Understanding the Tipping Point of Urban Conflict:
Nairobi: Perspectives on Political Violence from Popular Settlements

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1. INTRODUCTION

Political Violence - Post Election Violence in Kenya, 2007/8
1. INTRODUCTION: Nairobi at a Glance

- Population: 4 million people.
- Home Owners (Citywide): 18%; Renters: 82%
- Home Owners (Informal Settlements): 8%; Rent Payers: 92%
- Informal Renters with agreements: 3.6%
- Citywide Occupancy Rate: 1.6 persons/room; informal 3.
- High income (Densities): 4 persons/ha; Low income tenements (up to 800 persons per hectare)
- Informal Sector Employment (citywide): 75%
- 49% of slum dwellers (regular/casual jobs); 19% (household enterprises); 26% (unemployed).
- 46% of youth & 49% of women unemployed.
- 73% of the city’s slum dwellers live below poverty line; up from 26% (1992)
- *Gini* coefficient of 0.57
2. METHODOLOGY

• City Level Analysis of Conflict & Violence.

• Sub-City Case Studies (Participatory Violence Appraisal)
  – Why Kawangware, Kibera, and Mukuru? Known violence hotspots at the city level, access, familiarity & safety for researchers
  – Relatively understudied, significance of Kibera
  – Purposively identified groups
  – The Participatory Violence Appraisal:
    • 74 focus groups (19, 37, and 18 for Kawangware, Kibera, and Mukuru respectively),
    • 8 in-depth interviews, feedback workshops

• Triangulation & Validation (feedback loops) of City Level & Sub-City Level Findings.
Kangemi slums

Huruma Slums

Mathare slum

2. METHODOLOGY

Sub City Study Sites: After Jamii Bora (2008)
2. METHODOLOGY

PVA: Focus Group in Kibera
3. FINDINGS: Types of Violence

• **Political:** violence as a result of conflicts around the operations of the state, government policies, political parties or political opinions.
• **Domestic:** violence at home caused by conflicts in the household
• **Tribal/Ethnic:** violence as a result of negative use / abuse of ethnic identity.
• **Economic:** competition, rivalries among traders & entrepreneurs, robbery, arson, etc. as an economic strategy.
• **Landlord Tenant:** Violence as a result of conflicts between structure owners & tenants.
• **Religious:** Conflicts as a result of divergent beliefs.
3. FINDINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Violence</th>
<th>Kawangware (Percentage)</th>
<th>Kibera (Percentage)</th>
<th>Mukuru (Percentage)</th>
<th>Average (Percentage)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribal</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic (esp. robbery)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenants / Landlord</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Types & Prevalence of Violence in the Study Sites
3. FINDINGS: Political Violence

- Political violence is the most significant type of violence
- More lethal when ethnicity is the driver.
- There are other types of violence, i.e. domestic, ethnic, and economic and landlord / tenant violence, which, cumulatively, are more significant than political violence; policy should also respond to these.
- A response to violence - focusing mainly on political violence – has made the other forms of violence invisible.
- The invisibilisation & normalization of these forms of violence makes them difficult to be targeted by policy.
3. FINDINGS: Violence & Space

• **Violence has a spatial dimension:** in informal settlements conflicts & violence is as a result of quality & quantity of space.

• **Lack of adequate space** for production & reproduction lead to conflicts & violence.

• **Poor quality spaces** are sites of violent acts, especially by criminal gangs.

• Lack of space, poor spatial qualities & **lack of regulation of use** of space intensifies spatial related conflicts & violence.

• The **mapping of hotspots** helps people to understand violence in concrete terms and can lead to very specific actions by communities.
TOP THREE TYPES OF VIOLENCE IN MUKURU KAIYABA HOTSPOTS

Legend
- Political_Violence
- Domestic_Violence
- Economic_Violence
- Tribal_Violence

Source: Eco-Build Africa Trust, Nairobi, Kenya 2011

Violence Hotspots in Mukuru
## 3. FINDINGS: Tipping Points

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settlements</th>
<th>Tipping point</th>
<th>Types of violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Kawangware  | Arbitrary and high increases in rent
When tenants refuse to pay rent
Receipt of messages of ethnic attacks | Tenant-landlord, ethnic violence
Tenant-landlord, ethnic violence
Ethnic violence, political violence |
| Kibera      | When politicians use abusive language or hate speech
Political disagreements
Disruption of political meetings/rallies
Communal perception of unjust decisions
Rigging elections | Political violence, tenant-landlord, ethnic violence
Political violence
Economic violence, political violence
Economic violence, political violence
Political violence |
| Mukuru      | When police harass the youth
When there is no more space for development
Onset of crude ritual killing | Political violence
Political violence
Political violence, economic |
3. FINDINGS: Tipping Points

- Government and media tip conflict into violence and vice versa.
- Political parties and criminal gangs only tip conflict into violence.
- Hospitals, FBOs and NGOs tip violence back to conflict.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Tip conflict into violence</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Tip violence Back to conflict</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Kawangware</td>
<td>Kibera</td>
<td>Mukuru</td>
<td>Kawangware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political organizations</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local groups</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Criminal groups</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Media</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBOs</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitals</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FBOs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Institutions that Tip Conflict into Violence & Vice Versa
3. FINDINGS: Violence Chains

• Useful in showing the linkages.
• Where there are stronger chains, communities are perceived as more violent.
• **Ethnic violence is frequently the determinant of the strength of linkages** in various violence chains.
• Communities with weak chains happen to be those where ethnic violence is not the driver. They are seen as less violent.
4. INSIGHTS FOR POLICY, CONT’D

• The Nairobi study shows how local micro-level study could inform generic policy at the city level
• This approach overcomes the abstractionism of meta-policy made mainly at National level; where communities have no idea how they could be involved in the implementation.

4.1. Political violence is the most important type; but it is not the only one.

4.2. Other types of violence are significant & needs also to be targeted by policy.

4.3. Addressing the spatial manifestations of violence
   – Spatial slum improvement programmes (such as KENSUP; KISIP)
   – Violence-specific interventions such as Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED).
4. INSIGHTS FOR POLICY, CONT’D

4.4. Ensuring conflicts do not tip into violence
   - Civic awareness.
   - Political Parties Act will not be a vehicle to address sub-city violence
   - Understand & strengthen local institutions that support violence reduction.
   - Creation of inclusive social amenities that are multi-cultural/religious/ethnic

4.5. Strengthening governance structures

4.6. Addressing youth unemployment

4.7. Intermarriage among affected communities
5. NEXT STEPS

5.1. Chiefs recognised hotspots as violence problems requiring more information & specific interventions:
   – Therefore there is need to *develop and implement community based, spatial, violence reduction strategies.*

5.2. Police Leadership recognised specific gaps in their response to violence, e.g. *role of youth; role of institutions & focus on crime, rather than violence reporting:*
   – Interventions need to be put in place to address the gaps.
5. NEXT STEPS

5.3. PVA as used in the study has demonstrated potential in development of policy from bottom up:
- Therefore there is need to explore viability of policy proposals from the community.

5.4. Lessons from Santiago: political violence is direct but also structural:
- Nairobi study has focused on direct violence; therefore there is need to explore structural violence in Nairobi
- Understanding violence – poverty nexus has hinged on the poor. There is need to go beyond this & look at other structural issues, e.g. power.