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Strategies Employed in Managing Inter-ethnic Conflicts Occasioned by National Elections in Nakuru County between 1992 and 2017

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Abstract:

Wars and conflicts decide political boundaries, move populations around the world, define political debates, and generally affect just about everything in our societies. Violence is widespread and can be tapped for various reasons, including but not exclusively to election victory. Since the inception of the multiparty system in 1992, there has been a highly volatile political environment in regions with multiple ethnic compositions. The study sought to evaluate the strategies employed in the management of inter-ethnic conflicts occasioned by national elections in Nakuru County, Kenya, between 1992 and 2017. The study was anchored on Democratic theory. The study adopted a descriptive research design. This study targeted the household heads of Kuresoi North and Molo sub-counties. The study population included: government officials, security personnel, CSOs officials, opinion leaders, religious leaders, and youth group representatives. A total sample of 427 was used. Data collection tools adopted were questionnaires, FGDs, and interview guides. The study employed both probability and non-probability sampling techniques. Data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS), and results were presented in the form of charts, graphs, and tables for quantitative data and in the form of narrative reports and verbatim quotations for qualitative data. The study concluded that the state, which is the lead agency in conflict management, has shifted from macro-level focus to micro-level intervention through local government institutions.

Keywords: National elections, ethnic violence, conflict management, politics, ethnicity

1. Introduction

Violence is pervasive and may be used for a number of purposes, including but not limited to electoral triumph. Numerous national elections, particularly those in newly formed democracies, are plagued with considerable violence during campaign season, voting days, and the aftermath of the results announcement. Bangladesh and Burundi are two countries providing such examples. The conflict has erupted in Afghanistan, India, Iraq, Nigeria, Pakistan, Zimbabwe, and Kenya during electioneering seasons (Birch *et al.*, 2020).

With the establishment of the multiparty system in 1992, Kenya has had a very turbulent political climate in regions with diverse ethnic makeup. According to Gichuhi (2020), Kenya's history of violence (1992- 2017), particularly along inter-ethnic lines, revealed a consistent pattern of causes and triggers, all of which are the result of unsolved concerns despite succeeding governments. Ethnic violence is a symptom of unsolved conflicts resulting from years of discriminatory policies (Laibuta, 2014). Over time, politicians' purposeful use of violence to achieve power, combined with their refusal to prosecute abusers, has resulted in a culture of impunity and a steady escalation of violence. Muema (2017) stated that the country has been experiencing inter-ethnic violence and tensions during electioneering seasons since the early 1990s.

From 1991 to 2017, Nakuru County has had a history of escalating inter-ethnic strife. The politicisation of views of economic exploitation, exclusion, and uneven access to resources and opportunity is considered to be the root of long-standing conflicts. The Kalenjin, the Rift Valley's biggest ethnic group, believes that the migrations of other groups, most notably the Gikuyu, are a result of "historical injustices" (Nderitu, 2020). Attempts have been made to prevent conflict from reoccurring throughout national election seasons. For example, Kenya's 2008 coalition government was charged with pursuing four objectives based on the country's socio-economic requirements, including poverty eradication and tackling disparities and marginalisation. District Peace Committees were also formed by the NSC, which were given a broader

responsibility to help develop inter-ethnic relations by facilitating negotiations between elders from various ethnic groups and clans with a history of hostilities. With the passage of the 2010 Constitution and various government alterations, a civil oversight board (the Independent Policing Oversight Authority) and a national police training council have been established as additional safeguards. Other national efforts include:

- The Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence (CIPEV),
- The Commission Investigating the 2007 General Elections,
- The Committee of Experts on Constitutional Review (CoE),
- The Interim Independent Electoral Commission (IIEC),
- The Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC),
- The Interim Independent Boundaries Review Commission (IIBRC),
- The Interim Independent Constitutional Dispute Resolution Court (IICDRC), and
- The National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC)

By adopting a comprehensive range of transitional justice systems and other changes, it was believed that all of these would contribute to a national reconciliation process (Gutiérrez-R, 2014). The Nakuru Peace Accord, which was concluded in 2012 after a 16-month peace process headed by the NCIC to address ethnic conflict origins, is noteworthy. The agreement defined a code of behaviour for the communities and stressed the importance of urgent follow-up activities, focusing on outreach and publicizing the agreement (Nderitu, 2020). Following the agreement, successive elections were deemed to be quite peaceful. The agreement also emphasized cohesiveness as a cross-cutting issue that necessitated the participation of various players, including civil society and government agencies. However, it is claimed that programming attempts have failed to adapt to conflict dynamics, making long-term peace in Nakuru County hard.

Despite the efforts, it is worth noting that the recurrence of ethnic conflict in every election period, including the 2017 national elections, remains a concern regarding the contribution of national elections to inter-ethnic conflict in Nakuru County. For instance, the 2007 elections led to the deaths of hundreds of people and the destruction of property worth millions of shillings, as reported by various news sources. The 2013 and 2017 elections were not marred by a lot of violence. However, there was a lot of tension with people who were deemed to be non-locals migrating to their perceived ancestral homes for fear of being attacked. Therefore, this study uses strategies to manage conflicts between communities in Nakuru County.

2. Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored on democratic theory. In Fishkin's (2001) theory of democratic theory, the tyranny of the majority is the primary focus. He contends that the majority's decision may clash with justice or inflict unpleasant consequences on a minority of the population through democratic means. According to Warrens (1989), the Multidisciplinary division between political theory and political philosophy (ontology, epistemology, and normativity) does not apply to democratic theory.

Citizens have the right to elect, check, and replace their leaders. They also have the right to participate actively in politics and civic life. They have the right to protect their human rights and the right to the rule of law, in which all citizens are subject to the law (Maphazi, 2012). Public involvement has always been an essential feature of democratic decision-making since it gives citizens a voice in how their government spends public funds. It is possible to trace the origins of citizen engagement all the way back to Colonial New England and ancient Greece.

This ideology aims to extend the path to democracy from authoritarianism into liberalisation and, eventually, democracy. The loosening of constraints and the growth of individual and collective rights are all aspects of liberalisation, be it economic or political (Keller, 1996). The expansion of political rights alone does not constitute democratisation. Most of the time, liberalisation comes before democracy, but the two might happen simultaneously. Liberalisation occurs when the authoritarian regime falls. Transition occurs when the first multiparty election is held, and Consolidation occurs when democracy is reinforced, according to Maphazi (2012). Democratic elections are distinguished by their competitiveness and regularity; liberal democracies have a higher threshold, while procedural democracies make it easier to monitor participation levels.

By looking at a society's technological and institutional structures, this theoretical approach proposes that democracy may be evaluated more accurately. Procedural democracy emphasises the role of elections, the executive branch, and the legislative more than direct democracy (Mangu, 2005). According to proponents of procedural democracy, the fundamental meaning of democracy is liberty, effective citizen control over government policies by citizens, excellent governance, truth and openness in politics, well-educated and spirited discussions, maximum involvement, and a variety of other values. According to them, democracy implies that the people can either accept or reject the individuals who would rule over them.

Further explanations of substantive democracy, which focus on changes in the economy, are provided by the theory. Most African countries appear to lack substantive democracy to improve social and economic circumstances and promote justice (Maphazi, 2012). Through employment creation and a decrease in poverty, the practice of democracy should enhance the lives of its citizens, according to Mangu (2005).

It is essential to understand the practice of national elections through the lens of democratic philosophy. To understand democracy, it is necessary to understand the concept of freedom. As a cornerstone of democracy, elections allow individuals to participate in exercising their civil liberties.

3. Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design. This study targeted the household heads of Kuresoi North and Molo sub-counties which are perennially hit by the conflicts. This study had a target population of 14,054. Key informants included government officials, security personnel, CSOs officials, opinion leaders, religious leaders, and youth group representatives. A total sample of 427 was used. Data collection tools adopted were: questionnaires, FGDs, and interview guides. Sampling techniques included stratified strategic sampling, simple random sampling for household heads, and purposive sampling for key informants. Data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS), and results were presented in the form of charts, graphs, and tables for quantitative data and thematically for qualitative data.

4. Findings

4.1. Participation in National Elections and Voting Process

The respondents were asked to explain their role in the election and the election process. The results are given in table 1.

Role	Male	Female	Frequency (%)
Aspirants	4	1	5 (0.5%)
As Agent	11	13	24(6.2%)
Voter mobilization	21	19	40 (10.3%)
As a Voter	119	108	227 (58.2)
I do not vote	50	46	96(24.6)
None	1	0	1 (0.2%)
Total			393 (100%)

Table 1: National Elections and Voting Process

Source: Field Data, (2020)

The study findings indicate that 293 out of 393 respondents do get involved in the national election process, while the others do not get involved in the electioneering period.

The above results indicate that a majority of the respondents participate during the electioneering period by voting 58.2%, whereas 24.6% do not vote. 10.3% of the respondents mobilize as aspirants, while 6.2% participate as agents. 0.5% participate in elections as aspirants, while 0.1% report none. This implies that the majority of the respondents exercise their voting rights. The results indicate that residents in Nakuru County participate in the election process as agents, voters, or mobilisers.

According to Maphazi (2012), citizen engagement in politics and civic life is encouraged, as well as the preservation of people's human rights and a rule of law that applies to all citizens. According to a key informant, those who vote equally in a democratic system have the opportunity to compete for various elected positions. The results are in direct opposition to what an influential person had to say about them.

One opinion leader noted:

A leading tribe can have all political seats from the county to a member of the county assembly in regions that have a higher number of voters from one tribe. Some handle the issue by alternating local seats to another tribe to spread out the opportunity to all (Field interview with Opinion leader in Elburgon on 27th June, 2021).

This claim directly conflicts with Maphazi's (2012) claims of free and fair elections. Public engagement has always been an element of democratic decision-making processes. This study's findings are consistent with the notion of participation as a chance for citizens to influence public choices (Teshome, 2008). Taylor (2003), on the other hand, argues that public engagement might exacerbate already-existing inequities in society. People in positions of power may use this as an opportunity to talk directly with government officials about topics that concern them. It is argued that political power conflicts impede successful public engagement procedures.

In support of these, findings from a key informant at IEBC official in Molo indicated that:

Parties adhere to stipulated regulations, including regional and ethnic diversity as a requirement for official approvals, but parties, in most cases, remain strongly inclined along certain ethnic lines. (Field interview with IEBC representative in Molo on 29th October, 2021).

KNHR report 2019 concurs with these by stating that reference made to the constitution of Kenya 2010 bars parties from being formed along ethnic lines. Political parties therein are supposed to be formed based on the national character, with its membership reflecting regional and ethnic diversity. The drafters of the 2010 Constitution hoped the new law would address the simmering issues that resulted in violence in every electoral cycle. Pockets of violence experienced after the 2013 and 2017 elections and the growing calls for constitutional review exposed the soft underbelly of the 2010 Constitution. However, the report further opines that the political parties in the post-2010 constitution era still carry the unresolved challenges of the pre-2010 constitution era.

4.2. Politics and Ethnicity during National Elections

The study sought to establish the nature of politics practiced during national election periods. From the FGD discussions, one of the respondents had this to say:

Political parties in the region are formed along ethnic lines, and campaigns/rallies and voting are also along ethnic lines. Candidates are voted along ethnic lines, and even conflicts are along ethnic divides. (FGD respondent at Elburgon, 27th June, 2021).

The findings suggest that elections in Kenya are defined by affiliations and identity to ethnic groups, thus prone to violence along ethnic divides. Political elites have for many years resorted to using identities for political mileage. Politics in Kenya is seemingly narrowed to deeper fragmentations that threaten the advancement of liberal democracy, institutions, and stability. Many scholars have attributed Kenya's ethnic animosity and antagonism to the colonial masters. Violence in Kenyan elections has been on the rise ever since 1992, and Taylor (2018) agreed that there was a significant likelihood of violence in 2017. Historically violent elections have created an atmosphere of fear and trepidation in the country's political context. Affluent people who represent specific ethnic groups dominate politics. The country continues to suffer from perceived injustices stemming from the exclusion of particular ethnic groups from political and economic power centres.

As Nyaura, 2018 notes, the colonial aim of improving the territories inhabited by settlers has led to an unequal distribution of socio-economic resources across ethnic groups in the regions they control. As a result, racial inequalities are linked to geographical differences in development. Those living in marginalised and underdeveloped areas see political power as a gateway to development/resources, exacerbating the conflict. As a result of such viewpoints, ethnic alliances are created in order to share resources and power. As this study demonstrated, there is still a link between politics and ethnicity in Kenya.

According to Kisaka and Nyadera (2019), African states' access to power is still highly important. Ethnic communities believe that they are entitled to certain benefits because of their political status. An ethnic group or even a single person is motivated to seek power because of this. Elections in many transitional democracies can exacerbate existing socio-economic, ethnic, political, or religious cleavages (e.g., Kenya, India, Guyana, and Kyrgyzstan). As in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh, militant organizations may be dangerous to the integrity of the voting process (Bardall, 2011).

We must be aware of conflict dynamics to evaluate, minimise or resolve disputes while supporting the political process. The formation of county administrations in Kenya in 2013 was intended to address the issue of marginalisation and uneven access and allocation of resources that had become a national concern. County governments are entitled to budgetary allocations from the national revenue with additional equalization funds as provided under article 204 of the Constitution to provide basic needs to the marginalized areas (KNHRC, 2019). However, critiques of devolution and county governments have expressed concerns over the emergence of inter-county minority groups. The emergence of county majorities and minorities has revealed that ethnic cleavages are essential aspects of county politics, just as in national politics.

4.3. Actors Involved in Conflict Management in Nakuru County

The respondents were asked to identify the actors involved in the management of conflicts in Nakuru County. The results are indicated in table 2.

Media	Frequency	Percentage
Media	50	11.7
Government	118	27.6
CSOs	92	21.5
Local Peace Committees	79	18.5
Local Administration/ Security personnel	90	21.6
Total	427	100.0

Table 2: Actors Involved in Conflict Management in Nakuru County

Source: Field Data (2021)

From the results, the main actors in conflict management in Nakuru County were:

- The government at 118 (27.6%),
- CSOs at 92 (21.5%),
- The local administration/ security personnel at 90 (21.6%),
- Peace committees at 79 (18.5%), and
- The media at 50 (11.7%)

4.3.1. Government/ the State

Organisations at the national and sub-national levels function under the rules set out by the state's institutions or regulations (which may be official or informal) to control political, social, and economic participation across a region. Some of the examples of such organisations are: the executive and ministry branches, legislature, and judiciary.

The immediate political crisis was ended, and laws like the National Accord and Reconciliation Act (Act of 2008) and the National Cohesion and Integration Act (Act of 2009) were created, paving the way for after the aftermath of the

2007/2008 PEV mediation (2008). The National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) was established by the latter Act to carry out initiatives to remove prejudice and promote equality and peaceful co-existence among Kenya's various ethnic and racial groups (NCVR, 2019). The peace process in Nakuru County was also started as a result of utilising these national peace measures.

The NCIC intervened in Nakuru County ahead of the upcoming elections in order to end the Rift Valley's cycle of violence. In April 2011, the NCIC and NSC began formal participation in Nakuru County, driven by an approach that focused on the two primary protagonists in conflict, the Kikuyu and Kalenjin groups. The mediation team began by meeting with the elders of each village to secure their support for the process. Afterward, the team met with each community individually to gather information about their issues and prepare them for bilateral conversations with the Kikuyu and the Kalenjin (NCPVR, 2019).

When the NCIC launched its mediation effort, it identified factors such as Nakuru's electoral politics, land, and economic imbalances and the interests that would bring the conflict's principal parties - the Kalenjin and the Gikuyu to the negotiating table. All of these factors contributed to the outbreak of violence and conflict and must thus be considered in any effort to resolve it. The NCIC was also cognizant of the Elders' awareness of their significance and their specific aversion to commissions. Both the Akiwumi Commission and the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights identified several of them as violence planners and instigators. As a result, the NCIC approached male Elders via the Provincial Administration.

One of the difficulties the NCIC encountered was the fact that the Provincial Administration and the police had displayed a lack of impartiality during the 2007-2008 unrest. However, following multiple rounds of talks and advances with the Elders, the NCIC and NSC determined that technical competence was required to develop a peace deal. On Sunday, 19 August, 2012, the Nakuru County Peace Accord was ultimately signed. The accord called for a series of immediate initiatives, including meetings without the NCIC, NSC, or HD Centre, to demonstrate the Elders' commitment to the peace pact. Additionally, they were compelled to assemble both political leaders and young people, individually and collectively, to instruct them not to foment violence (Wairimu, 2019). The peace agreement's objective was to ensure that residents of all ethnic communities in Nakuru lived in harmony. The agreement was divided into five sections: purpose, guiding principles, dialogue-related actions, conflict resolution, and links with other processes and institutions.

Institutions or regulations that govern political, social, and economic activity throughout a territorial area constitute the state. Elders from both communities came together in working groups over the course of 16 months, and a climate of understanding developed due to several meetings and public apologies. When it was time to create a peace accord with participation from the communities, the NCIC and NSC turned to the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue for technical assistance.

It was organised to remember past violence, recognise elders' responsibilities, and discuss collaboration to prevent future bloodshed, especially around the 2013 elections. The pact was a political commitment by the elders of the community to cooperate to avert future violence. Two separate commissions were set up to handle issues of justice, impunity, and land grievances. This was done to expedite the collaboration process between these two agencies.

Communities were given a code of behaviour to follow, emphasizing rapid follow-up activities and publicising the agreement. As part of the NCIC's encouragement, the communities collaborated with the provincial government and law enforcement authorities to organise joint media appearances and roadshows. For the 2013 presidential and senate elections, the elders interacted directly with President and Deputy President candidates. As a result, the 2013 elections were very calm because of widespread political support for the pact.

The findings, however, are at odds with a UN (2009) assessment stating that governmental interventions have only been helpful at the surface level. According to this research, state involvement focuses on top leadership and macro-level conflict transformation and connections while disregarding the bulk of the people and micro-level conflict resolution. It is common for the leaders of the disputing parties to meet at the macro level to negotiate a ceasefire and peace accord that would then spread to the entire populace. First and foremost, state involvement is accused of ignoring local concerns and challenges. To justify this, it is necessary to show that a strong political party or governmental agency regularly threatens or intimidates voters. In Nakuru County, however, this does not appear to be the case.

4.3.2. Civil Society Organisations

According to the findings, CSOs play a significant role in conflict management in Nakuru County before, during, and after inter-ethnic conflicts. More than a handful of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), including Mercy Corps (USAID), SCCRR (Peace Caravan), and Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) like NCKK, have worked with Molo's community leaders to promote peace and harmony. Researchers found that small groups of twenty individuals, organised by the Catholic Church in Bondeni, to discuss peace and social cohesion were effective.

These CSOs' processes have been characterized by enhanced coordination and facilitation of intervention through resource allocation. As a result, these efforts have significantly contributed to implementing peace-building activities and the national and local capacities in conflict transformation. However, it was also noted that there exists an inherent failure to develop an extensive list of structural and direct prevention tools. The intervention strategy is only activated during the election period and lacks strategic coordination where multiple prevention measures are not utilized.

FGDs found that ward administrators, peace committees, and religious leaders use Barazas to promote understanding, tolerance, and civic education through Barazas. Those in rural regions are considered more successful than those in urban areas and are supposed to collaborate with CSOs and churches to identify and prepare solutions. Peace

gatherings, talks, and mediation between competing towns, corporations, and families embroiled in conflict are all examples of this type of activity.

Accordingly, the context of the contemporary conflict environment in Nakuru County remains complex and highly unstable. This scenario is highly correlated to the determinants that dictate the onset, duration, and intensities of ethnic clashes by providing the rational choice for the causes and reactions for conflict transformation. According to a report by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in 2006, depending too heavily on civil society actors might have the potential to delegitimize and substitute for state institutions, which could undermine long-term attempts to develop them. As a result, the representation of civil society in the dispute may be weighted towards urban-based groups rather than grassroots communities, which appears to be the situation in Nakuru County. Cohesion and unity are protected at all levels of the Kenyan government. Nakuru County's ethnicity may be addressed with the help of institutions like NCIC that have the mandate to remove ethnic prejudice and promote tolerance in Nakuru County by supporting them.

The NCIC initiated the Nakuru peace process in 2010 as an attempt to help and transform the culture of violence in the county. This was informed by the need for a holistic healing and inclusive process to help nurture peace and address structural issues that had simmered beneath the surface for many years. This was underscored by the fact that the hitherto drivers and conditions that had allowed for deliberate political elites mobilization along ethnic lines were very much present in Nakuru County.

4.3.3. Local Administration/ Security Personnel

This research focused on the Chiefs, Assistant County Commissioners, and local political leaders who commonly act as third-party neutrals in local conflicts. National Government Administration (previously provincial administration) workers are responsible for enforcing law and order in their respective communities. They are natives of the communities they serve and hence have a deeper understanding of the conflicts identified in the research. Community problems can be resolved through increased security and the support of government peace initiatives.

As the results of interviews with local government officials revealed, they play an essential role in coordinating different peace-building activities, including the local peace committees chaired by the then-District Commissioners, now Deputy County Commissioners (District Peace Committee and District Development Committees). Resettlement and economic restoration of the affected communities are the responsibilities of the team in charge of the enforcement of peace accords. As a result, they have helped to improve the government's responsiveness to underprivileged populations and develop local peace-building blocks.

According to the study's findings, government-sponsored seminars and workshops teach local administrators various conflict resolution skills, risk reduction techniques, resource mobilisation and utilisation, and administration and security duties. In addition to barazas and field days, the local authority teaches these skills to their citizens.

Government police officers are involved in this study's safety measures. Several police stations and patrol sites have been established in regions considered to be at risk. In addition, the government has improved a programme for open and accountable police services in the community. These officers are tasked with responding to local crime and disputes, such as regional land disputes, and providing early warnings to avert problems like hate speech and mass mobilisation.

Another government project aiming at enhancing community policing is the Nyumba Kumi (10 homes) Initiative, which encourages residents to know at least 10 of their neighbours so that they may better protect themselves. The findings of the investigation show that the project is still ineffective, with a number of critical flaws uncovered.

4.3.4. Peace Committees

The study identified peace Committees as actors involved in conflict management in Nakuru County. District or Sub-County Peace Committees serve as critical units for National Early Warning and Early Response Centers. An interview by an elder in a Peace Committee in Molo Sub-county elaborated:

As a committee, we are tasked with addressing early warning signs before conflict incidents. Some of the key areas we focus on include: political incitement, mobilization of people, especially the youth and other gangs/ militia, hate speech, and proliferation of Small Arms and Weapons characterized by pre-conflict contexts. (Field interview with a committee member in Molo on 28th June 2021).

The study findings highlight the role of the local peace committees in preventing conflicts in Nakuru County. The findings agree with other scholarly works, such as Owino (2019), who notes that despite the challenges of conflict recurrence, the Local peace committees have played a major role in both the national and local early warning and response. However, it is worth noting that their efforts have been dwindled by poor strategic coordination and planning. However, better still, they have been able to identify conflict hotspots and perpetrators, among other issues within Nakuru County.

4.3.5. Media

The responses for the actors involved in conflict management in Nakuru County cited media as one of the participants. Media liberalization and the transition period in Kenya started in 1992 following the restoration of multiparty pluralism. The media is used as a tool to disseminate positive messages and promote peace education to promote unity across different ethnic groups, as identified by the study findings.

From the FGDs, it was illustrated as follows:

The emergence of more radio and Television stations in the county has prompted ethnic groups and individuals to use these outlets to promote their interests-the enhancement of unity and social cohesion and

a sense of belonging among groups of people (Field interview with youth leaders at Molo Town on 21st June 2021).

The media has been used to send messages of cohesion and unity amongst the ethnic communities within the county. These findings agree with a study by Howard (2019), who confirms that the media plays a huge role in bringing peace and not conflict, as was the case in Tanzania, where the community radio was used to resolve land conflicts among the Masaai herdsman in Arusha.

Contrary to these findings, however, responses from key informants indicated media as a source of conflict during the 2007/2008 PEV. One key informant noted:

Vernacular radio stations participated in mass mobilization and spread of hate messages with name callings reported along ethnic divisions (Field interview with an Opinion leader at Kuresoi North on 27th June, 2021).

An impartial "mirror" of society that transmits knowledge that citizens may utilise to make democratic and informed decisions is what the liberal view sees in the media. Radical views of the media are backed by Steenveld, 2004, who sees media as a means by which dominant social classes retain their grip over society. It reinforces the premise that these great forces are fighting to win the hearts and minds of people in order to exert authority. These adversaries are now using the media to battle for control, putting the media's authority and independence at risk, especially in places like Nakuru, where tensions are high. The international community has given inadequate attention to the use of media and particularly community radio to incite violence, on the other side. Some media stations foment ethnic divide, hatred, violence, and bias against other groups. Kenya's community radio has been heavily criticised for its role in escalating the post-election instability that resulted in hundreds being killed or displaced. Media Self-Censorship can be considered a conflict management strategy to support both of these points of view. On the other side, the media may be a powerful force for peace. People are encouraged to accept each other's beliefs and perspectives by television news anchors, who use their platform as an outlet for promoting peace. When it comes to coverage of protests and demonstrations that occurred following the release of election results, the media is condemned for censoring and concealing information and skipping live news conferences on Election Day (Clairs *et al.*, 2014).

4.4. Strategies Employed in Conflict Management in Nakuru County

The respondents were further asked to explain some of the approaches used in conflict management within Nakuru County. The results are shown in table 3.

Approaches	Frequency	Percentage
Intercommunity negotiations	100	25.4
Mediation	95	24.2
Dialogue	47	12
Judicial settlements	27	12
Peace education/ Confidence building measures	24	18.8
Resettlement and reintegration	11	2.8
Empower marginalized groups	25	3.8
Use of non-judicial bodies	14	1
Total	393	100

Table 3: Approaches Used in the Management of Inter-Ethnic Conflicts within the Two Sub-Counties
Source: Field Data, 2020

The results indicated that the approaches used by CSOs to attain peaceful co-existence within the county are intercommunity negotiations (25.4%), mediation (24.2%), dialogue (12.0%), judicial settlement (12.0%), peace education and communication (18.8%), resettlement and reintegration (2.8%), empowerment programs (3.8%) and use of non-judicial bodies (1.0%). Reconciliation programmes and income-generating activities are the main approaches used by the CSOs and the government towards conflict management within the county.

Results from the FGDs and non-state actors' officials highlighted multiple roles of CSOs, including:

- Peace processes,
- Lobbying and advocacy for resettlement and peace for the internally displaced; psycho-social therapy,
- Sensitization of individuals and communities on justice and peace issues,
- Facilitation of implementation of peace-building activities, innovative economic empowerment,
- Provision of livelihood vouchers and conducting baseline surveys in target areas

The study findings show that the CSOs adopt various strategies for building peace within the county.

The CSOs consider Integrated Holistic Conflict Strategies through their emphasis on the local context and capacities, as was revealed by the study findings. More emphasis should be placed on creating capacities rather than simply constructing buildings for peace. Conflict analysis and mapping should be carried out as methods for phasing out the various projects and an exit strategy. According to a report by Fisher (1997), CSOs strive to address the core causes of conflict and rebuild relationships between parties and actors through a balanced approach that is further reinforced through partnerships and community engagement.

According to Bardall (2011: 11), "Informal" solutions include multi-stakeholder groups, mediation by community leaders, party leaders, etc. Advocacy, non-violence promotion, and troubleshooting methods can be formed by civil society organisations. However, it is essential to build ties with the governmental, electoral, and security sectors to guarantee that the information can be used in a timely manner.

A study by Owino 2019 notes that the operations of conflict transformation in Nakuru County are explicitly directed toward prevalence crises with the use of approaches such as negotiation, mediation, and dialogue being applied. He further asserts that in the long-term practice, conflict managers tend to focus on adherence to human rights, economic, social, and political stability, as well as CSO-building measures.

The study findings further revealed that conflict management in Nakuru County is also exhibited through a multi-actor participatory approach. There was evident cooperation and coordination among the NCIC, NSC, and elders in formulating and implementing peace agreements. Worth noting is The 2010 Nakuru Peace Accord. The NCIC initiated the accord to avert a culture of violence that was perennial during electioneering periods. As quoted by Owino 2019, the peace accord was triggered by the adverse impacts of the 2007/ 2008 Post Election Violence on Kikuyu and Kalenjin in the two sub-counties and the larger Nakuru County.

The Accord was aimed at reconciliatory programs through dialogue forums with the affected communities in established dialogue structures. For instance, the activity/project involves partnering with DPC and strengthening village committees through exchange programs, economic empowerment, and experience sharing. One key informant noted:

The peace agreement was important as it brought forth initiatives aimed to enhance economic empowerment and ownership, as well as peaceful co-existence, especially amongst those who were greatly affected and displaced in 2007 (Field interview in Kuresoi with an elder on 25th June, 2021).

When ethnic diversity is paired with a patron-client political structure and a lengthy history of ethnic conflict, Taylor, 2018 concludes that violence is far more likely when these factors are present. People of the same ethnicity as those in authority tend to believe that gaining political power entails gaining access to patronage products and other resources. However, elections come in various types and sizes and are held not only in democratic (or democratizing) systems but also in autocracies. Elections can only help ensure fair competition for political power if the rule of law is guaranteed. If not, conflict will occur as the losing parties cannot accept their result.

Another approach used in conflict management worth noting is the role of Shalom Center for Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation (SCCRR). The center aims to empower communities with knowledge and skills in conflict prevention, management, and transformation. The centre works in collaboration with local leaders and youth leaders. The key areas of concern for the team include conflict prevention and adopting formal and informal early warning structures. As noted by one of the key respondents:

Shalom Centre has undertaken various peace drives undertaking various inter-communal cohesion activities recruiting over 500 peace ambassadors. (Field interview with the key informant at Kivumbini on 23rd June, 2021).

The study findings also noted that SCCRR supports communities in Kuresoi and Molo through peace-building workshops. In order to identify the conflict concerns, an all-inclusive method is employed to establish the best tactics and solutions for peace. SCCRR uses a multi-level approach that includes county leaders, local government representatives, and grassroots community leaders to ensure that all perspectives are heard. SCCRR also works with CBOs, socio-economic empowerment groups, village leaders, clusters (Nyumba Kumi), religious organizations, and schools.

United States Institute of Peace book discusses several techniques to back up these conclusions. According to the book's findings, preventive measures have been shown to reduce violence. Moreover, the research found that "despite theoretically convincing reasoning, the quantitative impact of citizen- or community-oriented instruments such as peace messages, voter consultations, and even youth programming remains minimal and uncertain." According to case studies, state-led measures such as security sector participation and strengthening election administration and management may be the most successful methods of reducing violence. Nakuru County can benefit from this strategy.

4.5. National and County Governments Programmes

More than three-quarters of the respondents have experienced the impact of both governments' programs in their areas of residence. 118 did not feel any impact. This is explained in figure 1.

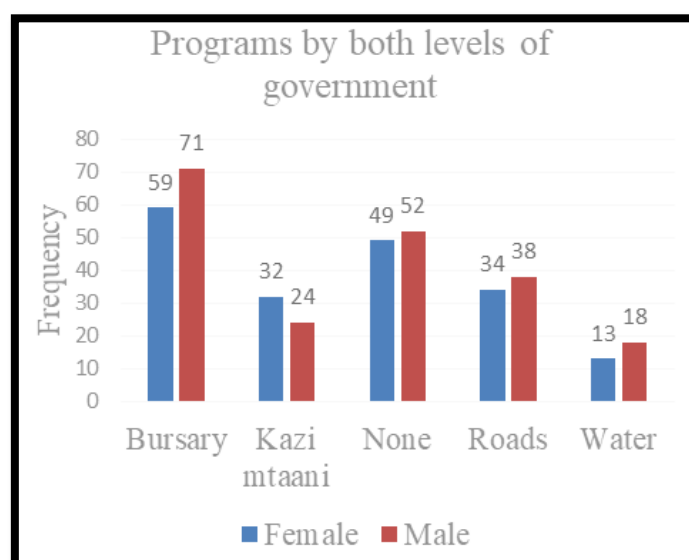


Figure 1: Impact of National and County Governments' Programs
Source: Research Data (2021)

130 of the respondents receive a bursary from either of the governments, 101 do not feel any impact from both the governments and 72 admit to having improved roads within areas of residence, while 56 have participated in kazi mtaani or felt its impact. The rest 31 have access to clean water.

As noted from the findings, the state officials indicated using diverse integrated conflict strategies toward conflict transformation. Results from the FGDs highlighted multiple roles of government, including:

- Peace processes,
- Lobbying and advocacy for resettlement and peace for the internally displaced,
- Psycho-social therapy,
- Sensitization of individuals and communities on justice and peace issues,
- Facilitation of implementation of peace-building activities and innovative economic empowerment,
- Provision of livelihood vouchers and conducting baseline surveys in target areas and more so in Molo and Kuresoi North Sub-counties

The study findings indicated the efforts made by the government to manage conflicts at the grass root level within the county. This disagrees with the UN report (2009) indicating that state intervention has only been successful at the formal and superficial levels.

The study also revealed through household respondents, as well as FGDs and key informants' feedback, that support by the government to the facilities includes funding and technical support of inter-ethnic community projects (mainly through C.B.O.s) and community connector initiatives. As noted by this study, income-generating activities, which include farming and trading activities facilitated by County and national governments and CSOs, aim to reduce vulnerability among communities through poverty alleviation. This has brought about increased levels of confidence in the settings such as markets, empowerment of marginalized groups, and associations between groups motivated by the incentives to interact and cooperate. However, most respondents indicated experiencing challenges, including market fluctuations for the products, inadequate funding, and poor infrastructure, which remain a hindrance to marginalization and poverty alleviation, which cause conflict in the area.

The Community Policing Associations (CPAs), led by governors or their representatives, have an essential role in securing Kenya's counties, as stated in the country's constitution. Another six appointees are picked from various stakeholders in the county, including:

- Business leaders, women, and people with special needs,
- Religious groups,
- Community-based organisations, and
- The county assembly

As a result, CPAs are tasked with the following:

- Keeping tabs on crime trends and patterns,
- Drafting proposals for specific goals and objectives for police performance,
- Keeping tabs on those goals and objectives' progress and accomplishments, and
- Overseeing and promoting community policing initiatives while also facilitating public participation and overseeing the policing budget

Legal snags have prevented the formation of CPAs. Civilians are represented in security decision-making through the CPA, which also serves as a tool for holding police officers accountable to the public (NCVPR, 2019).

In this study's FGDs, school projects, road networks, water projects, and bridges were some of the highlighted peace-building projects. People-to-people project connectors include Koiluget Secondary School and Burnt Forest. Kikuyus

and Kalenjins built the school. Furthermore, the secondary school intends to assist in the education and employment of young people, which not only helps to reduce poverty but also makes them less subject to political influence. There is also the Kipkalel Bridge Project, which aims to improve relations between the Kikuyu and Kalenjin residents of the Rurigi and Olave farms by linking their two communities (respectively, valley). Kalenjins regarded the Kipkalel Bridge as an excellent chance to provide transportation linkages between the Rurigi farm and the Burnt Forest Trading Centre, which the PEV considered a threat. In addition, programmes aimed at developing the ability of individuals and groups to participate in governance, advocacy, and peace-building activities are employed. These programmes also aim to improve already existing efforts. This programme aims to increase individuals' understanding of and involvement in the devolved system of government under the county structure, as well as to coach, design, and produce strategic plans for local communities to modify and implement.

Other government support initiatives identified were: The Government's National Reconciliation Fund for Mitigation and Resettlement; The Government's National Reconciliation and Emergency Initiative; and The Social and Economic Recovery Strategy, which provide financial and logistical support to the community. The Community Development Funds were also revealed to be common government sources, with the affected social amenities beneficiaries. Reports from the CSOs officials indicated having received grants and loans from the government through the Ministry of Social Services, Ministry of Special Programmes, and District Development Department to enhance their projects, especially health facilities and farm projects aimed at improving community livelihoods. Government technical advisers and staff have been sent to help improve the operations of the government-sponsored projects and initiatives. The study findings agree with other studies that recognize the government as the lead agency towards conflict management (Pkalya & Mohammad, 2006).

Findings from the FGDs and key informants also revealed that the government and CSOs coordinate with the community and their local government leaders in their peace initiatives and through local peace-building blocks to understand the problems and desired mechanisms to be implemented. The conception of a holistic, multi-actor, participatory programme is sought to ensure that processes, mechanisms, and structures are put in place to generate and sustain a common strategic objective among the political, security, development, and human rights interventions. This helps overcome arising challenges, reduce duplication and provide a means to identify ways in which different processes link together towards achieving sustainable peace.

Peacekeeping operations in the Democratic Republic of Congo are connected to the findings. UN Security Council resolutions 1279, 1291, 1493, 1565, and 1592 mandated the creation of MONUC as a special mission to address the political issues in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The UN Charter's Chapter VI offers MONUC a range of options for assisting conflict resolution in the Democratic Republic of Congo through collaboration. Cooperation includes monitoring ceasefires, delivering humanitarian supplies, and facilitating the transition to democracy, as well as supporting the national electoral framework and supporting the establishment of national human rights and the rule of law standards set by the United Nations with regard to democracy and human rights,

4.6. How to Achieve Social Interests and Inclusivity

The study sought to establish ways in which the leaders assist citizens to achieve inclusivity along ethnic lines. The study findings are shown in table 4. The study reported that 78 of the respondents socialize well with members from other communities, while 102 feel segregated. 35.5% of the respondents report roads to be the common provision for use developed, 21.5% indicate that they hardly know when public participation is done to enable them to participate in the affairs of the county meant for them. 13.5% acknowledge receiving bursaries from national and local leaders. 11.5% indicate that favoritism of only people close to their leaders gets to enjoy services meant for the public. 7.9% reported none. 6.7% of the respondents have participated in *kazi mtaani* through the National Youth Service program, while 3.3% are happy to have piped water around their residence, as shown below.

Project	Male	Female	Frequency (%)
Bursary	23	30	53 (13.6%)
Favoritism	23	22	45(11.5%)
<i>Kazi Mtaani</i>	12	14	26 (6.7%)
No Public Participation	40	44	84 (21.5%)
Water	9	4	13 (7.9%)
Roads	67	71	138(35.5%)
None	13	18	31 (7.9%)
Total			410 (100%)

Table 4: Social Interests and Inclusivity
Source: Research Data (2021)

From the household respondents, road projects were identified as a major approach that can be used to promote inter-ethnic cohesion. Additionally, respondents from the FGDs discussion highlighted the use of sports such as football through Football Kenya Federation (FKF) that have increased registration in the past few years.

One opinion leader shared that:

The communities have to interact, intermarry and share cultures to increase integration. Most of the civic institutions are spread out for all members from different communities to share. Nyumba Kumi initiative

does not limit sharing and visiting other members from different communities (Field interview in Kivumbini, 23rd June 2021).

From the study findings, it is apparent that businesses are not limited to specific people from one community; the priority is on the availability of space that will enable one to operate from an area of wish.

It is imperative to note that in Kenya, measures have been put in place to address the issue of inter-ethnic conflicts occasioned by national elections. Contrary to the study findings, Taylor, 2018 asserts that Peace campaigns and training have been applied in various cycles of election-prompted violence. However, peace campaigns failed to reach potential victims or perpetrators of electoral violence in rural areas. Too often, training was targeting the informed rather than the uninformed, which resulted in limited trickle-down effects for the community and the repetition of training. Intentionally supported peace initiatives in the pre-election period are inadequate, and communities are left vulnerable to sporadic violence in the post-election period. Additionally, there is a lack of sustained engagement and sufficient funding for peace-building efforts in the months preceding the national elections (Taylor, 2018).

Coordination among the core actors involved in conflict management cannot be fully realized without constructing effective strategies that give birth to sustainable peace. The actors involved in conflict management are the media, the government (county and national), CSOs, LPCs, and local administration/ security personnel.

The strategies employed in conflict management and peace-building include facilitating peace programmes, livelihood restoration, and empowerment programs with an emphasis on an all-inclusive participatory approach involving community members and other co-actors. Inter-community negotiations, mediation, dialogue, judicial settlements, resettlement, reintegration, and non-judicial approaches are used to address inter-ethnic conflicts in the county. Additionally, the government uses bursaries, *kazi mtaani*, schools, bridges, water, and road projects to promote unity and social harmony among the warring communities.

5. Conclusion

The study concludes that the state, which is the lead agency in conflict management, has shifted from macro-level focus to micro-level intervention through local government institutions. The state and non-state actors coordinate with each other through local peace-building blocks. All-inclusive approaches to peace-building are key in addressing the inter-ethnic conflict in Nakuru County, which remains volatile and multi-faceted in nature. Projects designed to promote cohesion and unity, like schools, bridges, and dispensaries, are developed between the Kalenjin and Kikuyu and have been used to prevent inter-ethnic conflicts.

6. Recommendations

The study recommends improved coordination and integration through enhanced inter-ethnic forums strengthening local peace-building blocks, which may help eliminate stereotypes and negative ethnicity. The existing peace agreement, such as the Nakuru Peace Accord be strengthened and enhanced to enable stakeholders involved to have coherent platforms for effective intervention efforts and coordination between and amongst the national and local peace-building blocks.

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