Full Length Research

Effect of Political Mobilization on Political Violence in Nairobi County, Kenya: Focus on Mathare and Kibra Informal Settlements

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This article arose out of a need to understand better the role of political elite and actors in the mobilization of ethnic supporters for political action, specifically the recurrent political violence, in Kibra and Mathare. To investigate how political elites consolidate ethnic mobilization and use it in political contests, quantitative analysis was used and involved a proportional stratified random sample. A sample size of sample size of (n=766) was used and was divided equally between Kibra (n=383) and Mathare (n=383). The sample was weighted to reflected the relative sample sizes in Kibra (n=7) and Mathare (n=6). The sample was disaggregated as "in-group", "out-group", and "other-group". The "in-group" (n=296) were presumed ethnic supporters of the ruling elite during the 2007 presidential election and the "out-group" (n=268) supported the non-ruling elite in this contest. Besides, these groups had engaged severally in ethno-political conflicts in the study area. The "other-group" (n=202) belonged to smaller ethnic groups living in the study area who did not belong to the core ethnic groups from who the political elite drew political support. The group was used as an analytical tool –to compare conflict attitudes and behaviour against the "in-group and "out-groups." Regarding political mobilization apropos the 2007-2008 national election, statistically significant differences were observed, with the "in-group" having higher levels of mobilization than the "out-group". This suggests the "in-group", was keener to preserve its status of privilege than the "out-group" was to shed off its marginalised status. Regarding scores for political violence, the "out-group" had lower scores than the "in-group", suggesting the "out-group" had stronger negative attitudes and behaviour towards the "in-group" than did the latter towards the former group. Hypotheses testing showed that political mobilization was a significant factor in the outbreak of political violence in the study area. But significant differences were observed vis a vis the "in-group" and "out-group". Political mobilization was a factor in political violence for the "in-group" and not for the "out-group", the presumed initiators of the violence in the study area. Political violence occurred spontaneously when animosities of the "out-group" escalated, triggered by the declaration of a disputed election. But the use of political violence as a tool to achieve political objectives was organised and enabled by political elites, who used ethnic militia to score political objectives.

Keywords: "in-group", "out-group", political mobilization, political violence.

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INTRODUCTION

Studies that enunciate the causal path of ethno-political violence are growing. Satisfactory explanations are being sought on how ethnicity contributes to political violence. Ethno-political violence would occur were political elites to use ethnicity to frame political dialogue and organize political competition. Political mobilization would be the proximate cause of ethno-political violence, including in contexts in which political violence ensues after a disputed election (Vermeersch, 2011). In analysing political mobilization, Vermeesch (2011) argued that it would be part of legitimate or accepted political practice of contesting for power. Fearon (2004) examined variations in ethnicization of politics or political ethnicity in some regions and countries of the world. In Africa, for example, political mobilization occurs as elite use ethnicity as a political resource with which to seek state power. Political elites find it easier to use ethnicity in political mobilization, compared to other forms of identity, such as religion, because ethnic supporters can be mobilised to act politically based on real or perceived grievances. In ethnically fragmented societies, ruling political elite are likely to mobilize ethnic groups to keep power and non-ruling elite are likely to mobilize ethnic groups to take over power. The political fight to control public resources, economic and political, tends to be associated with discriminative political regimes in quasi-democracies (Cederman et al., 2013). Group grievances, borne of horizontal inequalities, are powerful mobilising mechanisms and are integral to political contestation. Political mobilization morphs into violence when non-ruling elite loose an election and their ethnic group (s), from who they drew political support, feels frustrated that its marginalised status is unlikely to change (Fearon, 2004). Unsuccessful in their quest for power, such elites could engage in political actions--initiate protests, strikes, and demonstrations—to show their outrage or frustration or as tools to use in their quest for enjoying elite clientelism. For this reason, Fearon (2004) suggests that conflict analysts must first determine the role of agency, the motivations of key actors in areas where violence occurs.

Ethnic violence is more likely to occur when political leaders, from both the "in-group" and "out-group", have a motive to engage in violence, have the means to sponsor such political manoeuvres, and have opportunity to do so. Electoral cycles in general and disputed elections in the context of ethnic grievances provide the motive and opportunity for political elites to sponsor violence or stoke ethnic passions to a level that violence would likely ensue. The precise factors that cause the radicalization of political mobilization or political ethnicity leading to violence seem rather involved and need to be teased apart in theatres of conflict. Research is needed, in countries experiences or susceptible to ethnic conflict, to establish whether and how political mobilization morphs into political violence (Vermeesch, 2011). The prospect of violence increases after elections, whether these elections are competitive or non-competitive (Cederman et al., 2010). An electoral process could serve to humiliate the "out-group" further, deepening their grievances; consequently, these groups would eventually revolt against the state. Of note in Cederman's et al's work is the role of threats to or changes in power structure. The searching question is what happens when ruling elite feel their hold on power is under serious threat or when the non-ruling elite fail to capture power through an election. The narrative of political inclusion or exclusion and the social and economic condition of ethnic groups is central to the point Cederman et al., (2010) made. Laakso (2007) examined the problem of electoral violence in several African countries, including Kenya and Zimbabwe, countries that have experienced serious post-election violence. Electoral violence occurs in semi-democracies in which power is personalized, in the national executive. In the run-up to the 1992 and 1997 general elections, politicians allied to the ruling party in Kenya used party militia to engage in violent political campaigns (Laakso, 2007). In cases, elites encouraged youth to physically zone off some areas of the country and disrupted opposition rallies. Even worse, the ethnic cleansing in parts of the Rift Valley province in 1992 and in the Coastal Province in 1997 national elections were sponsored by political leaders from the ruling party, activities that were only achieved with the acquiescence of state security officers. Political elite exploited the economic deprivation of the *Digo* community, an indigenous people living in the province, who attacked people ethnic groups perceived to support the opposition in its quest for power. In the wake of the 2002 general election, an ethnic militia, the *Mungiki*, were allowed by the authorities to undertake a campaign of intimidation in the Rift Valley province, a campaign that aimed to bolster

the candidacy of the candidate of the ruling party in the presidential election. Government security forces allegedly perpetrated or permitted pro-government militia to engage in ethnic cleansing in the 1992, 1997, and 2002 national elections (Laakso, 2007).

Since the return of multi-party elections, the use of organised and directed violence in Kenya has been active. Ethnic conflicts escalated between the Luo and Kalenjin and between the Kalenjin and the Kikuyu in the 1992 and 1997 election cycles, leaving 1,500 people dead and displacing 300,000 people. Regarding the electoral violence, following the disputed elections in 2007-8, political violence was initially low key in the sense that the violent protests, where it occurred in opposition areas, was about settling of scores of earlier conflicts and ethnic rivalries. The violence in the Rift Valley involved several communities, the Kisii, Kalenjin, and Maasai, pointing to unresolved conflicts and grievances. The situation only worsened when reports emerged of hate speech and the targeting of people based on their ethnicity. It is noteworthy that the violence took on a class formation character and involved youth who were presumed to be struggling to be self-reliant. The high casualties that resulted from police reactions to the violence in the country, the study suggests, suggests the violence was unplanned. The use of state apparatus in adulterating political campaigns, in suppressing protests, or in restoring order could be read as evidence of planned violence (Murunga, 2011). Not only were some officers of the national police indifferent to acts of violence in some parts of the country, but also, some of them executed crimes, including murders and rapes. But even violence committed by non-state agents does not mean that political mobilization did not occur, though it implies it.

Regarding the outbreak of violence following the announcement of the disputed 2007-2008 elections, Murunga (2011) notes that some form of violence was no doubt planned drawing inference from the level of coordination and organization observed in the violence. In the Rift Valley, planning took two forms, before and after the election. Ethnic cleansing, murders, and rapes happened against ordinary Kikuyu, who were targeted simply because they belonged to the tribe of the ruling elite. It is interesting though that the revenge attacks, ferocious as they were, did not target people or the ethnic group that engaged in the worst cases of

violence in the Rift Valley. It was interesting to find out the kind of beliefs that were used to justify acts of violence in Kibra and Mathare. While retaliatory attacks were organised and coordinated, they assumed rather expansive meanings, with the practices of what the study calls vicarious punishment. The researcher believed that these stories are telling about the psychological antecedents that spur violence in general and the kind of messaging that occurs during political mobilization. Murunga (2011) argues that attackers in the 2007 post-election violence dehumanized their victims. It was right to find out how negative messages communicated about ethnic groups during the post-election violence shaped the attitudes and behaviour of ethnic group towards each other in theatres of conflict. What is unclear in the literature on conflict, in Murunga's (2011) work, or for that matter, Fjelde and Otsby (2012), is why an "out-group" would choose to attack ordinary members of the "in-group", and not the agents or property of the state. After all, it is the latter the entity that creates the skewed distribution of political and economic resources, which create elite and group grievances in the first place. In summary, there is a lack of clarity on how exactly political violence comes about. In the theoretical model, political mobilization would play an instrumental role to the occurrence of such violence. The literature suggests that political elite who sponsor violent acts use militia, from within and without, to stir up unrest or launch attacks to achieve political objectives. It was important to understand how the threats of the use of force by militia presumed to be loyal to the "in group" impacted the conflict situation in the study area.

Statement of the Problem

In Mathare and Kibra setting, the "in-group" and "out-group" phenomenon was at the root of political violence following the 2007-2008 presidential elections. The escalation of political violence in the study area was presumed to occur when political elite mobilise their ethnic supporters to engage in political actions, such as demonstrations which are violent in nature or which result in violence. Yet, the trigger of violence could originate from without the slum area. For example, following the announcement of the results of the 2007 presidential election, violent protests broke out in the study area. Accordingly, the research problem,

which defined and motivated the researcher's investigation of the conflict situation in the study area, were the lack of a sound and methodical knowledge on 1) the role of political agency in the political violence in the study area. It is for this reason the researcher analysed the relationship between political mobilization and political violence in Kibra and Mathare.

Theoretical Framework

Ernest Gellner's instrumentalist theory of ethnic conflict was employed. The basic reasoning of this theory is that political violence will occur when political and governance cultures are discriminative against non-ruling elite and their ethnic groups (Bratton and Kimenyi, 2008). Typically, political discrimination works when ruling elite lock out non-ruling elite from clientelistic networks and their ethnic groups from state patronage. In seeking to capture state power, the disadvantaged elite would use the grievances of their ethnic supporters as platforms for political mobilization. At the same time, political elite from the "in-group", keen to keep the status quo, mobilize their ethnic groups to retain power (Robinson, 2009). Political violence would break out if elite seeking power loose in an electoral contest and mobilise their ethnic supporters to engage in political protest actions, which can entail use of violence or keel over into violence.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

To investigate the role of agency in the recurrent political violence in Mathare and Kibra, the researcher used a quantitative, correlation research design. Quantitative methodology involved descriptive and inferential analysis. Using regression analysis, a hypothesis was tested on the role of political elite in instigating the outbreak of violence following the 2007-2008 presidential election, through political mobilization. In the quantitative analysis, the population of households targeted was 62,729 in Kibra and 86,929 in Mathare. The sample was drawn from 7 villages in Kibra and 6 from Mathare. Targeted were people who voted in the 2007 national elections and who were heads of households in the study area. A proportional stratified random sample was used, and (n=766) respondents were identified, divided equally between Kibra (n=383) and Mathare (n=383).

Systematic sampling was used to locate households in each of the villages in the study area.

RESULTS

Both the Political Mobilization and Political Violence scales had good composite reliability: 0.91. The instruments also met both configural and metric invariances tests, which meant they could be used to make group comparisons: "in-group" and "out-group". The following goodness of fit indices were observed as well: Political mobilization, χ^2=14 (df=2, χ^2/df=22, SRMR, 0.02, RMSEA .016, CFI =0.98, and NNFI =0.95. For Political Violence, the threshold of "good fit" were observed: (χ^2=223 (df=5, χ^2/df=110, SRMR, 0.00, RMSEA .000, CFI=1, NNFI=1).

In the study area, political violence was (M=23.4, SD=5.7). Segmenting the sample as "in-group" and "out-group", it emerged that the mean score for political mobilization for the "in-group" was (M=40.7, SD=6.1) and for the "out-group" (M=37.3, SD=7.1), a difference found to be statistically significant through a t-test. This implies there was higher mobilization of elite of the "in group" relative to the elite of the "out-group". The literature (Fearon, 2004) supposes that both the "in-group" and the "out-group" would be motivated to mobilize politically: either to secure the status quo or to overthrow it. The data seems to point to a stronger impulse to mobilize to support the status quo, to ward off the challenge by the "out-group". This situation might have arisen due to the siege mentality created by the elite in the "in group" to marshal support from their communities (Murunga, 2011).

The "in-group" had a higher score for political violence (M=25.1, SD=4.64) than did the "out-group" (M=23, SD=5.94). A t-test for difference in means was significant statistically. For political violence, lower scores meant stronger negative attitudes of respondents towards the rival ethnic group. Comparing the means scores between the "in-group" and "out-group", then, it seems the "out-group" had more negative scores, relative to the "in-group", about bitterness, resentment, and anger. The elevated levels of political violence among the "out-group" suggest that this group had stronger, negative feelings towards the "in-group" than did the latter towards the former. The "out-group felt ethnic animosities more intensely than did the "in-group."

This finding is in line with some theoretical

Table 1. ANOVA Results for Political Mobilization and Political Violence for Study Area.

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1372.675	1	1372.675	31.466	.000[b]
	Residual	33285.278	764	43.624		
	Total	34657.953	765			
a. Dependent Variable: Political Violence Study Area						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Political mobilization Study Area						

F=31.466 and *p*-value is 0.000**

accounts on the behaviour of "out-groups" at the incipient phase of political violence (Blagojevich, 2009). Several factors explain the magnitude of political violence in the study area. The first one was the fear that a win for the opposition leader would mean lost income for property owners in the study area. Property owners were, in the main, ethnic supporters of the incumbent at the presidential election. Tension also grew because there were rumours circulating in the study area that the elections would be compromised. As Jacobs (2011) notes, tension in the slum area was high even before the presidential election result was declared, a situation aggravated by the lengthy delay in tallying of results in the presidential election, no less the way the electoral authority handled the entire electoral process (Okombo and Sana, 2010). Soon after the disputed elections of 2007 were declared, supporters of the opposition candidate unleashed violence against the ethnic supporters of the incumbent presidential candidate (Waki Commission, 2008). The findings suggest that the ethnic group that would likely initiate violence due to the sense of frustration at being denied the opportunity to have their elite assume power and improve their circumstances through reorienting of state development activities, a point Murunga (2011) has noted.

Hypotheses regarding the Relationship between Political Mobilization and Political Violence in Study Area

H$_o$: β=0 (Political mobilization is not a useful predictor of political violence).
H$_a$: β≠0 (Political mobilization is not a useful predictor of political violence).
Significance Level: α=0.05 (Reject the null hypothesis if *p*-value is less or equal to 0.05).

Correlation analyses found that political mobilization and political violence in the study area had a moderate positive correlation r^2 (764) =0.12, *p*<0.01. Simple regression analysis was used to test the hypotheses on the presumed link between political mobilization and political violence.

The findings suggest political mobilization explains and predicts political violence significantly, r^2=0.2, F (1, 763) =31.46, *p*<0.01 (Table 1). Since *p*-value is 0.000 is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. At the 0.05 level of significance, the statistical evidence is sufficient to conclude that the population regression line is not zero and political mobilization is a useful predictor of political mobilization, β=.19 t (5.6), p=0.00.

H$_o$: β=0 (Political mobilization is not a useful predictor of political violence).
H$_a$: β≠0 (Political mobilization is not a useful predictor of political violence).

Significance Level: α=0.05 (Reject the null hypothesis if *p*-value is less or equal to 0.05).
For the "in group", it was established too that political mobilization was a significant predictor of political violence for the "in group": r^2 = (0.354), F (1, 294) = 42.179, *p*<0.01, β=.34 t (6.4), p=0.00 (Table 2).
H$_o$: β=0 (Political mobilization is not a useful predictor of political violence).
H$_a$: β≠0 (Political mobilization is not a useful predictor of political violence).

Significance Level: α = 0.05 (Reject the null hypothesis if *p*-value is less or equal to 0.05).

For the "out-group", however, political mobilization was found not to have a significant effect on political violence, F (3, 2225.15) = 103.53, *p*=.387, β=.03

Table 2. ANOVA Results for Association between Political Mobilization and Political Violence for "In group".

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1603.380	1	1603.380	42.179	.000[b]
	Residual	11175.904	294	38.013		
	Total	12779.284	295			
a. Dependent Variable: Political violence In Group						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Political mobilization In Group						

F=42.1790 and *p*-value is 0.000**

Table 3. ANOVA Results for Link between Political mobilization and Political Violence for the Out Group.

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	38.644	1	38.644	.751	.387[b]
	Residual	13688.266	266	51.460		
	Total	13726.910	267			
a. Dependent Variable: Political Mobilization						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Violence Outgroup						

t(5), p=0.00 (Table 3). The same outcome was observed for the "out-group".

CONCLUSION

In this article, the aim was to establish whether there were significant differences between ethnic groups regarding political mobilization and political violence and establisher whether the former could explain and predict the latter. Descriptive analysis showed that the "in-group" had higher scores for political violence than the "out-group". In other words, the "in-group" mobilized politically at a statistically significant higher level than did the "out-group". This suggests the "in-group" was more determined to retain its status quo than the "out-group" was to become the "in group". Regarding political violence, the "out-group" had a lower mean score, relative to the "in-group", suggesting the group had higher feelings, anger, bitterness, and resentment about the consequences and outcomes of the disputed presidential election than did the "in-group".

The findings showed that political mobilization could explain political violence in the study area. But when the sample was clustered about the rival ethnic groups, this mechanism of ethnic conflict only applied to the "in-group". The "out-group" had lower levels of political mobilization but higher levels of political violence, negative attitudes and behaviour towards members of the "in-group." Yet, the "out-group" was presumed initiators of political violence, based on the conceptual model. The findings suggest that the outbreak of violence, with the behaviour of the "out-group" in mind, was due to unresolved ethnic animosities, which keeled over into violence. However, the findings affirm the view that elites galvanized ethnic supporters for the political contest of the 2007-8 elections, but used militia to engage in violence against supporters of the "in-group".

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