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

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1. INTRODUCTION

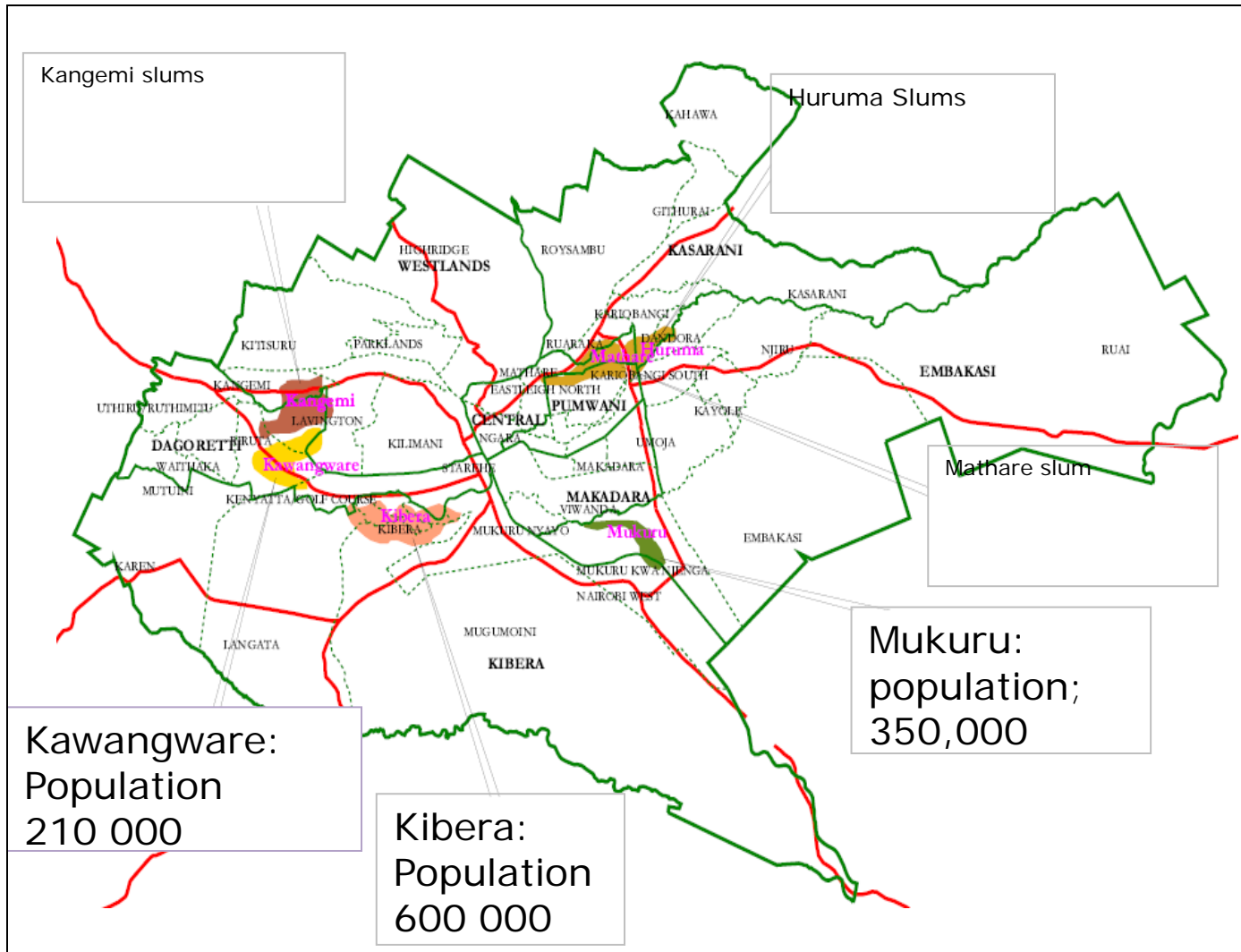**Political Violence - Post Election Violence in Kenya, 2007/8**

1. INTRODUCTION: Nairobi at a Glance

- Population : 4 million people.
- Gangs deaths: 3000 between 1991 & 1998
- 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.

2. METHODOLOGY

Kangemi slums

Huruma Slums

Mathare slum

Kawangware:
Population
210 000

Kibera:
Population
600 000

Mukuru:
population;
350,000

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

Types of Violence	Kawangware (Percentage)	Kibera (Percentage)	Mukuru (Percentage)	Average (Percentage)
Political	26	32	19	26
Domestic	10	20	28	19
Tribal	17	22	15	18
Economic (esp. robbery)	27	12	16	18
Tenants / Landlord	20	10	18	16
Religious	0	4	4	3
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

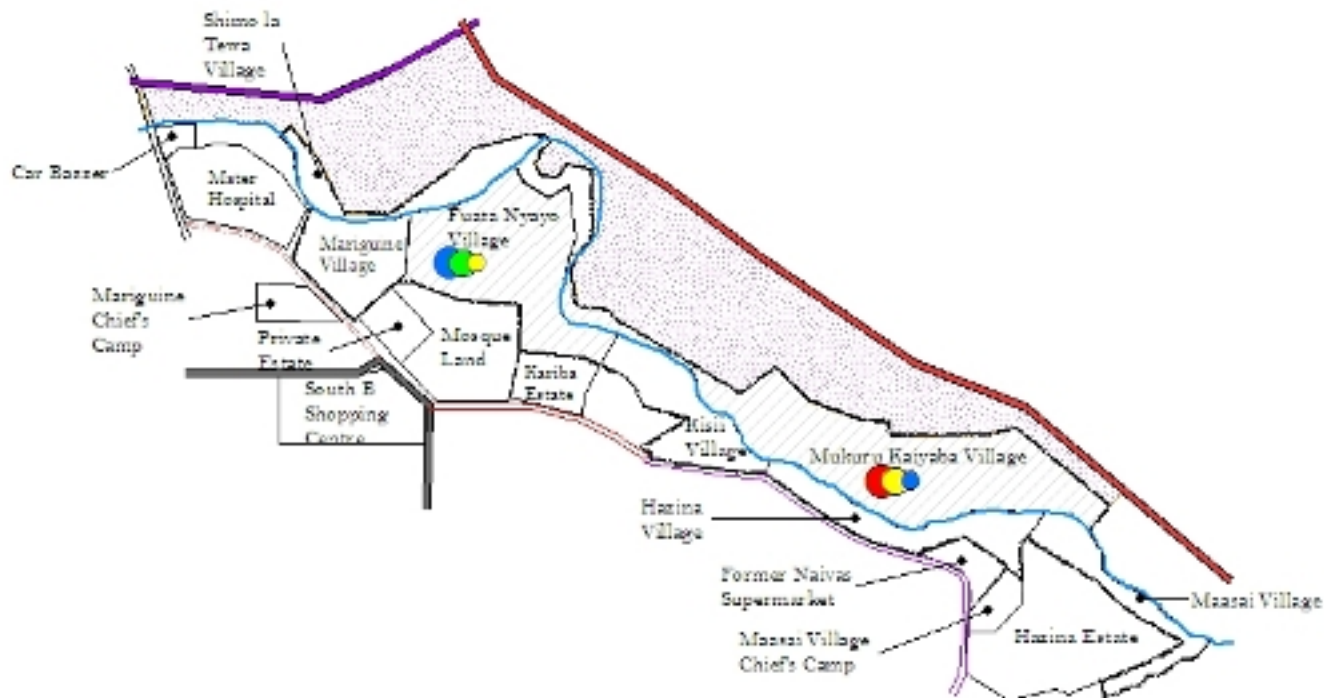**Types & Prevalence of Violence in the Study Sites**

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.

Violence Hotspots in Mukuru

3. FINDINGS: Tipping Points

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

An Analysis of Violence in the Case Study Sites
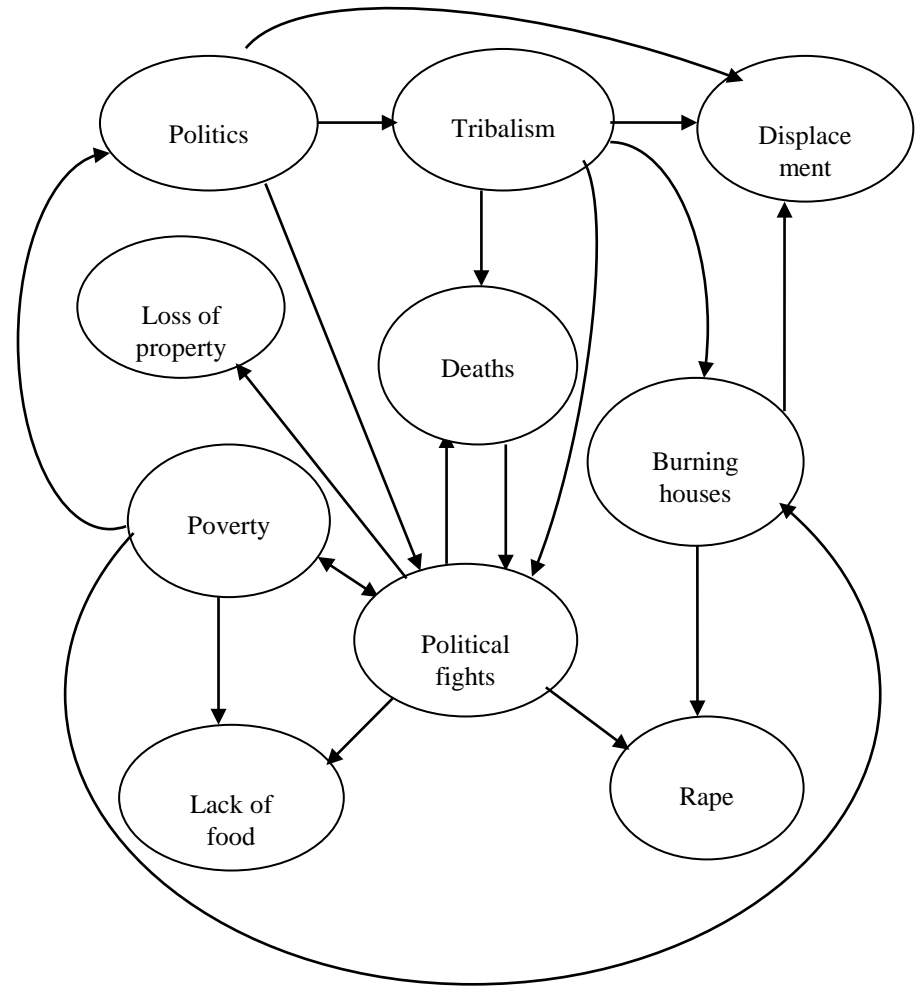
3. FINDINGS: Tipping Points

- 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.

Institution	Settlement							
	Tip conflict into violence			Total	Tip violence Back to conflict			Total
	Kawangware	Kibera	Mukuru		Kawangware	Kibera	Mukuru	
Government	5	2	7	14	4	1	1	**6**
Political organizations	4	2	0	6	0	0	0	**0**
Local groups	0	4	0	4	0	0	0	**0**
Criminal groups	0	4	2	6				**0**
Media	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	**1**
CBOs	1	0	0	1	1	2	1	**4**
Individuals	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	**2**
Hospitals	0	0	0	0	2	2	1	**5**
FBOs	0	0	0	0	1	3	0	**4**
NGOs	0	0	0	0	7	6	4	**17**
Total	12	12	9		16	15	10	

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.*