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Electoral Justice Traits of Youth-Led Election Violence in Nairobi's Informal Settlements

Gezahegn Kebede Gebrehana
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Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Gezahegn Kebede Gebrehana

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Walden University
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Abstract

Electoral Justice Traits of Youth-Led Election Violence

in Nairobi's Informal Settlements

by

Gezahegn Kebede Gebrehana

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration—Terrorism, Mediation, and Peace

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May 2021

Abstract

Youth residing in Kenya's informal urban settlements commonly engage in election-related violence, yet little is known about why this occurs. This study explored the triggers for the escalation of such violence in informal settlements, which has been characteristic of almost all elections held since the introduction of the multiparty system in 1991. The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological study was to understand lived experiences of young adults and community leaders who lived in one of Nairobi's informal settlements who had witnessed the level of youth violence in the city. A conceptual foundation related to electoral justice that manifests in different contexts during elections and a related behavioral theory of elections formed the theoretical and conceptual basis for this study. Data from transcripts of semi structured interviews with 17 participants were coded and inductively analyzed. This led to the emergence of seven justice-related themes about the country's electoral system. Results revealed that massive youth unemployment, ethnic affiliations promoting tribal politics, election campaign strategies and their financing, and a loose and unaccountable security management system stand out in explaining the electoral-justice-related traits of youth-led violence in Kenyan elections. Positive social change can be achieved by instituting policy, practice, and attitudinal changes in relation to the identified traits. This study may provide useful information to political leaders aspiring to win elections through peaceful means.

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Dedication

This study is dedicated to my wife, Selamawit Berhanu Wolde who has been behind me all the way from start to finish. This educational journey would not have been successful without her encouragement both in words and deeds and at times of ease and stress. My daughters, Semawit, Gelila and Mariamawit, all believed in me that I would be an exemplary father and encouraged me to cross the finish line regardless of intermittent challenges. Their encouragement holds a marked space in my success and hence my work is dedicated to them as well.

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Finally, I would like to thank all friends, family members and the Walden University academic support staff who, directly or indirectly contributed to my success.

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Introduction

The issue that triggered the conceptualization of the study was the consistent involvement of young people in violence during successive general elections in Kenya. Increasingly, election-related violence in Kenya is witnessed to be linked with young people living in informal settlements of big cities such as Nairobi. There could be several reasons for young people to be inclined toward violent activities during general elections. Most of these reasons have been identified by the works of several researchers who have engaged in issues related to election violence.

The identified research problem deals with escalation of violence led by young people living in informal settlements, the triggers of which have not been exhaustively defined. Political marginalization and electoral justice matters are widely believed to be the major causes of violence during elections in Kenyan. While political marginalization is widely covered in the literature, little is known about the aspects of electoral justice that drive the youth in informal settlements to engage in violence. The research problem that this study was intended to address, therefore, has to do with the functionality or otherwise of the country's electoral justice system.

This chapter begins with an introduction that provides an overview of the research problem. It further illustrates the background of the study, followed by the pertinent elements of the study. The subject problem being studied is introduced in a problem statement; subsequent sections address the purpose of the research and the significance of the study, together with its implications for positive social change. Next, the research

questions are presented, and the nature of the study is discussed. Following the description of the conceptual framework and its use in the study, other explanatory elements such as definitions of terms, assumptions, scope and delimitations, and limitations are stated. Chapter 1 concludes with a summary.

Background

After about three decades of one-party rule following the 1963 independence, Kenyans started demanding a vibrant political environment that operates in a multiparty political system. The second president of the nation, Daniel Arap Moi, ruled the country with tight control when he took over from the first president of independent Kenya. However, he had to give in to mounting international and domestic pressure to liberalize the country's political system. Accordingly, Kenya went through a political transition in 1991 through which it abolished the one-party system and introduced multiparty competition, which allowed greater freedom for expression of dissent (Holmquist & Ford, 1998).

Kenyans held the first multiparty election in 1992, followed by five successive elections in 1997, 2002, 2007, 2013, and 2017. Other than all elections going through defined electoral processes, violence is the one thing that they had in common. The specifics of the 1992 and 1997 elections were more related to challenges with respect to adapting to a perceived free electoral environment. The elections that followed were more and more characterized by association with ethnic identities leading to conflicts between different ethnic groupings in the name of competing for political positions. In all cases, ethnic affiliations were more pronounced than any political issues as a basis for

contention. Whichever contender was declared a winner, losers always contested the result and reverted to some form of violence that mobilized young people based on either ethnic identity or political allegiance (Ahluwalia, 2017; Linke, 2013). Because election-related violence has become the norm rather than the exception in Kenya, it is important to consider what has prompted the major actors to engage in violence. Various literature and experiences show that young people, especially those in informal settlements of major urban centers such as Nairobi, are seen as being at the center of the violence (Linke, 2013). Hence, this study aimed at understanding the characteristics of youth violence during elections in one of the largest informal settlements of Nairobi. This effort to understand these traits may have significant social change implications by contributing to knowledge about the major drivers of violence that can be used to avoid or minimize election-related violence that hampers young people's contribution to effective social change.

Problem Statement

There is a problem in Nairobi and other Kenyan cities during general elections. The problem is the escalation of youth violence in informal settlements (Ahluwalia, 2017; Linke, 2013). During the August and October 2017 elections, about 70 people were killed, several properties were destroyed, and businesses and public service facilities were closed (Human Rights Watch, 2017). During this period, the Kenyan Government shut down three major media houses to restrict coverage of the violence (Human Rights Watch, 2017). Some communities went through a long process of recovering from the aftereffects of this violence. Beyond the residents of informal settlements, this problem

has a negative impact on the whole city due to disruptions of economic activities and social services that affect the lives of all residents (Ahluwalia, 2017).

Among the many factors contributing to this problem are political marginalization and mistrust in the electoral system. Literature reviewed for my study identified several causes of violence, among which the exclusion of residents based on their geographical location, social status, and lack of social bonding due to weak spiritual attachment to communities was highlighted (Baier, 2015; Salas-Wright et al., 2013; Seal, et al., 2014). Politically connected gangs, land disputes, and the failure of political institutions (Dercon & Gutierrez-Romero, 2012) are also contributing factors. Moreover, the implications of hybrid security governance and community-based armed groups for the escalation of election violence are factors that need closer examination.

The reviewed literature addressed the escalation of youth violence during elections from the perspective of several factors, which may be classified into two broad categories: electoral justice (fairness of electoral systems and procedures) and political marginalization (effective representation of citizens in political structures and systems). Although wide coverage is available on political marginalization, there is little or no exposition on which aspects of electoral justice are driving the youth in informal settlements to engage in violence. This study contributes to the body of knowledge needed to address the problem by providing information to public policy makers on the key aspects of electoral justice that deserve attention in reducing election violence in Kenya. This information may help in understanding which aspects of electoral justice trigger violence among young people in informal settlements, thereby helping those

seeking to formulate new or adjust existing policies. This may contribute to social change through the resulting understanding of the prevailing conflict paradigm (Bebbie, 2017) during elections.

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to understand the major aspects of electoral justice that trigger youth violence in the informal settlements of Nairobi during elections. To address this gap in understanding aspects of electoral justice that trigger youth violence, this qualitative study used a phenomenological approach. Selected young people and community leaders from one of the largest informal settlements of Nairobi (Kibera) provided their views and experiences through structured interviews based on their exposure to the 2007, 2013, and 2017 elections.

Research Questions

Following are the research questions compatible with the phenomenological approach.

1. How do youth living in Nairobi's informal settlements perceive electoral justice?
2. How do feelings of electoral injustice amongst youth living in Nairobi's informal settlements contribute to political violence in these communities during national elections?

Conceptual Framework

Through this research, I aimed to help in understanding the phenomenon of youth violence in informal settlements of Nairobi through the lived experiences of young

people who had witnessed or participated in such violence during successive election periods and community leaders who experienced the same. Such experience was best captured using a phenomenological research design that would help in understanding the human factors involved in an experience related to the phenomenon (Dawidowitz, 2017). Phenomenology involves observation; this type of research progresses from specific observations of experiences to a set of generalized concepts through an inductive reasoning process. An inductive approach is better positioned to lead to the development of a conceptual framework (Imenda, 2014). Therefore, using a conceptual framework for qualitative research of this type was appropriate, as argued by Dawidowitz (2017) and Imenda (2014).

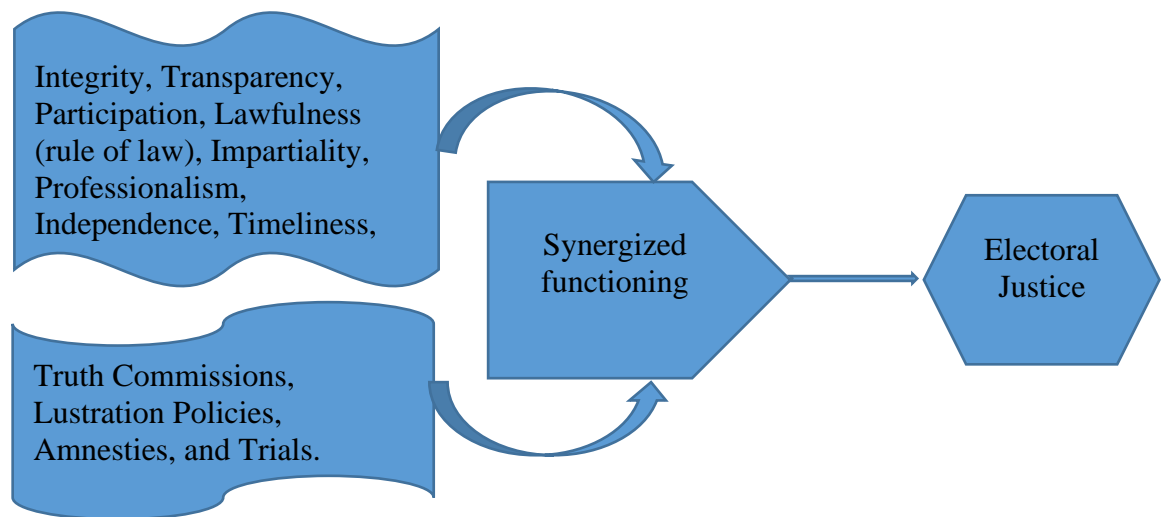
Being directly linked to the behavioral theory of elections (Bender, 2011) described in Chapter 2, the conceptual framework for this study was embedded in the concept of electoral justice, which according to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA, 2010) is a set of instruments and procedures embedded in an electoral system to prevent election irregularities and resulting disputes or to mitigate their impact by punishing perpetrators when irregularities occur. Maxell (2012) argued that what is usually called the “research problem” in a study is part of the conceptual framework on which the study is based. Therefore, the gap identified in my problem statement as a research problem, which had to do with electoral justice, constituted a significant component of the conceptual framework.

While several factors have been attributed to the violence erupting in informal settlements of Nairobi during successive Kenyan elections, the connection of electoral

justice with such violence is not clear. The conceptual framework of electoral justice consists of several related concepts and principles such as integrity, transparency, participation, lawfulness (rule of law), impartiality, professionalism, independence, timeliness, nonviolence, and acceptance (IDEA, 2010a). Another set of concepts that constitute the conceptual framework of electoral justice, per Greenstein and Harvey (2017), consists of those categorized under the term “transitional justice mechanisms,” which were articulated through research conducted in 63 countries around the world using data from 187 post transition elections held from 1980 to 2004. These include truth commissions, lustration policies, amnesties, and trials. Both sets of concepts are illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Diagram of Conceptual Framework for the Study



Many African countries that started coming out of the colonial syndrome in the early 1960s have gradually gone through democratization processes. However, the road to democratization, which conventionally is supposed to be blessed by decent elections, not only has been rough for many, but also has been characterized by election violence. Electoral violence is a manifestation of a weak electoral justice system that the public could not go on for free and fair elections to avoid public discontent prior to, during, and after elections.

According to Omotola (2010), cases of electoral violence are representative phenomena of the African continent. Kenya, Nigeria, and Zimbabwe (found in East, West, and Southern Africa, respectively) have similar political features and tendencies in their process of democratization, even though their historical and geographical makeups are divergent. Studies have indicated that wherever such violence occurs before, during, or after elections, there is consistent failure of some elements of the democratic architecture, which in most cases plays a significant role in eroding public trust in the electoral justice system (Asuelime, 2019; Away, 2013; Omotola, 2010). This is believed to be a major factor for electoral violence in Africa.

The contradiction in the assumption that electoral justice is for all, as spelled out in electoral laws, is that in circumstances of litigations emanating from electoral disputes, the burden of proof lies on the aggrieved. In most cases, this is nearly impossible for the aggrieved for obvious reasons, such as the cost not being affordable to those outside the government and the winner (mostly government or government-affiliated candidates) having access to state resources that the other side may not. This situation of the electoral

justice landscape tilting in favor of the winner (Omotoal, 2010) leaves those who feel disfavored to revert to other forms of confrontation, including violence. This was partly proven in the Kenyan case during the 2013 elections, as demonstrated in the *Raila Odinga v. IEBC* (Asuelime, 2019) case, in which the fact that the litigant was able to proceed with the case in court did not spare the country from those who did not trust the electoral justice system and engaged in conflict.

One of the most significant milestones in the Kenyan political landscape since its independence in 1963 was the promulgation of a new constitution in 2010. This constitution was regarded as one of the most progressive constitutions in Africa, paralleling the constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Akech, 2010; Glinz, n.d., as cited in Hope, 2015). One of the salient components of the constitution is the establishment of institutions with the responsibility to oversee fair and free elections by taking lessons from the issues and root causes of the horrible postelection violence in 2008. During the 2007-2008 postelection violence, one of the patterns observed was the burning and looting of shops, houses, and commercial outlets in the slums of Nairobi and other urban areas by youth groups (Endoh & Mbao, 2016). Consequently, the promulgation of the new constitution sparked a new hope for most Kenyans not to revert to violence during elections for lack of confidence in such institutions whereby electoral justice is presumed to prevail.

The high hopes of Kenyans in the new constitution, which counted on the establishment of institutions such as the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) and related judicial structures to ascertain justice in the electoral

process, did not spare Kenyans, especially youth, from getting involved in conflicts in the 2013 and 2017 elections. Although the various components of electoral justice might have played roles in either triggering or aggravating conflict, a gap exists in the literature on the specific traits of electoral justice that play such roles. Through this research, I sought to explore exactly which factors can explain the gap in the research literature. This research is directly related to the violence that attracts young people in informal settlements of Nairobi during elections and its association with electoral justice, thereby explaining the aspects of electoral justice that contribute to youth violence in informal settlements of Nairobi.

Nature of the Study

The nature of this study is derived from the use of the qualitative research method with a phenomenological approach. The detailed experiences and situations witnessed by individuals chosen for this study were best captured through a phenomenological study in which the meaning of their lived experiences of youth violence were described (Miller, et al. , 2003). The approach focused on what participants had in common. Its basic purpose was understanding how individual experiences inform those of groups with a view to understating a particular phenomenon from the perspectives of the participants (Giorgi, 2012, 2014) and from the experiences of those who lived them (Rudestam & Newton, 2015). Phenomenological research uses a descriptive approach, and my aim in using such an approach was to describe a phenomenon for which there was no preconceived framework while remaining faithful to the facts generated in the process of the research. The study was aimed toward generating an understanding of which aspects of electoral

justice contribute to youth violence in Kenyan elections, and a phenomenological approach could offer such an understanding. This was because the sources of data were individuals who had lived through situations of violence in at least two of the last three consecutive general elections since 2007, all of which were characterized by violence. This approach was best suited to extracting data for an appropriate description of the phenomenon.

Data on lived experiences of young people and community leaders in the Kibera informal settlement of Nairobi were collected through interviews based on a semi structured questionnaire. To triangulate information obtained from the main participants (young people and community leaders), experts who were experienced in designing and running conflict-management-related community projects in the informal settlement were interviewed. The preliminary data obtained were coded using NVivo software. The codes were categorized into appropriate themes in an unbiased and open-minded manner. The categories were then labeled to ascertain adaptation (aligning with the designed process), to seek further information from other sources to clarify matters in the case of missing aspects of the issue, and to focus on solving problems identified in the process (Kvale & Brinkmanne, 2014). This process of labeling helped in navigating between the data and the idea that they represented, and back to other related data. Finally, the data were analyzed to link the findings with the objective of the study. In the data analysis, I followed an approach of inductive analysis and creative synthesis (Patton, 2014) whereby the emerging categories or dimensions of analysis helped in understanding the existing

patterns in the way that the participants responded to circumstances that may lead to violence during elections.

Definitions

Electoral justice: Electoral justice is a legal concept that embraces safeguarding both the legality of electoral processes and the political rights of citizens with the purpose of ascertaining the transition from the use of violence as a means for resolving electoral disputes that arise from the nonobservance or breach of the provisions of electoral law (IDEA, 2010)

Electoral violence: All forms of organized acts or threats—physical, psychological, and structural—aimed at intimidating, harming, or blackmailing a political stakeholder before, during, and after an election with a view toward determining, delaying, or otherwise influencing an electoral process (Albert, 2007, p. 133, as cited in Omotola, 2010).

Hybrid security governance: A security management arrangement whereby neighborhoods manage their own security in collaboration with or in parallel to existing government security management practices (Schuberth, 2018).

Informal settlements: Part of a city where groups of housing units have been constructed on land that the occupants have no legal claim to or occupy illegally. Such settlements are known for noncompliance with current planning and building regulations (United Nations, 1997).

Lustration policies: Policies developed to cleanse a new regime from the remnants of the past. This process involves screening new officials (elected or appointed)

for involvement in the former regime and setting some consequences if they are found to have been involved (Greenstein & Harvey, 2017).

Truth commission: An official body charged with the investigation of claims of human rights abuses, especially during a previous government or regime (Brahm, 2009).

Youth: For the purpose of this study, youth are defined as young adults aged between 18 and 30 years.

Youth violence: Interpersonal violence or violence perpetration led by or engaging young people against another person, group, or community that leads to injury, death, or psychological or physical harm (CDC, 2015).

Assumptions

There were a couple of critical assumptions, the validity of which was instrumental for the success of the study. The first assumption was that the sampling used for the selection of participants was representative and participants answered the questions honestly. For this to happen, a combination of random and snowball sampling was used with the help of community leaders who had knowledge of young people exposed to electoral violence. Moreover, to increase the level of comfort that participants felt in answering the questions with free will and honesty, I confirmed confidentiality and conveyed to them that they could withdraw from the study at any time and with no ramifications (Leedy & Ormrod, 2016).

The other assumption was related to the nature of the diversity of violence in informal settlements of Kenya. Young people in informal settlements are exposed to violence triggered by several inherent or intermittent factors. Although these factors are

mainly understood to be derivatives of poverty and inequality, others may include ethnic division, weak social cohesion, and lack of collective efficacy (Barolsky, 2012). Young people who engage in election-related violence prior to, during, or after elections are also confronted by all of the above triggers of violence. The assumption of the study, therefore, was that respondents were able to disassociate themselves from these triggers and focus on their respective experiences as they related to electoral justice.

Scope and Delimitations

There were two aspects of delimitation in the study. Out of the three major informal settlements within the vicinity of Nairobi that were characterized by youth-related violence during the Kenyan elections, the study focused only on Kibera informal settlement. Although the other informal settlements have their own characteristics contributing to various forms of violence, Kibera, being the largest of all in terms of population, happens to be historically linked to violence associated with elections.

Young people who participate in violence during elections are normally as young as 15 years of age. The study focused on those aged between 18 and 30 years who participated in violence during the last two general elections in Kenya. The last two elections were held in 2013 and 2017. Because those who were 15 years of age during the last general election (2017) would turn 18 at the time of the study, I chose 18 years as the minimum age for participants in the study.

Limitations

One limitation of the study was the identification of appropriate participants through the sampling process who had in one way or another taken part in election-

related violence during the last two elections. Because informal settlements are usually characterized by various forms of violence during nonelection periods as well, participants might not have differentiated between election-related and other forms of violence in responding to the research questions.

In most cases, informal settlements are informal in the true sense of the word. Young people selected for the study from such areas might not have had the required patience to go through the rigorous process of responding to questions, and this, to some extent, might have limited the achievement of the expectation of the study. This limitation, however, was partly addressed by using various ways of motivating participants to patiently engage in the full interview process.

Significance

The research examined the factors related to electoral justice that trigger increased levels of youth violence in Nairobi's informal settlements during general elections. During three successive elections in Kenya, residents witnessed violence in informal settlements as a key factor for loss of lives and destruction of property. Hence, understanding the major triggers of violence related to electoral justice, and suggesting ways of dealing with them in minimizing and avoiding the negative impacts of violence may be a source for additional knowledge that contributes to social change.

Implications for Positive Social Change

Positive social change may occur in the form of systems and attitudes that span from the individual to the societal level (Yob et al., 2014). Accordingly, policy makers may have additional insights generated by the study on the gaps in electoral systems and

procedures. The additional insights may help them to consider triggers of violence and its spread when developing strategies for minimizing violence in future elections and improving on the management of key risks related to violence in informal settlements. This may lead to a decrease in or the elimination of disruption in economic and social activities due to increased violence during elections, from which both individuals as well as society may benefit. Hence, the results of the study are expected to contribute significantly to the process of social change that aims at reducing the prevalence of election violence and its effects not only in informal settlements, but also across the country because any amendment in the electoral justice system will have countrywide ramifications.

Summary

The background of the study was the unprecedented involvement of young people in violence during successive general elections in Kenya. Among the various factors that may trigger election violence, the problem that I planned to resolve in this study was one linked to electoral justice coherent with the conceptual framework on which the study was based. The purpose of the study was understanding key aspects of electoral justice that may be contributors to violence. This was expected to generate knowledge that can be used by policy makers to improve policies and practices helping to reduce election-related violence.

The study involved the assumption that participants who provided responses addressing the research question would be representatives of young people who experienced violence during Kenyan elections and would focus on matters related to their

experiences of election violence in the context of electoral justice. The study was conducted in Kibera, the largest informal settlement of Nairobi. Limitations of the study might be the representativeness of the participants to be sampled and the patience required from the young respondents to the research questions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to learn about the knowledge generated by various researchers and writers regarding election-related violence both in Kenya and other parts of the world. This knowledge was used as a basis to identify the gaps in the literature about the aspects of Kenyan elections linked to the cyclical violence in informal settlements of the capital, Nairobi. The review identified key areas of concern in relation to election violence in Kenya and addressed their association with this study focusing on youth violence in informal settlements of Nairobi.

This chapter illustrates the literature search strategy adopted for the research, including the major data sources and the key words and phrases used in the search for literature. The theoretical/conceptual foundation for the study is explained in detail. The major part of the chapter is the literature view itself, which is demonstrated using various pertinent themes related to the subject of the study (violence and elections). The chapter ends with a conclusion.

Literature Search Strategy

The major source for the literature used in the study was Walden University's online library with multiple databases that offered current and historical sources of knowledge. Among the various databases, the following were the most frequently used: Academic Search Complete, Communications and Mass Media Complete, Criminal Justice Database, International Security & Counter Terrorism Reference Center, Political Science Complete, ProQuest Central, Science Direct, and SAGE Journals. Although there

were some sources from earlier years that directly related to the political history of Kenya and associated violence, as well as other works considered to be seminal for the subject of the study, the scope of the literature review focused on literature produced over the past 5 years.

Key words and phrases used for the literature search included *youth violence*, *election and violence*, *electoral justice and violence*, *violence and informal settlements*, *Kenyan elections*, *ethnic politics*, and *electoral politics*.

Theoretical Foundation

The study was premised on one of the most prominent theories related to elections, namely the behavioral theory of elections. The conceptual framework of the study related to electoral justice, as discussed in detail in Chapter 1, was directly linked to the aspirations and stipulations of this theory. Whereas, conventionally, most election theories have involved the assumption that voters and other players in election processes are rational, the behavioural theory of elections, as introduced in 2011 by a group of scholars that included Jonathan Bendor, Daniel Diermeier, David A. Siegel, and Michael M. Ting, challenges this assumption of rationality, taking advantage of and navigating through the rise of behavioral economics (Kosmidis, 2013). The authors of the theory argued that regardless of how voters and politicians perceive the process of elections and the associated rationality of the decisions that they make, they are only boundedly rational (Bendor, et al., 2011). This means that any decision that they make is influenced by their behavioral responses to matters that have direct or indirect influence on how elections are conducted or administered. Here is where the concept of electoral justice—

and how its rationality or otherwise is perceived by various players—comes into play, the understanding or interpretation of which might lead some segments of the population such as youth into violence. The philosophical assumption behind this theory is linked to the ontological construct of the theory, which relates to discovering the reality among multiple realities (Hastings, 2017) that citizens rely on in the process of making a decision for any action or inaction (Dirette, 2014)

The theory provides a comprehensive account of why citizens and parties behave the way they do at each stage of the electoral process—pre-election, during an election, and postelection. Strengthening the argument against the rational choice theory, the authors reinforced that decision making is usually not free of individual economic self-interest, thereby leading to an incomplete account of human behavior in the process of the decision being made. They argued that a more useful and credible framework for analyzing actions or inaction of players during elections is provided by tools that reflect the bounded rationality concept of the theory.

Literature Review

Exposure to Violence

Violence during elections in Kenya has become a rule rather than an exception. Every election conducted since the introduction of the multiparty system in 1992 has been marred by some form of violence. Regardless of who is responsible for the major violent activities in terms of planning, executing, and promoting them, the fact remains that a significant number of community members, both in urban and rural areas, are exposed to and affected by the violence.

The conventional understanding of elections is that they involve a process by which citizens who are eligible to vote cast their ballots to elect those who stand for elections. In the case of Kenya, however, the reality appears to be the opposite. It is the political elites who aspire for elected positions who “elect” voters (Mugo Mugo, 2013). This idea of politicians electing voters who will eventually cast their ballots for them draws on the politicians’ drive and ability to manipulate potential voters to side them with various pretexts such as ethnic affiliation, protection of the interest of those considered to be their own (those already in power), or the need to take their turn (those who want to oust the ones in power). In both cases, the ordinary people who are subjected to the agitation of their respective political “leaders” and those who follow them are directly and indirectly exposed to the violence that their actions will bring. In this regard, Mueller (2011) argued that the use of violence to win elections has become an acceptable legacy however disputed it may be. Jenkins (2015) confirmed the same but with the argument that the marked urban socio-spatial variation cannot be explained by existing studies and hence requires further investigation.

The Ethnic Face of Violence

The link between ethnicity and violence in the context of the Kenyan sociopolitical setup, particularly in an urban context, is better explained by an attempt to understand the localized sensitivity of the violence in the lead-up to elections. The structural roots of election-related violence are somehow linked to microlevel socio-spatial variations (Jenkins, 2015) in which the actions or reactions of potential players implicated in violence depend on their real or perceived association with the ethnic group

from which the election contenders come. Due to the allocative and in most cases coercive nature of presidential power in Kenyan politics (Klopp, 2001), leaders use every means to influence local-level actors through ethnic affiliation and go to the extent of using violence to win (Mueller, 2011).

While exclusivist ethnic identities in general are seen to be facilitators of violent conflict (Ishiyama, et al., 2016), what encourages the political elites who are proponents of ethnic dichotomy is mostly the postelection behavior of the winners, which is based on the “winner takes it all” zero-sum ethnic game (Mueller, 2011). Because a lost election means waiting for another cycle of elections to benefit one’s own ethnic entourage, using ethnicity as a tool to confront the opposition appears to “legitimize” the conflict that follows. In elections since the 1990s, it has become common to see groups organized based on ethnic affiliations killing or destroying properties of specific ethnic groups that support a candidate from an opposing group. While some analysts, like Schuberth (2018), have argued that these gangs, operating in the name of community groups, are manipulated by political entrepreneurs during elections to terrorize those who are from different ethnic groups, Mueller (2011) firmly stated that this scenario leads to what he called defensive voting, whereby the behavior of voters is influenced by the fear of the worst thing that might happen to them if someone from an opposing ethnic group came to power.

Drawing on the Kenyan experience of the 2007 elections, there are different arguments about the role of ethnicity and how it might be handled to avoid heading to violence. One such argument is that of Horowitz (2016). Horowitz argued that however

significant ethnicity might seem to be as an avenue for mobilizing ethnic constituencies during elections, thereby leading to potential conflict, competition for swing voters, particularly among groups that do not necessarily have a coethnic leader, not only minimizes the violence associated with ethnicity, but also gives a better chance of winning to contenders.

In a related account of the 2007-2008 election and the violence that followed, isolated pockets of peace existed in some informal settlements of Kenya where different ethnic groups coexisted (Jenkins, 2015). This was characterized by how the dominant groups perceived the others either as “good guests” who might not do any harm regardless of the outcome of elections or as “bad guests” who might be threats to “their own” winners. Hence, the host/guest dichotomy plays a central role in the level of ethnic-centered violence during elections.

The experiences of the 2007 election and subsequent Kenyan experience further indicate that divisive election campaigns centered on ethnic affiliations were causes of ethnic violence that drove the nation to a nearly catastrophic situation (Horowitz, 2016). However, this is assumed to have happened not solely because of the contending parties focused on mobilizing their ethnic constituencies, but also due to lack of adequate and just electoral policies and procedures governing the campaigns from the perspective of electoral justice.

Emotional Footprints of Violence

Decision making is a daily phenomenon that individuals or groups are involved in. Decisions may be made consciously, following analysis of situations, or

unconsciously, influenced by the mood and emotions attached to the situation. As per Bucurean (2018), who conducted a qualitative study of the effects of mood and emotions on decision making, it is not advisable for anyone to make decisions when influenced by particular moods and emotions. The moods and emotions of citizens involved in electoral processes are directly related to how informed and rational they might be as voters (Soderstorm, 2017). Negative emotions might lead to conflict and violence, and violence, in turn, could generate further reciprocal buildup of emotions.

Conventional wisdom, sometimes supported by literature (Halperin & Tagar, 2017), links emotions mostly with young people, as the young are the ones on the front lines at times of violence. However, little is acknowledged about the ability of young people exposed to community violence to demonstrate positive adaptation or resilience over time (Jain & Cohen, 2013) and hence the need to look closely at a shift in perspective, practices, and policies across systems. This fits well with electoral systems pertaining to election-related violence. While emotion regulation is a way of managing conflicts (Halperin & Tagar, 2017), how much these emotions are influenced by availability or lack of electoral systems considered being fair and just is a gap in the literature that requires further exploration.

Institutional Legacies

In functioning democracies, the tenet of going to polls for assuming a public office is the willingness to accept the outcome of elections and not to win at any cost and by any means. This, of course, assumes the existence of the rule of law that governs not only the electoral process, but also other spheres of public governance and the

functioning of institutions that uphold and practice the law. The credibility of any process is dependent on the credibility of and trust in the system that governs the process.

The electoral practices in Kenya, which in most cases are characterized by violence to varying degrees, have their roots in the strength and willingness of public institutions that are directly or indirectly responsible for meeting public expectations. According to Dercon (2012), the deterioration of public trust in institutions and the resulting erosion of social capital at a community level are manifestations of the weakness of critical institutions such as the Electoral Commission, the police, and the judiciary and political parties, which perform far below public expectations. In particular, the institutional weakness of the Kenyan police force warrants mention (Okia, 2011), as it seriously undermined the force's effectiveness in handling violent incidents during and after the election. It is obvious that in a situation where institutions that are entrusted by law and by public consent to oversee the credibility and fairness of elections fail to do so, violence is imminent because there is little or no incentive on the part of political players to handle issues in a nonviolent way. This, according to LeBas (2013), encourages the establishment of violent organizations in the name of self-protection, thereby perpetuating more violence. In a related context, there is a link between the political knowledge of citizens involved in the electoral process and the performance of institutions responsible for ascertaining electoral justice—the fairness and credibility of elections (Soderstorm, 2017)—indicating that failure to uphold such responsibilities might lead to violence. But to what extent the violence resulting from perceived or real injustices is related to the performances of the institutions requires more research.

Media and Violence

In the modern setup of public interactions, media play a significant role in shaping public opinion in a direction that may either benefit or harm implanted societal values. The role that media played in the Kenyan electoral processes at different stages of its development has been documented in various research outputs. The direction to which the media leads public opinion can be either challenging the status quo and disproving what has been accepted as conventional norms within the society or introducing a completely new phenomenon that the society has never been exposed to in the past.

While the mainstream media (various broadcast and print media networks) operating at the national level dominated earlier years' election processes in Kenya, the introduction and gradual development of information and communications technology (ICT) has markedly changed the way that communities receive, process, and react to information relayed by various media sources. This was evident from the comparison that Trujillo, et al. (2014) performed between the 2013 and prior years' elections, in which it was evident that the media played a positive role in addressing the public with private and public messages on the risk of violence, thereby contributing to the reduction of violence. According to the Media Council of Kenya (n.d., as cited in Ngugi & Kinyua, 2014), 95% of Kenyans listened to radios, which had a significant influence on the characteristics of the 2007-2008 post election violence.

The media have been considered by many to represent a more democratic and trusted institution in the absence of trust in other mainstream government institutions such as the parliament and courts (Makinen & Kuira, 2008). Community radios

broadcasting in local languages have been instrumental in influencing the public and thereby perpetuating violence, as they have been used by politicians and their affiliates to incite violence. However, due to the government's ban of live broadcasting following the announcement of the controversial presidential result, social media quickly gained prominence. According to Makinen and Kuira (2008), social media were instrumental in generating an alternative public space for discussion and information sharing, which in a way helped to contain the effects of the violence. A further improvement in the way that the media played a role was demonstrated during the 2013 election (Weighton & McCurdy, 2017), which drew from the bitter experiences of the 2007 elections.

Electoral Integrity

The conventional societal paradigm tells us that people react to any event or process based on their actual or perceived understanding of the level of integrity behind the event or the process. This means that whether the outcome of a certain process is the desired one or not, its acceptance mainly depends on the integrity or trustworthiness of the process that resulted in the specific outcome. In democratic or less democratic systems, the electoral systems' levels of integrity are relative and there may not be a standard measure of integrity that applies to all contexts.

In relatively less experienced multiparty democratic practices, the relationship between election integrity and what happens on an election day to voters is worth examining. The experience of voters on an election day regarding manipulation, administrative irregularities, and effectiveness of election observers are the categories of election day events that demonstrate the experience–integrity nexus (Kerr, 2017).

According to Kerr (2017), the 2015 Nigerian election experience demonstrated a strong association between election day experiences and the corresponding perception about integrity of elections, even considering the effects of specific winners and losers. Similar studies done in the case of Kenyan elections indicated that election integrity is linked more to the local context related to the understanding of free and fair election than mere election administration (Shah, 2015). Similarly, the official election observers of the 2017 presidential election of Kenya concluded that the election was free and fair as demonstrated on election day (Falana, 2017). However, the Supreme Court of Kenya, which handled the appeal against the election results by the opposition, established that electoral fraud was committed in the transmission of election results, even though the election was properly conducted. Thus, the massive irregularities in the transmission of election results confirmed by the court compromised the integrity of the Kenyan election. In three Eastern European countries, public perception about election integrity is seen from the perspective of beliefs about corruption among public officials, support for the current regime, and television consumption (McAllister & White, 2015).

However, although the experiences in both Nigeria and Kenya depicted the link between election day experiences and perception of election integrity, there is disparity between the two. The Kenyan election was followed by violence (Shah, 2015) while the Nigerian was not (Kerr, 2017). There is no conclusive evidence that lack of integrity alone might have led to violence in the Kenyan case. However, considering the close link between electoral justice and electoral integrity, exploring the electoral justice dimension of electoral integrity will make a good contribution to the literature.

Effects of Violence

Violence in Kenyan informal settlements like in many similar environments has diversified effects on its residents, and beyond both with respect to its causes, and consequences. While women and children are the most vulnerable sections of the community under any threats to peaceful living environment, a broader outlook of the matter depicts that young people specially when the violence leads to different levels of school unrest (Ochieng, 2010), are victims of increased level of violence. This is because, in such circumstances, children at schools may be left without protection and consequently betrayed by the society which is expected to protect them. Since the mood in general during postelection violence is such that people are worried about their own safety, the attention given to children and the young is relatively small. This, according to Ochieng (2010) who conducted a case study on the effects of ethnic violence on school children in Kenya, leads to loss of trust on the overall societal support available to those who need protection during such critical times.

Kenya is one of the most stable democracies in Africa. However, the violence that followed the 2007 election in the country may be termed as not only one that led the country into chaos at that moment, but also one that left a dark spot for future electoral practices in the country. Dercon and Gutierrez-Romero (2012), who conducted a survey to provide qualitative and quantitative evidences of the key triggers of election related violence in Kenya established that, one in three Kenyans are exposed to and affected by election related violence without being differentiated by ethnic or level of wealth possessions.

The analysis on effects of violence in the case of Kenyan elections obliged some researchers to look at the issue beyond the country level. Endoh and Mbao (2016) scrutinized the post 2007 presidential election consequences in Kenya. The International Criminal Court (ICC) issued warrants for the arrest of the two top government officials (contenders for the Presidency and Vice Presidency) for their alleged role in masterminding ethnic violence which led to the death of more than 1,200 people. The ICC intervention in the matter called for a counter reaction by the African Union accusing the court of discrimination against African leaders and advising African countries including Kenya to consider withdrawing from the ICC membership. Whether the ICC intervention in search of justice would contribute to the peace process that the government of Kenya has embarked on following the violence, remained to be a debate on peace vs justice. Moreover, the violence in Kenya had a regional economic ramification (Latigo, et al., 2008 as cited in Endo & Mbawo (2016) across the Eastern Africa particularly to Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo which are landlocked.

The effects of such exposure to violence may be explained in multiple scenarios but can be summarized as a general loss of public trust in the electoral system. However, the specific elements of the electoral system which contributed to the conflict scenario remain to be the gap in the literature that need to be further studied.

Conclusion

This literature review has identified various practical and conceptual matters which have a direct and indirect relevance to the violence during and postelection periods in Kenyan elections. These matters range from individual and group emotions which eventually drive people to violence, to ethnic affiliations and the role of media and electoral integrity in influencing the intensity and spread of violence. Deliberation on the concept of electoral justice was a clear gap identified in the review. This gap in the literature is the subject of Chapter 3 which describes in detail the methodology used to address the research questions designed to generate information on the lived experiences of young people about election related violence in informal settlements of the Kenyan capital, Nairobi.

Chapter 3: Research Method

Introduction

Youth violence in informal settlements of Nairobi and other informal settlements across the country is widely seen to be one of the characteristics of the three successive general elections in Kenya since 2007. This consistent phenomenon of youth violence has caused loss of lives, disruption of economic and social activities, and overall vulnerability of communities. The phenomenon of interest in this study was therefore key attributes that lead young people in informal settlements of Nairobi to violence during elections. This chapter provides a description of the various elements of the research method, namely,

- the design and rationale,
- methodology,
- sample selection criteria,
- data collection method,
- data analysis and interpretation,
- my role as a researcher, and
- participant selection criteria.

It also provides details on ethical requirements of the research process, which include obtaining informed consent and ethical considerations pertaining to the study.

The research questions guiding the research were as follows:

1. How do youth living in Nairobi's informal settlements perceive/understand electoral justice?

2. How do feelings of electoral injustice amongst youth living in Nairobi's informal settlements contribute to political violence in these communities during national elections?

This chapter deals with the description of the research design, followed by the rationale for the research and my role as the researcher. The other major element of the chapter is a description of the methodology, which starts with the background and continues with key components of the methodology. The section on participant selection logic explains the “how” and “why” of selecting participants for the study. The data collection section outlines the instruments used and procedures followed for recruitment, participation, and data collection. The data analysis section provides a step-by-step description of the process of data analysis together with the instrument used for the same. Issues of trustworthiness and the ethical concerns and procedures followed during the study process are also explained at the end of the chapter, followed by a summary note on the whole chapter.

Research Design and Rationale

Research Design

The research design that I used in my dissertation was a qualitative social research method using a phenomenological approach. This method gave a comprehensive perspective on the phenomenon of the study whereby, as a researcher, I could develop a deeper and more well-rounded understanding of the phenomenon (Babbie, 2017). Because such an approach gives the opportunity to capture the essence of human experience about a specific phenomenon through the eyes of the study participants

(Creswell, 2014), it is possible to come up with a description of trends, attitudes, and opinions of the population chosen for the sample. This is done primarily through the collection of data using open-ended and conversational communication with the subjects of the study as well as with other groups and individuals who are in a better position to understand and reflect on the phenomenon. The research design was appropriate for the study because it allowed me to get a better understanding of the reality surrounding the triggers of violence in informal settlements of Nairobi during general elections based on the lived experiences of the participants. The method enabled me to understand the phenomenon of interest that unfolded naturally through findings derived from real-world settings (Patton, 2001, as cited in Golafshani, 2003).

The Rationale

One of the values of qualitative research is the opportunity that it provides in identifying the principal opinions, reasons, experiences, and motivations of those involved in the research, depending on the various methodologies used. Among these qualitative research methodologies, the phenomenological approach was the one that I chose for my study. This was because it provided an opportunity to reflect on and understand the human factors in analyzing experiences of the population to be studied and providing answers to questions related to people's perceptions in a particular context (Dawidowicz, 2017). In this regard, the nature of the study, in which I sought to understand the lived experiences of young people who had witnessed the 2017 election violence, either by directly taking part in the violence or by being proximate to the violent incidents in one way or another, fit the chosen approach. Moreover, I included in

the study groups of women and community leaders who had also witnessed successive election-related violence in the informal settlements of Nairobi. This helped in corroborating the outcome of the research from various perspectives. The topic of my study was related to understanding the various traits of electoral justice as one among the factors of violence in informal settlements of Nairobi during election periods. To understand the factors that trigger such violence, basing the research on the lived experiences of people who have witnessed it through successive elections is an appropriate approach.

The Role of the Researcher

One of the normative attributes of the behavior of a social researcher, according to Babbie (2017), is balancing between one's political and ethical orientation to avoid interference in, or undue influence on, scientific research. Accordingly, my role as a researcher began with positioning myself within the mindset of fairness and transparency in the process of conducting the research. I was responsible for selecting participants for the research based on acceptable sampling methods. Upon successful completion of my proposal and its subsequent approval by the Institutional Review Board (IRB), I used the interview guide that I developed to conduct face-to-face and phone interviews with the selected participants. The key actions that I took to attain acceptable standard of a research process and minimize the conventional researcher bias included the following:

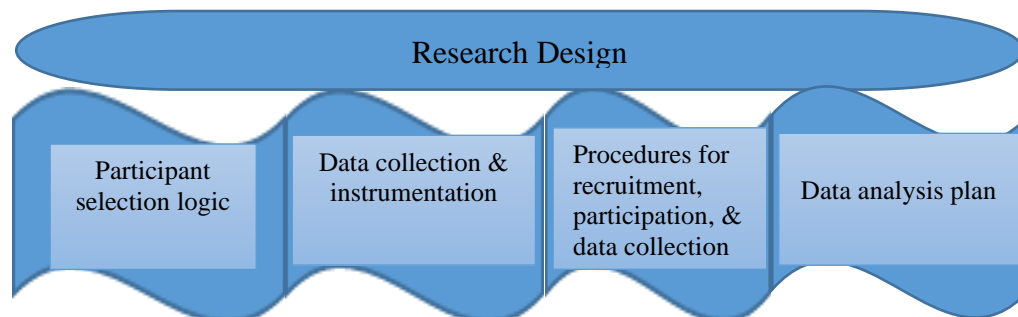
1. explaining the context and the objective of the research to participants to ensure that they fully understood how their responses would be used,
2. obtaining full consent from participants,

3. assigning codes to participants to maintain confidentiality,
4. recording and transcribing the interviews/discussions,
5. using multiple iterations of the coding process to confirm themes directly linked to the transcribed data,
6. transcribing and uploading the data into the chosen software (NVivo),
7. organizing and analyzing the data to develop structural meaning of the output,
8. giving participants the opportunity to review the result,
9. reviewing findings with peers, and
10. checking for an alternative explanation, if any, to make my interpretation stronger and bias free, by examining the findings against what is generally understood or believed to drive young people into violence during elections.

Methodology

Background

According to Babbie (2017), methodology is a sub field of epistemology (a science of knowing) that guides a researcher to arrive at a logically and empirically supported conclusion. Beyond being a philosophical framework within which the research is conducted, it contains step-by-step guidance for conducting research. This section outlines participant selection; instrumentation of the research process; procedures for recruitment, participation, and data collection; data analysis; and consideration of other data sources.

Figure 2*Conceptual Model of the Research Design***Participant Selection Logic**

The target group of interest was young adults and community leaders who had a fairly adequate knowledge of how elections have been conducted in Kenya. Such individuals were also ones who had witnessed the election-related violence in the Kibera informal settlement of Nairobi during any of the elections that had taken place since 2007, with a focus on the 2017 elections. The sampling strategy that I used was a combination of convenience and snowball sampling based on the inclusion/exclusion criteria that I developed for this purpose.

There is no unanimity among researchers about the precise sample size for a particular qualitative study. However, I used a combination of two suggestions from the literature. One was guidance by Creswell (1998) and Morse (1994, as cited in Mason, 2010), who suggested the sample size for a phenomenological study to be between five and 25. The other was by Guest, et al. (2006), who argued that 15 is the smallest acceptable sample. Hence, I chose to use a sample size of 10 for individual interviews of

young adults and five for interviews with community leaders from the same location.

Apart from the major target groups for the study, for the purpose of triangulation of data, I also included three professionals running conflict management and peace-building-related projects in the informal settlements.

Although the general procedure of using inclusion/exclusion criteria in identifying the participants may work in principle, I limited my criteria for the selection of young people to those (a) whom I could gain access to, either through work or other social engagements; (b) who were experienced and engaged in works related to youth in the informal settlement context; (c) who had lived in the Kibera informal settlement of Nairobi and witnessed at least two of the last three elections, including the 2017 election; and (d) who were between the ages of 18 and 30 years. For community leaders and other professionals, I sought the support of community and youth groups operating in the Kibera informal settlement to gain access to the potential population from which participants were selected.

Once I made the selection of participants using the set criteria, I contacted and invited them to take part in the study as per the guidelines and template of the IRB. I sent the invitation to participants through the community organization identified earlier and committed to support in the process. I followed up with participants with phone calls to firm up the logistics for the interviews.

Data Collection and Instrumentation

This section explains the various actions that I took with the help of the chosen research instrument. Although the initial plan was to use a combination of face-to-face

interviews and focus group discussions with participants for data collection, this had to be changed to a combination of individual face-to-face interviews where possible and phone interviews due to the social distancing requirements of the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, a combination of face-to-face and phone interviews, with no predetermined order, constituted the data collection instrument that the study used. Interview questions that would help in answering the research questions were developed, and these questions were adjusted as needed based on the flow of conversation with participants and their responses requiring some probing questions. The interview guide was the primary basis for developing the interview questions. I developed an interview guide that aligned with the phenomenological approach of the study based on the template provided by Walden University in related course resources (Walden University, n.d.). In the process, I extensively referred to the literature and used feedback from my chair. One important aspect of this process was understanding the difference and relationship between the research questions and interview questions. This significantly helped me in developing the interview questions in such a way that they generated data for analysis to answer my research questions.

To ensure content, rigor, validity, and credibility of the interview guide, I scrutinized the contents in detail so that there was an adequate level of alignment between them. I also made some notes in the “Remarks” column to remind me of any need to refer to or explore matters further to ascertain validity of the guide.

The data were collected through face-to-face and phone semi structured interviews. The justification for conducting the interviews with community leaders and

professionals in addition to young adults was that it would help in triangulating the information obtained from the young people. The interviews took place in a quiet environment using the interview questions prepared with adherence to the interview guide. The questions were sequenced in such a way that participants felt at ease to respond, with their responses to the preceding questions preparing them for the following questions. My engagement with each participant for the interview started with explaining the purpose and direction of the research and giving them the opportunity to agree to the terms for proceeding with the interview, or, alternatively, terminate participation in case of disagreement. In the case of agreement, I proceeded with the interview. In the case of a decline by a participant to continue with the interview, I was prepared to revert to the reserve pool of participants that I had earlier prepared and pick and substitute the declining participants to maintain the sample size. I also made it clear to participants that they could discontinue the interview at any point, with no need to provide any explanation for doing so. I substituted only one participant, not for declining after my explanation but because of not showing up for the interview as scheduled. No participant decided to discontinue the interview once it started.

All of the interviews were recorded using an MP3 voice recorder, with prior consent of the participants. Each interview took between 30 and 45 minutes, including the introduction, questions and answers, and conclusion. At the end of each interview, I gave the opportunity to the participant to ask any questions or disclose any information that was not covered during the interview. Additionally, I informed the participant of the

next steps in finalizing the research in which I assured them that they will have copy of the transcript to make comments on.

After completing the transcription of the data obtained through the interview within 2 weeks of the initial interview, I shared a draft copy of the transcript with participants, requesting that they submit any adjustments/comments or concur with it within 5 days of receipt of the draft. My message while sending the transcript made it clear that failure to respond within five days would be presumed to indicate concurrence with the contents of the transcript.

The data from the interviews, presented in the form of codes, concepts, categories, and themes, were the primary sources of the analysis for the study. In addition, the field notes that I prepared during the interviews helped me to reflect on the whole process in support of the analysis and interpretation of data.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation and Data Collection

Prior to engaging in any research work in Kenya as a non-Kenyan national, a researcher needs to obtain a research license from the Kenyan National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). To issue a license for academic research, the Commission requires a researcher to submit together with the application an IRB-approved proposal, an introductory letter from the academic institution in which the student is a registered researcher, an affiliation letter from a Kenyan research or academic institution that commits to ascertain observance of ethical requirements in the data collection process, and a letter of consent from any local organization involved in support of the research process. I therefore had to identify an academic institution and a

community organization in the informal settlement in support of my application for the license. Accordingly, upon submission of my IRB-approved proposal (approval No. 04-09-20-0654858) and other supporting documentation from Walden University, I managed to get an agreement of affiliation with Tangaza University College, Institute of Youth Studies (associated with the Catholic University of East Africa). I also managed to identify a community organization operating in Kibera informal settlement, the Soweto Youth Group (SYG), which provided me with the consent letter. Following submission of the required documentation, I obtained the research license (Ref. No. 505313) from NACOSTI on October 2, 2020, which allowed me to embark on the research process.

The initial step in the recruitment process was to engage with the identified community organization. I shared the recruitment criteria with the SYG based on which they disseminated to potential participants and compiled and shared with me a list of volunteers to participate in the study. I randomly selected ten participants from the youth category and included all the five community leaders in the list of participants.

All the fifteen participants were scheduled for face to face and telephone interviews based on their preference. Upon going through the interviewing process with the young participants, there was a sense of data saturation in the eighth interview. I proceeded with the ninth participant to confirm whether it is worthwhile to proceed till the end. The data saturation was evident as no new information was coming from the ninth participant as well. I therefore limited the number of interviews with young people to nine. I interviewed all the five scheduled community leaders.

Data Analysis

The purpose of the study is to understand the major aspects of electoral justice that trigger youth violence in the informal settlements of Nairobi. My data analysis plan recognized the fact that qualitative data analysis is not an event but a process. This means, it is a systematic and intentional scrutiny of data at various stages and moments throughout the research process (Ravitch and Nicole, 2016). Phenomenology is the approach I chose for my study.

The key elements in the data analysis are characterized by the process which starts at the stage of collecting the data through the interview process and organizing them using various tools. This includes the process of performing concurrent actions such as data collection and analysis, during which the following actions were performed:

1. composing memos,
2. coding and categorizing data in the form of concepts, categories and themes,
3. using writing as an analytical tool,
4. developing analytical ideas and concepts to convert the information into analyzable data, and
5. connecting the analysis to prior theory and literature (Van den Hoonaard & Van den Hoonaard, 2008) (as cited in Ravitch and Nicole, 2016).

Accordingly, in my phenomenological approach, while the analysis remains as close to the data as possible, the focus was on the experience of participants at the various stages of the analysis noted above. I performed the coding following the coding guidelines (the

coding cycle) stated by Saldana (2015) as the first and second cycle of coding. I was also mindful to link the process with the outcome. As suggested by Ravitch & Carl (2016), I attempted to clearly differentiate between the outcomes of the coding process, i.e., the codes, concepts, categories and themes.

After completing the interview to minimize any potential researcher bias and make my interpretation stronger and bias free, I took the following actions: using multiple people for coding the data, giving participants the opportunity to review transcripts, reviewing findings with peers, and checking for an alternative explanation.

Among a set of available QDA software, I used Nvivo. The major consideration for my choice is that, it is a software easy to use. It enables to analyze textual data such as interviews, news transcripts, and open-ended responses. Still images can also be analyzed using this software. Moreover, it enables to import formats of documents like plain text, RTF, HTML, PDF as well as data stored in Excel, MS Access, CSV, tab delimited text files. The other features of the software are the possibility of intuitive coding using codes organized in a tree structure, adding comments or memos to coded segments, cases or the whole project and coding frequency analysis with bar chart, pie chart and tag clouds (Predictive Analysis Today, 2016b). Ability to export tables to XLS, Tab Delimited, CSV formats, and Word format and also graphs to BMP, PNG, JPEG, WMF formats is an added feature of the software. The advantage of the QDA software over the hand coding is the multiplicity of features and what it can offer to a researcher.

Issues of Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness of the study is explained by the key dimensions of trustworthiness such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In this regard, I considered the following:

Credibility

According to Shenton (2004), one of the measures of credibility is developing an early familiarity with the culture of participants before the first data collection dialogues take place. Accordingly, I used my experience of living in Nairobi during two of the last four elections to familiarize myself with the culture of participants. I also practiced iterative questioning to ascertain what the participants said are based on their genuine experiences. In addition, I used a triangulation method by soliciting information from other sources such as community leaders. Other supportive methods of ensuring credibility as described by Shenton (2004) include peer scrutiny of the research project, and examination of previous related research projects.

Transferability

Although in general transferability of qualitative research results is debatable because of differences in contexts of different studies, I examined to what similar context the results of my dissertation might be transferable.

Dependability

Dependability is somewhat related to credibility. It refers to the extent to which the research findings are valid, consistent and can be replicated (Golafshani, 2003). In this regard, I subscribe to the argument of Lincoln and Guba (1985) (as cited in Shenton,

2004), in which they asserted that in practice, demonstrating credibility in qualitative research contributes to dependability and this can be done using “overlapping methods” like focus groups and individual interviews. What I did was to ascertain credibility as it contributes to dependability.

Confirmability

This deals with ensuring that, as far as possible findings of the study generate from the experiences and ideas of the participants, rather than the preferences and characteristics of the researcher (Shenton, 2004). It serves as a measure to check whether the findings of the research and the interpretations thereon, are supported by the data (Creswell, 2014). Since a threat to confirmability might also be increased by researcher biases (Creswell, 2014), I was very careful in containing my views and preferences and focused on the experiences of the participants, thereby containing any potential biases.

Ethical Concerns and Procedures

The basis of an effective communication in transferring valid, credible, and trustworthy information from one point to another is the level of trust established between the two communicators. In this regard, it is very important for me as a researcher to pay attention to the various ethical considerations for establishing trust among the participants in the research. To address ethical concerns this research strictly adhered to the guidelines of the IRB as provided in the Walden University Dissertation checklist. Obtaining approval from the IRB and adhering to its requirements is the guarantee for addressing conventional ethical concerns in the research. Accordingly, the following were implemented:

1. explaining to participants the objectives, data collection methods, and processes of the research.
2. obtaining written consent from participants, and
3. sharing the transcribed data with participants for comments and verification.

In this regard, during the whole process of the research, I tried to assure the participants that their confidentiality would be maintained. This included no identification of participants in the study report and the interview recording and transcripts would be destroyed as soon as I have completed my dissertation.

Summary

Through this research, I tried to understand the electoral justice traits of youth led violence in informal settlements during elections in Kenya using a phenomenological approach. In the previous two chapters I examined the significance and scope of the research, introduced the conceptual framework which substantiates the need for and relevance of the research, and also dealt with the literature review demonstrating the gap in the subject of the research. In this chapter, I outlined the research design and rationale, the methodology of the research, my role as a researcher together with the various required steps to minimize researcher bias, and the various steps I took to ascertain trustworthiness of the research.

Participants of the research were selected from Kibera, the largest informal settlement in Nairobi. In the selection process, I used the support of community leaders in the area and an organization running youth and conflict related programs in the area.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to draw conclusions from the lived experiences of young people and community leaders on the link between electoral justice and youth-led violence in the informal settlements of the Kenyan capital, Nairobi. The research questions were drawn in such a way as to answer the questions of how participants perceive electoral justice and how the functioning or otherwise of the electoral justice system in the country triggers youth violence during elections. The preliminary data collection method was semi structured interviewing conducted face to face. The interviews with 17 participants generated information for analysis and conclusions about the subject of the study. This chapter addresses a pilot study conducted before embarking on the actual study, the research setting, demographic information on participants, data collection, data analysis, evidence of the trustworthiness of the data, and results of the study, concluding with a summary of the chapter.

Pilot Study

The pilot study idea came up when I was compelled to modify my data collection methodology from a combination of face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions to phone interviews due to the social distancing requirements of the COVID-19 pandemic. Accordingly, I managed to identify two individuals (a female and a male) who did not actually live in the informal settlement but witnessed and participated in the 2013 and 2017 elections in Kenya. Because they had worked on development projects targeting young people in two of the most densely populated informal settlements in

Nairobi, they were conversant with matters linked to violence and youth in the context of informal settlements. Both volunteers for the pilot study were within the age range of young adults targeted for the main study.

The purpose of the pilot study was to test the appropriateness of the interview questions when administered by phone as opposed to in face-to-face and focus group discussions as originally designed, both in terms of approach and the time it might take. Before participation, both of the participants signed the informed consent. Evaluation of the transcripts of the two pilot participants and the process revealed that I had to include a probing question to make sure that the concept of electoral justice was well understood by participants. I also learned that the whole process might take less time if participants were accessible by phone, in that I would not need to spend time waiting for participants to appear at the interview venue. Upon concluding the pilot study, I confirmed that the interview questions supported by a probing question were reasonable and applicable to the lived experiences of young people in understanding the link between electoral justice and violence in informal settlements.

Research Questions

Two research questions guided this study:

1. How do youth living in Nairobi's informal settlements perceive/understand electoral justice?
2. How do feelings of electoral injustice amongst youth living in Nairobi's informal settlements contribute to political violence in these communities during national elections?

In this chapter, guided by these research questions, I will present the results of the phenomenological study. This includes the setting in which the research took place, participants' demographic information, data collection methods, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness of the data, and the corresponding results answering the research questions.

Research Setting

Participants were recruited through a community organization operating in the informal settlement where the study was conducted. The community organization provided a list of young adults organized in different areas of work within the informal settlement, as well as community leaders, from which I randomly selected the participants. I had no pre-existing relationships with any of the participants. The interviews were set as a combination of face-to-face and phone communication through regular telephone. The phone option was introduced due to the social distancing requirements of the COVID-19 pandemic to make sure that participants felt comfortable taking part in the interviews. Accordingly, out of the 17 participants, 14 were interviewed face to face and the remaining three were interviewed by phone. Both methods of interviews worked as expected, allowing smooth conversation and voice recording.

The interviews were conducted in a natural setting. The inductive nature of the phenomenological approach facilitated exploration of the meanings and insights related to the participants' lived experience in a similar setting (Levitt, et al., , 2017), whereby they were able to express their concerns about electoral justice and associated violence

openly. The results of the study were not influenced by any personal or organizational relationships. No identifying information on participants was shared with anyone.

Demographics

Participants were classified into three categories with the inclusion criteria shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Categorization of Participants

Participants	Codes	Inclusion/exclusion criteria
Young adults	P1 to P9	Age: 18-30 Participated in at least two of the last three elections
Community leaders	PP10 to PP14	Participated in or witnessed at least two of the last three elections Lived in Kibera for at least 10 years
Project managers	PPP15 to PPP17	Worked on youth-related programs in Kibera informal settlement

The categorization was important in that examining lived experiences of youth violence and its implications for electoral justice from the perspectives of the youth themselves was critical. The views of community leaders who witnessed what was happening in their localities during elections added credence to the study. The views of project managers who managed projects dealing with aftereffects of the violence not only provided wider exposure to the issue, but also helped in triangulation of the data for credibility.

Table 2*Demographic Profile of Participants*

Participant	Age	Gender	No. of elections witnessed/ participated in	No. of years lived in Kibera
P1	25	Male	2	10
P2	22	Female	2	12
P3	30	Male	3	15
P4	28	Male	3	11
P5	20	Female	2	10
P6	30	Male	3	25
P7	25	Female	2	18
P8	28	Female	2	15
P9	29	Male	2	29
PP10	40	Male	3	25
PP11	47	Male	3	30
PP12	50	Female	3	45
PP13	38	Male	3	22
PP14	45	Male	3	30
PPP15	40	Female	3	0 ^a
PPP16	42	Female	3	0 ^a
PPP17	44	Male	3	0 ^a

^a Did not live in Kibera but worked there for over 10 years.

Data Collection

Out of the 15 (before adding three project management experts) potential participants initially registered for the interview, I managed to interview 14 number represented nine out of the 10 young adults and all five community leaders. The number was reduced due to application of the data saturation principle. As per Gentle et al. (2015), the objective of a research interview of this nature is to obtain appropriate and sufficient information about the subject of the interview from an adequate number of

diverse individuals. In this regard, at a point when successive interviewees were providing similar information to what the preceding interviewees had said, there was no need to continue with the remaining participants, and hence the total number of participants stood at 14. However, due to the need to validate the data obtained from the originally planned participants through a triangulation approach, I included in the participant list three project management experts who ran conflict-management-related projects in the Kibera informal settlement, bringing the total number of participants to 17. Each interview took between 30 and 50 minutes, and all interviews were recorded using an MP3 recording device. I secured informed consent from all participants before recording the interviews.

Data Analysis

For the data analysis, I explored various types of qualitative data analysis software. I eventually decided to use NVivo and made use of the coding system that the software offers.

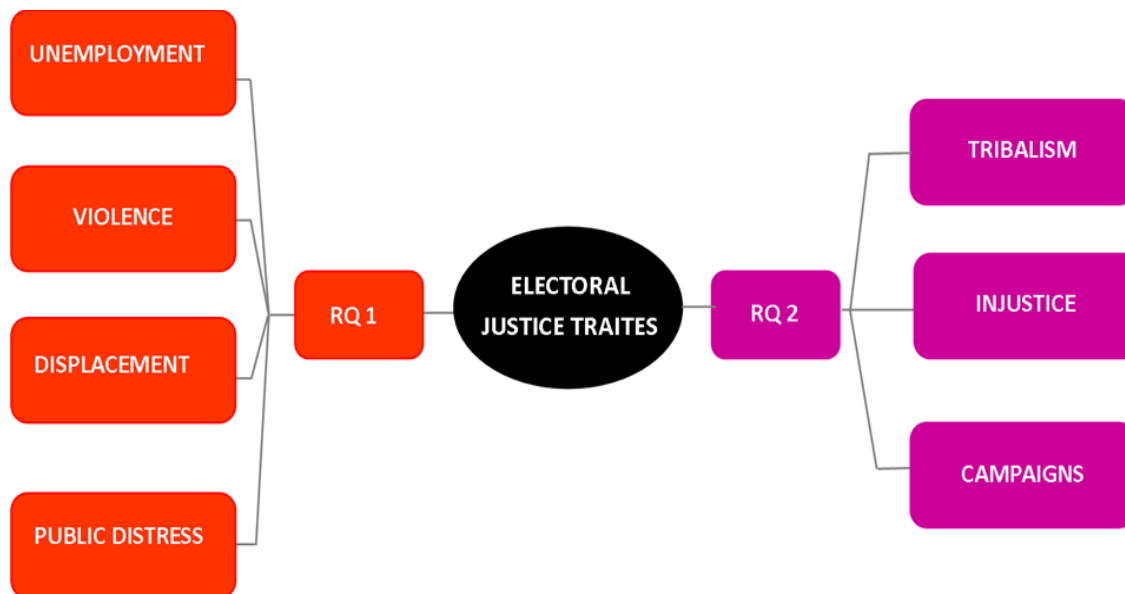
Coding Process

To enhance the usefulness of the coding results, I used a hierarchical coding frame. In the coding process, I used an inductive coding approach whereby all of the codes were derived from responses of the participants as opposed to having a predefined set of codes. The process was also iterative, in that I created codes after having read a sample of interview transcripts, re-read the transcripts and applied the codes, read additional transcripts applying the codes, and where they did not match, created new codes. The hierarchical frame constituted seven themes associated with the two research

questions and several codes, as illustrated in Figure 3, where they were later categorized under different subthemes.

Figure 3

Hierarchical Coding



I used NVivo software for the coding process and for organizing the codes under each category in support of the analysis. Accordingly, I ran a visualization exercise using a word cloud to get a sense of word frequency in the codes within each category and discovered the phenomena described in the following section on themes and subthemes, giving indications of the lived experiences of participants concerning election violence.

Frequency of occurrence of a word in the responses of participants is indicated by the size of the font in each theme depicted in the associated word cloud. The larger the font size, the more frequently the word was mentioned in the responses. What is interesting here is that the frequently used words had a direct connection with the themes/subthemes that emerged from the analysis, thereby to a certain degree validating

the commonalities of views of respondents who were unknown and unrelated to each other on answers to the research questions.

Emerging Themes and Subthemes

Through the coding process, a total of seven themes and several associated subthemes emerged in relation to the research questions. A visual representation of these themes appears in Appendix A.

RQ 1: Lived Experiences

Unemployment.

A word cloud for the theme of youth unemployment appears in Figure 4.

Figure 4

Youth Unemployment



Young people in the slums (informal settlements) of Nairobi are mostly characterized by unemployment and idleness. They are exposed to various circumstances that significantly impact and shape their future. This widespread joblessness and idleness, coupled with the energy they possess and the feeling of having nothing to lose, put them

in a situation to be influenced easily to engage in activities considered unpleasant by their surrounding communities.

One among such unpleasant circumstances is how politicians relate to young people in informal settlements and use them during elections as instruments for their political aspirations. During pre-election periods, most candidates who forecast failure in a genuine campaigning and electoral process opt to mobilize young people who are easily influenced by small cash handouts to engage in demonstrations in support of them, to the extent of aggressively fighting with supporters of opposition candidates. The cash handouts are big motivators for the youth to cause violence. Strategists of the candidates promote and practice a great deal of financing and mobilization, propaganda, and social media messaging that trigger emotions, and when these efforts are backed by money, the result is instant and visible. This mobilization is done through influential youth leaders within the informal settlements. A full-day casual job earns about KES300. To an idle young person, receiving KES300 to show up at a political rally means a lot. The payment usually amounts to KES500, which is a lot of money not to be influenced by, and young people who are vulnerable, idle, and energetic can be induced to go to the streets for a cause in a way that their mothers and fathers would not. Hence, unless the youth are economically empowered and somehow meaningfully engaged, the cycles of violence during elections will continue.

Violence.

A word cloud for the theme of violence appears in Figure 5.

Figure 5

Violence



Comparison of the Three Elections.

The level of violence both in urban and rural areas of Kenya in the last three successive elections (2007, 2013, and 2017) varied significantly. In 2007, there was a great deal of incitement during the election campaigns. The general tendency of those involved in violence, including security forces, was a “shoot to kill” approach. The government did not take initiative to warn politicians, and this triggered postelection violence in which more than 1,200 people were killed. Since the 2007 postelection violence led to the engagement of some political leaders with the International Criminal Court in the Hague, the process sent a warning sign to politicians to be very careful in the subsequent elections not to promote violence. Hence, the 2013 and 2017 elections saw reduced levels of violence.

Although some politicians still tried to use violence as a means of success in elections, older youth were gradually becoming more sober and not ready to go to the streets because they had families and kids to take care of. Hence, 2013 and 2017 were calmer than 2007. Moreover, before the elections in 2013 and 2017, political parties attempted to discourage youth from engaging in violence. There was also increased awareness that violence meant loss of life and property on both sides, which helped to reduce the level of violence. In addition, what helped in the realization of the benefit of calmness was that once the violence was over and the consequences felt, no one representing the instigators turned up to find out how those affected were doing or offer any compensation or sympathy. The young people realized that they were losing more than the politicians were.

In 2013 and 2017, there was a system that could be followed, and whenever there were irregularities, the results were nullified, and the elections were repeated. There was better transparency and involvement of citizens. The year 2017 was especially different because the government machinery was prepared to respond to violence at the highest level. They mapped out the hot spots considered to be prone to violence and deployed forces, although some instances were seen where there was excessive use of force by the police. 20 out of the 47 constituencies (including Nairobi where there are volatile informal settlements) were flagged as potential hot spots. Overall, in all the three elections since 2007, the concern of the public in informal settlements has been not whether there will be violence during elections, but what would the extent of the violence be.

Loss of Lives and Property.

One of the saddest parts of violence during elections is the resulting loss of lives and property of not only those directly and willingly involved in the violence, but those who are not. What usually happens is, even perceived peaceful political rallies involving residents of informal settlements such as Kibera draw the attention of those young people who are characterized by rioting even during nonelection periods. Triggered/encouraged by various factors including their tribal affiliation and related incitements by politicians, these people take advantage of the situation to break into peoples' houses and business premises and loot properties.

The 2007 situation was particularly traumatizing. Many people died not only in Kibera but everywhere. People associated with opposing politicians destroyed each other's properties. Some even used the situation as an opportunity to take advantage over neighbors and others with whom they had grudges. They caused pains to them by destroying their properties. Although at a lesser scale, 2013 and 2017 elections were not spared from loss of lives and properties. The overall experience of residents of Kibera is so traumatizing that one of the participants in this study who witnessed the violence narrated what he saw as follows:

I had so many friends who lost their lives. There was this young man who lost his life in front of my eyes. He was a university student who lived with his aunt. It was so difficult for the aunt to explain to the mother how it all happened. It was very sad because the young man was innocent, did not take part in any violence, but he lost his life. (P5)

Use of Security Forces/Apparatus.

The use and behavior of the security apparatus (including the police) in Kenya during elections is characterized by mixed paradigms. For those who confronted the police during various election related violences the police are not considered as a trusted body. This is because, they are consistently demonstrating behaviors that confirm bad handling of the situation mainly supporting one side and harassing the other. Being paid to do so is not ruled out either. Since at the back of one of the sides in election related disputes and associated violences is the government in power, the police were repeatedly seen to be used by the government to interfere in the conflict in the name of maintaining law and order and keeping people off the streets, thereby significantly harming the opposition supporters. Some candidates who have privileged access to manipulate the security apparatus misuse security officers to their advantage angering voters and the youth who feel that the security apparatus favor one candidate over the other. In the informal settlements, including parts of Kibera, people were forced to lock themselves in their houses for fear of the police. The police response to the 2007 election violence was also not good, as they ended up causing more violence.

On the other hand, the role and responsibility of any state security apparatus is clear with respect to maintaining law and order during any sort of crisis including elections. From this perspective, the performance of the police was seen to be gradually improving in the successive election periods since 2007. They provided security to the clerks and the public coming to cast their votes. In 2017 there were plenty of police on the streets, talking to the citizens and promoting peace which was not the case in 2007

and 2013. In 2013 and 2017 the security agents were alert and the structure was beefed up in advance to prevent what happened in 2007. Police did a good work of maintaining law and order. Security around polling stations helped voters to be calm as they vote. Provision of security by the police also guaranteed peaceful election campaigns. Police also did social media monitoring, whereby they circulated images of people suspected of causing trouble with a very high possibility of getting arrested.

Going to the Streets.

As noted earlier, some of the major causes for the youth to engage in violence have been identified as unemployment and idleness. It is understood that violence and going to the streets are not synonymous as not all street engagements should lead to violence. Going to the streets, however, is the vehicle for finding oneself in a violent environment. Hence, participants of the study deliberated on their experiences in relation to what pulls young people to the streets.

The youth go to the streets during pre-election campaigns and in the process or following announcement of results. On the voting day, thought tense, situations are within manageable expectations in most places until results start to tick in. When the youth realize the candidate, they voted for is not the one winning or likely to win, they go to the streets and start fighting. Powered in some cases by drugs, peer pressure and having not much to lose, they engage with the energy and the time that makes their involvement sometime tragic. This is how one of the participants who has been demonstrating during successive elections expressed the how and why of going to the streets.

The other reason why I could go to demonstrate on the streets is unfairness by the electoral commission and if they announce the wrong results. But if the elections are free and fair and my candidate fails, I cannot go to the streets. (P6)

There is, however, a growing realization among the youth in the informal settlements that bloodshed and death during the previous elections resulting from street fights with the police and opposition groups had little or no impact at all on the electoral results. They also came to more and more understand that it is only the youth in the informal settlements who go to the streets and face the consequences while children of the politicians are nowhere to be seen. Hence, some level of fatigue in going to the streets every time politicians set them to do so is being felt among the youth in informal settlements.

Voting System and Stolen Victories.

In 2007 voters were queuing two meters from the ballot box, and supporters were all there waiting for the results. In 2017 one would vote and then go home. Voting and waiting for the results are some of the reasons that triggered violence because after voting people are idle and well positioned to incite others. Although there were some technical challenges observed, a biometric voter registration (BVR) system was introduced in 2017. The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) made an intensive campaign to introduce the system and this somehow improved the process and had a significant implication on effectiveness of the system and the trust there on. More polling stations were introduced resulting in shorter queues and faster voting. This ensured all the

voting to be completed within the stipulated time, between 6:00 am and 6:00 pm, for the results to be announced the following day.

One of the triggers of violence in all areas, and specifically in informal settlements during the three election periods is the real or perceived vote rigging which is termed by most as “stolen victory”. From experiences of the 2007 and 2013 elections, the youth and similarly, the public supporting opposition candidates witnessed four different ways in which their victories have been stolen. These were as follows:

1. *Tampering with technology*: Deliberate malfunctioning of the technology (2013) meant to safeguard the process and reverting to manual processing which can be abused. This meant fingerprint verification to ascertain that the right people were voting, and ascertaining they were voting only once was not possible.
2. *Inflated turnout*: This was prevalent in areas of low population density. Cited example is 2013 election where the unusual high official turnout of over 80% in North Eastern Region which many were surprised about. The suspicion is, the turnout could have been inflated deliberately in which ballot papers were added in the name of non-existing voters or those who did not show up to vote. In this regard, a participant narrated the situation he witnessed during the 2013 election as follows: “I remember Juja constituency in Kiambu county registered 110% voter turnout. Such things instantly trigger anxiety and caused violence, and this is exactly what happened” (P9).

3. *Setting up fake polling streams*: Many polling stations are usually split up into “streams” to ease up congestion of the voting process and results transmission. Experiences from 2013 election indicated that there were suspicions in some cases whereby fake polling streams were set up to add fraudulent votes.
4. *Falsifying the figures*: This is a classic way of election rigging. It happens while transferring results from polling stations or constituency level to the national tallying center and it was a major concern of stolen victory and cause of violence both in 2007 and 2013 elections. A participant narrated his experience in this regard as follows:

I remember during the live streaming of results in 2007, people believed their candidate who garnered more than 1,000,000 votes and leading by wide margins, then suddenly there was power blackout and the gap was closed by the time the lights were back. In 2013 the results were announced at the polling station and streamed live, and this created better trust. (PP13)

Media/Social Media.

Both the mainstream and social media played significant roles in influencing the youth in a direction that escalated violence during all three elections. Politicians had strategists who ran their social media, in which they invested a lot of money. The role that local media organizations played in amplifying hate speech was vivid in aggravating the 2007 postelection violence.

Local language radios have been responsible for fueling ethnic hatred and violence. These radio stations are mainly partisan and unethical. Talk shows transmitted through these stations were platforms for hate speech and most of the talk show hosts are not necessarily trained in conflict reporting or moderation. A participant described his feelings about the media as follows: “The media in Kenya is biased to certain candidates. The political experts who give their analysis are biased. If a small lie is repeated so many times it looks like the truth” (PP11).

The learning from the tragic experience of 2007 resulted in the Kenyan Government issuing state guidelines to avoid hate speech which helped to decrease violence instigated by the media in subsequent elections. In 2013 and 2017 elections, the rise in “peace journalism,” was observed. An example of such a phenomenon is COS FM a local radio station targeting mainly residents of informal settlements which succeeded in bringing together different ethnic groups for community conversation.

Peace Initiatives.

After 2007, there were many initiatives in the form of meetings, youth groups formation, and community dialogues. They focused on training the youth could on how to use negotiation instead of violence to solve disputes. Since the 2007 elections were chaotic, the initiatives were not well planned. Prior to the 2013 election, many organizations like the UN-Habitat, Peace Net-Kibera and many others came to Kibera to enlighten people on the need for peaceful elections and avoiding violence. The same was replicated in 2017 and a relatively peaceful election was witnessed.

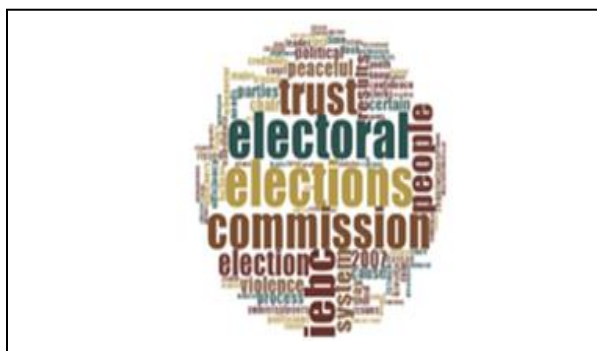
In 2013 many parents took time to talk to and advise their children (the youth) before the elections focusing on the disadvantages of violence. This somehow seemed to have helped them reason out. Massive peace rallies and mobilizations were conducted towards ensuring peaceful electioneering period. Although some religious groups are aligned with political parties, religious institutions also played significant roles in bringing people together.

Public Distress.

A word cloud for the theme of public distress appears in Figure 6.

Figure 6

Public Distress



Mistrust Among Communities.

The appropriate word that describes the political disposition ahead of any election in Kenya is “distrust”. One of the key elements of public distress in all the elections is the lack of trust in the electoral system. The discontent starts from the assignment of clerks in the polling stations.

Where clerks have been suspected of not being fair and transparent in the process of vote counting and transmitting results, there is already some level of unrest looming within the community. The agents of candidates are alert in observing if the counting will be fair and look at the credibility of the clerks. If the mistrust mounts, the bitterness heightens emotions and they start violence because they do not believe that the vote counting will result in their candidate winning.

Credibility of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission.

The overall public distress lies in the consistently demonstrated inability of the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) to guarantee free and fair elections. After every election, the commission was disbanded and a new one formed though this helped very little improving the trust level. What deepened the public distress following the 2007 tragic and highly disputed election was, the commission chairman came out in public and declared that he was not able to tell who won the election. While the chairman of the Commission plays a major role in ensuring peaceful elections, individuals in the position did not win public trust until the election in 2017 when a relatively well accepted commissioner took office. Most people are of the opinion that in 2007 the Kivuitu Election Commission of Kenya (ECK) and later (in 2013) the Issack Hassan IEBC have no difference because only the chair and the name have changed but the group remained the same.

Following the introduction of the biometric voter registration system coupled with appointment of an acceptable commissioner for the 2017 election, the trust level showed some improvement, but it takes long time and concerted effort for a substantive

improvement. Overtime, certain rules, and regulations that have been enforced by the electoral commission that ban politicians from participating in elections if they are involved in political malpractices like bribery of voters.

Failed Leadership.

Leaders are always expected to stand behind their people. Specially at the time of despair and challenges people face in connection with aftereffects of elections, they should demonstrate their roles as leaders to ease the suffering of their people. Neither the political nor the religious leaders take their responsibilities as seriously as expected.

If we look at 2007, after all the miseries that people, especially young people who supported politicians went through, the opposition political leaders focused more on sharing power with the government and paid no attention to the situation of those who suffered for them. The people are left with no option but wait for what would happen in the next election. Politicians are also doing very little in their handling of historical injustices so that people can find ways as a nation to repair relationships between communities that have been affected during election processes marked by violence.

The role of religious leaders is also very important. People miss the religious leaders giving direction through God and not political parties. They need to pray for the country and peace, not support certain candidates. In this regard, one of the participants expressed his views about the religious leaders as follows:

The religious leaders who should give us direction because we are God fearing country, are aligned with certain political affiliations, and even the Council of

Churches is supporting a particular candidate. They are not giving us direction forgetting that their followers could be aligned with some other candidates. (P12)

Overall, when the leaders fail to guide their people, they themselves become causes of further violence and public distress.

Free and Fair Election.

If elections are perceived to be free and fair, young people normally would not go to the streets to demonstrate. But what usually happens in informal settlements is that, the young voters organize themselves into gangs and try to monitor how the process is going. Where some irregularities are observed or perceived, there would be so many stone throws. One of the participants (P4) who served as a clerk at a polling station called Ayani, witnessed electorates referring to their party leader giving them permission to throw stones. Some people really want to vote but they would not do so because they would be stopped on the way. This happens at every level. The political parties lack free and fair elections at the grassroots level where the process starts with party nominations. These are the same people who complain about the process not being fair at the national elections.

The other reflection of lack of fairness in the electoral process relates to how much does the vote one casts really counts. It is observed that the candidate of the state enjoys more protection than the opposition and that's how it has always been in Kenya. The youth generally believe that no matter how many times they vote the process remains to be unfair.

The system seems to decide who the winner will be. This is because tycoons sit down and decide who would be best suit to protect their property – the dynasty. This means, if somebody somewhere decides for you, there was no need of going to vote if your vote does not count.

Politicians' Behaviors.

The behavior of politicians is what plays a key role in the performance of elections. People have realized over time that the politicians are greedy. All they care about is themselves. While their supporters demonstrate on the streets, their children are in good schools overseas. Their children never take part in the challenging processes of elections and the ordinary supporters feel that they are being misused. The interesting thing is, politicians mobilize youth from informal settlements like Kibera, Mathare, Kwangware and Korogoshi and while these supporters of opposing politicians fight on the streets, the politicians meet, talk, drink and eat together. Those who realize this phenomenon eventually tend to start asking how genuine the cause for the fighting is.

Politicians are also major contributing factors of peace during elections. Their words can cause either peace or violence as they are heard by voters. For example, when they say people from an opposing tribe came and grabbed their land while they know their people sold the land to the other tribe, the audience becomes furious and ready to fight. The players are not as such the political groups but individuals in the groups. Once they get what they want, things calm down. They always try to push things to the end until they get what they want. In 2007 they advised to calm only after the two opposing

groups formed a coalition and in 2017, after what is referred to as “the handshake”. This demonstrates that they use the power of their supporters to bargain for power.

Electoral Disputes Handling.

Although the situation appears to have improved overtime, overall, there is very little trust in the judicial system that handles electoral disputes. The judges were under threat, hence giving a biased opinion. Cases take too long to be heard and determined in courts. 2007 was bloody violent and led to serious disputes. Due to the lack of confidence in handling the cases of the 2007 elections, many including the international community supported the cases to be referred to the international criminal court. However, even that failed because the internal political dynamics paved ways for tampering with evidence and intimidating witnesses whereby the court was not able to proceed with the cases.

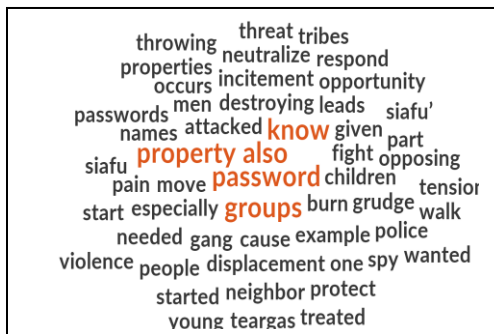
A dramatic shift was seen in the courage and behavior of the highest judicial organ of the nation in the 2017 election disputes. The election commission declared the incumbent president the winner by a margin of 1.4 million votes following which the opposition challenged the decision in the supreme court. For the first time in the history of Kenyan elections, may be in Africa as well, an opposition challenge in court against a presidential poll result that awarded victory for a sitting president was successful and the election had to be repeated. The Chief Justice announced that the August 8, 2017 election was not conducted in accordance with the constitution and declared it "invalid, null and void".

Displacement.

A word cloud for the theme of displacement appears in Figure 7.

Figure 7

Displacement



Tension and Threats.

The 2007 election was full of threats and intimidations. In most instances this was triggered by tribal differences. The incitements were between groups as well as individuals. Children were under threat. The young men start the violence and the police respond by throwing teargas to neutralize the crowd and this leads to further tensions. The violence in the informal settlements, though triggered by various election process related incidents has its roots in ethnic rivalries in rural areas and the associated struggle for ancestral lands. What we see as an immediate ignition of conflict following election results is linked to the internal grudge brewing for decades. This phenomenon holds true for the 2013 and 2017 elections as well. Politicians and their supporters come up with slogans that affect the voter attitude. For example, during the referendum for the new constitution in 2010, there was a slogan “Katiba ni sasa kama si sasa ni sasa hivi” (the new constitution is now and right now). There are other political slogans that cause

violence and tension like “it is our time to eat” which also creates a divide between neighbors.

Some use the created tension as an opportunity especially if they had a grudge with their neighbors to cause pain by destroying their property. The opposing tribes would also gang up to protect their property and that’s how the fight starts. These groups were given names and passwords so that if one of their own wanted to move or walk from part A to B of an area, they needed a password. For example, there was a password ‘siafu siafu’ for members of a group needed to know and say to prove they belong to the group. Those who failed to say the password were treated as spies and attacked.

The outcome of such threats and tensions is displacement of people from where they lived for decades and heading to any opportune destinations. One among such opportune destinations specially for the youth is an informal settlement in any city. Kibera and other informal settlements in Nairobi are mainly characterized by such influx of people from rural areas.

ground for enhanced violence. Parties mobilize along ethnic lines a lot using violence as a means of gaining power. Certain groups move from their area, mobilize and bring people from other areas, pay people to come and register in Nairobi, transport them during the real election to vote for a certain group. They finance the transportation and rallying. Tribalistic differences also cause friction because each tribe wants to be superior than the other. If one looks at the Kibera informal settlement, residents come from different parts of the country thereby affiliated with different ethnic groups. The chief opposition leader has a big following in Kibera and has a big influence on violence in the area. During elections, the two dominant and opposing groups (led by the Kikuyus on one side and the Luos on the other) try to drag the rest towards their side. In this regard, although each side marshalled their youth in the name of protecting their own, associating oneself with one or the other always has its own security implications.

In Kibera and most other informal settlements, the security concern is manifested in the fact that each political side has its own organized vigilante group that creates challenges for the opposing side including preventing access to voting stations where possible. You could not access some parts of the slum unless you were a kikuyu because of the Mungiki group and the Highrise route was not accessible unless you were a Luo. Those who cause violence ask for your identification cards. If you are from an opposition tribe, they beat you up and stop you from voting. There are several places where you cannot go to vote if you are from a certain tribe. They will stop you on the way. In an election discussion, this phenomenon eventually translates into voting either willfully or

forced, not on the bases of credibility and performance history of candidates or their vision for the people, but purely based on their tribe or ethnic affiliation.

People blamed the other tribe for not winning and they did not even realize you are not part of it at all. In connection with the youth, tribalism did not stop in political elections. Even in the universities, elections for students' leadership bear the face of the political leadership contests having its roots in tribalism. Student election in the class bears the face of an election between lakeside and Mount Kenya (the roots of the two opposing political groups).

Tolerance.

What is generally lacking in the tribal related disputes is tolerance. Particularly during elections, the tolerance levels on all sides are very low. Although people know that life continues after elections and they need to live together, emotions created in the process of ethnicity led mobilization mask the attention to be given to the need for life after the elections.

As the years progressed from 2007 the ethnicity factor has reduced, and people are becoming less tribal. Both in 2013 and 2017 there was a slight improvement partly because of the tendency of a relatively younger generation emerging in the leadership. The tendency of forming coalitions among different tribal parties also contributed to the reduction of animosity and tension.

Injustice.

A word cloud for the theme of injustice appears in Figure 9.

Figure 9

Injustice



Some people feel that there are historical injustices that citizens from different backgrounds face which are manifested during elections to date. In Kibera the people who originally came from Nyanza and Western part of Kenya are the ones who are seen to cause violence because they believe their fore father, Jaramogi is the one who assisted Jomo Kenyatta (the first Kenyan president after independence) into power and they deserve their chance to lead. This has been built over time. One of the participants from the community leaders narrated his observation as follows:

The candidate of the state enjoyed more protection than the opposition and that's how it has been in Kenya since time in memorial. The judicial system gives more protection to the candidate of the state more and this is unjust. (P10)

Defying Electoral Rules.

Supporters of the opposition coalition believe that the opposition has been winning elections since 2007 but they have been denied victory several times. When

candidates of either the incumbent government or the opposition are found not obeying electoral rules like sponsoring violence against their opponents, and this is reported to the relevant authorities, no action is taken. This breeds discontent from rival youth supporters promoting violence. Laws governing elections meant for all and need to be observed by all. In this regard, the 2017 elections revealed some hope when the Supreme Court nullified the results of the August 2017 election. Through its ruling, the court asserted that the integrity of a process matters, even if uncertainty follows. It resisted the temptation to opt for political stability over electoral justice and sent a signal to the continent's leaders that the power of the executive is not absolute.

Left Out of Government.

Many Kenyans believe that there is an inbuilt system for those who become leaders and those rejected by the system cannot become leaders and hence excluded. They believe that in a non-transparent election there is no leveled playing field and hence what emerges is the feeling of being disfranchised. Most of the time their candidate of choice does not win but the one favored by the hidden system. The question of electoral justice pronounces itself here clearly. When certain communities feel left out of government through rigged elections, they are likely to vent through violence thus a need to ensure that elections are free, fair and a true reflection of the wishes of the electorate.

Political Influence.

There is stiff competition between different political parties. They all focus on each other's weakness and try to influence supporters to rally against their opponents. But if there was credibility where people share their plans and visions for the people without

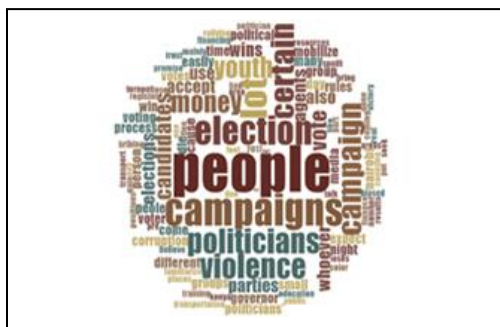
interference, the level of violence would have been less. Violence always starts by young people sponsored by the politicians. The IEBC nor the political parties are seen anywhere conducting civic education. In fact, the political parties fuel violence. The influence of politicians does not stop at the youth. The whole justice system, the police and even the religious groups are influenced and biased because they were aligned to particular candidates. The partisan security apparatus lets go influential politicians and their supporters who act recklessly during the election process.

Election Campaigns

A word cloud for the theme of election campaigns appears in Figure 10.

Figure 10

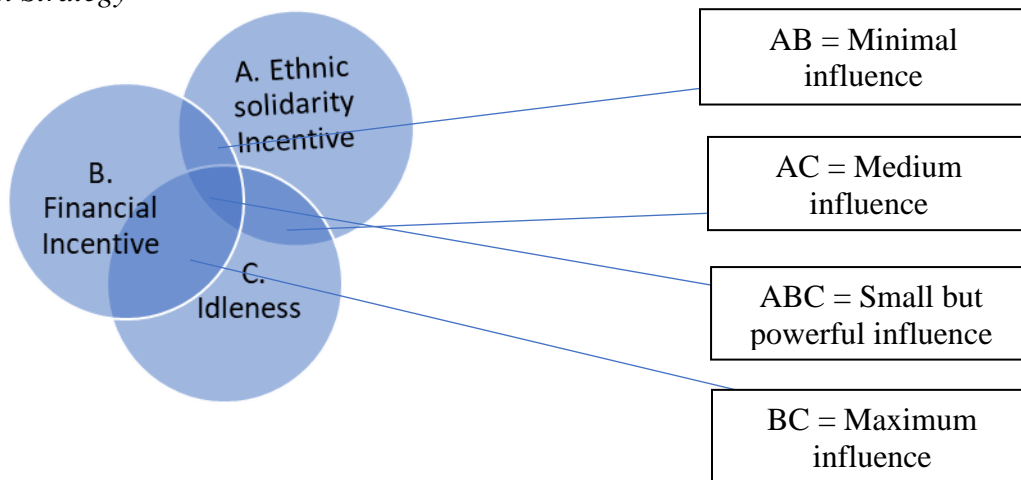
Election Campaigns



One of the objectives of an election campaign is to mobilize supporters of a candidate by nurturing solidarity among different individuals persuaded by various instances that appeal to their respective situations or interests. These instances could be financial motivation, social status, ethnic affiliation, age or any other condition that individuals identify themselves with. Kenyan politicians use the strategy of combining any of these instances to persuade young people to come out to political rallies.

The most popular combination for voter mobilization or campaigns strategy is that of ethnicity centered solidarity and financial motivation. When this is matched with idleness of potential rally goers, the result will be a fertile ground for violent engagements. When some other relatively influential people campaign for a politician, they expect positions, economic benefits, and feel they will gain out of the victory of the politicians.

This tendency of campaign strategies in Kenyan elections appears to be sowing the seed for what looks like commercialization of campaigns. The more campaigns are getting to be commercial ventures, the more they cultivate what some people refer to as professional rally goers. These people find themselves wherever candidates travel for campaigning and they do so by moving in large groups, attending rallies and giving the impression that the candidates have big support in the area. They are also involved in recruiting young people who would play catalyst roles between the locals and the movers. Combinations of incentives influencing young people to engage in activities of support to politicians are indicated in Figure 11.

Figure 11*Campaign Strategy*

Moreover, the campaign strategy linked with material incentive clearly lures voters to compromise their electoral conscience and subsequently leads to electoral injustices by commercializing the elections. The negative role of such a strategy coupled with the ethnic solidarity was demonstrated in the 2007 presidential elections. It distorted the basis for the fundamental understanding of free and fair democratic elections, thereby undermining electoral justice.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

Credibility

According to Shenten (2004), one of the measures of credibility is developing an early familiarity with the culture of participants before the first data collection dialogues take place. Accordingly, I used my experience of living in Nairobi during two of last four elections to familiarize myself with the culture of participants. I also practiced iterative

questioning to ascertain what the participants were saying were based on their genuine experiences.

In addition, I used a triangulation method by soliciting information from other sources like elders and community leaders in the informal settlement, project managers running conflict related project in informal settlements of Nairobi. This additional evidence of credibility is the synergy between the responses of participants observed through a triangulation method as indicted in Appendix A and B. Other supportive methods of ensuring credibility as described by Shenton (2004) include peer scrutiny of the research project, and examination of previous related research projects, which I did.

Transferability

The level at which future research and other similar frameworks make use of the results of the study outcome denotes the level of its transferability (Marshall & Rossman, 2014). Although in general transferability of qualitative research results is debatable because of differences in contexts of different studies, I examined to what similar context the results of my dissertation might be transferable. I am of the belief that though the study was specific to the Kibera informal settlement of Nairobi, it would as well be transferable to other informal settlements within Kenya as well as other countries where ethnic division and poverty play significant roles in mobilizing young people during elections.

Comfortability

This deals with ensuring as far as possible that, findings of the study generate from the experiences and ideas of the participants, rather than the preferences and

characteristics of the researcher (Shenton, 2004). It serves as a measure to check whether the findings of the research and the interpretations thereon, are supported by the data (Creswell, 2014). Since a threat to confirmability might also be increased by researcher biases (Creswell, 2014), I was very careful in containing my views and preferences and focus on the experiences of the participants and contain any potential biases.

Accordingly, the data analysis was exclusively derived from the interview transcript and hence addressing the issue of conformability. One evidence of this is the level of commonality in the responses of a young participant (P6) and a community leader (PP10) as demonstrated in figure 12 below in which they have similar views related to seven of the themes and sub themes dealt with in the analysis.

Dependability

Dependability is somewhat related to credibility. It refers to the extent to which the research findings are valid, consistent and can be replicated (Golafshani, 2003). In this regard, I subscribe to the argument of Lincoln and Guba (1985) (as cited in Shenton, 2004), in which they asserted that in practice, demonstrating credibility in qualitative research contributes to dependability and this can be done using “overlapping methods” like focus groups and individual interviews. Although I had to change focus group discussion as one among the two data collection methods due to the social distancing requirements to manage the Covid-19 pandemic which surfaced immediately before my data collection commenced, I included in the interview community leaders and experts who managed conflict management related projects in informal settlements in the

interviews to compensate for the change and sustain credibility. By so doing, I tried to ascertain credibility as it contributes to dependability.

Study Results

Participants' responses in interviews as transcribed and analyzed using the NVIVO software have adequately responded to the two research questions as illustrated below.

Research Question 1: Perceptions About Electoral Justice

The data coding and subsequent analysis resulted in emergence of various themes and sub themes that depict the feelings and perceptions of participants about electoral justice. Following are brief interpretations of the feelings and perceptions of participants as expressed under each of the identified themes and sub-themes.

Unemployment

Participants feel that the severe economic conditions of young people in informal settlements due to the chronic unemployment exposes them to a degree of vulnerability that they become malleable to be used by politicians for illegal and unjust activities related to election processes. Young people who are idle and have nothing to lose by engaging in such illegal and unjust activities driven by politicians are believed to be contributors of undermining the electoral justice of the country.

Violence

Comparing the three elections (2007, 2013 and 2017), although all of them were characterized by violence of varying degrees, 2007 was the worst and 2017 was relatively the best. This perception is based on the extent of the loss of lives and property because

of violence. The use of government security apparatus in either fueling or controlling violence was demonstrated at varying degrees during the three elections thereby contributing to severity of the consequences of violence. Street demonstrations usually ending in fighting either with the police or opposition groups were the triggers of violence in almost all cases. The other triggers of violence were unreliable election/voting systems resulting in real or perceived vote rigging expressed as “stolen victors”. The media, both the mainstream and social media played their respective roles in aggravating violence, specially in 2007 where some local media were used to instigate tribal conflict. Considering all these elements of violence which were demonstrated at diminishing degrees from 2007 to 2017, participants believe that they have affected citizens’ confidence level on the country’s electoral justice system.

Public Distress

The consistent lack of credibility of the institution entrusted to manage elections in Kenya for its successive failure to conduct free and fair elections resulted in a hard-core mistrust of the institution and the whole electoral system. Participants not only feel but believe the inability to conduct free and fair elections is closely linked to failure of leadership at various levels and as well to the behaviors of politicians who give credence to their political aspirations rather than the function of a just and credible electoral system. The way election disputes were handled during presidential and other elections did not correspond with public expectations except for the bold decision made by the Supreme Court to invalidate the August 2017 presidential election results. The participants’ feeling of electoral justice from this perspective is that, although there is a

slight indication of improvement in the 2017 elections, there is a lot to be done in the future to demonstrate a real improvement in the public trust towards electoral justice practices.

Displacement

Tensions and threats that potentially lead to displacement of people from their regular areas of residences surface long before election days. This happens mostly in rural areas from where residents of informal settlements like Kibera come from. It is linked to ethnic rivalries and the struggle for ancestral lands.

The violence in informal settlements does not necessarily lead to displacement but nevertheless, the fact that the conflict is usually between rival ethnic groups, the tension and threat this causes to families, specially women and children cannot be underestimated. The feelings of participants in this regard is that normal process of elections that would ascertain observance of electoral justice might be undermined when people are tense and fail to react rationally to circumstances during elections.

Research Question 2: Contribution to Political Violence

Tribalism

How electoral justice is perceived by participants has a direct contribution to political violence during elections. The common denominator in all the ups and downs related to election disputes and associated violence is tribalism. Politicians run for offices not based on a political agenda they may convince the electorate about but counting on their tribal belongingness and related ethnic affiliations. This derails the value linked to electoral justice. When disputes connected with ethnic affiliations arise, what is generally

lacking is tolerance. The tolerance levels on all sides are very low, particularly during elections. Since all sides feel that justice does not work anyway, they opt for any move, including political violence that they believe would make them win elections. Hence, the lack of trust and confidence in the electoral justice system tends to push people to their tribal corners and with this, the lack of tolerance mentioned above sows the seed for political violence.

Injustice

When people feel that politicians specially those associated with the incumbent government intentionally defy electoral rules and regulations, this is seen as a strategic approach to keep the opposition politicians out of government. The way this is done is through tampering with the electoral system and seemingly inadvertently using state resources for political purposes. Moreover, the influence of politicians to undermine electoral justice does not stop at the youth. The whole justice system, the security apparatus including the police and even the religious groups are influenced and biased because they are in one way or another aligned with particular candidates during election, thereby exacerbating political violence.

Election Campaigns

One of the key attributes of the Kenyan election campaigns that directly undermine the electoral justice system is the campaign strategy followed by politicians. The dominant campaigning strategy for voter mobilization is ethnicity centered solidarity supported with financial motivation. The financial motivation element of the strategy has created what appears to be commercialization of campaigns which gave way to a new

category of players referred to as professional rally goers. These people follow candidates in large groups, attending rallies and giving impression that a candidate has big number of followers. Not only that, in areas where they are not welcomed like in informal settlements, they are the primary causes of violence thereby contributing to the disruption of a smooth functioning of the electoral justice system.

Summary

The study engaged 17 participants nine of whom are young adults and five community leaders from the Kibera informal settlement. In addition, three professionals who run conflict management related projects in informal settlements were interviewed for the purpose of triangulation of data. Participants' feelings about and experiences in the functioning of electoral justice in the Kenyan context is characterized by multiple factors and players contributing to the malfunctioning of the electoral justice system.

These factors (unemployment, violence, public distress, and displacement) and players (politicians, tribal groups, the security apparatus) are at the heart of drawing young residents of the informal settlements into conflict during elections. Although there are symptoms of improvement over there the past three elections (2007, 2013, and 2017) in levels of violence and compliance with electoral processes, the resulting discontent marred by the associated derivatives of tribalism in the whole of Kenyan political setup, injustice and corrupt campaigning strategies still significantly undermine smooth functioning of the electoral justice system of the country.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

Introduction

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to gain an understanding of the lived experiences and perceptions of residents of Kenyan informal settlements (mainly young people) about major aspects of electoral justice that trigger youth violence during elections in the informal settlements of the national capital, Nairobi. The qualitative phenomenological design of the study facilitated a step-by-step process toward achieving the objective of the study.

The interviews were held with young people who had either directly participated in election-related violence over the past three successive elections or witnessed the same, with community leaders who had witnessed such violence over the years, and with other individuals who had direct experience in leading on conflict management and peace-building-related projects in informal settlements of Nairobi. They led to insights into major triggers of violence during elections and their implications for electoral justice.

The two research questions that I used to guide the study were the following:

1. How do youth living in Nairobi's informal settlements perceive electoral justice?
2. How do feelings of electoral injustice amongst youth living in Nairobi's informal settlements contribute to political violence in these communities during national elections?

This chapter contains a discussion of the major findings of the study in relation to the research questions designed to respond to the research problem, their respective interpretations, limitations of the study, and recommendations. The chapter also explains implications of the study for social change and finally provides a conclusion.

Interpretation of Findings

Perception of Electoral Justice

Among the 17 participants, almost all had a similar understanding of electoral justice as it relates to the youth violence observed in all three elections in Kenya since 2007. The major traits of electoral justice as understood by the participants manifesting in youth-led violence in the informal settlements during elections were identified as the following: youth unemployment, violence resulting from real or perceived vote rigging by organized operatives of candidates, public distress emanating from deep mistrust in the functioning of the electoral system, and displacement of people from their inherent voting constituencies, thereby denying them their rights to effectively participate in elections.

The perceptions of participants in relation to electoral justice with reference to the identified triggers were influenced by what they witnessed during successive elections, as follows:

- *young adults*: by directly engaging in the violence
- *community leaders*: by handling community responsibilities and challenges resulting from young people's consistent involvement in violence during elections

- *professionals*: by their ample experiences in running conflict management and peace building projects in informal settlements of Nairobi, and also drawing their perceptions from their observations during elections and situational analysis in support of their respective projects

Youth in the informal settlements who are unemployed and mostly idle feel that they have nothing to lose by engaging in any adversary activities that contribute to circumstances that undermine certain aspects of electoral processes. Though at lesser degrees moving from 2007 to 2017, all of the elections have been plagued by allegations of electoral fraud. Public trust in the IEBC and the judiciary is heavily polarized along party lines. Historically, the Kenyan electoral/judicial system has not been seen to bring many perpetrators of electoral fraud and associated violence to justice to hold them accountable for their actions. This has mainly been due to the link and affiliation of the perpetrators to the powerhouse in the political system. Traditionally, the majority of Kenyan youth have been excluded from meaningful participation in civic and political processes. As in many other countries, youth in Kenya are the society's hope in constituting a working democratic state. However, they have been neglected in playing their expected roles and instead have been used by politicians to achieve their political aspirations. This seems to have contributed to the slow movement toward genuine democratization and compliance with electoral justice requirements.

Looking into the role of politicians in the whole process of democratization and how electoral processes are handled, one may conclude that they are also perceived to be major contributors to peace during elections if they are willing and able to act

accordingly. Because their words mean a lot and are heard by their supporters, how they behave during elections causes either peace or violence, which eventually has its footprint on the functioning of electoral justice processes.

Contribution to Political Violence

The key contributors to political violence that have roots in the public perception of the extent to which electoral justice prevails in Kenyan elections are as follows.

Tribalism

The ethnic construct of the Kenyan political system, influenced by perceptions about the functionality of the electoral justice, masks the logical abstraction of electoral justice and leads supporters of candidates to other alternatives of refuge. One of the alternatives happens to be their tribal domain which by instinct drives them to violence with political opponents. The tolerance level of each side is very low, both for historical reasons and due to the persistently negative portrayal of the opposing side. This is facilitated by various means, including hate speech in various media outlets. The lack of tolerance not only leads to violence, but also masks the fact that there is still life after elections and people need to somehow live together.

Injustice

The real or perceived injustice in the whole political setup of Kenya, which is also reflected in electoral processes, has its roots in the one-party rule that has existed since independence in 1963. The situation has not shown any significant changes, even with the transition to a multiparty system in 1991. In all these years, political power has been

in the hands of two ethnic groups, and those who claim that they also have a stake consider this unjust and try to fight it through any means possible during elections.

Election Campaigns

Election campaigns are one of the key segments of an election process in which the ugly faces of elections are manifested. Together with tribalism and various forms of injustice, election campaigns vividly contributed to political violence during the pre-election, election, and post-election periods of 2007, 2013, and 2017. Since the financing of campaigns is not regulated, candidates are seen to be going the route of commercializing campaigns in which they spend lots of money to move what people call “professional rally goers” who accompany candidates to various campaign grounds. These rally goers move in huge numbers, in some cases outnumbering the locals and creating instances of violence where there are already ethnic tensions. Use of government resources for campaigning by candidates affiliated with the incumbent administration is also a practice that is not monitored.

Although the contending presidential candidates usually issue what they call “manifestoes” indicating their vision for transforming the country’s future under their leadership, very little is observed about issues of concern during campaigns. Therefore, the campaigning strategy is characterized more by seeking ethnic solidarity supported by financial incentives than by issues-based campaigning.

Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of the study was the informal nature of the youth participants. Once I had drawn a sample from the group of potential participants and

communicated the interview schedules, a few participants, particularly those who were snowball-sampled, moved to other parts of the settlement and were not traceable and had to be replaced by others. The ones who missed the interviews were considered by the community leaders to be proactive and engaging and probably would have provided useful insights to the study had they made it to the interview.

Another limitation was a change in methodology from a combination of focus group discussions and individual interviews to individual interviews alone. I was compelled to cancel the focus group discussions (with the approval of the IRB) due to the restrictions of the COVID-19 social distancing protocol. Although valuable experience was shared by the individual participants, the focus group discussions in the context of the informal settlements would have brought more interactions and resulting insights for the study.

Recommendations

Based on the reflections of participants about the subject of the study, the analysis, and the interpretation thereof, I forward the following recommendations.

On Violence

1. Any violence witnessed must be thoroughly investigated, and actions must be taken against the perpetrators of violence regardless of the position held or won during the election in question.
2. Early warning systems must be put in place to monitor any triggers to violence, and action must be taken against inciters of violence.

3. Drone technology should be employed to capture images of goons hired by politicians, after which they can be traced and actions can be taken against them.

On Unemployment

4. Youth unemployment is a ticking time bomb that must be addressed to tame the use of youth as goons for hire during electioneering periods.

On Campaign/Election Financing

5. Campaign financing and expenditures must always be scrutinized to ensure that all alternative voices have an equal platform to pass their message to the electorate without undue influence from moneyed candidates. This will ensure that elections become about the policies put forward, rather than about the financial muscle of the candidates involved. It will also help in reducing the commercialization of campaigns, in that paid “professional” rally goers will be discouraged.
6. There should be a transparent system of disclosure of the funding received by all parties and candidates, with such disclosures filed periodically during the electioneering period. Political parties must promote a culture of transparency in campaigns, nominations, and electioneering by disclosing all funds expended and expenses incurred with respect to the conduct and management of a nomination process and election campaign. The law must also allow the people to access such reports with ease for inspection and scrutiny.

7. Political parties should be made to open up all party processes to the public, from finances to party nominations, so that the people feel that their in-party activities are meaningful and transparent. This will ensure that they do not feel cheated when they vote, and that the nomination certificate goes to the preferred candidates.

On Tribalism

8. To tame regional political parties that fuel feelings of tribalism, political parties should be incentivized to ensure national representation by increasing the share of the political parties' funds for parties with the largest spread in the 47 counties. This should be made a requirement for parliamentary parties to benefit from the political parties' fund.
9. The Kenyan legislative and governance structure to explore some modalities by which representatives of a majority of Kenya's ethnic groups may be guaranteed senior positions in government. This might pave the way for politicians to gradually move away from ethnicity as a tool for political mobilization, and toward ideological campaigns that prioritize socioeconomic development.
10. The National Cohesion and Integration Commission should employ technology to record and document instances of hate speech to aid in the prosecution and conviction of suspects accused of engaging in hate speech.

On Security Management

11. Security personnel overseeing fair elections should be trained on nonpartisan policing to reduce misuse by politicians.
12. Stiffer penalties should be imposed on violators of electoral laws, including automatic loss of elective position upon conviction.

On Other Electoral-Justice-Related Matters

13. The electoral system must ensure total end-to-end management of the electioneering period from party nominations, election campaigns, and beyond the conduct of the election to keep democracy alive and strengthen and safeguard the gains made so far.
14. Voter civic education efforts and vigilance must remain beyond election time to ensure that elected leaders keep to their mandate to the electorate. This should involve enhancing public participation in governance and redefining concurrence on people-centered development.
15. There must be an independent election audit and monitoring during the election period and after the election to keep track of the observance of electoral laws and continually strengthen and build the electoral systems.

Implications

Fixing the challenges related to electoral justice in the Kenyan context is not a simple and quick thing to do. However, if serious, step-by-step action is taken in consideration of the study recommendations, this study could have immense implications for social change involving election-related dynamics. Hence, the study's level of

implications for social change rests on how much the outcomes are taken on board by the respective stakeholders. The study provides a clearer understanding of the major triggers for escalation of violence impacting the smooth functioning of the Kenyan electoral justice system. Some of these triggers are structural, others are historical, and still others are sentimental.

Some of the study recommendations entail policy changes in the electoral management system. Others require only changes in practices. Still others require mindset changes through concerted efforts of politicians and, in some opportune circumstances, the efforts of community and religious leaders. Overall, implementation of the named recommendations, as sources of additional knowledge, will help in minimizing and/or avoiding the negative impacts of violence contributing to social change, in that the human, material, and emotional resources will be spared and used for advancing the development of the country.

It is my belief that the outcome of the study as a contributor to social change as a result of reduced violence and streamlining of the electoral system will be felt at three levels:

- at the individual level, whereby young people in informal settlements and those who care for them may opt for more productive engagement in a society that recognizes and rewards their contribution.
- at an organizational level, whereby political parties and their associates may streamline their approaches to mobilizing supporters based on ethnic

affiliation and focus on issues-based elections that may help them play the roles of transformative leaders; and

- at a societal level, whereby the general public may not only witness reduced loss of lives and property resulting from election-related violence, but also enjoy relatively free and fair elections.

Conclusions

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to understand the major aspects of electoral justice that trigger youth violence in the informal settlements of Nairobi during elections, through the lived experiences of participants. The interaction with participants provided sufficient insights on the key triggers of youth violence during elections in informal settlements. The study results confirmed that there are several areas that need to be addressed at policy, organizational, and individual levels in order to avoid or minimize the challenges observed in successive elections in Kenya that undermined the effective functioning of the electoral justice system.

Participants explicitly conveyed their experiences with the issues that they felt had an impact on the smooth functioning of the electoral justice system. These issues revolved around youth unemployment, violence resulting from real or perceived vote rigging by organized operatives of candidates, public distress emanating from deep mistrust in the functioning of the electoral system, and displacement of people from their inherent voting constituencies, which denied them their rights to effectively participate in elections. The interpretation of the participants' experiences led to identification of issues such as tribalism, associated injustices, and election campaign strategies as the key

drivers negatively impacting the smooth functioning of the electoral justice system. The outcome of the study, backed by the specified recommendations, may contribute to social change by encouraging policy and practice changes that could reduce youth violence and related dysfunctionality of the electoral justice system.

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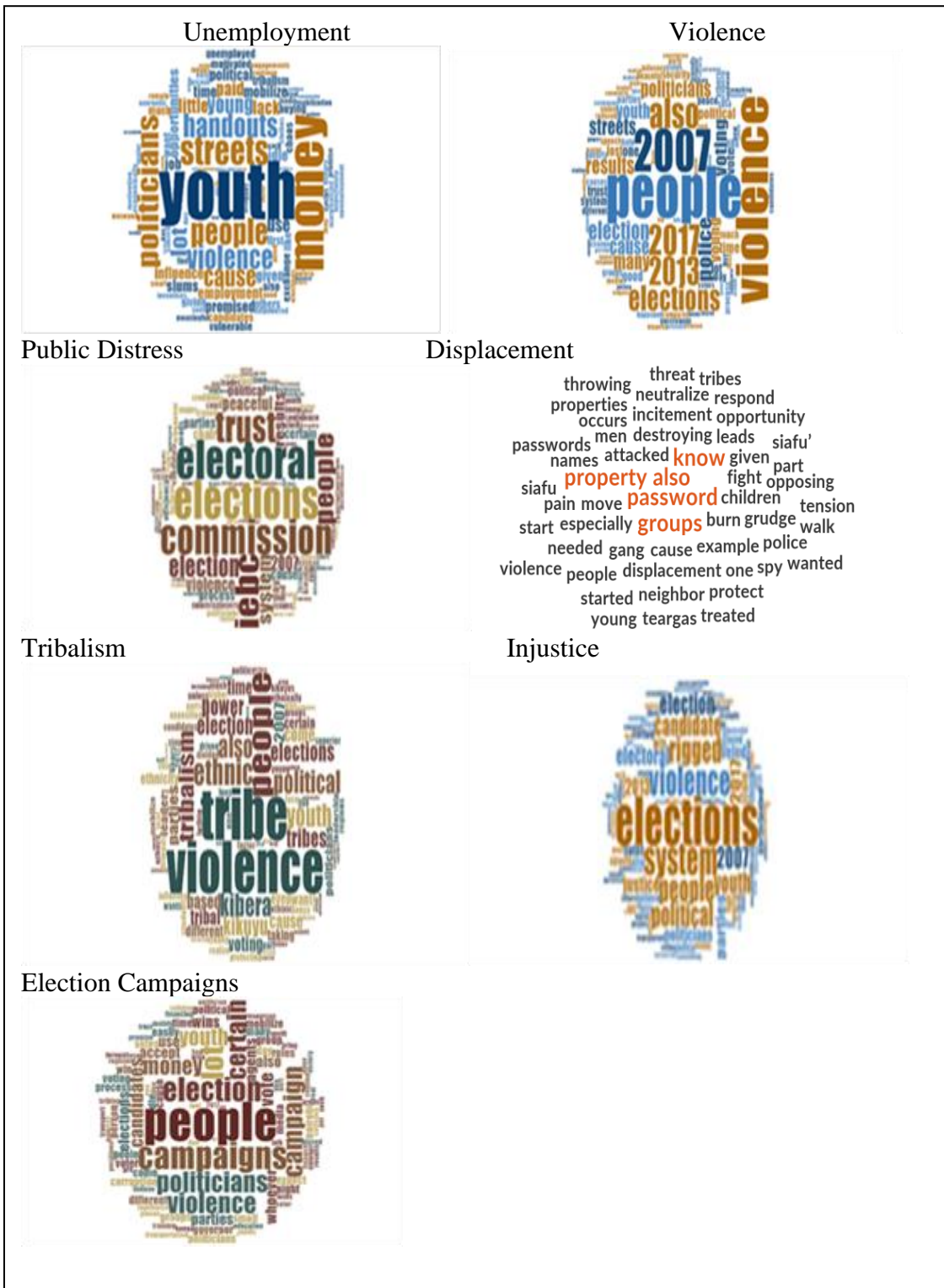
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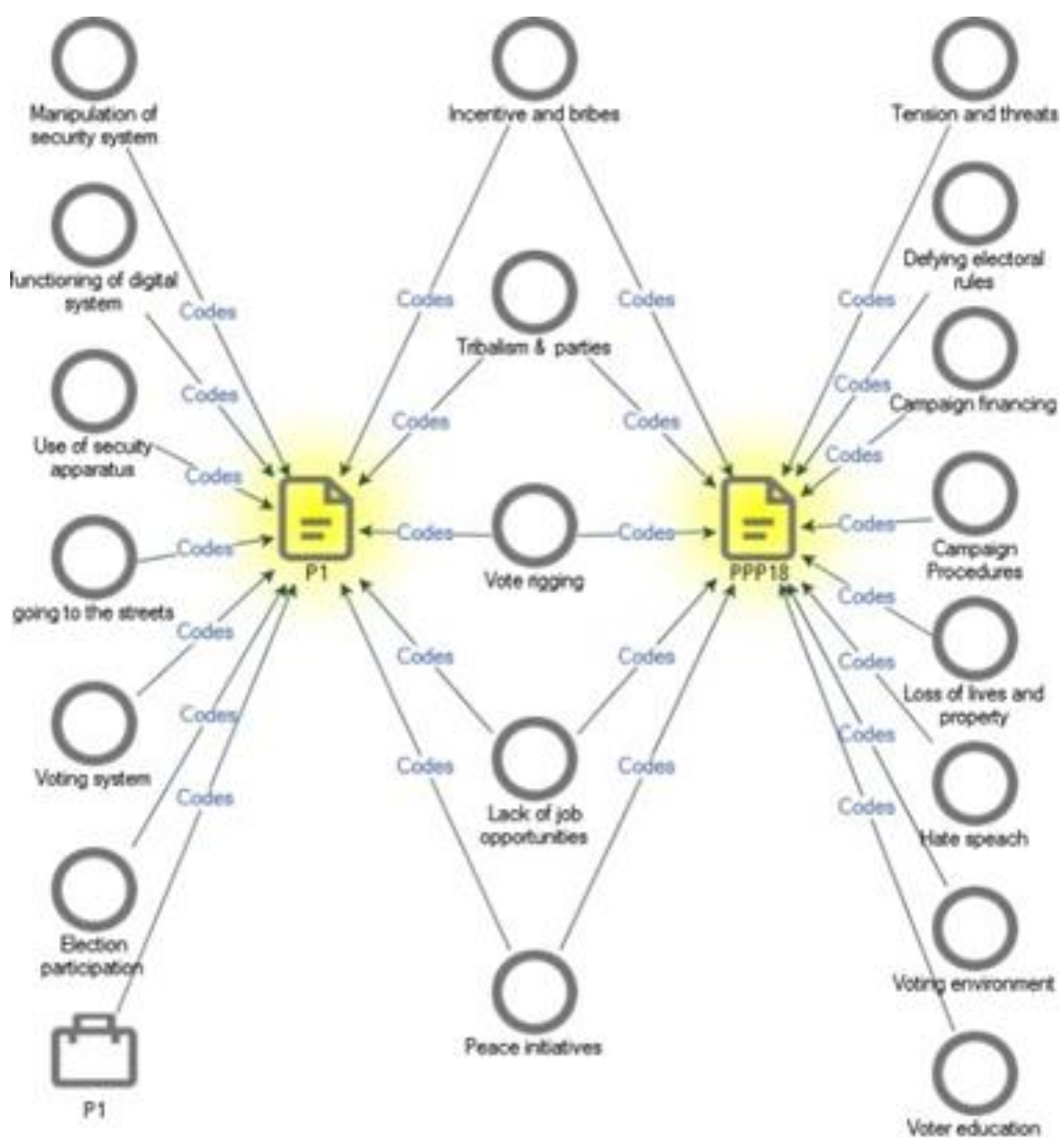
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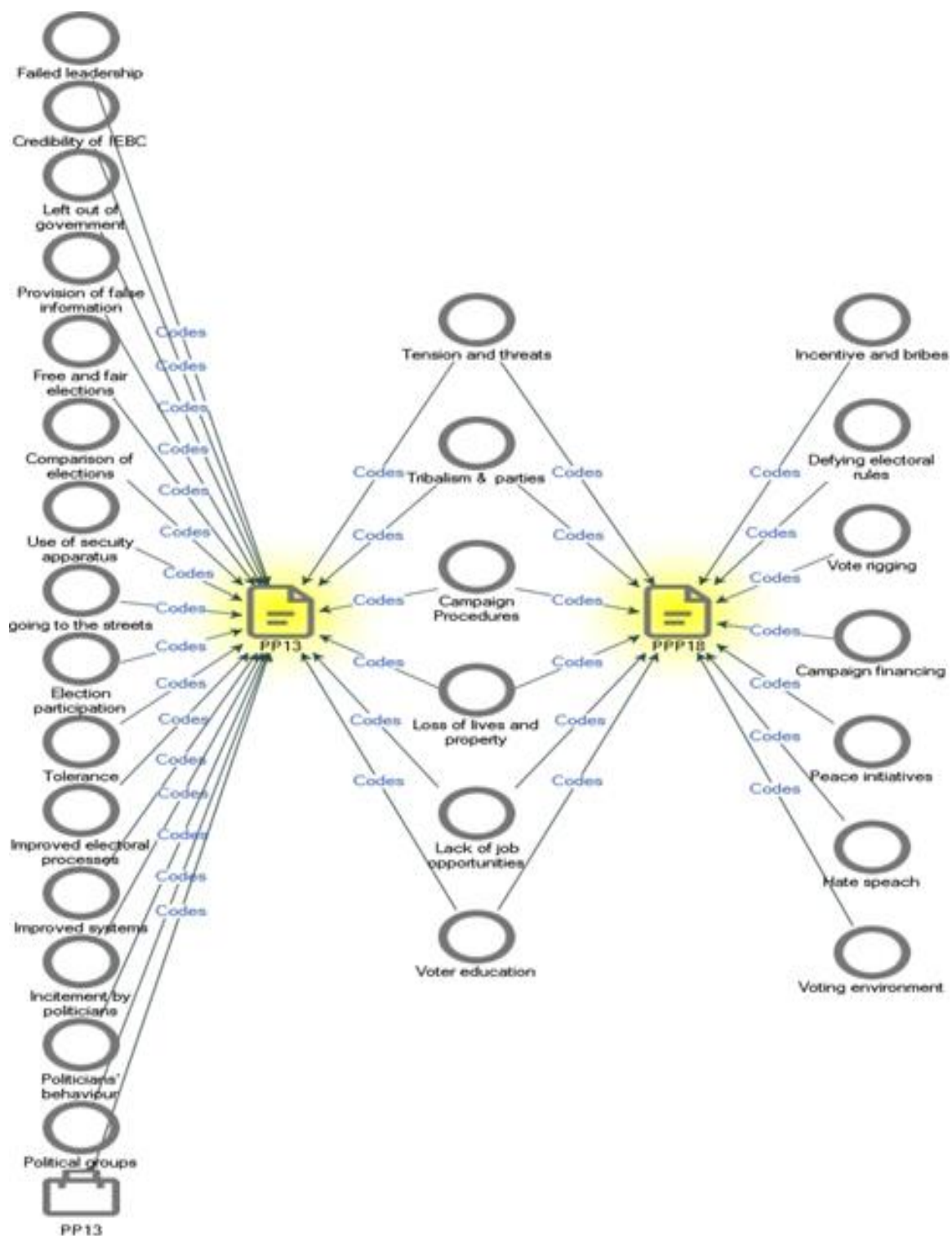
Appendix A: Emerging Themes



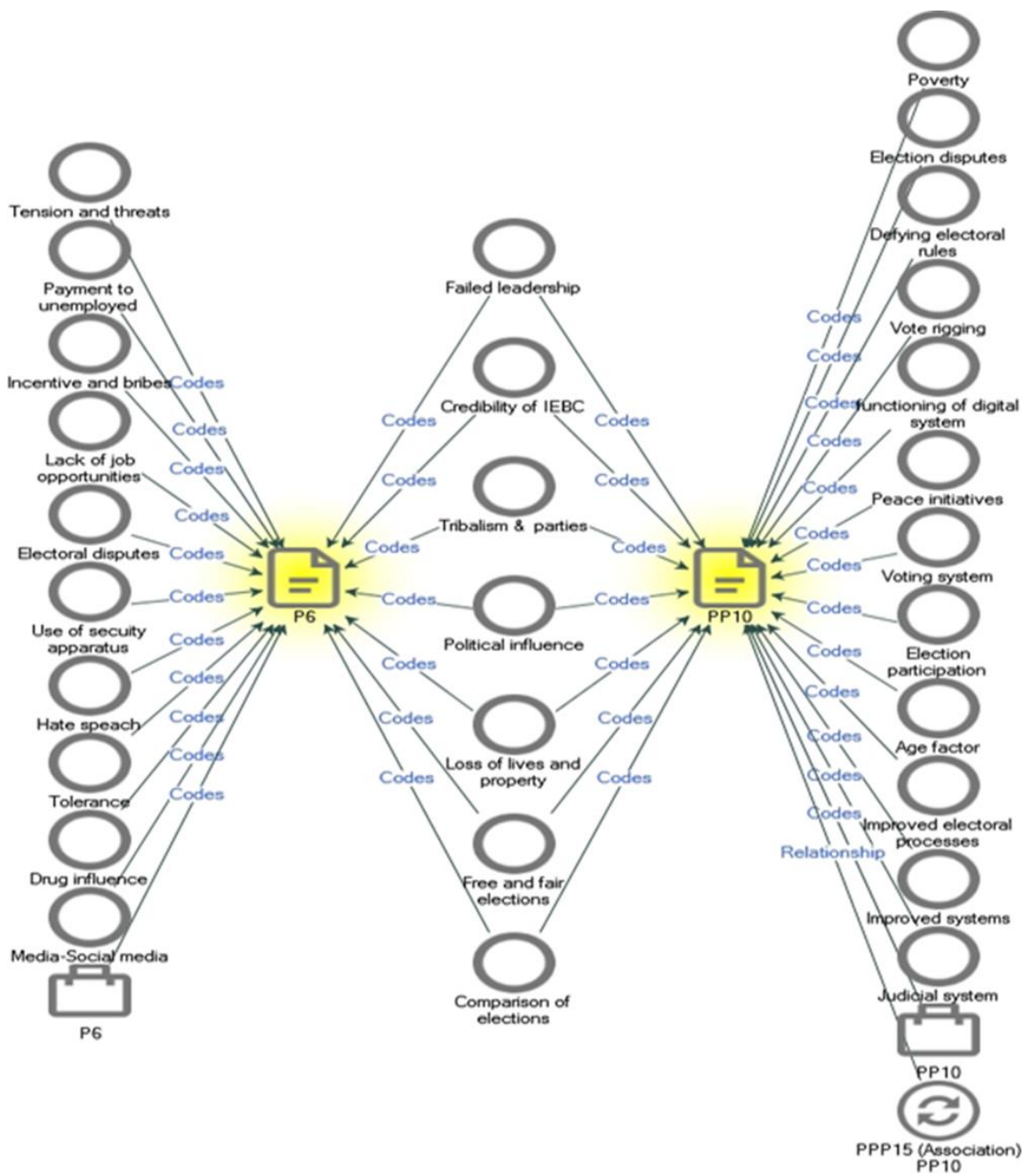
Appendix B: Evidence of Triangulation in Data Collection 1



Appendix C: Evidence of Triangulation in Data Collection 2



Appendix D: Synergy of Responses Demonstrating Conformability



Appendix E: Interview Protocol

1. Introduction
 - a. Welcome and thank participants for volunteering to participate
 - b. Introduce yourself and any other person like a note taker (if any)
 - c. Hand out the consent form
2. Ask Participants to review, ask any questions, and then sign the consent form.

Offer a copy of the consent form (unsigned) to each participant. Some will want and others may not, but always offer
3. Give a very brief overview of the research
4. Give participants information about the process: approximate time the interview may take, break if necessary.
5. Let participants know that:
 - a. Participation in the interview is entirely voluntary and not
 - b. the interviews will be recorded, and notes taken but participants names will not be revealed in any comments or reports. Obtain their consent (verbal consent sufficient) for the recording.
 - c. they can decide not to continue with the interview without giving any reason if they feel uncomfortable on any part of the questions being asked.
 - d. they can seek clarification on any question that is not clear for them.
 - e. Transcript of the interview will be shared with them for validation and they are encouraged to respond with their views when contacted.
6. Thank them at the end

Appendix F: List of Interview Questions

Q1: What has been your experience with youth violence in any elections since 2007?

(RQ1)

Q2: What do you think are the major factors driving young people into violence during elections? (RQ1)

Q3: How do you understand the link between the electoral justice system of the country and violence during elections? (RQ1, RQ2)

Q4: Which of the last three elections have you participated in or observed? (RQ1, RQ2)

- For those that you have participated in or observed, describe the violence related to the campaign or voting that you observed.

- Did you notice any trend over the course of these elections as to violence (did it become more severe? Less severe? Stay about the same? Please explain.)

Q5: How is the decision of voters to engage in violence influenced by factors related to observance of electoral laws and regulations? (RQ2)

Q6: What aspects of the electoral laws and regulations had direct influence on your views and actions during: (RQ2)

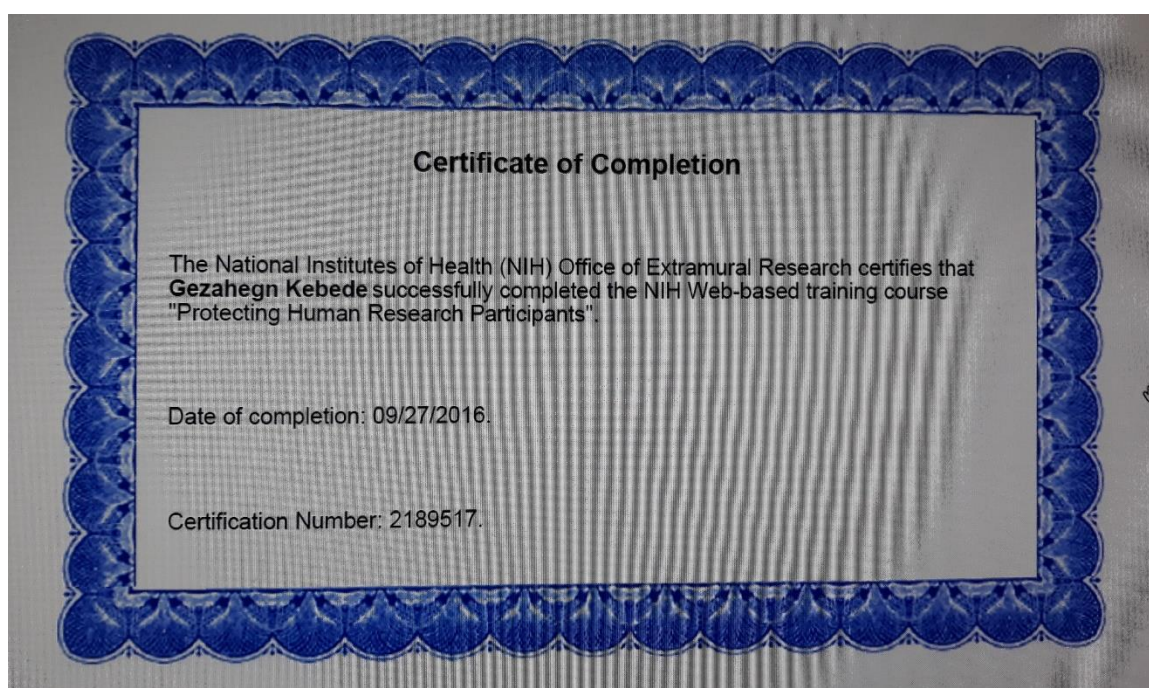
- Pre-election campaigns?

- Election days (actual voting day)?

- Post-election manifestations?

“Thank you for all that valuable information, is there anything else you’d like to add before we end?”

Appendix G: National Institutes of Health Certificate



Appendix H: Research License from the Kenyan Government—National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovations


REPUBLIC OF KENYA


NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR
SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Ref No: **505313** Date of Issue: **02/October/2020**

RESEARCH LICENSE



This is to Certify that **Mr.. Gezahegn Gebrehana of Walden University, has been licensed to conduct research in Nairobi on the topic: Electoral Justice Traits of Youth Led Election Violence in Nairobi's Informal Settlements for the period ending : 02/October/2021.**

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SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY &
INNOVATION

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Appendix I: Affiliation Letter from Tangaza University College—Institute of Youth
Studies



TANGAZA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
Institute of Youth Studies

P.O. Box 15055 Lang'ata 00509 Nairobi, Kenya. E-mail:
iysdirector@tangaza.ac.ke
Tel: 254-20-890018/890340, Mob: 0722-204724 / 0733-685059 / 0734-420935

5th August 2020

To the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI)
off Waiyaki Way, Upper Kabete,
P. O. Box 30623, 00100
Nairobi, KENYA

Dear Sir/Madam,
RE: CONFIRMATION OF AFFILIATION

This is to confirm that Kebede Gezahegn Gebrechana a student at Walden University, USA is a research affiliate at Tangaza University College – Institute of Youth Studies under the supervision of Dr Elizabeth Ngumbi for the period August 2020 to July 2021 as he pursues his research topic as below:

Doctor of Philosophy: Major in Public Policy and administration
Concentration in terrorism, mediation and peace


The research involves fieldwork in Langata Constituency.

Any question or clarification on the research can be directed to our head of department as below and we will be more than willing to assist.

All further support documents are attached.

Any assistance accorded to the researcher by NACOSTI so as to meet the field work requirements will be highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,



Catherine Kisasa Muthonde
Coordinator- Centre for Child Safeguarding and Protection

