current Situation of internally Displaced Persons in Kenya: Jesuit Refugee Service, 2001.*

Kamungi, P. *'Land and Internal Displacement in Kenya'*, Nairobi. 2007.

Kanogo, Squatters and Roots of Mau Mau; in Miller,N.and Yeager, R.; Kenya: *The Quest for Prosperity*, Oxford, Westview Press, 1994.

Karuri, L.G; Kenya Private Sector Alliance: *Presentation to Parliamentary Leaders' Retreat, Machakos*, February 2<sup>nd</sup> 2006.

Kenya Human Rights Commission, Article 19, 1997.

Kenya Human Rights Commission, 1998.

Kenya Land Alliance, *Righting the Wrongs: Historical Injustices and Land Reforms in Kenya, Policy Brief. Nairobi.* 2004.

Kenya Land Alliance, *The National Land policy in Kenya: Addressing Historical Injustices Issue paper no.2/2004.Nairobi.* 2004.

Kimathi, W. internal displacement: *'Kenya's Protruding Eye Sore Thumb,' in Nguzo za Haki, a publication of Kenya National Commission on Human Rights*, Issue 9, Nairobi, December 2009.

Klopp, J. 'Kenya's Internally Displaced: Managing Civil Conflict in Democratic Transitions' in D. Pekoe (eds.), *East Africa and the Horn: Confronting challenges of Good governance, International Peace Academy Occasional Paper Series.* Nairobi.2006

Klopp, J.,'Can Moral Ethnicity Trump Political Tribalism? *The Struggle for Land and Nation in Kenya'*, *African Studies vol.61, no.2, 2002. Nairobi.* 2002.

KNHCR, on the Brink of the Precipice: *A human Rights account of Kenya's Post Election Violence, KNHCR*, 2008.

Kothari, C.K., Research Methodology: *Methods and Techniques* (New Delhi: New Age International Publishers (P) 1990).

Lee,S.W and Pitsch,A.; *Center for International Development and Conflict (CIDC): Kikuyu, Kisii, Luhya and Luo in Kenya.*

Lonsdale, J. Mau Maus of the Mind: “*Making of Mau Mau and remaking Kenya,*” *Journal of African History* 31, 1990’

Lonsdale, J.: ‘*Soil, Work, Civilization and citizenship in Kenya*’, *Journal of Eastern African Studies.* Nairobi. 2009.

Martin, J. L; *The Effects of Social Support on Psychological distress among Vietnam Veterans and their peers.* Paper presented to the annual meetings of American Psychological Association, Washington DC, 1982.

McClelland, D.C; *Motivational factors in health and disease,* American Psychologists, 1989.

Miller, N. and Yeager, R., *Kenya: The Quest for Prosperity,* Oxford, Westview Press, 1994.

Millier, C.: *The Lunatic Express.*

Mkwale, S; ‘*State orders IDPs camping outside DCs’ office dispersed,*’ *Standard,* January 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

Mutahi, P, ‘*Political Violence in the elections,*’ In Maupeu et al: *The Moi Succession Elections 2002,* Nairobi, Trans Africa Press, 2005.



Mwagiru, M., *Conflict in Africa: Theory Processes and Institutions of Management Centre for Conflict Research (Escape Printers). Nairobi*

Okwaro, B.M: *Internally Displaced Persons and the Dilemma of the right of Return: A case study of Vumilia Eldoret, Jikaze and Vumilia Narok, IDPs in Mahi Mahiu in Kenya's Rift Valley Province 2007-2010; University of Nairobi, M.A. Project, 2010*

Oyugi, W.O.: *Conflict in Kenya: A Periodic Phenomenon, 2002.*

Pak, J.H. and Wilson, A.: *True Family Values, New York, 1996.*

Rook, K. S; *Social Support Versus Companionship: Effects on life Stress, loneliness, and evaluation by others. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 1987*

Sethi, S and Seligman, M.E.P; *Optimism and fundamentalism. Psychological Science, 1993.*

Stephens, T; *Physical activity and mental health in the United States and Canada: Evidence from four Population Surveys Preventive Medicine, 1998.*

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP); *From Relief to Rehabilitation, Reconstruction and Reconciliation, Nairobi, 1993.*

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), *the internally displaced populations in Kenya, Western and Rift Valley Provinces: A Needs Assessment and Programme Proposal for Rehabilitation, Nairobi, 1993.*

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP): *Kenya's Internally Displaced Persons, Nairobi, 2002.*

## QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name of respondent/ interviewee.....
2. Sex: (1) Male (2) Female
3. Age: (1) Below 30 (2) 31 – 40 (3) 41 -50 (4) 51- 60 (5) Above 60 Yrs
4. What is your formal education level?  
(1) Primary (2) secondary (3) Tertiary level (4) University (5) None
5. Where was your residence at the time of 2007 elections?  
(1) Rift Valley (2) Central (3) Coast (4) Nairobi (5) Western (6) Other
6. What was your occupation at the time of 2007 elections?  
(1) Business (2) Teacher (3) Student (4) Farmer (5) civil servant (6) other
7. Did you go to IDP camp? (1) Yes (2) No  
If no why? (1) Accommodated by relatives/friends (2) Government help (3) other
8. Why did you return to your ‘ancestral homeland’?  
(1) Hostility (2) Fear of life (3) Loss of occupation (4) Government intervention (5) other
9. How did you return to your ‘ancestral homeland’?  
(1) Friends/relatives help (2) Government help (3) Leaders’ help (4) other
10. Who received you in ancestral homeland? (1) Family (2) Friends (3) Other
11. What is your homeland tenure status? (1) Have land (2) Don’t have land (3) other
12. Any assistance from government or social support system? (1) Yes (2) No
13. Hopes and aspirations.  
(1) Enhanced security (2) National cohesion (3) Employment (4) Tribal unity (5) other
14. What is your residency status? (1) Squatter (2) occupier (3) lease (4) rent
15. Who is your host? (1) Family (2) Friend (3) Social Support e.g church (4) Other
16. What is your hosting terms and condition?  
(1) Short-term (2) Medium term (3) Long term
17. Do you experience any tension, suspicion or discomfort with hosts? (1) Yes (2) No
18. How is the idea of hosting returnees perceived in the community?  
(1) Acceptable/Normal (2) Exceptional/abnormal?

19. How long had you stayed away from ancestral home?  
(1)Below 1 Yr      (2)1-5 Yrs      (3)5-10 Yrs      (4) Over 10 Yrs
20. Had you migrated or was sojourned to where displaced?  
(1)Migrated      (2) Sojourned
21. Would you like to go back to where you were displaced?      (1)Yes      (1)No
22. Do you support the idea of ethnic integration?      (1)Yes      (2)No
23. Have you healed from the effects of displacement?      (1)Yes      (2) No
24. Do you accept members from ethnic groups to settle within your community?  
(1)Yes      (2) No
25. What do expect from government and rest of Kenyans  
(1) Integration and cohesion  
(2) Security  
(3) Land Provision  
(4) Financial and in kind assistance  
(5) Nothing