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**EXPLORING VIOLENCE THROUGH
THE NARRATIVES OF YOUTH IN
KENYAN SECONDARY SCHOOLS:
IMPLICATIONS FOR
RECONCEPTUALISING
PEACEBUILDING.**

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**Exploring Violence through the Narratives of Youth in Kenyan Secondary
Schools: Implications for Reconceptualising Peacebuilding.**

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Department of Peace Studies

University of Bradford

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Exploring Violence through the Narratives of Youth in Kenyan Secondary Schools: Implications for Reconceptualising Peacebuilding.

Key words: Youth, peacebuilding, education, culture, violence, constructivist grounded theory, narratives, secondary schools, militia, Kenya

ABSTRACT

Based on the narratives of young people this research explores the rise in youth violence in Kenya's secondary school system and wider society and the potential for peacebuilding to address youth violence. Of particular concern is the gradual change in the profiles, patterns and intensity of the conflict, as evidenced by the increase in the number of youth militias. This increase is often attributed to unemployment and poverty – yet, to date, no systematic research has been produced on the extent to which the youth participation in violence occurs through choice or coercion, or indeed both. Worryingly, a significant number of young people involved in this violence are secondary school students.

The findings of this research indicate that despite responses to youth violence in the school and wider Kenyan society, the violence is unabated. Notably, approaches continue to be top-down, generic, superficial and ineffectual. By marginalising the narratives of the youth who participate in and/or observe the violence, current institutional policies and approaches are decontextualised - from both the particular and the wider Kenyan context. This leaves intact the root causes of the violence.

This research raises important questions concerning generic, top-down, quick-fix, outmoded cultural paradigms, hierarchical and questionable homogeneous pedagogical approaches to peacebuilding in both the schools and wider Kenyan context. In attempt to address these deficiencies the research seeks to find out approaches to peacebuilding and the Kenyan education systems that can respond to youth violence. This research proffers three key dimensions that can be incorporated in order to ensure effective and sustainable peace: experiences, worldviews and attitudes of the actors.

The research, which utilises a constructivist grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006), was conducted in fourteen secondary schools in Nairobi and the Rift Valley provinces – two provinces that have been at the centre of youth violence and militia activities. These provinces were also selected in order to reflect the multi-cultural and multi-ethnic character, and the different types of schools in Kenya.

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“Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam” (AMDG)

“For the greater glory of God”

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AGM	Annual General Meeting
B-NEP	Building a Network of Peace
BOG	Board of Governors
CARE	CARE-International
CATS	Continuous Assessment Tests
CBO	Community Based Organisations
CO	Centre Organiser
CGT	Constructivist Grounded Theory
CIPEV	Commission of Inquiry into the Post-Election Violence
CRS	Catholic Relief Service
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CU	Christian Union
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
DDR	Disarmament, demobilisation, and reintegration
DFID	Department For International Development
DP	Democratic Party
FBOs	Faith Based Organisations
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FPE	Free Primary Education
GDP	Gross Development Product
GOK	Government of Kenya
GSU	General Service Unit
GT	Grounded Theory
GTM	Grounded Theory Methodology
HDI	Human Development Index
HREP	Human Rights Education for Peace
HRW	Human Rights Watch
ICC	International Criminal Court

ICG	International Crisis Group
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IRIN	Integrated Regional Information Networks
JPN	Justice and Peace Networks
KAC	Kikuyu Central Association
KADU	Kenya African Democratic Union
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KCB	Kenya Catholic Bishops
KCPE	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KESSHA	Kenya Secondary Schools Heads Association
KIE	Kenya Institute of Education
KNBS	Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
KNCHR	Kenya National Commission of Human Rights
KNDR	Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation
KNEC	Kenya National Examination Council
KNYA	Kenya National Youth Alliance
KYEP	Kenya and Youth Empowerment Programme
LDP	Liberal Democratic Party
LEAP	Local Empowerment Programmes
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOYAS	Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports
MPI	Multidimensional Poverty Index
MRC	Mombasa Republic Congress
MS	Muslim Society
NaRC	National Alliance Rainbow Coalition
NCKK	National Council of Churches Kenya
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa Development

NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NPI-Africa	Nairobi Peace Initiative-Africa
NSC	National Steering committee
NSIS	National Security Institute
ODM	Orange Democratic Movement
OPC	Oodua People's Congress
PEP	Peace Education Programmes
PEV	Post-Election Violence
PNU	Party of National Unity
PASW	Predictive Analytics Statistics Software
PTA	Parents Teachers Association
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SLDF	Sabaot Land Defence Force
SSA	sub-Saharan Africa
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TI	Transparency International
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nation Educational Science and Cultural Organisation
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Education Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
YCS	Young Christians Society

GENESIS, SCOPE OF THE STUDY AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As an experienced educator, lecturer, teacher and principal of twenty years who has worked with Kenyan youth in different types of learning institutions¹, I have become increasingly aware of the disturbing level of youth-related violence in Kenya's secondary school system. This research arises out of a personal and professional commitment to document, reflect and explore innovative approaches to building strong educational responses to generate a constructive youth engagement as actors in reducing violence and creating more peaceful relations within the school system and within the wider socio-political context.

Notably, my interest in this research arose out of my own experience observing renewed youth political unrest and violence in Kenyan schools in the late 1990s and 2001. As a new school principal in the Rift Valley, I accompanied students and their parents who had lost loved ones and property especially in the 1992-1993 violence. The designation of this violence in mainstream narratives as primarily "ethnic clashes" and in the case of school violence mainly as "indiscipline" seemed to absent youth-centered narratives and understandings, concerning the violence and their experiences within it, be it as observers, victims or participants.

In the period following 2001 school unrest, government-initiated commissions of inquiries were set to identify the underlying factors of the violence. However, regardless of these commissions' recommendations on approaches to address youth-related violence in the schools and wider society, the situation has continued to remain unabated. In part, the arguments in this research are that educational and political policies and programmes have had little positive impact

¹ My experience includes being a Kenyan teacher in primary and secondary schools in Central, Nairobi and Rift Valley provinces, principal in two types of public secondary schools (provincial and national girls boarding) with a capacity of over 700 students and as a lecturer in a teachers' college.

because it fails on the three key points: analytical, methodological and pedagogical. First, analytically, it has excluded the role of youth-centered narratives as imperative for understanding and responding to the violence. Second, it has continued to utilise a methodological approach that absences participatory and empowering youth-driven processes. Third, its pedagogical response has been set within a normative, top-down, generic approach to building peace, rather than a contextual set of responses that are youth-informed.

In short, this thesis argues that the bulk of such peacebuilding approaches have been inadequate as they lack an understanding of the youth-based narratives and subjectivity. For instance, in widespread violent unrests in Kenyan secondary schools after the post-2007 election violence, the Ministry of Education (MOE) and various other education stakeholders (Parents Teachers Associations (PTA), School Board of Governors (BOG) and parents), popular media and the subsequent wider public discourses explained these youth violent conflicts mainly in terms of “indiscipline” or the “rebellious nature” of students. Students were viewed by some as “disgruntled” or “spoilt” and their behaviour characterised as “madness of youth”. Surprisingly, public discourse expressed for the re-introduction of the cane² as a measure to restore student “sanity” to the learning institutions (Mwandoto, April 3, 2008). In the same vein, elements of popular public discourse attributed the violence to the failure of school authorities to manage their schools properly, both as administrators and purveyors of authority (Crowley, 2008).

The argument in this thesis is that such government, educational public discourses over-emphasized behaviours and administrative causalities as explanative factors. The result of such framework has been to de-contextualise youth-related

²Students are beaten using a wooden rod, some teachers use the rubber gas supply hose of the Bunsen burner which often has a metal at one end or use belts to deal with deviant behaviour among students.

violence from the wider Kenyan political, economic, and socio-cultural context and dimensions. As a consequence, public discourses and educational responses have analytically misplaced the complex dynamics of youth violence, in part by not acutely engaging with youth-centered narrative.

Hence, an important factor in the current context of ongoing youth-related violence is the largely untapped potential of youth to contribute to peacebuilding in the country. Young people, often perceived as a “problem” by government, their education institutions, and other large segments of society, have a valuable potential to contribute to the development of appropriate educational policies that would address the continuing volatility and unrest in secondary schools. Indeed, as will be explored in the pages below, youth’s capacities as active actors and potential agents of social change must not be underestimated (Schwartz, 2010: 2; McEvoy-Levy, 2001).

Yet, more significantly, as will be further discussed in this thesis, the inability to adequately consider the series of issues and challenges at hand from the perspective of those that matter – youth –, has resulted in a failure to involve them in the various activities designed to resolve conflict concerning the educational setting and the wider society.

If responses to conflict, within Kenya’s secondary schools as well as in the wider society - participation of large number of young men and women in armed militias - are developed by largely ignoring the very concerns and viewpoints of the youth, then a number of fundamental concerns arise. The most important of these being the relevance of including youth’s subjective understanding(s) and viewpoint(s) on the violence itself as a key component. Understood in this way, the research puts forth the following research questions:

- a) *What narratives are used by the youth to describe, explain, and justify their participation in and/or observation of violent conflicts in Kenyan secondary schools and the wider society?*
- b) *In what ways can approaches to peacebuilding and the Kenyan education systems respond to youth violence?*

In response to these questions, the thesis explores the deepening patterns and increasing intensity of youth violence in Kenyan secondary schools, and the problematic extension of youth participation in both identity and political-based militias in schools and the wider society. First, it focuses on youth's understandings and their experiences of violence, the way the conflicts are handled when they occur and their sources of problem-solving. Second, the thesis proffers potential peacebuilding approaches, tools and pedagogies for engaging Kenyan youth in reducing school-based and wider social violence. More specifically, strengthening school-based peacebuilding approaches and responses would incorporate a bottom-up peacebuilding methodology. Such a bottom-up approach acknowledges and fully engages with the complexity of youth-centered narratives, worldviews, experiences and coping mechanisms. Further, such a framework would emphasise youth-defined empowerment, peacebuilding skills and capacities as key steps in engaging youth as problem-solvers, and not as problem itself.

Hence, it is the supposition of this thesis that in order to address youth violence and ensure sustainable peacebuilding in a school setting and wider society, one has to begin with the youth's own perspectives on the conflict and peace itself. Therefore, there is need to critically reflect on notions of conflict and peace from the youth's own perspective. The relationship between the events described above:

youth violence, militias, and inadequate responses in the context of widespread political and ethnic violence, calls for such reflection.

Before the next section – a Snapshot of the chapters – is an introduction on how the term “youth” is used in this thesis. The concept “youth” is complex. First, “youth” is a heterogeneous group with age variety, “gender, class, disability, ethnicity, education and provenance (e.g. region, rural/urban),” (Hilker and Fraser, 2009: 9). The World Programme of Action for Youth defines youth as persons between 15 -24 years of age (World Youth Report, 2011: 4). While in the African Youth Charter the term “young people” is used to refer to those aged between 15 and 17 years of age. On the other hand, the Kenyan constitution refers to “youth” as persons above 18 years but has not attained 34 years in age. It is also important to consider the “individuality of contemporary youth” when defining youth (Gidley, 2002).

Notably, youth is also shaped and operate in a particular cultural, social, political, and economic context(s). For instance, in different parts of the world youth is also defined using markers such as economic independence, cultural contexts for instance the rites that mark transition from childhood to adulthood (Smith and Ellison, 2012). Furthermore, during conflicts the tendency is to distinguish “youth” as “young men who pose a potential threat” thus leaving out the “young women” from youth-focused interventions as they are not considered a threat (Hilker and Fraser, 2009: 9). Equally in some cultures “young women” become mothers at an early age changing their social status more than it does for males (ibid.). In this thesis, “youth” refers to secondary school students and out of school youths mainly involved in militia group and gangs - , in the Kenyan context. Importantly, some of these definitions/categorisation apply to the target group in this thesis – the youth –

both in the school and wider society. However, when referring to the secondary school students age is not a key variable as will be noted in section 3.5 below (Table 3.5) since in the Kenyan education system age does not necessarily correspond with the Form levels (secondary schools nomenclature).

SNAPSHOT OF CHAPTERS

This thesis is structured into seven chapters. Chapter one, *Peacebuilding reconsidered* provides a reflection and critique of peacebuilding theory and practice, with a view to setting the scene for the engagement of Kenyan youth-centred narratives on the violence they participate in and/or observe. It, therefore, acts as a theoretical foundation for contextualising youth violence in Kenya and provides a methodological justification for engaging youth-centred narratives on the violence they engage in/and or observe in secondary schools and wider society. Narratives like these are essential if there is to be an understanding of how Kenyan youth justify their participation in violence and the coping mechanisms they employ within this context. It is equally important to identify the inadequacies of un-situated, top-down peacebuilding theory and practice mainly applying liberal peace theories.

Chapter two *Contextualising Youth Conflicts in Kenya*, outlines the complex cultural, economic, socio-political Kenyan context in which the youth violence occurs. This chapter introduces and discusses Kenya's cultural, political, and socio-economic history from pre-colonial period to date (2012) with special focus on youth and their engagement in violence. Further, the chapter highlights that the exploitation of youth in political violence has a long history in Kenya that predates European colonialism. Violence in which youth are key actors, victims or both has been used by both political leaders and ethnic communities as a major tool particularly for major political, socio-economic evolution and transitions, for example the

decolonising struggle for Kenyan independence. The involvement of such groups, among them the Mumbo cult (1913), Kikuyu *Karing'a* (1921) and in 1947 the *Dini ya Msambwa* (Ruteere, 2008, Gecaga, 2007 and Press, 2004).

Historically contextualised, the main interest to this research is the involvement of youth in Kenya's most recent history of violence which is characterised in the increase of youth militia groups, gangs and school violent unrest (Waki Report, 2008; KNCHR report 2008: 168-22). Moreover, the post-2007 election violence is significant to this study because it highlights the worrying trend of youth violence and the increase in militia groups and gangs in both the wider Kenyan society and school setting in particular. This contextualisation becomes an important framework to critique the current educational and government responses to this contemporary violence.

Chapter three, *Field Research Methodology*, outlines the rationale for the choice of methodology and methods used in this thesis. Specifically, the principles of Charmaz's (2006) Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) is utilised as both a method of comparative ongoing analysis and as theory grounded in empirical research. Given the inadequate research in the area of youth, education and peacebuilding in the Kenyan secondary school context, grounded theory is the optimum choice for research into this area in such a way as to let the field data begin to speak for itself.

This chapter also introduces the two research locations, Nairobi and the Rift Valley provinces. The research involved four different types of schools (public and private, all boys and all girls, day and boarding). The main factors for the selection of these locations were due to their multi-cultural and multi-ethnic character and also the fact that they cater for different categories of schools in Kenya, that is public and

private, national, provincial and district. These two locations also have a history of violence of political and ethnical nature where the youth are key actors, victims or both. Additionally, these locations are home to a number of youth militia groups and gangs that have been on the increase in recent years. Notwithstanding, the locations are representative of violent conflicts enveloping Kenya, as well as the educational and governmental responses to this violence.

Primary field data was collected from January to May 2010 using a variety of methods including survey questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and observation to capture mainly the youth narratives and to some extent other key informants. Fourteen schools participated in the actual study. 512 student respondents in total were selected from these schools to participate in the survey questionnaire. Students were selected in two schools to participate in the semi-structured interviews and students from twelve schools to participate in focus group discussions. As shown above the research also incorporated some other key informants working and/or interested in youth and youth issues. Some of the questions factored in the bio-data and demography such as age, education level, and students' leadership responsibilities among others.

This third chapter also highlights the fact that the research was carried out following the ethical issues as approved by the University of Bradford. Key was the ethical issues of informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, privacy and the *do no harm principle*. These ethical issues were adhered to throughout the research that is from data collection, coding, analysing, interpreting and the final documentation of the thesis. The thesis also applied the framework for evaluating grounded theory following the principles of Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) by Charmaz (2006).

In chapter four, *Youth Narratives: Violent Conflicts and Expectations*, we encounter the youth through their narratives on the violence they participate in and/or observe. This chapter covers the student respondents' perception of peace and conflict, views on conflicts they participate in and/or observe in their own school and neighbouring schools. In addition captures the youth's views on areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction, views/perceptions on youth militia groups and gangs and their activities and on the post-election violence and its aftermath. Also the chapter incorporates the key informants' narratives.

Data was generated by use of statistical software - quantitative data analysis using the Predictive Analytics Software (PASW). This involves a description of the data (frequencies and cross tabulations) mainly by gender, education level and location. The qualitative data from the open questions in the survey questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus groups discussions are coded and analysed thematically (chapters four and five). This involves theoretical sampling, comparing data with other data, codes, concepts and categories/themes. The coded responses are further analysed and coded into emerging themes which form the base for chapter six.

Chapter five, *Dealing with Conflicts in Schools and the Wider Kenyan Society*, analyses the data further with the main focus on how the conflicts are dealt with (understood and responded to) within the particular schools, neighbouring schools and the wider society. The issues of youth militias and gangs are revisited paying attention to how the authorities deal with them. Equally it addresses the how youth and youth issues are dealt with in both the school and wider society. The chapter further seeks views on how the authorities handled the post-2007 election violence and their expectations and understandings on how violence, youth and

youth issues should be handled. Conversely, the chapter explores the potential role of youth in problem-solving. This second set of field data and analysis utilises youth narratives to highlight the gaps and limitations in the current approaches by the educational system and the Kenyan government. Chapter five will also address – where appropriate - the second research question (b) which seeks to find: *In what ways can approaches to peacebuilding and the Kenyan education systems respond to youth violence?*

Chapter six, *A Thematic Analysis and Interpretation of Field Research Data*, combines mainly the coded data from chapters four and five to identify the emerging themes. The different levels that youth interact are highlighted: among themselves, with the school community, with the political, social, economic and cultural structures (local/national) and through global and social networking. After coding at different levels, using the principles of Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) five key themes were identified which were then analysed in detail. The five themes are: (i) experiencing brutality; (ii) experiencing rigidity (iii) experiencing coercion (iv) observing deviance in cultural structures and (v) ways of coping such as “exploding” (violence as a means of communication). The key themes inform chapter seven which is the concluding chapter of this thesis. Also in this chapter there is further analysis of the second research question (b).

Chapter seven, *Findings, Reflections and Further Research: Implications for reconceptualising peacebuilding*, serve to encapsulate the thesis. The research will focus on the youth violence and the existent institutional responses. This concluding chapter is guided by the literature review captured in chapters one and two, chapter four on the methodology and the analysed field research data collected in Kenya using the principles of CGT (chapters five and six). It captures the research findings

and reflections and highlights areas for further research. Key to these findings are the five emerging themes captured in chapter six.

This concluding chapter of the thesis seeks first, to advance the argument that Kenyan youth conflicts are multi-faceted and context specific. Hence, the responses must be tailored to address youth realities, in light of a dynamic Kenyan context. Second, within the Kenyan educational and governmental systems, the narratives of youth serve as a basis of developing criteria for assessing the relevance and effectiveness of school-based peacebuilding responses. Third, the research reflects on its implications for wider debates concerning theories and practices connecting peacebuilding, education and youth. As a consequence, the thesis points to the need for a reconceptualising of peacebuilding in education contexts and wider society that includes the narratives and understandings of those most affected – the youth – as a means to construct appropriate educational and social responses. Therefore, the thesis proffers key dimensions that can be taken into consideration for any peacebuilding responses to youth violence in schools and wider society - the worldviews, experiences and attitudes of affected communities and groups.

CHAPTER ONE: PEACEBUILDING RECONSIDERED

INTRODUCTION

As pointed out in the Snapshots of the chapters above, chapter one of this thesis employs peacebuilding framework as an appropriate theoretical lens through which to engage with the problem of youth violence in Kenya's secondary schools and wider society. The chapter reflects on, identifies and highlights the gaps in literature on the existing peacebuilding theories and practices. As discussed in the brief overview of the existing peacebuilding theories and practices below, the approaches have tended to be liberal, normative and top-down.

Chapter one and indeed the entire thesis, show that elusive are theories and practices that firmly acknowledge, and are sensitive to and stem from, the socio-cultural concepts and context of actors. Furthermore, as will be shown in the literature chapters and the research informed chapters below, the bulk of such peacebuilding approaches have been inadequate as they lack an understanding of the youth-based narratives and subjectivity. Hence the need to include youth-centered contextualised ontologies, epistemologies and situated *bottom-up* narratives of peace – in both the school setting and wider society – for sustainable peacebuilding. Additionally, to ensure sustainable peacebuilding, there is need to capture the subjective, intergenerational and culturally transmitted meanings of peace which are contained in the pertinent views, attitudes and beliefs. Core to this thesis is the argument that it is the way one perceives and conceptualises peace that will influence how one makes or builds peace (Rinehart, 1989:1). Therefore, there is need to pay more attention to peace concepts as real and important in sustainable peacebuilding.

The discussion and reflection in this chapter and that of the entire thesis is guided by the research question (a) and (b) mentioned above and recapped below.

- a) *What narratives are used by the youth to describe, explain, and justify their participation in and/or observation of violent conflict in Kenyan secondary schools and wider society?*
- b) *In what ways can approaches to peacebuilding and the Kenyan education systems respond to youth violence?*

1.1 THEORIES AND PRACTICES OF PEACEBUILDING: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

The academic and policy literature on post-conflict peacebuilding has burgeoned in the last two decades (Ramsbotham et al., 2005: 215). Yet, due to its varied range of activities, peacebuilding is considered one of the least understood and least “operationalized” concept (Gawerc, 2006: 43). According to Charles-Philippe (1999: 26) peacebuilding is “an elastic concept ... with no agreement on precise parameters.” For Green et al. (2007: 73) peacebuilding is a term that “is highly contested and frequently used in ways that lack conceptual clarity.” Lederach on the other hand defines peacebuilding as,

... a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates, and sustains the full array of processes, approaches, and stages needed to transform conflict toward more sustainable, peaceful relationships ... involves a wide range of activities and functions that both precede and follow formal accords (Lederach, 1997: 20).

As can be observed from these differing views on peacebuilding, this is an indication of how fast the concept is developing and also a lack of clarity on what peacebuilding really is. This is evidenced in the language for instance “elastic

concept”, “highly contested”, “full array processes, approaches”. Hence, it can be argued that there can be as many definitions of peacebuilding as there are actors. Another observation is that there seems to be an underlying desire for this concept to have a time limit for instance as expressed in the language “operationalized” (desire to see peacebuilding working giving an idea of something that has stalled), “no precise parameters” (cannot tell where peacebuilding begins and where it ends), “lack conceptual clarity”, “stages”, “precede and follow” (seems to portray a linear approach to peacebuilding). In fact this shows how complex and dynamic peacebuilding is and therefore cannot be constricted into a specific space or be time bound.

Importantly, the history of peacebuilding has evolved in what could be clustered as four schools of thought. These include: conflict management (Paris, 2004; Paffenholz, 2003: 16-21); conflict resolution (Ramsbotham, 2011; 2005); a combination of conflict management and conflict resolution (Paffenholz, 2003: 16-21)³ and the conflict transformation (Lederach 2003: 1997; Rupensinghe and Anderlini, 1995: 65-92). John Burton and John Paul Lederach fault the conflict resolution approach as being incapable of solving protracted conflicts. Burton advocates for “provention”⁴. This means concentrating on the “causal conditions”, and the positive promotion of environments conducive to collaborative relationships as opposed to only dealing with conflict resolution. He further argues that some conflict areas can have no resolutions but provention such as “drug-related conflicts and gang violence, terrorism and international conflicts” (Burton, 1990: 18). The contemporary approach that has dominated peacebuilding is referred to as the liberal

³ Among the supporters of the conflict resolution approach are: Oliver Ramsbotham, Tom Woodhouse and Hugh Miall (Paffenholz, 2003: 15-23, Miall 2004, 2005; Woodhouse, June 1999)

⁴ Burton prefers to use the term “provention” as opposed to “prevention”. This is in order to avoid the “negative connotation of containment” that is linked with the term “prevention”. For further reading on this refer to Burton, J. (1990). *Conflict: resolution and provention*: Houndmills: Macmillan.

peace approach and this will be dealt with later in this chapter. Importantly, all these approaches can be in operation at the same time and in a given context. The understanding of peacebuilding as going beyond conflict management to long-term conflict resolution and transformation is widely accepted. However, the tension between theory and practice remains since one senses that to date, the activities promoted by the United Nations and other international bodies tend to be reactive to crisis and focus on short-term and top-down problem-solving approaches (Green et al., 2007: 74).

Although central to conflict and peace research for several decades - indeed ever since Johan Galtung first popularised it in academia in 1976, the term peacebuilding entered the international policy agenda following UN's Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's *An Agenda for Peace* (1992). In this case, peacebuilding is envisioned as a post-conflict action, involving a central concern which is preventing the re-emergence of violent conflict and rebuilding capabilities of a society to resolving conflict without fighting (Boutros-Ghali, 1992: 46; 1994). Since this was thought of as limited to post-conflict peacebuilding, it was followed by the more comprehensive "Supplement to An Agenda for Peace" (1995), which was expanded to address all conflict phases.⁵

Interestingly, Boutros-Ghali and Galtung view peacebuilding from very different lenses. For Boutros-Ghali (1992) peacebuilding commences after the conflict has ended thus the notion of "post-conflict peacebuilding" instead of merely "peacebuilding". On the other hand, Galtung (1996: 265) perceives peacebuilding as

⁵ Several other United Nations documents have been published since then according to the evolving contexts of peacebuilding. This document emphasised the need for peacebuilding to address all the conflict phases. Among these documents, is the 2000 Report of the Panel on United Nations Peace Operations or Brahimi Report A/55/305/S/2000/809 Available at: http://www.un.org/peace/reports/peace_operations/This document emphasised on the need for peacebuilding to address all the conflict phase.

encompassing a “going back” to the causes of a conflict, that is the pre-(or ante) conflict situation to assess the fundamental causes of a particular conflict, before proposing the inter(during) and post-conflict peacebuilding. Galtung’s (1996) notion of peacebuilding comprises a peace that is built in the social, cultural and structural spheres as “a reservoir for the system itself to draw upon ...” when conflicts arise (Galtung, 1976: 298). One notes that so far, the peacebuilding approaches are mainly action and post-conflict oriented (retroactive) instead of being proactive.

Peacebuilding became a reality, at the end of the Cold War, “democratization and marketization as strategies” were perceived as the only options for preventing recurrence of violence (Paris, 2004: 13). The aim of the interventions was also to transform war-torn states into “liberal market democracies” (ibid.,: 5). However, due to the fact that these interventions were “quick fixes”, top-down and universally applied, the perceived peace was not sustainable. Hence, the perennial wars leading to an idealistic desire for a universal peace. At its inception, liberalism as conceived by Immanuel Kant and developed by John Locke had aimed at establishing a free society (Newman et al. 2009)⁶.

Since the post-Cold War period liberal peace approaches have become influential in most peacebuilding theories and practices. The components of liberal peacebuilding namely democratisation, social security sector (SSR), human rights education for peace (HREP), and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) are hegemonic representing a normative, top-down approach which imposes the notion of peace from the peacebuilding actors’ point of view instead of eliciting the contextual concept of peace. For this reason, liberal peacebuilding has been

⁶ The individual has “the freedom to life, to own and dispose of goods” (Fischer, 2000: 2).

suspected of resembling the old *mission civilisatrice*⁷ (Paris, 2002: 637-656). Instead of being seen as a worthwhile activity liberal peacebuilding has been persistently criticised as another form of neo-colonialism through which Western ideals are imposed from above (Richmond, 2007). Therefore, despite the intention to establish durable peace, could the liberal peace approaches have failed to detect the complexity of the field in which peace is to be built?


Liberal peace approaches have been dominated more by efficiency than legitimacy, paying less attention to the local context and significant questions such as “whose peace?” and “which peace?”. Some of the critics of liberal approaches claim that these approaches spring from the human security framework which still limits peacebuilding to a single strategy (Henk, 2005: 91-105; Gasper, 2005: 221-245). Importantly, Human Security framework has experienced a shift in focus from the minimalist approach (focus is on state security that is, “free from fear”) which was adopted by Canada and its maximalist approach (focus is on people security that is “freedom from want, freedom from fear and freedom from indignity”) which was adopted by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 1994 (Tadjbakhsh in Richmond, 2010: 117; Henk, 2005: 93; Gasper, 2005). Equally, liberal peace has been criticised for failing to address conflicts in some cases and exacerbating tensions in other cases (Tadjbakhsh in Richmond, 2010: 124-125). For instance, Herzegovina and Bosnia (HiB), Afghanistan and Iraq are some of the apt examples.

In his seminal work, Richmond (2010) discusses the “graduation of the liberal peace approach” focusing on conservative, orthodox and emancipatory models as noted in

Table 1.1. below.

⁷ For further reading on this refer to Paris, R. (2002: 637-656). International peacebuilding and the “mission civilisatrice”. For Paris “mission civilisatrice” is “the colonial-era belief that the European imperial power has a duty to ‘civilise’ dependent populations and territories.” In this article Paris discusses the liberal peace and its development. In his conclusion he notes that current academic literature on peace operations takes a lot for granted p. 655.

Table 1.1 Graduations of liberal peace model

GRADUATION OF LIBERAL PEACE MODELS	LIBERAL PEACE MODELS	NATURE OF PEACE	ONTOLOGY OF PEACE	METHOD
	Hyper-Conservative	Victor's peace defined solely by military superiority	Peace is not possible, very limited, or is territorially bounded; peace is utopian.	Use of Force
	Conservative	Victor's peace, constitutional peace settlement, institutional peace treaty [...] peacekeeping deployed for long periods	Peace is a product of force and elite diplomacy; universal form of peace should be aspired but is unreachable.	Force and Diplomacy, military intervention leading to ceasefire, mediation or negotiation
	Orthodox	Constitutional and institutional peace; elements of victor's peace through hegemony other than force [...] settlement more important than justice	Peace rests on mainly constitutional and institutional measures; it is universal and can be achieved through epistemic transference of technical knowledge and framework.	Top-down peacebuilding; some bottom-up peacebuilding
	Emancipatory	Civil peace; focus on social movement, social actors and issues, social justice as a pathway to peace; wary of external forms of domination being imported through external intervention	Peace rests on social justice and open and free communication between social actors, as well as state/official actors; recognition of difference and otherness.	Top-down and bottom-up peacebuilding

Source: Adapted: Richmond (2010:10)

http://www.standrews.ac.uk/intrel/media/Richmond_understanding_the_liberal_peace.pdf

Paris (2004) advances a new peacebuilding strategy “institutionalization before liberalization”⁸ (ibid.,: 7)⁹. The aim is to consolidate the institutions for instance the security sector, judicial sector and economic sector. Further, Paris (ibid.) is of the opinion that the liberalisation process should be carried out without compromising its ultimate goal, which is to establish sustainable peace. While this approach may work in certain contexts, in some post-conflict setting especially where those at the top leadership are the literate, expertise and economically endowed, the institutions will be filled with similar people, who had failed the structure in the first place. Hence this can further aggravate a conflict situation.

Furthermore, liberal peace approaches seem to advocate peace that is similar to all and the same in all contexts. However, “concepts such as peace and rule of law are far from being self-evident and universal, but are products of particular historical development and expressions of particular worldviews and social relations” (Richmond, 2005 : ibid.). Richmond (2005: 1–8) contends that what starts as coercion ends up being localised peace or virtuous peace, therefore contextual peace. However, history seem to prove the opposite with examples such as Somalia, Iraq and Sudan where the means seem to dictate the results of peace that is sought. It is in this light that Kartas (2007: 12) challenges the liberal peace advocacy for democracy, viewing democracy as a “polyarchy”¹⁰ to peace. Importantly, democracy is a social construct.

⁸ This is in order to achieve the Wilsonian goal often referred to “Wilsonianism”. This refers to the belief that democratisation and marketisation will foster peace in war-shattered states and is named after the twenty-eighth president of the Unites States, who believed that liberalism was key to peace and security (Paris, 2004: 6).

⁹ Paris gives Angola and Rwanda as examples of failed liberal peace systems, whereas Namibia and Mozambique are examples of the success story of Wilsonianism.

¹⁰Kartas borrows this word from Dahl. For further information refer to Kartas <http://busieco.samnet.sdu.dk/politics/nisa/papers/kartas.pdf>

Besides promotion of democracy liberal peace advocates for other values such as “market-based economic reforms” and range of other institutions associated with “modern” states as a driving force for building “peace”. However liberal peace places more stress on strategy than the local desired peace (Newman et al., 2009: 3). Faced with the recurring challenges of unsuccessful interventions of liberal peacebuilding approaches, Pugh et al. (2008: 393) propose one of the recent liberal peace approaches, that of “life welfare” (life wellbeing). According to Pugh et al.

[A] life welfare paradigm would encompass alternative notions of life (the individual, community, the biosphere and planetary environment) and alternative understandings of the political economy of peacebuilding in war-torn countries (Pugh et al. 2008: 394).

This model places emphasis on economy and ecology taking into consideration local voices, rejecting universalism in favour of heterodoxy, reconceptualising the abstract individual as a social being (ibid.).

Interesting, too, there has been a great deal of debate concerning the “local” and the “international” and their role in peacebuilding. This has generated new debates on the concept of “hybridity” of peace (Richmond and Franks, 2011; Mac Ginty, 2010; Newman et al., 2009). With reference to the debates on the importance of “engaging the local” and “local ownership”, Newman et al. (2009: 14), caution against “romanticizing” the “local” and validating the “international”. The idea of bringing together the “local” and “international” to create the hybrid form of peace (local-liberal hybrid peace) as Richmond (2009: 72) advocates is problematic as there is an assumption that these concepts (local and liberal) are understood in the same way by all people. The next assumption is that there is a locus where these two meet to create the hybrid form of peace while there is no single local and liberal

approach even in any given society. Third the notion that there can be a hybrid form of peace despite the fact that peace is dynamic and complex. What about the questions of “whose and which peace”?

Mac Ginty on the other hand, envisages a model of hybrid peace which is hinged on four pillars,

... the compliance powers of liberal peace agents, networks and structures; the incentivizing powers of liberal peace agents, networks and structures; the ability of local actors to resist, ignore or adapt liberal peace interventions; and ability of local actors, networks and structures to present and maintain alternative forms of peacemaking (Mac Ginty, 2010: 392).

Figure 1.1 below is a graphic interpretation of what Mac Ginty envisages as the interface between the “internationally supported” peace operations and “local approaches.”

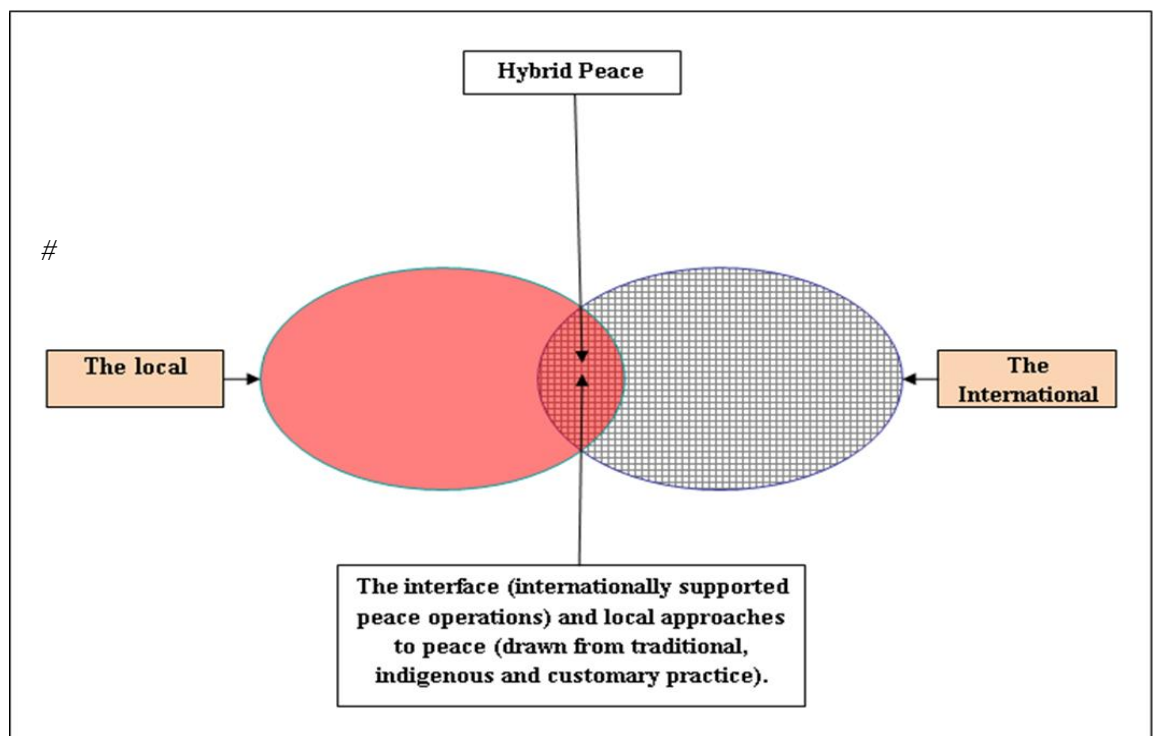


Figure 1.1 Graphic interpretation of Mac Ginty's argument on hybrid peace

Mac Ginty, 2010: 39, 2011: 88, 2012: 212).

Hence, for Mac Ginty sustainable hybrid peace brings on board the best of the two approaches, the “local” that “may draw on traditional, indigenous and customary practice” (2010: 391) and “international” – not as a binary but as a composite whole in a process where there is interplay of the four-part conceptual model (ibid.).

However, while this proposed four-part conceptual model might be viable theoretically, it may present several challenges in practice. For instance, the very context, networks and structures are different with one group already coming from a position of power (compliance and incentivising), and the other expected to respond (to present, maintain or resist) what is being offered. This could lead to tension due to the power dynamics as understood from the proposed model.

In this regard, while acknowledging the shortcomings of liberal peacebuilding, Paris (2004: 108) contends that “most host countries would probably be much worse off if it was not for the assistance they received”. Furthermore he asserts that there are no other possible ways for peacebuilding than the current normative liberal peacebuilding. In support of this view he argues that,

... peacebuilders should preserve the broad goal of converting war-shattered states into liberal market democracies, because well-established liberal market democracies tend to be peaceful in both their domestic affairs and their relations with other states (Paris, 2004: 7).

However, Paris does this with caution stating that the method should be applied in such a way that it does not jeopardise the peace it intends to consolidate.

From the discussions above, so far history seems to show that the peacebuilding approaches have navigated consciously or unconsciously, between two major ideologies; which are either the democratic or liberal ideologies. In brief this would imply that, if one takes the democratic approach, the emphasis can be that

human beings think and act collectively (Fischer, April 2000: 14).¹¹ This notion of collectivity implies that everybody must agree to the opinion of the majority. The danger of this approach is that it tends to mute and sideline the minority's voices and views. On the other hand, in the case of the liberal ideologies, the meanings and values are universal. Hence, one of the major reasons why liberal peace approaches have not been successful in peacebuilding may be due to their universalism and absolutism of values and rights.

Of particular interest to this thesis are the peacebuilding approaches used in dealing with violence committed by children/youth. These programmes target mainly the children/youth in aim of creating cultures of peace (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), 2002). Examples of such programmes are the school based interventions mainly the peace education programmes which are part of both the practice of, as well as the discourses on peacebuilding. Sommers (2002: 202-203) argues that the values of peace education are “widely embraced” and “espouses universal ideals that are often interpreted according to Western cultural notions of universality.”

These peacebuilding approaches/interventions also tend to apply the liberal peace theories and practices that are both normative and top-down. Notably, peace scholars and critics of the peacebuilding approaches among them Salomon and Cairns, 2011; Cabezudo and Haavelsrud, 2006; Danesh, 2006; Gur-Ze'ev in Salomon and Cairns, 2011 and Cairns, 1996 while acknowledging peace education as a key component to peacebuilding, also highlight its main shortcomings. These scholars among others, critique these peacebuilding interventions/programmes for

¹¹ “liberal peace assumes that happiness consists of commodious living”, pp. 2-3. For further reading on liberal peace refer to Fischer <http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/files/fischer.pdf>

mainly targeting children/youth. For instance Salomon and Cairns, 2010: 318 query “... whether peace education aimed at participants who have no political power, or even political voice, when not met by top-down actions, is of much value.” Also they contend that peace education programmes/interventions lack a clear philosophy that informs these activities and also lack adequate evaluation of the programmes to establish their successes and failures. In addition, some scholars have critiqued peacebuilding approaches that deal with violence committed by children/youth for paying little or no attention - both in theory and practice - to the youth’s positive role as peacebuilders (Schwartz 2010, Honwana and De Boeck, 2005 and McEvoy-Levy, 2001).

Danesh (2006) on the other hand, argues for peace education programmes that are context specific and inclusive. This is demonstrated in his piloted community-tailored peacebuilding approach – an approach that is holistic and participatory - aimed at creating a culture of peace in a school setting after the Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) conflict (Danesh, 2006: 57-63).¹² In order to ensure sustainable peacebuilding in this context, the different categories of participants (students, teachers and staff) were involved at all levels of implementation of the programmes. The first step was to respect each other’s worldviews (the unity-based worldview), to learn and practice the skills of a culture of peace, and to engage in a culture of healing. This success in the school in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) - through the shift from violence between two conflicting groups to discussions of peace - demonstrates that such programmes can be effective if the development of knowledge, skills and attitudes is coupled with experience and the practice of necessary values.

¹² For more information see Danesh (2011) in G.Salomon and E.Cairns *Handbook on peace education*, pp. 253-285.

However, while this peacebuilding approach was holistic, participatory and tailored to address the group in conflict at Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), this should not be used as a template for other contexts - even in the same place when a different group is involved, as the actors will be different. Therefore, an argument for a more inclusive, bottom-up, and not a “one-size-fits-all” approach to peacebuilding.

From the above example, it is crucial therefore for peace-builders when dealing with a group(s) in conflict to strive to unravel the concept such a group(s) has of peace before delving into peacebuilding. As Rinehart (1989) posits “[p]eace definitions or concepts are the basis on which we decide how to make peace.” This implies that the way one perceives and conceptualises peace will influence how one builds peace; for “[w]e have to know whereof we talk and think to be able to act.” (Galtung, 1996: 14). The question therefore is not only, whose peace? (Pugh et al., 2008) but also, which peace? This leads us to the next section - an ontological discussion on the nature of peace.

1.2 THE NATURE OF PEACE: AN ONTOLOGICAL DISCUSSION

As noted in the pages above, there seems to be a general emphasis on “conflict” rather than “peace” permeating recent peace studies’ literature. It appears that the early works of conflict research pioneers such as Coser (1956), Curle (1971) or Galtung (1969; 1996), who attempt to define peace, now receive less attention. Peace as a phenomenon has to date been “couched in language”, and usually juxtaposed with its opposite “conflict” or “violence” instead of been considered in its own right (Fell, 1988: 71-72). For instance, one definition expresses peace by what it is not and not by what it is: peace is absence of war or violence and peace is lack of unity and harmony. Indeed, “the word [peace] itself has neither been acceptably defined, nor

has there been agreement on how to define peace” (Rapoport, 1981: 672). Probably it is this very fact of evading conceptualisation that makes peace all the more real and important. As pointed out above, sustainable peacebuilding depend on understanding a group’s notion and concepts of peace whose and which peace? Additionally, it is how peace is understood that peace is lived out. Let us take an example of the quasi dogmatic United Nations (UN) statement “Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed” (Preamble of United Nations Educational Scientific Cultural Organisation’s Constitution (UNESCO), 2002: 25). One wonders what influence it can make if reformulated to focus more on “peace” as opposed to “war” for instance to read “Since peace begins in the minds and hearts of men and women, it is in the minds and hearts of men and women that peace must be constructed”.

Importantly, the term “peace” does not refer to material states of being, but rather to ideas that act as “orientative, motivative, and regulative principles” (Tuzin, 1996: 3). These can be termed as “ideals, values, illusions, and chimeras, ideological or rhetorical devices” (ibid.). Consequently, a given group’s concept of peace influences enormously the behaviours and attitudes of the group. Also, peace is ambiguous both normatively and conceptually. Capturing this dilemma, Tuzin asserts that the reason peace has been so difficult to locate ontologically is because: “[I]t is buried just where we would least expect it to be — in the heart of war.” (1996: 5). Hence, the emphasis that peace, like other great realities and values such as truth, good and life, is complex and is therefore “hard to define and hard to find” (Gregor, 1996: x).

Liberal approaches to peacebuilding assume that understandings of peace are common everywhere, understood in the same way. However, there are diverse

concepts of peace and this creates the notion that there are several “peaces” (Galtung, 1996: 14). Recognising that peace is contextual and can be plural rather than singular, leads to the acknowledgment that alternative versions of peace can have legitimacy (Mac Ginty, 2008: 159).

On the other hand, some scholars choose to focus on “how to achieve global peace” rather than “to reach consensus on a global definition of peace” (Albert, 2008: 35). This approach may limit the ability of peacebuilders to answer the expectations of different people and regions as regards peace.

The importance of context can be perceived in the current debate on structure and agency. Jabri (1996) explores the importance of reciprocity between structure and agency, in cognitive and practical process. Jabri defines human conduct and articulation of identity (meaning) as being “... drawn upon reflexively and are more reproduced intentionally or unintentionally through the process of interaction” (ibid.: 119-130). Therefore agency forms structure and structure forms agency. It would therefore be a sort of imposition to import any concept; no matter how sublime it may be, into different structural and cognitive systems. Wendt and Shapiro (1997: 181) expound this structural – agency problem as a trial to find out “... where the important causal mechanisms lie in social life.” According to Hay (2002: 89-134) the structural agency dilemma is similar to the dilemma of “context – conduct.” Further portrays reciprocity between structure and agency, which he terms the “conceptual duality” (ibid.,: 128). Therefore, according to Hay, every action or cognitive process is influenced by an interaction between “strategic structure and strategic actor” (ibid.,: 128-129). From these different views it is evident that the interplay between structure and agency is symbiotic.

The next section will deal with the importance of worldviews, language and rituals as crucial in defining peace and bearing in mind the argument of this thesis, that sustainable peacebuilding depend on understanding a group's notion and concepts of peace, whose and which peace? Additionally, it is how peace is understood that peace is lived out.

1.3 THE IMPORTANCE OF WORLDVIEWS, LANGUAGE AND RITUALS IN DEFINING PEACE

Definitions of peace are influenced by the worldviews of a given culture, and subsequently influential on people's expectations, attitudes and behaviours. Worldview is defined as the cognitive, normative, and affective biases or tendencies to which individuals are largely socialised, and that greatly determine the meanings individuals ascribe to their experiences, or the ways in which they co-create their realities (Coser, April 1989: 2). Worldviews imply that the group (clan, tribe, ethnolinguistic group or nation), and not the individual, becomes the centre for the analysis of reality.

Using Cox's (1989) insight into the two major worldviews - exogenic (from without) or endogenic (from within) - it becomes clear that *fact* and *value* cannot be separated. The endogenic (value) finds expression in the exogenic (fact). The first worldview, the exogenic perceives knowledge, in this case *peace* to be objectively grounded, achievable and, therefore, enabling common agreement. In this view, *peace* would be the same everywhere and for everybody. This reflects the liberal peace approach – which seems to communicate that “since we have it we can give it”. The second worldview, the endogenic perceives knowledge, in this case *peace*, to be the product of the agent. Therefore the reality *peace* is the construction of the (subjective) observer. Holders of the endogenic worldview, for example, would see peace as context specific and dynamic.

Similar to Cox's theory (the endogenic theory of worldview) is Jabri's (1996) structuration theory. This holds that human beings, as knowledgeable agents (ibid.), act and behave according to their notion of worldview. She asserts that human acts are not "... an aggregate of a series of separate intentions, reasons and motives, or isolated incidents... But human conduct is a long *duree* or continuous flow of conduct, where the acting agent has reasons for his or her activities" (ibid.,: 78). Importantly, individuals are "... capable of reflexively monitoring their conduct, such that behaviour is conceived as purposive and as drawing upon the stocks of knowledge that actors have of the social world around them" (ibid.,: 79). It is in this argument that structuration theory supports the endogenic worldview - which asserts that an action is an expression of meaning, that is of who he/she is and of the world he/she exists in. Hence, actors give meaning to their actions and actions give meaning to their agents. This rationalisation of action shows that actions are to be seen as rational events and not "motivations for action, which refers to the wants which prompt action" (Jabri, 1996: 78). Consequently, actions are expressions of meaning and this becomes crucial when engaging in any peacebuilding.

Cox's notion of worldview, may be compared to Milton Rinehart's (1989) two paradigms - the *popular* and the *numinar* paradigm. The *popular* paradigm takes a macro-social approach to peace. It posits the view that in order to obtain peace, threats to prosperity (economic and social) have to be eradicated – in that sense it reflects a form of *negative peace*. For Rinehart's *popular* paradigm peace exists outside the individual, and is, therefore, exogenic, and human nature is seen as fundamentally conflictual. The *numinar* paradigm, on the other hand, emphasises the *innate* nature of peace, as being micro social and idealistic in approach. Unlike the

popular paradigm, peace does not depend on economic or social prosperity - although it does not exclude this.

While in the *popular* paradigm the world is considered a threat, in the *numinar* paradigm the focus is on the existential state of the individual, the endogenic. However, the popular *visa-vis* numinar theory manifests a gray area - especially in the use of vague terms such as peace is oneness and peace is harmony (ibid.: 9). It is difficult to conceptualise how this can be achieved in an individual, given the complexity of human nature and the society in which an individual operates. These two paradigms of peace accompany humanity, as it wrestles with conflicts - which are entrenched (ambition, sickness and envy) within and threatened by (justice, climate change, equality) from without. Worth noting is the fact that it is this desire for peace - by an individual or group - that ends up creating conflict, because other individuals or groups appear to threaten this goal. The *numinar* paradigm is similar to many cultural or traditional notions - for instance, peace is equated to oneness with God, others, the universe, and harmony. These are the salient elements of cultural peace. Indeed, groups or cultures legitimise the ideals of peace. The result is a culturally and socially legitimised peace (Galtung 1996).

Concepts and values are transmitted by means of language, either through rituals, symbols and stories. Language is important for it articulates the group's concepts of peace. Language interprets and communicates meaning and events (Geertz, 1993: 5). It is very important for it expresses a concept beyond the pronounced word. "Language has a performative function in that it is implicated in the construction of social life" (Jabri, 1996: 128). Jabri further observes that talk is "multiformulative and multiconsequential" even when it appears to be banal (ibid.: 129). In some sub-Saharan African cultures when, for example, a person dislikes

another, that person will not pronounce the other's name. Hence, language is vital as a means to understanding the connotation for instance the word "peace" carries in a particular community.

One would note that the word, and in some languages the sound, "peace" carries with it a particular experience and an interpretation a particular group gives to that event. Let us take the case of Kenya. For example among the Agikũyũ (to be discussed later in this chapter), *thaai*¹³ is peace. In the past the elders used the word *thaai* to invoke *Ngai* (Kikuyu for God) especially when they gathered to meet with their God in Mt. Kĩĩnyaga (Mt. Kenya). When some elders use the same word *thaai* today this can bring about nostalgia of their youthful days. On the other hand, for the children and young people of this same community, the word "peace" may create for some pictures of a peaceful bird or to others animals grazing in a green field, and yet others two friends chatting and happily playing together, or a boy and girl enjoying a loving relationship. What feelings or experiences, for example, would the word *thaai* conjure up to members of the Mungiki militia/sect/group when they use it during the oathing ceremonies and gatherings?

This emphasises on the need to engage and understand the language a group or community uses, in order to build "peace". This can be well illustrated by the anecdotal example (borrowed from Gilbert Ryle in Geertz's (1993: 6-7) of two boys contracting their right eyelids. In one case it is a reflex action, the boy has no control over what is happening and in the other case, the boy is doing this deliberately, to give a conspiratory signal to a friend. By observing this gesture alone, one cannot decipher which one is a twitch and which is a wink. If one is not

¹³ Key informant, KYM#18, a Kikuyu elder in the Rift Valley interviewed by the researcher in February 2010.

very keen to observe what is going on, one might miss the point of this communication. This emphasises the need to engage and understand the language a group or community uses in this case for “peace” and/or conflict.

When for instance, Galtung indicates that the concept of peace is fragmented and finds expression in different languages, does this imply that there are as many “peaces” as there are people? “It is as if somewhere there was once a rich, holistic peace concept which was then split into several components each having a part of it” (Galtung, 1985: 155). This therefore underscores the importance of a subjective approach to the concept of peace, always expressed and communicated in a particular language. Despite the key role that language plays in transmitting concepts caution has to be taken that it does not become an instrument of domination (Jabri, 1996: 163).

Besides language, another cultural element in transmitting values or meanings of peace/conflict is ritual. According to Schirch rituals have three specific characteristics:

First, ritual occurs in a unique space, set aside from normal life. Second, ritual communicates through symbols, senses, and heightened emotions rather than relying heavily on the use of words. In ritual humans learn by doing. There is preference for nonverbal communication using bodies, senses, and emotions rather than words or rational thought. Third, ritual both marks and assists in the process of change. It confirms and transforms people’s worldviews, identities, and relationships with others (Schirch 2005: 1-2).

Furthermore, rituals help an individual respond to the fundamental questions which form their worldview. This underlines the importance of one’s knowledge and appreciation of the existing rituals in a given group. However, the importance of

rituals in solving conflicts, especially those that are deep-rooted and protracted, has received little serious engagement from scholars of peacebuilding (ibid.,: 1). In the next section we will discuss the concepts of peace.

1.4 CONCEPTS OF PEACE: THE UNENDING QUEST?

We have already noted that there are a limited number of definitions of *peace* in peace studies and conflict research literature. These definitions include the concept of peace as not just the absence of war but also encompass the structural, social and psycho-cultural. The works of renowned scholars such as Galtung (1996); Avruch (1998); Lederach (1995, 1997); Kriesberg (1982, 1998, 2003); Mitchell (1981) and Jabri (1996) have been instrumental in our understanding of peace and how groups interact and behave.

According to Galtung peace is a never ending process (Galtung, 1996: 265)¹⁴ but it is also perceived as the way in which one engages in the process (Cox, 1976: 12). Therefore it becomes both the process and the goal (ibid.). To affirm the concept of peace as a process, violence is defined as “... the cause of difference between the potential and the actual, between what would have been and what is” (Galtung, 1969: 168). Galtung considers that negative peace – which he equates to structural violence - and cultural violence amount to stagnation in the process (ibid.). Positive peace, on the other hand, is the event whereby structure, culture and people are oriented towards peace. In this sense, peace is seen as potential. Distinct from those who hold peace to be a process and potential, Michael Banks (cited in Bulloch, 2008: 581) portrays peace as conflict management, order, not harmony¹⁵ and justice. Bank’s notion of peace as not harmony is revealing, since if peace were harmony

¹⁴ In his own words, “I have long argued for an expanded peace concept [...] Hence, a dynamic peace concept was introduced. Peace is what we have when creative conflict transformation takes place non-violently” (Galtung, 1996: 265).

¹⁵ This contradicts indigenous communities and many others who define peace as “harmony”.

there would be "... no room for an autonomous subject and free spirit" (Gur-Ze'ev, 2001: 320). But Banks also seems to believe that peace is order and justice, in which case autonomy and subjectivity would be denied. This notion depicts peace as a result or action and not a state (Heathershaw, 2008: 598).

Some liberals would simplify the concept of peace as governance (Richmond 2005: 6). This envisions peace as expressed in law, civil society (security), democracy, and trade. One wonders the extent to which failure of governance could also, in part, be the result of the interpretation a particular country attributes to concepts such as democracy or security. In seeking an answer, it is necessary to consider the local group and their cultural concepts of peace.

Importantly, culture is an example whereby "... peace and conflict, rather than being two antagonistic realities, are co-existent aspects of reality" (Davies-Vengoechea, 2004: 11). Each emerges and develops based on the meaning and interpretation people involved give and attach to the action and event. Following this argument, as Lederach notes, peace or "... conflict is connected to meaning, meaning to knowledge, and knowledge is rooted in culture" (1995: 8). For Chabal (2006: 86) without cultural codes, "... man or [woman] would be condemned to the realm of instincts and senses". Porto (2002: 7; 2008: 58-59) holds the view that culture is "... fluid, malleable and amenable". This can be true only if one considers culture to be about identity; but culture is above all a source of cognition. Furthermore, culture embodies a framework of "... beliefs, expressive symbols, and values - in terms of which individuals define their world, express their feelings, and make their judgments" (Geertz, 1973: 144). Culture forms a person and a person

forms culture” (ibid.: 5).¹⁶ Culture gives meaningful answers to the perennial questions of life, for example,

Who am I? What is the nature of the universe? What do I need to do in order to survive? How much control do I have over my own life? How do I balance my desires with my responsibilities to my family and community? How can I lead a satisfying life? (Rosenberg, 1986: 19-23).

The importance of culture is entrenched in this Kiswahili proverb, “*mkosa mila ni mtumwa*”, which means that a person without a culture is a slave.

Nevertheless, there are dangers inherent in cultural relativism or ethnic identity - especially when people are mobilised and instrumentalised in the name of culture by unscrupulous leaders. Besides ethnic identity there is also cultural violence which is also apparent in some of the customs of a community that enhances, for example, gender inequality in the name of perpetuating tradition, continuity or harmony (female genital mutilation (FGM) being an extreme example of this). Despite the fact that culture can be imbued with violence, Gur-Ze’ev (2002: 14) citing Pappé (1997: 233) defends the notion of particularity and contextually-based peace. Therefore, it seems impossible to think of a universal concept of peace besides, perhaps, a standard minimally acceptable absence of physical violence.

Having noted the diversity in the way peace is conceived, it is appropriate to propose some examples from some ethnic communities. In the traditional Agĩkũyũ community, only *Ngai* (God) can bestow *Thaai* – which is popularly construed as *peace*. *Thaai* has an underlying and deeper meaning - that of “honour, awe, surrender, dependence, trust, humility and reconciliation”.¹⁷ It is wholeness – that, is,

¹⁶ For further reading on this refer to Geertz, 1973: 5 and Sorink, cited in Geertz, 1973: 145.

¹⁷ Key informant, KYM#18, a Kikuyu elder in the Rift Valley interviewed by the researcher in February 2010.

harmony with oneself (morals), harmony with others (social/communal), harmony with nature (cosmology), and harmony with the absolute (spiritual being - Ngai)¹⁸ which embraces the whole. It is therefore bestowed on those who are well-disposed before the creator (Ngai).¹⁹ Common among ethno-linguistic communities in Kenya and in other parts of Africa, is the belief that an individual will experience peace in connection with the community – that is, “I am because we are; and since we are, therefore I am” (Mbiti, (1970: 108). This is similar to the *Ubuntu* philosophy, which “... acknowledges the interconnectedness of humanity at all times (Murithi, 2008: 26)²⁰.

Similar to the example given of the concept of peace among the traditional Agĩkũyũ community is the theological notion of reconciliation - which is effected in four interlinked dimensions, that is, harmony with God (spiritual), harmony with self (psychological), harmony with one’s neighbour (social/culture), and harmony with nature (ecological or cosmological). It is this ensemble that engenders peace (Assefa, 1993: 13-16). Sindima 1995: 212, cited in Sharra, 2006: 1-30) advances similar ideas when he discusses the concept of *uMunthu*, as used in Malawi. He states that *UMunthu* derives its life source from *moyo*, meaning life in Chichewa. *Moyo* encompasses “... the cosmological, the biological, the material and the spiritual basis of existence ...” These concepts of peace are revealing, since peace cannot be understood as one element.

¹⁸ Information gathered from informal conversations with an elder – a member of the Agĩkũyũ community in Central Kenya, between the beginning of 2009 until the writing-up stage of this research.

¹⁹ For further information see Albert (2008: 31-45), Shorter (1975: 125-126) and Mbiti, J.S. (1975: 162-163).

²⁰ For further reading on alternative perspective on personhood and community refer to the debate between Kwame Gyekye and Ifeanyi Menkiti on Communitarianism in African Thought GYEKYE, K. (n.d.) Available at: <http://science.jrank.org/pages/8772/Communitarianism-in-African-Thought-Gyekye-on-Moderate-Communitarianism.html>.

A further example is from the Kalenjin, one of Kenya's ethno-linguistic groups which inhabit the Rift Valley province. According to one religious leader, belonging to the Kipsigis community, a sub-group of the Kalenjin, *kalya* (peace) means order, tranquillity, harmony, well-being and being at rest (but not as used in death) and is negotiated at a communal level.²¹ When the community is at *kalyet* (the peace) – which is the outcome of reconciliation – then the individual becomes the beneficiary of the peace accord. In addition, individuals have to ensure that they seek reconciliation with their community so that they do not call a curse upon themselves. Reconciliation is traditionally sealed through oaths or peace pacts and safeguarded by curses that will befall an individual who breaks the peace pact. For instance, someone can say to another “*Ingomi kalyet ak inye*” (“let it be peace with you” or “peace be together”/ “dwell in you” or “may peace belong to you”²² to show that they are reconciled with the other person.

A further example is *ddembe* (Luganda for “peace”) as shared by a member of the Baganda ethnic community of South Western Uganda.²³ From his narrative peace is unity, harmony, wholeness, relationship, bonding, inclusiveness and oneness. An individual contributes to this peace when he/she is in a healthy state, has good relationships, is accepted in the community, is fertile (childbearing), engages in community activities, and is hardworking and respectful. In this context peace is used in plural, (peaces) – for example, peace is *mirembe gyaffe* (our peaces). This encompasses *ddembe lyange* (my peace) and *ddembe lyo* (your peace) and *ddembe lye* (his/her peace). It is the ensemble of all - my, your and his/her peace - that makes

²¹ Telephone interview carried out on the 13 May 2009 with Kipkoech Rotich of Kipkelion, a member of the Kipsigis community - main sub-group of the Kalenjin ethnic community, Rift Valley province in Kenya (Kenya Bureau of Statistics, 2010).

²² Same telephone interview as previous footnote 20.

²³ Telephone interview carried out on 16 November 2008 with Karoli K., a Muganda from Masaka, Uganda.

the desired total peace of *mirembe gyaffe* (our peaces). This is illustrated in Figure 1.2 below:



Figure 1.2 Notion of peace – Baganda

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From Figure 1.2 above it is noted that peace is conditioned by everyone; when one is not at peace, the whole will not be at peace. Interestingly, the notion of one not being at peace as used in this context is different from a threat to security – and used more as a break from a cultural bond. Thus, peace is inclusive, a communal value, and the responsibility of each person in the community. At times this can compromise an individual’s rights and freedom.

The above examples seem to call for a subjective and ontological notion of peace. As illustrated in Figure 1.3 below. We have placed “peace” at the centre as it represents the focus, source and objective of the peacebuilding process: peace can be found outside, only if it is within. Culture, through symbols, rituals and languages,

interprets the concept of peace to its individual members. Individuals from different cultures interact to form society, which would be composed of diverse peace concepts, thus “peaces”. These groupings form a larger grouping (country or countries) which in turn produce multiplications of more peace concepts. We have used dotted circles as a representation of “interactions”, thereby expressing the dynamic nature of peace and peacebuilding.

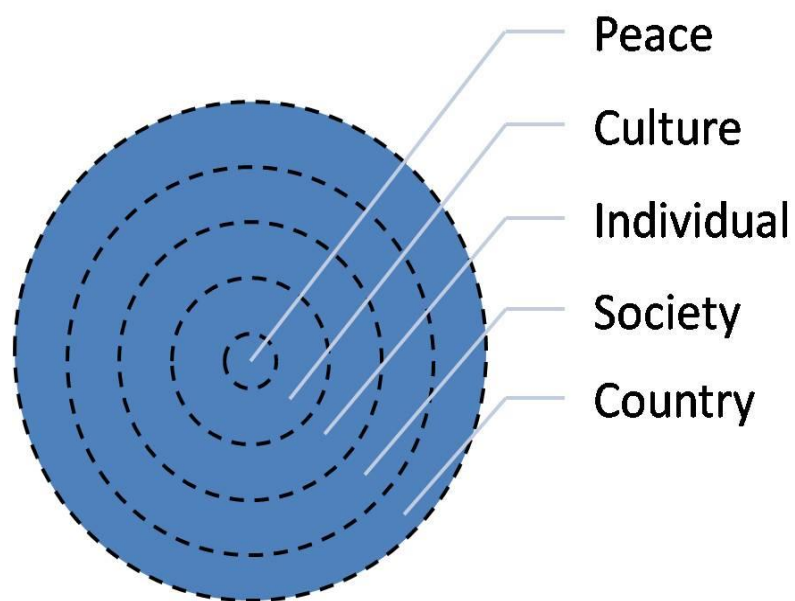


Figure 1.3 Subjective notion of peace

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Importantly in the cited examples and similar ones that are not mentioned in the thesis, this kind of cultural sphere, beliefs and customs are held as the essence of the identity of a community. As a result of this there is a tendency to equate culture with ethnicity. However, culture is different and broader than ethnic identity. Culture as already noted above, refers to the habits, values, beliefs, customs and worldviews of a given group. Thus, culture is dynamic and context-specific (Avruch, 2001: 7-14; 1998). Despite the fact that some scholars, such as Burton (1990: 36-39), tend to

equate values with culture, culture is, in fact, different from values. It is a culture which validates values and needs within a given community. For example, among the traditional Agikũyũ community in Kenya, an individual learned at a very early age to relate peacefully with others and the environment. The young were taught to respect and internalise community values, such as respect, tolerance, co-operation, friendship and trust. Ideally, they would learn this through modelling by parents, extended family and other significant adults, but also through myth, legends, proverbs, folktales and songs, perspectives and attitudes towards the creator and the environment (Bongoko, 1992; Wachira, May 1999).

Notably, culturally-ascribed attitudes and behaviours, even if they are perceived to be a legitimisation of *negative* peace, should be used as a foundation for peacebuilding or constructing *positive* peace. Hence the “... triangular syndrome of violence should then be contrasted in the mind with a triangular syndrome of peace in which cultural peace engenders structural peace” (Galtung, 1996: 208). This would be the logical approach of starting from the known to the unknown. Therefore, cultural peace, even though limited, would be the foundation of other peace prospects – that is, democracy, security, equality and justice. However, Boulding, (1977: 78) in his critique of Galtung advances the notion of *phase peace*²⁴ instead of ‘... negative or positive peace...’ Hence, should attention not be directed towards understanding and strengthening the cultural structures before addressing the social, economic and political structures (Karbo, 2008: 121-122)? Is this not the fertile ground in which strong culturally-founded peace is nurtured?

²⁴ According to Boulding, phase peace implies that one can never really say that they have attained real peace. Peace is elusive. When one thinks peace has been attained something happens that seems to take away that peace. It is as if peace is operating on a continuum, hence in stages. This means that one has to keep searching for peace. See Boulding article (1977) Twelve Friendly Quarrels with Johan Galtung.

This approach, which recognises the structural and cultural contribution to peace, asserts that stable peace is built on culture or cultural peace, which, in turn, will sustain the social, economic and political structures, put in place. Without a strong culturally-founded peace, structures are bound to collapse - thus destroying culture (the basis for peace, in this case); akin to building a foundation on sand. This brings us to our earlier question whose and which peace?

1.5 WHOSE AND WHICH PEACE? THE SEARCH FOR INTERSUBJECTIVE UNDERSTANDING OF PEACEBUILDING

Having explored several concepts of peace within different cultural groups, and examined related concepts advanced by peace scholars, one might conclude that peace is relative - a subjective, contextual and cultural concept. This being the case, a peace-builder has the task, and obligation, to enquire about the concepts of peace relevant in a given area of intervention. Thus, peace is not a ready-made package that is delivered to a community or society. Peace, like conflict, is a cultural/social construct (Pugh, et al. 2008: 205) and, as such, is context-specific and “dynamic” (Lederach, 1997: 20). Hence, examples of the diversified concepts of, and expectations for, peace are a continuous reminder of the need to start from the ground up, in order to discover what kind of peace is expected.

As noted in the first section of this chapter, peacebuilding has been criticised as a concept that encompasses so many activities that there is the danger of it being equated with everything that is included in development. Lund (2003: 27) maintains that this makes peacebuilding almost useless, so far as knowledge gathering and practical application is concerned. Yet, if there are many concepts of peace should not peacebuilding also reflect such diversity?

To recap what was mentioned earlier in this chapter, several approaches for building peace have dominated the discourses on peacebuilding that is: conflict

resolution, conflict management and conflict transformation. Take for instance conflict transformation, this approach though holistic, confines the concepts of peace to one notion: peace as relationship. In this case it is similar to earlier liberal peacebuilding approaches - those concerned with dispensing what people need. In this way it leans towards peace-making. The questions that come to mind here are: Do all relationships support and engender peace? Are poor relationships always the cause of conflicts? It would seem too simplistic to attach peace to a single element of life, no matter how important. Lederach (1997: 38-55) considers cultural peace, which may include cultural violence, an important foundation for peacebuilding. But also in his well often-cited, all-inclusive model of peacebuilding²⁵ he reflects on the important role of actors in this process of ensuring peace. This argument reflects the structure *visa-vis* agency debate. While it is vital for actors at the different levels in Lederach's pyramid to be involved in peacebuilding, this kind of structure tends to create hierarchical divisions. As Ramsbotham et al. (2005: 222) points out "... solutions are derived and built from local resources ..." but the structure in which this takes place often has imbalanced power dynamics. This could therefore lead to some people *owning* peace, while others are excluded.

The process enhanced in the pyramid is action-oriented, for it seeks to resolve conflict and restore relationships. However, relationships can only be restored when those involved have similar narratives and a concept of values, such as peace. Take for example, the case of Rwanda and the handling of the post-genocide period. How, for example, could relationships be re-established between neighbours who had committed such atrocities against each other? Can appearing in organised *Gacaca* courts (traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution applied in Rwanda)

²⁵ For further information see the pyramid of actors and approaches to peacebuilding (Lederach, 1997: 39; Ramsbotham, 2005: 22-27; Miall, 1999: 18; Lederach 2001: 145-156).

build or solve relationship problems? What does peace mean for the victim, and is this the same for the perpetrator? Part of the response to this would be for peacebuilders to constantly dialogue with the target community or group, in order to understand and prioritise its concept of peace.

The importance of taking culture seriously in peacebuilding cannot be underestimated. Importantly, the use of cultural resources (rituals, symbols and language) ensures that the peacebuilding process is effective, less costly, and less demanding. In order to have effective peacebuilding it would seem imperative to start at the grassroots - where knowledge, attitudes, worldviews, and cosmologies are modelled and remodelled (Galtung, 1996: vii).²⁶ It is these factors that engineer cognitive attitudes (behaviour). Is this not what effective peacebuilding entails; tapping into the skills of those at the grassroots and ensuring that their voices, skills and knowledge are brought on board?

Mouly (cited in Pugh et al. 2008: 305) asserts that "... a transformative peacebuilding process requires the free participation of large segments of the population, at the local level, in collective process." In addition, peace and peacebuilding is elicited (that is, drawn out from culture and is subject based) by nature and eclectic (that is, takes into account diverse notions of peace) in character. Could Galtung's concept of peacebuilding, articulated in his seminal work "*Peace by peaceful means...*" (1996) be the mirror that articulates this peacebuilding that is elicited by nature and eclectic in character - using peace to build peace?

In addition, in order to build lasting peace there is need to continuously "...identify the non-articulated, structural violence throughout society" (Galtung,

²⁶ Plato argues that modelling and remodelling should start at an early age, within the family, and that it should be done by "...telling children stories, which though not wholly destitute of truth are in the main fictitious" (Staub, 2001 : 159-184).

1996: 271). This may not mean resolving all types of violence, but they should be recognised at least. We have already noted that a clear understanding of cultural violence can be arrived at by investigating the cultural concept of peace. There is, therefore, a need to employ new approaches to peacebuilding, which are tailored to the specific needs of the group in conflict. Furthermore, such approaches need not be “...inscribed on stone and built by steel” (ibid,: 271-272). Each community or group has values and beliefs about reality; that is, what it is, how it should be, how it could be and this may change over time. Therefore, to build peace would mean realising these values and beliefs “... through the concrete socio-cultural environment” (Smoker, 1981). Murithi (2009: 3-4) advocates for the bottom-up peacebuilding approach - that engages the “... local populations in the designing, planning and implementation of peace-building initiatives” - one that is sustainable. Hence, this thesis proffers three cultural dimensions which could be incorporated to any peacebuilding approach: the experience, worldviews and attitudes of the actors. Below is an outline of how these cultural dimensions are understood in this thesis:

1. Experience - kept real and alive by narratives passed from generation to generation. This includes events such as births, deaths/violent conflict and the nature of interaction with others
2. Worldview - the cultural notion of the meaning of life within a specific community, which has a bearing on how meanings are transmitted. Worldview is the source of cultural values - providing the tools for interpretation of events and solutions to challenges.
3. Attitudes - acquired through experience and cultural values in a given context.

The three outlined cultural dimensions proffered in this thesis which could be incorporated to any peacebuilding approach in both the school and wider society are represented in Figure 1.4 below.

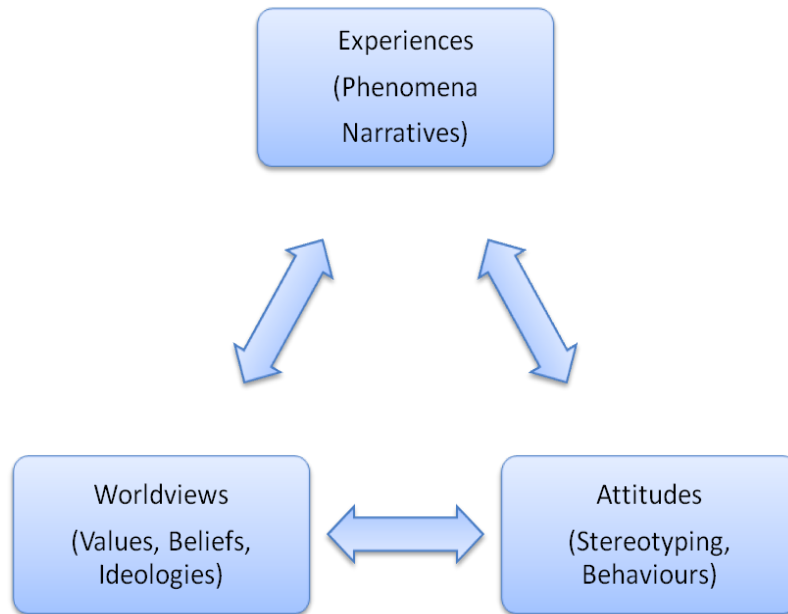


Figure 1.4 Cultural dimensions proffered for incorporation in peacebuilding approaches

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CONCLUSION

This chapter highlights the importance of knowledge and the understanding of culturally-specific worldviews, beliefs, language and rituals - as the fundamental basis for peacebuilding; both theoretically and in practice.

Peace theories and peacebuilding approaches - typified by an explicit top-down process that subsumes all types and levels of actors into a pre-established set of methodologies and goals - have been critiqued. As discussed, such theories and peacebuilding approaches have been informed mainly by the liberal peace theories that tend to be normative and top-down. This calls for reflection on the sustainability

of peacebuilding intervention. For instance, what form would such intervention take? Questions to be asked include: What type of peacebuilding activities can address such a complex phenomenon as youth violence, in the Kenyan context? How, and in what context, can peacebuilding thrive, in order to nurture peace that is contextual, subjective and dynamic? In response to some of these questions the thesis proffers three key dimensions which could be incorporated to any peacebuilding approach that is: the experience, worldviews and attitudes of the actors.

Therefore, for peacebuilding to be sustainable it has to be *bottom-up* and tailored to the needs of the people involved and their environment – in this case youth in Kenyan secondary schools and the wider society. To this end, any peacebuilding theory must emphasis a collaborative approach that values the youth perspective and their participation, and the contribution they can make towards eradicating violence in their schools and wider society.

CHAPTER TWO

CONTEXTUALISING YOUTH CONFLICTS IN KENYA

INTRODUCTION

The aim of chapter two is to provide the contextual background on Kenya in which youth violence occurs. This is important since these contextual dynamics have an influence on how youth conceptualise realities and react to events. It also has an impact on how various social structures both utilise youth in furthering agendas, and on how they react to youth behaviour in this regard. Essentially this chapter responds to the assertion that, “violence must be understood in its context” (Titley, 1997: 8). Before outlining the structure of this chapter, it is important to recap the research questions.

- a) *What narratives are used by the youth to describe, explain, and justify their participation in and/or observation of violent conflicts in Kenyan secondary schools and wider society?*
- b) *In what ways can approaches to peacebuilding and the Kenyan education systems respond to youth violence?*

Regarding the structure of this chapter, the first part is background information on Kenya as a country, its socio-economic including the demographic and role distinction of youth. Second, is a historical overview of the Kenyan political history concentrating mainly on the post-colonial period and paying special attention to the periods 1963-1978, the era of Jomo Kenyatta; 1978-2002, the era of Daniel Toroitich arap Moi; 2002-2007, the era of Emilio Mwai Kibaki; and finally 2007, a power sharing grand coalition government - formed, after an election characterised as flawed - under the leadership of the Emilio Mwai Kibaki and the Prime Minister

Raila Amolo Odinga. The third is an analysis of youth violence from the past to the present. Fourth, are the responses to the youth violence in the school and wider Kenyan society.

2.1 THE 'DNA' OF KENYA: A POTENTIALLY VIBRANT NATION (CULTURALLY/SOCIO-ECONOMICALLY AND POLITICALLY)

Kenya is a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural sovereign republic. It is a key country in the East African region, which includes the countries of Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda that depend on Kenya for trade as well as communication. There are forty-two ethnic communities in Kenya. In the last census, conducted in 2009 and published in 2010 the Kenyan population was 38,610,097 people (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2010). Of these 19,192,458 are males and 19,417,639 are females. The dominant five ethnic communities are Kikuyu (6,622,576) followed by the Luhya (5,338,666), Kalenjin (4,967,328), Luo (4,044,440), and Kamba (3,893,157). Importantly, each province is dominated by a particular ethnic community except for Nairobi, the capital city and other town centres such as Nakuru, the administrative town in the Rift Valley province (Map 1 below). A vast majority (79 per cent) of Kenyan's population lives in the rural areas (International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), 2011)



Map 1 Geographical concentration of some ethnic communities in Kenya

Source: Leonard, D.K. (1991, xx) in Widner J. 1992

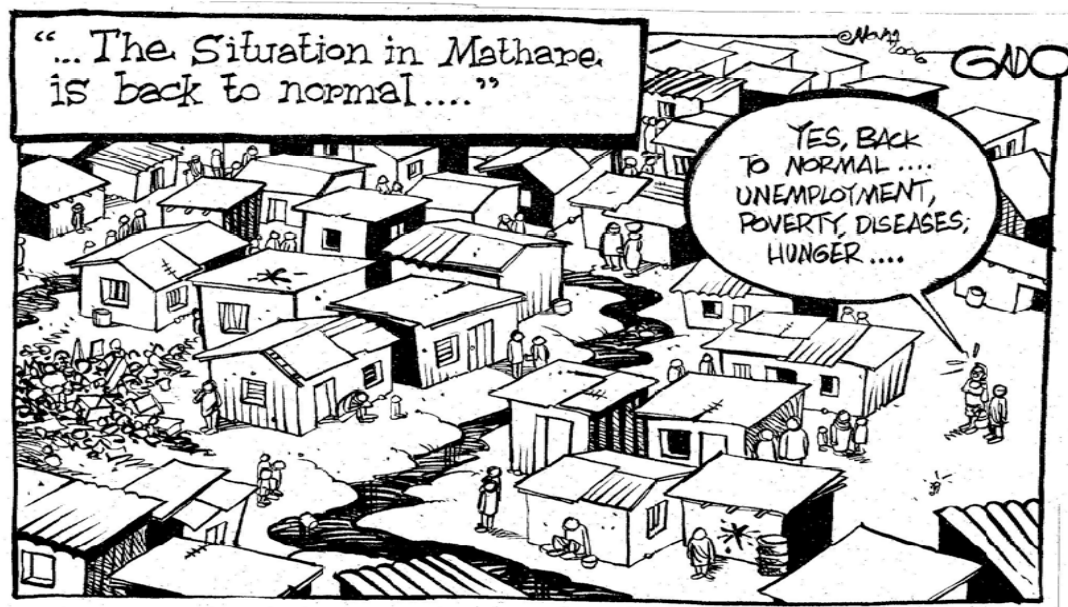
Kenya’s strategic geographical position, situated in the Eastern Coast of Africa on the Indian Ocean makes her the gateway to the East and Central Africa (the Great Lake region) and the Middle East. Kenya is East Africa’s economic powerhouse” (Kagwanja and Southall, 2009), has a robust and “an expanding middle class” (International Crisis Group, 2008: 5), vibrant civil society, free press and a well organised private sector that offers alternative employment (Sundet et al., 2009:5). This has been crucial to the political history and economy of the country.

Agriculture, tourism, trade and industry are the three pillars which “total for more than half of Kenya’s GDP” (Mkhabela, 2011). In 2007 Kenya registered a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of 7.1 percent (Gastrow, 2011). However, regardless

episodes of a robust economy, the “poverty rate has remained over 48 per cent” (IFAD, 2011). Equally, the rural-urban divide remains a challenge especially in terms of the provision of basic amenities such as health centres, schools, clean water, electricity, good roads and holds Kenya back from attaining the millennium development goals (MDGs) by 2015 (United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2011). The Human Development Index (HDI), for the year 2010-2011, ranks Kenya 143 out of 173 countries (UNDP, 2011)²⁷. This is dismal considering that most of the countries in the region except for Tanzania have had on-going violence. Additionally, they depend on Kenya’s port to communicate with other parts of the world. However, Gastrow (2011: 4) contends that with a GDP growth rate of 4.1 per cent in 2010 and the prediction by International Monetary Fund (IMF) of a rise to 6.3 per cent in 2012, Kenya’s economy is growing. However, since 2013 is an election year it may be difficult to predict. This is due to the fact that democratic elections in Kenya have been plagued with violence which hamper the predicted development and instead lead to re-development. While Kenya’s GDP growth rate improves this seems to have little or no effect on the lives of the people of Kenya. Cartoon 1 below captures the experience of the majority of the Kenyan population especially in the slums. The cartoonist was capturing the headlines of one newspaper referring to the people returning to their homes in the slums following a bloody fight between the “Taliban” (a militia group in Kenya) and Mungiki militia over turfs in Nairobi (Anderson, 2002). The “normalcy” that they were returning to was unemployment, poverty, hunger and disease. This situation is also a reality in

²⁷ The purpose of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) is “to reveal trends in the multiple used deprivations that batter poor people at the same time” (UNDP, 2011: 50). This identifies multiple deprivations at the individual level in health, education and standard of living. It uses micro data from household surveys. Unlike the Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index (HDI), all the indicators needed to construct the measure must come from the same survey. Each person in a given household is classified as poor or nonpoor depending on the number of deprivations his or her household experiences. These data are then aggregated into the national measure of poverty.

other parts of Kenya especially in the north where sometimes people experience famine due to droughts.



Cartoon 1 The situation in Mathare slums

Source: Munro, 2009:8

Additionally, Kenya's performance in the Transparency International (TI) ranking in 2011 is poor, ranking 154 out of 182 countries. Out of a score of 10 (highly clean) to 0 (highly corrupt), Kenya scored 2.2. In the year 2010 it scored 2.1. This score places it on an equal rating with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), a country that has been fragile for decades. Also Kenya lags behind countries such as Liberia (3.2), a country that has undergone fourteen years of war and Rwanda (5.0), a country emerging from a history of the 1994 genocide (Transparency International, 2011). This paradox of apparent peace and the consistent lack of visible strides economically coupled with the growing youth population present a social and political challenge for Kenya.

Kenya also boasts of a young nation and yet it is in this that lay Kenya's greatest challenge. The census released in the year 2010 shows that out of a total population of 38,610,097 people, 13,665,378 million are youth between 15-34 years (Kenya

National Bureau of Statistics, 2010). Of these 4,066,888 are female (51.2%) and 3,877,758 male (48.8%). The numbers that are in learning institution include 1,796,467 in secondary schools and 198,119 in universities (ibid: 26). In terms of percentages as shown in Figure 2.1 below, 31 percent are between 15 and 19 years in age, 28 percent are between 20 and 24 years of age, 23 percent are between 25 and 29 years in age and 18 percent are between 30 and 34 years in age (Njonjo, 2010: 5). Of special interest to this study is the youth cohort between 15 and 19 years in age which is the largest age group among the youth population in Kenya and also the cohort that would be at the secondary level of education. Below is a graphic representation.

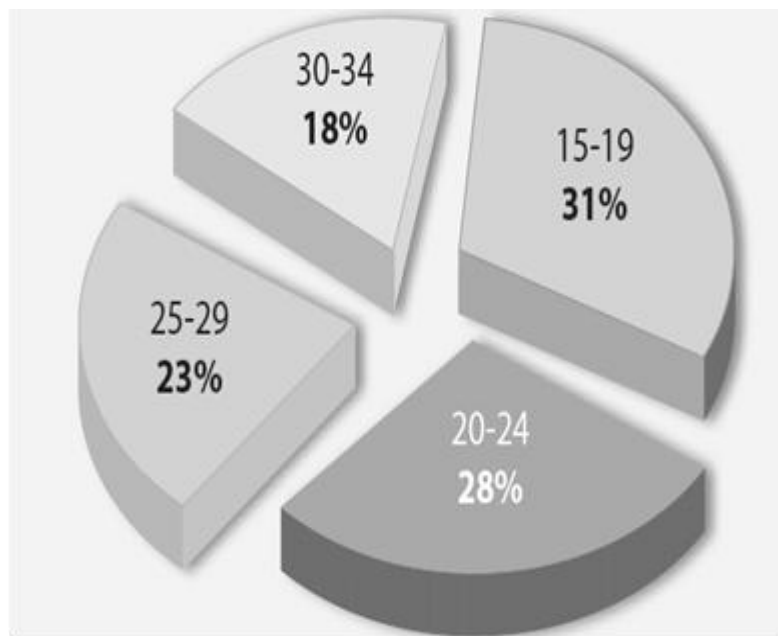
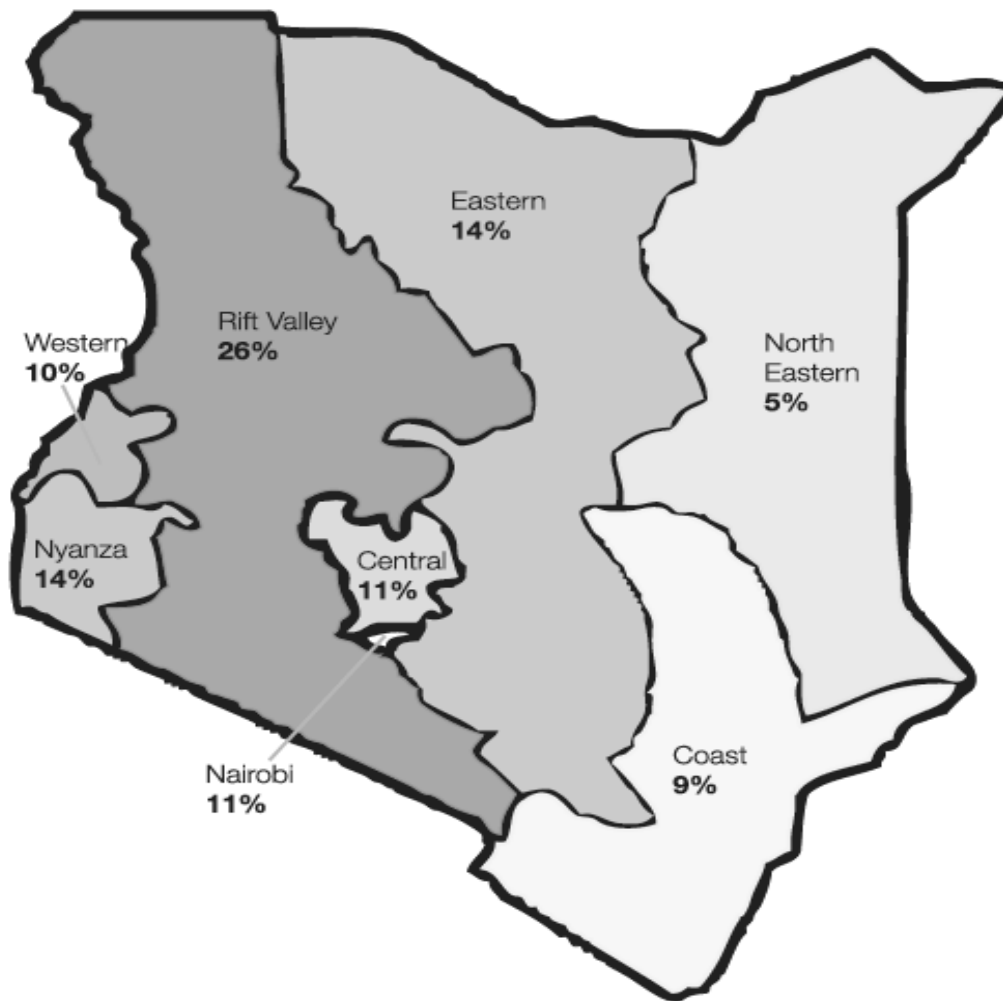


Figure 2.1 Youth population (15-34) distribution of Kenya's youth population

Source: KNBS, census 2009 cited in Njonjo, (2010: 5)



Map 2 Proportion of youth population percentage by province

Source: KNBS, census 2009²⁸ cited in Njonjo, 2010: 6

As can be observed from Map 2 below, the largest youth cohort is in the Rift Valley province (26 percent of total population), with an equal proportion in Eastern and Nyanza province (14 percent). Nairobi (capital city) and Central province are equal at (11 percent) each, Western province has 10 percent youth and with less than 10 percent are Coast province (9 percent) and North Eastern at 5 percent (Njonjo, *ibid.*).

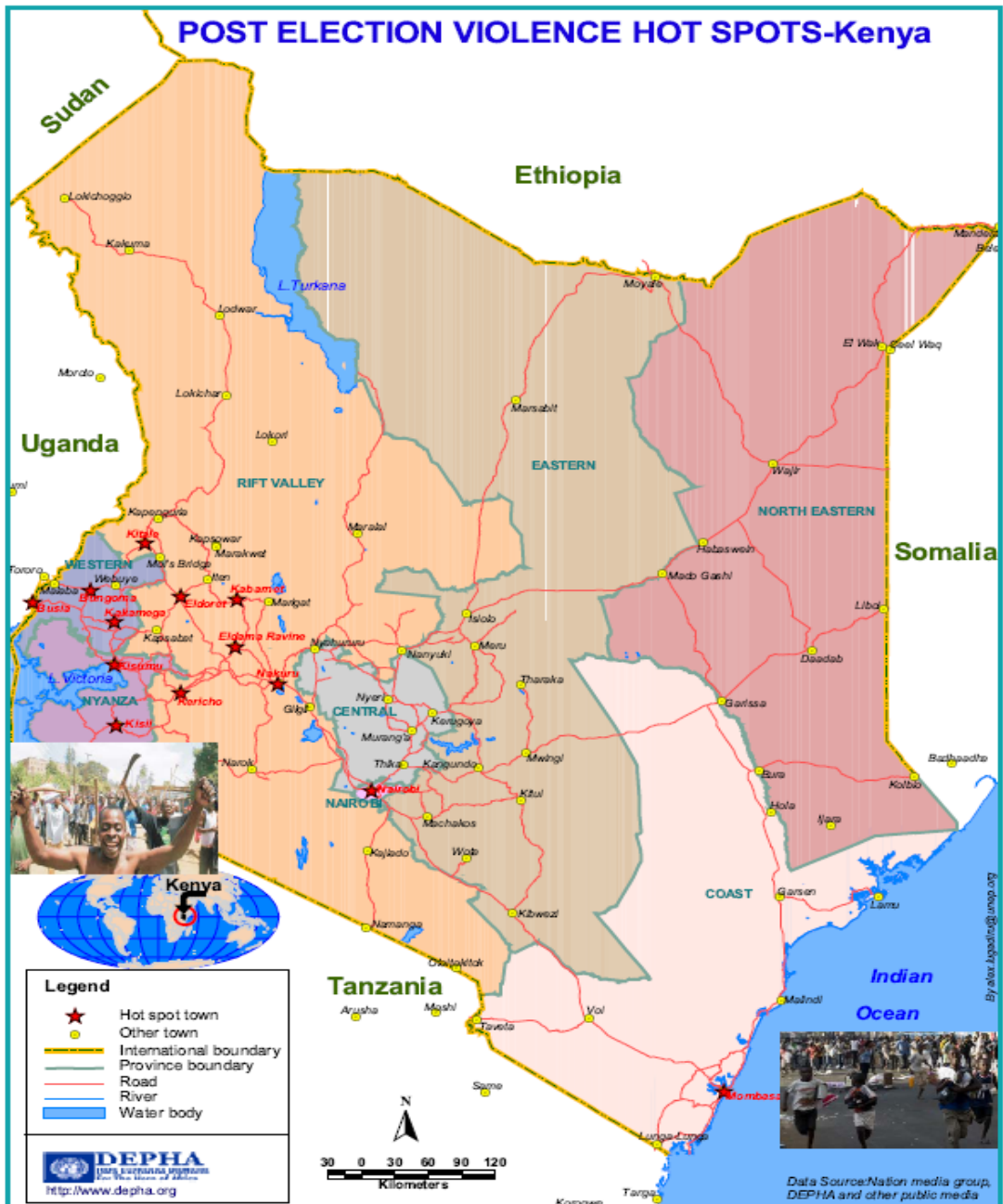
Kenya has also experienced growth and expansion of youth unemployment and youth involvement in militia and gang related activities. 67 percent of the

²⁸ There was a controversy after the results of the census were released about the figures for North Eastern. Therefore, these figures may change once the new ones are released.

unemployed are youth. This situation is attributed to among other things the low absorptive capacity of the economy and lack of appropriate skills and job selectiveness (Government of Kenya, Youth policy, 2008: 16). Significantly, the absorption capacity in the labour market in Kenya can only accommodate 25 percent of the youth (African Executive, 2008). There is also “a problem of skills mis-match that leads to under-utilisation of the labour force especially youth” (Government of Kenya, Vision 2030, 2008: 1). The government has also recognised unemployment as one of the factors contributing to the increase in formation of criminal gangs and militia groups in Kenya (Government of Kenya, Youth policy, 2008: 16). Other challenges facing Kenya is the prevalent access to illegal drugs among its youth population, which is associated with the rise of crimes especially in Nairobi informal dwellings. For instance in 2007, 57 per cent of the population of convicted prisoners was between 16 and 25 years of age (Government of Kenya, Vision 2030, 2008: 1). Prevalence of the HIV/AIDS pandemic is also high among the youth population and the most affected are girls (ibid.: 2).

These demographic and background factors are important variables when exploring the role of youth in violent episodes in Kenya, particularly those involving political elections and youth militias and gangs. As will be discussed later in this chapter, in the historical evolution of the nation the youth have been and remain an influential force in forging the political arena of the country. For instance, prior to the 2007 elections, for the first time the youth decided that their vote counted (ICG, 2008: 4; Forti and Maina, 2012). They used modern technology, including face book, twitter, hip hop music in campaigns and rallies to mobilise youth to register as voters to ensure that they voted in leaders of their choice in the 2007 elections. Their catch phrase was “*Vijana Tugutuke, Ni Time yetu*”, Sheng for “Let’s wake up youth, it is our time” (ICG, 2008: 4). This move by the youth led to scholars opining that in the

2007 elections, the “youth factor ... may take over from ethnicity” (Kagwanja, 2005). Cheeseman (2007: 168) observes that there were six million more voters in the voter register. Forti and Maina (2012) also note that 3.7 million youth voted. In addition, some scholars’ observation is that the youth between 18-35 years of age supported a Raila presidency under the Orange Democratic Movement (ODM), which campaigned on a platform of change and *majimbo* (a form of federalism). This would ensure that communities that have for a long time being excluded would have a voice and share in the resources (Mwangi and Holmquist, 2008). Kibaki’s presidency on the other hand, which centred on his accomplishment development record – using the slogan “*Kazi iendelee*”, Swahili for, “let the work continue” (ibid.) - had the support of the over fifty age group who were happy with his slow but steady pace (Branch, 2010). It is most likely that this was part of the reason for the youth’s frustrations with the turn of events during and after the announcement of the disputed presidential election in 2007 when Kibaki was declared the winner. Some of the youth went to the streets carrying posters on which were inscribed the phrase “No Raila no Peace” (De Smedt, 2009). The eruption of violence “led to the death of over 1,000 people and displacement of almost 700,000 others in two months” (Lynch, 2009: 604). Some of the areas that were adversely affected by the post-2007 election violence are shown in Map 3 below.



★ Hotspot towns

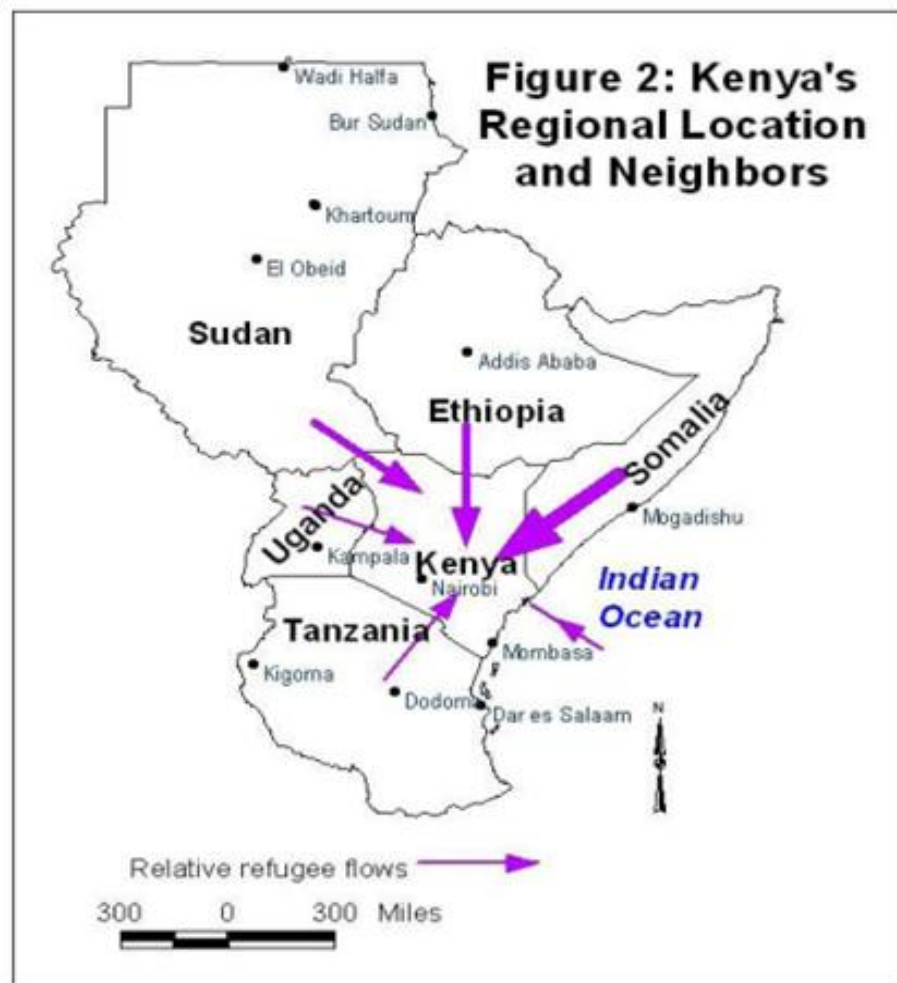
Map 3 Areas adversely affected by the post-election violence

Source: <http://reliefweb.int/node/20235>

As regards these eruptions of violence, some pertinent questions arise: What, for instance, is the explanation for the widespread violence that engulfed Kenya within seconds of the announcement of the presidential election results in 2007? What led communities that have lived together in relative harmony, intermarried and shared common markets, infrastructure and schools as one community, to commit atrocities of such magnitude against each other? What is the explanation of the quick mobilisation of the youth militia groups and gangs that attacked looted, raped and killed neighbours and “foe”? How does one explain the partisan behaviour, of especially the police whose motto is “*Utumishi Kwa Wote*” (Swahili for Service to All) and their aloofness as they watched groups of people young and old commit atrocities against particular ethnic groups? What is the explanation of the impunity that accompanied politicians and leaders who incited violence and security government organs that shot and killed innocent civilians? How could “a stolen election” lead to such atrocities? A review of the history of violence in Kenya to be analysed in this chapter may shed light on some or all these questions.

Violent conflicts in Kenya have been attributed to a number of factors for instance land (Waki Report, 2008), cattle rustling and unequal distribution of resources affecting the mainly nomadic communities in the northern part of Kenya (Mkutu, 2008; Adan and Pkalya, 2005). As was evidenced in the post-2007 election violence, these conflicts are characterised by killing, raping, destruction of people’s property, looting, torturing, animosity among different ethnic communities and forced male circumcision on mainly communities that do not practice this rite of passage (Kamau-Rutenberg, 17 July 2009). Notably, majority of the actors, victims and indeed both are youth (IRIN, 2007, Waki Report, 2008, Kenya National Commission of Human Rights, 2008).

Another issue that has the potential to spawn violence in Kenya is the refugee problem – a consequence of violence and instability in the surrounding regions such as Somalia, Sudan and Northern Uganda. Kenya has become home to thousands of refugees (Mogire, 2003). Map 4 below shows Kenya’s neighbours and the refugee flow.



Map 4 Kenya’s neighbours and the refugee flow

Source: Kefa M. Otiso, pp. 115

The vulnerability of Kenya also lies in the “long porous borders and unprotected shores lines” (Gastrow, 2011: 5). This creates room for unmonitored movement of peoples and a sense of insecurity. One explanation for this is that

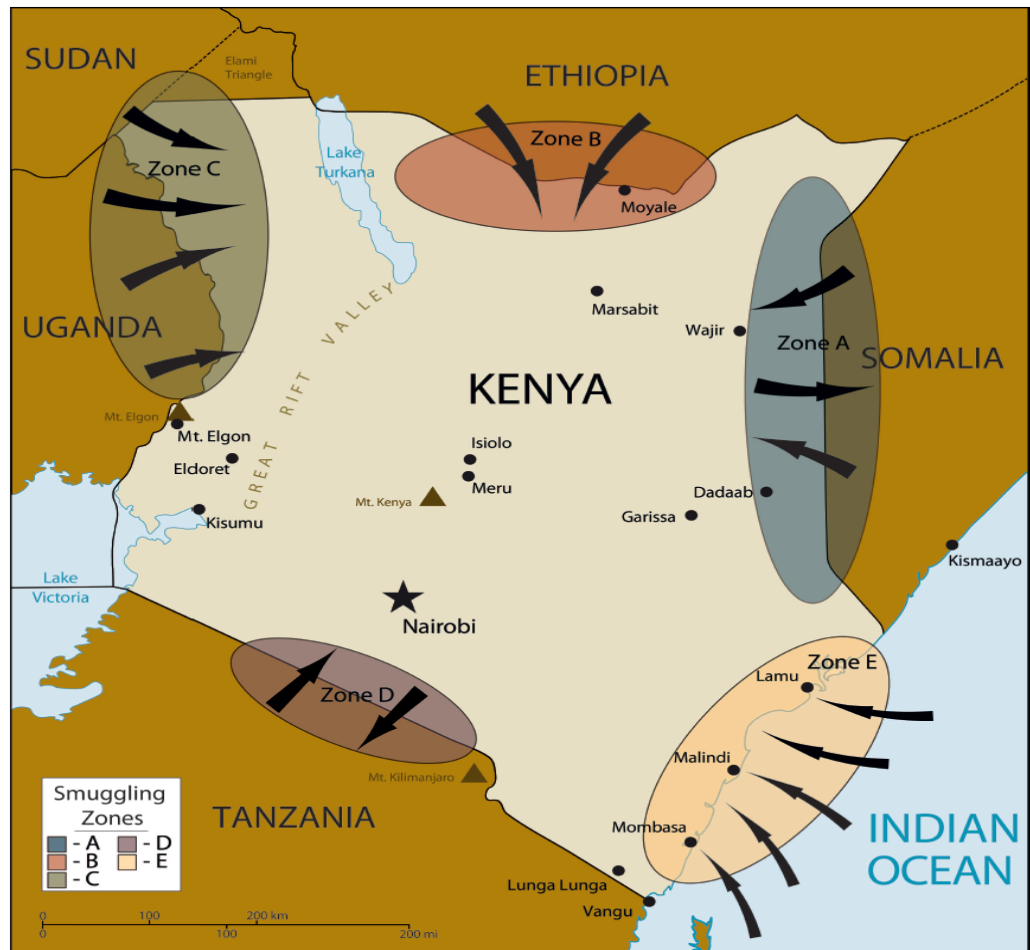
people living in especially volatile areas such as those bordering Ethiopia and Somali where there seems to be inadequate or no security personnel tend to keep small arms to protect themselves (Mkutu, 2008). The offensive against the Al Shaabab in Somalia “*Operation Linda Nchi* (Swahili for “Operation Protect the Country”) that was estimated to be costing the Kenyan government at least Kenyan Shillings 210 million (\$2.8 million) per month in personnel costs alone added to this vulnerability (International Crisis Group, 15 February, 2012: 14). For instance Kenya has experienced more than twenty attacks and bomb scares linked to Al-Shabaab mainly targeting crowded places such as bars, nightclubs and churches (ICG, 2012).

Nairobi and Rift Valley - the selected locations for the field research - in aim of addressing the key research questions of this thesis, have been the cauldron of different forms of violence especially politicised ethnic-based violence and militia groups and gangs²⁹ related violence. The violent conflicts have occurred primarily during election periods of 1992, 1997 and 2007 with the Rift Valley province being the epicentre. Nairobi has been a hot spot for criminal militia groups and gangs and violent demonstrations. Those involved in these violent demonstrations are mainly hawkers, people in the slums of Nairobi for instance Mathare and Kibera³⁰ due to the violent demolitions of their dwellings (Anderson, 2002).

Kenya also provides a low risk environment for transnational organised crime. This reality is articulated in Gastrow’s report (2011) and also in the World Bank report on Conflict and Security (2011). Map 5 below shows how arms are smuggled into Kenya for use in Kenya or on transit to other countries in the region.

²⁹ For further reading on non-state actors, especially the different categories refer to Williams P. Violent non-state actors, national and international security. 1-21 Available: http://www.humansecuritygateway.com/documents/ISN_Violent Non-State Actors.pdf.

³⁰ More information will be captured in chapter four of this study.



Key: Zone A: The Somalia-Kenya border (682 kilometres); Zone B: The Ethiopia-Kenya border (861 kilometres); Zone C: The Uganda-Kenya border (933 kilometres); Zone D: The Tanzania-Kenya border (769 kilometres); Zone E: the Indian Ocean Coastline (536 kilometres).

Map 5 Transnational organised crime

Source: Gastrow, 2011: 79-84

These varied violent conflicts in Kenya, as well as the post-2007 election violence, that threatened to destabilise the country, have resulted in hundreds of internally displaced persons (IDPs) spread in different parts of the country, especially in the Rift Valley (Lynch, 2009; Biegon, 2009; Kamungi, 2009; Anderson and Lochery, 2008: 329; Klopp in Bekoe, 2006). The issue of refugees and IDPs is urgent and if not dealt with appropriately could lead to further conflict not only in the future elections but such violence may also affect future political, economic and social development (Klopp et al., 2010). The failure also to resettle the IDPs, some

of them for over two decades, poses a security threat and acts as a fertile ground for youth to be recruited into militia groups and gangs or insurgent groups, such as the case of Al Shabaab between the Kenya and Somali border (ICG, 2012; Mogire, 2008). Another case in point was the recruitment of the Kikuyu IDPs chased away from the Rift Valley in 1992 and 1997 into the Mungiki militia (Branch, 2011: 237). Such a situation can also instigate further conflicts especially when faced with “mobilised youth, local impunity, and the failure of the police and legal system” (Klopp et al., 2010: 3).

Importantly, in reference to the violent conflicts that arose as a result of the 2007 disputed Kenya presidential elections where youth played key roles as actors, victims or indeed both, scholars have advanced different arguments about the triggers. One view advanced by Cheeseman and Branch (2009: 5) among others is that beyond the immediate trigger - the flawed election - there are three historical trends that might be the root causes. Their argument is that the post-election violence was a result of a long process that started with “*elite fragmentation*” in Moi’s era, and was induced by “*political liberalization*” and consequently led to the “*informalization*” of violence. These scholars claim that a combination of all these factors undermined the capacity of “the centre to hold”. The decentralisation of control over violence meant that the wave of attacks was broader and harder to manage (ibid.,: 6).

Mueller’s, views on the other hand are that the post-election violence was inevitable due to the following factors,

... a gradual decline in the state’s monopoly of legitimate force and a consequent generalized level of violence not always within its control; deliberately weak institutions, mostly overridden by a highly personalized

and centralized presidency, that could and did not exercise the autonomy or checks and balances normally associated with democracies; and political parties that were programmatic, were driven by ethnic clientilism, and had a winner-take-all view of political power and its associated economic by products (Mueller 2008: 186).

Thus, according to Mueller (ibid.) the “stolen election” was just a trigger. The writing was already on the wall. Mueller’s further argument is that the above factors can “shape Kenya’s landscape and still predispose it to more violence, whether electoral or non-electoral” (Mueller, 2010: 102). Branch (2011: 19) on the other hand maintains that the post-election violence should not be seen as a case in isolation but as “the latest episode in a much longer history of political violence”. Other factors advanced in reference to the post-election violence are due to “weak institutions, historical injustices, the normalisation of violence and a lack of elite consensus on the rules of the game” (Cheeseman, 2008: 167).

While in agreement that the “normalisation of violence” was a factor in the post-2007 election violence, Lynch maintains that there were other “interwoven factors and longstanding issues” mainly,

... the use of violence as a political and economic strategy; a culture of impunity for corruption, ethnic incitement and organisation of violence; ... high levels of poverty, inequality, and un- (and under) employment especially among the youth (Lynch, 20 July 2012: 96).

Kagwanja and Southall (2009: 267) attribute the violence to “ethnic disputes and grievances over land and citizenship”, which they claim became key issues in the campaign in which members of the Kikuyu community were blamed for “contributing to the marginalisation of other groups” (ibid.). Their account is further articulated by a Kalenjin elder interviewed during the post-election violence, “people

had to fight Kikuyu because Kibaki is a Kikuyu ... We will not sit down and see one tribe lead Kenya. ... One tribe cannot lead the other 41 tribes” (Harter cited in Human Rights Watch, 2011). However, Ajulu (2000) and Murunga (2011) refute Kagwanja and Southall claims of *41 tribes against one* (the Kikuyu) by observing that all the different ethnic communities in Kenya have experienced exclusion in one way or another some for decades.

Cheeseman (2011: 100) on the other hand, brings new insight into these discourses by positing that “moral ethnicity” represents a suitable foundation on which to build democratic polity”.³¹ For example, in the narrative below from a recording by UNDP, ethnic identity is appreciated.

I used to live in Kisumu until 2008. My neighbours used to call me Kikuyu. I didn't mind because it was an acknowledgment of some quality in me. I also used to call them Luo. However, when the violence broke out they burnt my house and the small business I was running. Tribe becomes a problem when mixed with politics (UNDP, Picha Mtaani, nd.: 36)

From the above varied views it is evident that violence in Kenya is not a new phenomenon. The next section therefore deals with Kenya's political history, especially her history of violence. The section will highlight the roles played by the leaders in entrenching violence and also the involvement of youth in Kenya's most recent history of violence.

³¹ For a discussion on “moral ethnicity” and “political tribalism” refer to Cheeseman (2011).

2.2 LOOKING INTO THE PAST: DEMOCRATISATION BALANCING ON “ONE LEG OF A THREE LEGGED AFRICAN STOOL”³²

Four main eras in the political history of Kenya are important in order to better understand the youth violence: one, the pre-colonial and colonial period, which predates 1963 when Kenya attained independence, two, the post-colonial era (rule of Jomo Kenyatta and Daniel Toroitich arap Moi). Three, the multiparty era under president Mwai Kibaki 2002-2007 and from 2008 to the next election after five years, a Government of National Unity sharing power between President Mwai Kibaki and Prime Minister, Raila Amolo Odinga.

Beginning with the *pre-colonial era*: During this period in Africa and specifically Kenya, the governance system was based on ethnic groupings, which are quite complex. Through the *divide and rule* policy, the colonialists manipulated long-standing ethnic groupings, by building alliances with members of some ethnic communities, for example the Kikuyu. This created or exacerbated tensions within groupings of an ethnic community or with other different ethnic groups (Branch 2011; Hansen, 2009; Munene, 1997; Nyukuri, 1997). Additionally, by reinforcing the ethnical differences and exalting a single authority (for instance the chief) already established traditional mechanisms of governance, the colonialists failed to identify other forms of leadership that were present for instance, clans, age groups and women’s groups (Mamdani, December 2002). Maathai (2010) notes that those selected for leadership were often persons that a given community regarded as misfits. The community did not recognise their authority as they perceived them to

³² The idea is adopted from Wangari Maathai’s philosophy of a three legged African stool. First leg represents the democratic space, where rights - human, women’s, children’s or environment’s are respected. The second leg symbolises sustainable and accountable management of natural resources, both for those living today and in the future, in a manner that is just and fair, including for people on margins of society. The third leg stands for “cultures of peace” which take the form of fairness, respect, compassion, forgiveness, recompense, and justice (Maathai, 2010: 56, The challenges for Africa ...). For details on this philosophy refer to Maathai (ibid. and following pages).

be spies or traitors. Also this created antagonism, ridicule, rejection and isolation of such “chosen leaders” (ibid.). Hence, colonialism disrupted the way of life of the indigenous people socially, politically, economically and culturally.

Importantly, these ethnic and clan divisions were made more complex by the creation of arbitrary borders. For instance, the political boundaries created divisions that cut across communities, splitting and lumping them together into administrative units without consideration of geographical topography or the situation of ethnic clans (Francis, 2006; Blanton, et al., 2001; Ayoob, 1995). Examples include the Maasai ethnic community found on the borders of Kenya and Tanzania, the Teso found on the Kenya and Uganda border, the Somali in the Kenya, Ethiopia and Somali borders, and the Luo in Kenya and Uganda borders (Maathai, 2010; Mazrui, 2008: 36).

Notably, the post-colonial leaders in Africa and in the Kenyan context tended to mirror colonial forms of leadership, due in part to the existing social and institutional structures put into place through years of colonial rule (Cheeseman, 2011: 95; Miguel, 2004: 336-337; Ouch, 2002). Consequently, the leaders were critiqued for perpetuating the colonial hegemony long after independence (Fashina, 2009). The people had the perception that the leadership had only exchanged hands; what had changed was the skin colour. This therefore earned the post-colonial leaders the label “*Wazungu Weusi*” (Swahili for Black Europeans)³³.

Table 2.1 below illustrates the historical and contemporary pattern of leadership in Kenya. It is interesting to note that despite having over forty ethnic groups political power has remained in the hands of leaders within only two of these

³³ The phrase was used by a Tanzanian playwright Ebrahim Hussein in the play “Kinjeketile”. It is based on the war of independence by the Ngoni people of Tanzania against the German settlers (1905-1907). They rebelled against forced labour and repression. This is similar to other wars against colonial rule across Africa.

groups (the Kikuyu and Kalenjin). This pattern illustrates the ability of some leaders within these two groups to successfully hold on to power despite Kenya's stated commitment to democracy. This characterisation does not necessarily reflect the complexity of power relations as regionalism also plays a significant role.

Table 2.1 Kenyan leaders from independence 1963 to 2012

President	Jomo Kenyatta (Mzee)³⁴	Daniel Toroitich arap Moi (Nyayo)³⁵	Emilio Mwai Kibaki	Emilio Mwai Kibaki (President) Raila Amolo Odinga (Prime Minister)
Party of choice ¹	KANU	KANU	DP (but won on a NARC ticket)	PNU (Kibaki) ODM (Raila)
Ethnic community	Gikuyu (Kiambu)	Kalenjin (Tugen)	Gikuyu (Nyeri)	Gikuyu (Nyeri) Luo
The tenure	1963-1978	1978-2002	2002-2007	2007-2012/2013(Kibaki) 2007- (Raila) [Raila - a candidate for next election]
No. of years in power	14	24	5	5(without re-election) 5(will be vying for presidency in the next General election)
System of governance	De facto one-party state	De jure one-party State until 1991, when Kenya becomes a multi-party state	A multi-party State(competitive)	A coalition Government of National Unity (GNU) following the signing of a National Accord after a disputed general election in 2007 The peace was brokered by the former United Nations Secretary General, Kofi Annan

¹KANU-Kenya African National Union; DP-Democratic Party; NaRC-National Rainbow Coalition

PNU-Party of National Unity; ODM - Orange Democratic Movement

³⁴ Swahili for "an elder" – sign of respect

³⁵ Swahili for "footsteps"– When the second president of Kenya, Daniel Toroitich arap Moi came to power he promised the Kenyan people that he would follow in the footsteps (in Swahili *nyayo*) of the late *Mzee* Jomo Kenyatta.

Jomo Kenyatta, the first president of the Republic of Kenya (1964-1978) acquired power over a nation that had suffered oppression for decades under colonial rule. Hence one of the key challenges was the resettlement of persons in order to build a nation identity (Asingo, 2003: 19). Despite the myriad challenges such as the social, political, cultural and economic breakdown that plagued the country the populace was full of optimism for the future. However, it was not long before Kenyatta established his leadership by “heavy centralization of political and economic power” (Annan, 2008). Using the bureaucratic colonial structures, such as the provincial administration with district commissioners down to chiefs and headmen, Kenyatta established his chain of command to the grassroots (Cheeseman, 2011: 96; Branch, 2011: 73). Also entrenched his power by amending the constitution thirteen times (Roberts, 2009).

After Kenyatta’s death in 1978, Moi became his successor. Akin to his predecessor Moi resorted to detention without trial, arbitrary arrests and torture of those that opposed or were perceived to be anti-government (KNCHR, 2008). His centralisation and personalisation of power led to the subordination of both the judiciary and parliament (Korwa and Munyae, 2001:13). Furthermore, similar to his predecessor Moi took advantage of the loopholes in the former Kenyan constitution and changed it at will³⁶. As the chancellor of all Kenya’s university, Moi extended his power to the institutions, warning the universities that he was keeping a keen eye for instance he said: “From now on ... I shall be very careful with the University of Nairobi” (Branch, 2011: 147). Moi became “all powerful” (Throup and Thornby, 1998: 38-39). Symbolically, this power is evident in some of the monuments in

³⁶ Kenyans overwhelmingly voted for a new constitution which was promulgated on the 27 August, 2010. This constitution was voted for through a referendum and gives the power to the people of Kenya as opposed to the former constitution that invested power in the executive. It reads: “All sovereign power belongs to the people of Kenya and shall be exercised only in accordance with this constitution” (Laws of Kenya, 2010: 13).

Kenya (Larsen, 2011: 279). Some scholars have used the famous saying of the French King Louis XIV (1638-1715) “*L’État c’est moi*”³⁷ to refer to Moi and his rule (Branch, 2011:139; Throup and Hornsby, 1998: 37). The general consensus was that politics in Kenya was becoming more “violent, arbitrary and authoritarian” during Moi’s term in office (Cheeseman 2009: 97; Mwakikagile, 2004). In support, Throup and Hornsby (1998: 15; Widner, 1992) viewed Kenyatta’s regime as relatively accommodating of dissent. However, Ajulu (2000: 139) posits that the difference between the two regimes lay in the degree and intensity of kleptocracy and predation.

To sum up, these two eras Kenyatta’s and Moi’s regimes were characterised by “repression, abuses of human rights, ethnicity, nepotism and patronage” (Odhiambo-Mbai, 2003). Their regimes were reminiscent of the colonial power (Kanyinga, 2003:123) displaying an insatiable desire to cling on to power and also to show who was in control (Branch, 2011; Mueller, 2008; Throup and Thornsby, 1998). As regards entrenching their powers, both leaders perfected the art of patron-clientism by meeting delegates of ordinary Kenyans mainly in their rural homes, Gatundu in Central province and Kabarak in Rift Valley respectively (Branch, 2011; Jonyo, 2003: 165; Throup and Hornsby, 1998; Munene, 1997; Leys, Tamarkin, 1978.). Terms such as going to Kenyatta to “lick sugar” (Mueller, 1984) or to drink “*chai*”, Swahili for, tea (Munene, 1997: 30-31), or “buying land” (ibid.), or going to Moi “to eat *ugali*”³⁸ were used (Mueller, 2008).

³⁷ “The state is me and I am the state”. Therefore there is no state without me and I cannot exist without power. This is a famous quotation associated with Louis XIV of France (1638-1715).

³⁸ This is the staple food that is popular and seems affordable in Kenya. It is hard dough made of maize meal usually eaten with accompaniments such as kale, meat, fish or beans, among other things. This is used symbolically to mean engaging in patron clientilism. Sometimes, the phrase used is, “one has been bought” especially in reference to fiery critics of the government who stop criticising the leaders once they receive a favour.

Kenyatta and Moi also engaged young people to instigate violence on behalf of the KANU government by intimidating and harassing opponents or the dissenting voices (Mueller, 1984; Mutua, 2006). During Kenyatta's era, the youth would spy on, intimidate or destroy property especially shops of those in the opposition party, the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU). On the other hand, in 1991 -1993 at the time of change to multi-partyism ethnic clashes, Moi used the Youth KANU'92 (Mejia, 1995; Kenya Human Rights Commission, 1998)³⁹ as one way of ensuring that his hegemonic power was secure (Branch 2011: 199-200)⁴⁰. Interestingly, it was during the retired president Moi's time that these established militias, the Mungiki, the *jeshi la mzee* (Swahili for the old man's army) and the Kalenjin warriors became more visible and operated openly, and hence assumed legitimacy (Kagwanja, 2005).

Agitation for change led to multi-party government with people demanding for constitutional reform as they chanted "Moi must go!" "We want change!" (Mwakikagile, 2001:107)⁴¹. In order to dislodge Moi and the KANU party after they had been in power for four decades, a coalition of parties - the National Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NaRC) - was formed (Amutabi, 2009:70). Interesting, it was the first time that leaders representing different communities were coming together to form an inter-ethnic party. Since Kenya's independence, political parties have been constituted on ethnic lines as opposed to ideology (Kanyinga, 2003). The leaders of the allied coalition signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)

³⁹ Refer to the pastoral letter from the Bishops titled: "Joint message to his excellency the president of Kenya" in Mejia, R. (1995).

⁴⁰ For an in-depth reading of the dynamics of the Mungiki as a religio-political militia and the Moi succession, refer to Rasmussen on Uhuru as Moi's choice (Rasmussen, 2010: 435); Landinfo (2010) "Kenya: Mungiki – Abusers or abused" and "Power to Uhuru ..." (Kagwanja, 2005).

⁴¹ During this demonstration for change, the people marched chanting 'Moi must go! We want change! The police used excessive force, clubs, bullets and tear gas and injured some of the demonstrators.

(Branch 2011; Biegon, 2009) which had Mwai Kibaki as the undisputed presidential candidate.

Kibaki won the elections in 2002 with a 62.2 percent win (Roberts, 2009; Biegon, 2009; Mueller, 2008). His win marked the beginning of what the Kenyans saw as a new era (Murunga and Nasong'o, 2006: 1). There was democratic space for the people to express themselves individually or in groups. The popular media and civic societies also gained freedom of expression. To symbolically usher in an era free of repression, harassment, and detention without trial, and torture, the Nyayo torture chambers were for the first time opened to the public (Citizens for Justice, November 2003). Public universities across the country were given more autonomy and the authority to have their own chancellor, a privilege that the two former presidents were unwilling to delegate (Chege, 2009: 36).

In addition, Kibaki's government became a member of the African Peer Review Mechanisms, a new initiative under the sponsorship of the New Partnership for Africa Development (NEPAD). This gave Kenya the opportunity to assess her progress and areas of challenge among her peer members in the African continent such as Ghana, Ethiopia, Zambia, Tanzania, and Liberia (NEPAD, 2012). As Poku and Mdee (2011: 24) notes, the African Peer Review Mechanisms acts as a platform where governments have the opportunity to assess their nation's progress and areas for improvement.

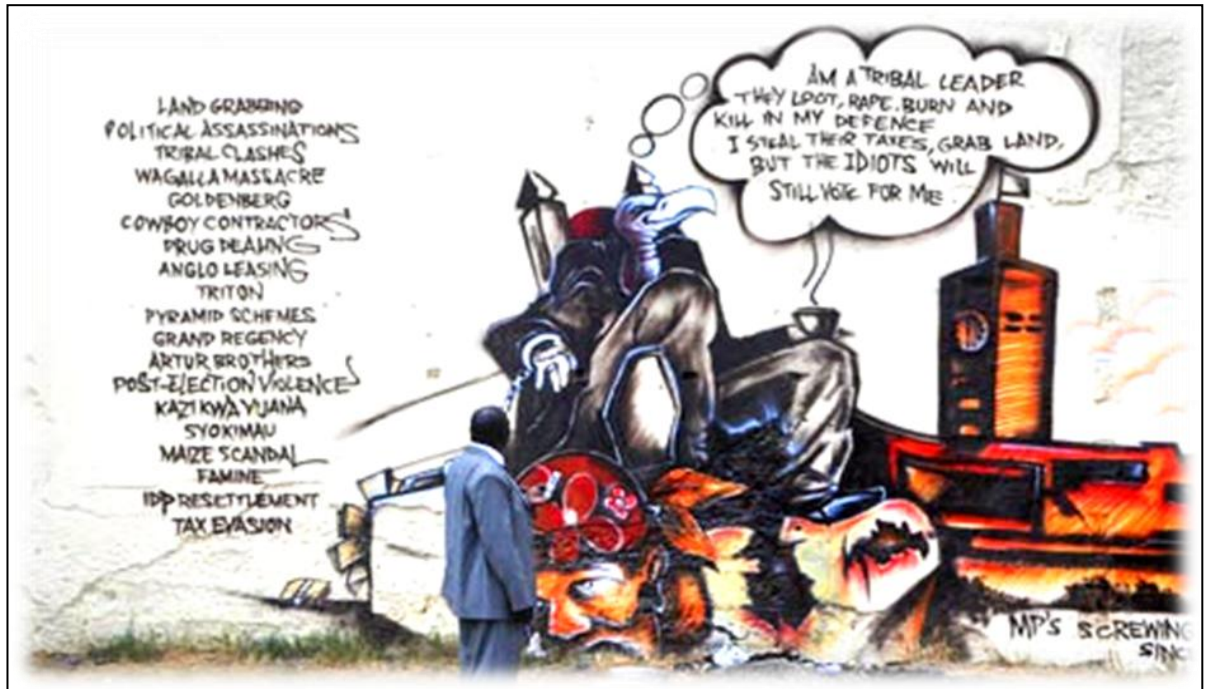
These great milestones in Kenya's history under Kibaki's leadership notwithstanding, suffered setbacks. As soon as Kibaki was in power, he failed to honour the Memorandum of Understanding that led to the split of the allied parties (Biegon, 2009). Furthermore, three key pledges were not honoured: first, to have a new constitution in 100 days, second, create 500000 jobs in order to reduce

unemployment among the youth and third, zero-tolerance to corruption. Importantly, Amutabi (2009: 76) contends that during President Mwai Kibaki's tenure corruption, financial and political scandals were in excess, in fact were "appalling". For instance, those involved in the different corruption scandals including, the Goldenberg-Anglo leasing scandal, and the Arturs Brothers cocaine scandal (a case in December 2004 worth nearly \$66 million) were treated with impunity (Branch, 2011: 263)⁴². Issues of corruption in Kenya have been highlighted using different modes of communication for instance the media, popular music and graffiti on walls of conspicuous buildings in the main streets of Nairobi as shown in Box 1 below.⁴³ Some of the examples of corruption highlighted by the youth in the graffiti below are land grabbing, political assassinations, tribal clashes, cowboy contracts, *Kazi kwa vijana* (Swahili literal translation for jobs for youth), tax evasion among others. The words in the mind of the politician are captured after the graffiti below (Box 1).

⁴² For further reading, refer to chapter seven, Branch, 2011: 217-244.

⁴³ To view this graffiti also refer to Nation Television (NTV) Kenya, Thursday, March 1, 2012).

Box 1 Kenyan youth: expressing dissatisfaction with leaders through graffiti



Source: *Nation Television* (Member of Parliament (MP) depicted as vulture sitting on a throne and stepping on the back of ordinary Kenyan people thinking: "Am a tribal leader, they loot, rape, burn and kill in my defence. I steal their taxes, grab land, but the idiots will still vote for me.")

NTV) Kenya, February 29, 2012 online; Chonghaile, C.N., The Guardian, Wednesday, 21 March 2012

President Mwai Kibaki second term was disputed in what was termed a "stolen election" leading to the post-2007 election violence and the impasse between him and the Prime Minister, Raila Amolo Odinga who was also a presidential candidate. As the violence continued unabated this led to the regional and international community intervention (Waki report, 2008). The former United Nations Secretary, Kofi Annan was mandated as key mediator among a delegation of the panel of eminent African personalities (Juma, 2009; Horowitz, 2008)⁴⁴. After

⁴⁴ "The visit of President John Kufuor, the then Chair of the African Union, to Kenya from 8 to 10 January 2008, resulted in the creation of a Panel of Eminent African Personalities, composed of former UN Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan (Chair), former President of Tanzania, Mr. Benjamin Mkapa and former South African First Lady, Mrs. Graca Machel, to assist Kenyans in finding a peaceful solution to the crisis. Under the auspices of the Panel, President Kibaki's PNU and Mr.

successful negotiations involving the two aggrieved parties an agreement was concluded on 28 February 2008 and a grand coalition of two equal partners was formed. The two principals agreed on a four-point agenda for the national dialogue: First, to stop the violence so that people would enjoy their fundamental rights and liberties. Second, to take immediate measures to address the humanitarian crisis, promote reconciliation, healing and restoration of calm. Third, to address the long-term issues and solutions (such as constitutional, institutional and legal reforms). Fourth, was to put in place systems that would address land reform, poverty and inequity, and unemployment, particularly among the youth (The Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation Committee (KNDR or “National Dialogue) 2010; NPI-Africa 2010; Juma, 2009). While the grand coalition government made the initial step in addressing the first, second and third agendas, the great challenge was in dealing with the fourth agenda especially to address unemployment among the youth.

To conclude this section, having looked generally at Kenya’s history of violence and the roles played by the leaders in entrenching the violence, of particular concern to this research study is the Kenyan cultural, socio-economic and political history of youth involvement in violent conflicts which predates colonialism. Special attention will also be given to involvement of youth in Kenya’s most recent history of violence. Three forms of violence will be addressed in this section: First, youth militia groups and gangs, second, youth and the post-election violence and third, youth and violence in schools, and then a consideration of some of the immediate responses to this violence. However, this division is for purpose of analysis only.

Odinga’s ODM started negotiations on 29 January, 2008” (The Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation Committee (KNDR or “National Dialogue”) <http://www.dialoguekenya.org/home.aspx>

2.3 YOUTH VIOLENCE: FROM THE PAST TO THE PRESENT

Youth violence, particularly the use of youth in political violence has a long history in Kenya. The tradition of youth involvement in violence predates colonialism. Violence has been used as a tool for major political, social, evolution and transitions; in which youth are both actors and victims (Gecaga, 2007). It is in this context that the youth are moulded and nurtured (Fredriksen and Munive, 2010). For a better understanding of this phenomenon an analysis of the youth militia groups and gangs, in the cultural settings is important as will be seen below.

Culturally, in most communities in Kenya, there are varied rites of passage; the most significant, for both individuals and the community is the stage from childhood to adulthood. It is a “radical change of the individual concerned” (Mbiti, 1991:96). In some of these communities male circumcision plays a key role. The rite of passage enables one to partake of the community responsibility and leadership. Adults that do not undergo this rite are considered and treated as children irrespective of their age (Kamau-Rutenberg, 17 July 2009). In some of these communities the males are circumcised when they are between twelve to fifteen years of age. The rites, which are marked by ceremonies, rituals, seclusion and secrecy, take between two weeks and one month depending on the ethnic community (ibid.). During this period the initiates receive informal education from elders who often use symbolic language (KNCHR, 15 August 2008: 36-37; Gachiri, 2006). Likewise, they are taught to be brave warriors by enduring extreme pain and protecting their community at all cost. For instance, among the Kalenjin, the initiates are taught to use weapons such as bows, arrows (Lynch, 2008; Klopp et al., 2010; Gachiri, 2006) and the Maasai how to use spears (Tarayia, 2004). In other communities especially among the Turkana and Pokots the rites involve cattle raids

(Mkutu, 2008) or killing of one of the big five⁴⁵ (National Steering Committee (NSC), 2009: 22) as a sign of bravery and pride.⁴⁶ Notably, cattle raids today pose real security and peacebuilding challenges considering the fact that in traditional Kenyan society, cattle raids were carried out using sticks and sometimes bows, arrows and spear but today they have become sophisticated with communities using lethal weapons such as small arms (Mkutu, 2008; Adan and Pkalya, 2005).

Kipterit, a young initiate of the Kalenjin group, narrates some of the initiation rituals that he and other male initiates participated in. According to Kipterit parts of the rituals include beatings in order to toughen the initiates for example initiates are beaten hard on the most sensitive parts of the body, usually across the shoulders, back of the legs, ankles, forehead, funny bone and knees. They are also inducted into and threatened by referring to the unique power and role of the elders: “Elders are connected to the ancestors: that all ancestors are close to God and that elders possess power to bless and curse” (Gachiri, 2006: 188-187). Corroborating this information on the deific role of elders, Klopp et al. (2010: 11) states that the initiates “are taught that if they can kill there would be no either spiritual or emotional impact as they would be purified later after killing.”⁴⁷

Below are some examples of cultural groups’ affiliated to ethnic communities. Of interest is the role these groups played in the struggle for political

⁴⁵ These are the lion, the elephant, the rhino, the cheetah and the buffalo. Poaching of wildlife is outlawed in Kenya.

⁴⁶ During the fieldwork in Kenya in the year 2010, the researcher interviewed a chief belonging to the Maasai ethnic community. The chief pointed out that children are prepared for this great activity of killing a lion for instance by first killing different types of birds. Among the Maasai, the morans are shown how to use the spear, which is not only a weapon of protection but also a symbol of manhood (Tarayia, 2004).

⁴⁷ Klopp personal communication with a youth from Kurosei, (Rift Valley, Kenya) in May 29, 2009 (Klopp et al., 2010)

independence in Kenya; a struggle that was characterised by different forms of brutality (Lonsdale, 1990; Branch, 2011).

The Mumbo cult (1913) mainly Luo (Nyanza province) drew from the Abagusii warrior traditions and prophetism (Ruteere, 2008; Gecaga, 2007). Then there was the Kikuyu *Karing'a* (Kikuyu for authentic) who had support from the Kikuyu Central Association (KCA) - a political group organised by young urban Kikuyu in 1921 (Ruteere 2008; Press, 2004). The *Dini ya Msambwa* (Swahili for Msambwa's religion) in 1947 on the other hand, was under the guidance of Masinde Muliro and drew heavily from the Bukusu, a group of the Luyia ethnic community (Ruteere, 2008; Gecaga, 2007). These and others from the different ethnic communities in Kenya were expected to uphold the particular ethnic group's culture and articulate its ideals and grievances. During the colonial period, these mentioned groups among others mobilised their communities to resist any form of repression, forced labour and interference in their culture (Nasong'o, 2007; Gecaga, 2007). It is in light of these cultural groups that some of the contemporary militia groups in Kenya can be understood.

In the political, cultural/socio-economic context of Kenya, new groups are allied to different ethnic communities or politicians (Anderson, 2002). One therefore needs to understand that there is a difference between the culture militias and the so called civil militias ⁴⁸(Francis, 2006). However, the former can be turned into the later by the political structures in place. Guichaoua, (2006: 1664) suggests that these *latecomers* (civil militias) seem to outnumber the ethnical ideological militia. Supporting this view, Anderson (2002: 550) notes that these new groups of youth militia and gangs chose a "cultural" or "traditional" name or "name of a place" or

⁴⁸ For detailed reading on the civil militias refer to Francis, D.J., ed. (2006). *Civil militia: Africa's intractable security menace?*

“an ethnic group”. This is in effort to “give the appearance of legitimacy and cultural affiliation that may not in fact be substantiated by the groups’ actual membership or activities” (ibid.). The Mungiki, whose members are mainly from the Kikuyu ethnic community, the Kalenjin warriors (Kalenjin), the Chinkororo and Amachuma (Kisii), the “Taliban” (Luo), Sabaot Land Defence Force (mainly Sabaot and other tribes in Mt Elgon area) are some of the key militia groups among others (Rasmussen, 2010; Kagwanja, 2009, 2005, 2003; Anderson, 2002; Wamue; 2001). Both the Mungiki and the Sabaot Land Defence Force claim to be fighting for their ancestral land (Wamue, 2001; Simiyu, 2008). The Mungiki, similar to the Kikuyu *Karinga*, advocate for a return to traditional religion and culture and a rejection of all that is foreign (Wamue, 2001; Kagwanja, 2003: 31; Anderson, 2002: 535). They equally, claim roots in the Mau Mau⁴⁹ - a revolutionary movement against British colonial rule - as they identify themselves as the “*iregi*”, Kikuyu for, revolutionaries (Kagwanja, 2005: 6) and claim to be the voice of the poor and the excluded. One of their leaders claim that they “have a duty to mobilise and bring economical, political and social changes in society so that the masses can control their destiny” (Ndura Waruinge cited in Branch, 2011: 237)⁵⁰ Interestingly, Anderson asserts that, “Mungiki speaks for the poor and dispossessed, but with a distinctively Gikuyu voice” (2002: 534). Hence, during the 1992 and 1997 violent conflicts dubbed “ethnic/land clashes”, the Mungiki protected the Kikuyu families that were displaced from the Rift Valley (Tarimo, 2009; Omaera, 2009; Osamba, 2001). The Mungiki numbers swelled as they recruited the internally displaced persons into their sect/militia (Branch, 2011:237). Besides protecting the Kikuyu people, during the

⁴⁹ For detailed reading on the Mau Mau and their role in the struggle for Kenya’s political independence refer to Branch, 2011.

⁵⁰ Refer also to the interview of the two founding leaders (Ndura Waruinge and Maina Njenga) of the *Mungiki* by the news anchor, Jeff Koinange on the K24 TV channel news.

post-2007 election violence the Mungiki resorted to retaliatory attacks especially against the Kalenjin and Luo ethnic communities (Waki report, 2008; KNCHR 15 August, 2008). The other ethnic communities that have such groups allied to them are the Maasai and Kamba.

Importantly the mushrooming militia groups and gangs mobilise or are easily mobilised to commit crimes, extortion, harassment and other forms of criminality becoming vulnerable targets for manipulation by political leaders (Anderson, 2002). For instance in election periods, they have been used as goons by hopeful election candidates to intimidate opponents or opposition supporters (Klopp et. al. 2010; Dimova, 2010). Nonetheless, they too can mobilise themselves when they, and/or their communities or peers are aggrieved or perceive an injustice either to them, and/or their communities or peers (ibid.). An apt example is the Mungiki militia/sect/group whose first leader, Ndura Waruinge claims to have a membership of over four million members (Branch, 2011: 239-240). Due to the amorphous and secretive nature of such groups it is not easy to ascertain the numbers. He also claims that the group receives over 800 million Kenya shilling (\$11.5 million) in subscription fees from its membership alone.

Notably, a monitoring report shows that there are new militia groups in Kenya and these are on the increase (Kenya National Dialogue and Reconciliation (KNDR, 2010). This report identifies some of them that prey on the transport sector and engage in criminal activities in the country and especially in some parts of Nairobi, Central and Nyanza provinces as captured below. In Nairobi West (Kibera) there is “Yes We Can, Siafu, Haki Yetu, 14 Gendarmerie, 12 Flamingos, 12 Disciples, Bunkers, Kosovo, Tuff Gong, Deigo youths, 40 Ndugus, Bumps Ahead, Kaberege Youth, ODM Youths, Darajani, Jipange and Super 14” (ibid.). Also the

report identified the “Thaai and Wailer groups” in Nairobi North. The “Hague, Kenda Kenda, Bantu, Ngoroko” illegal gangs were identified in Central province. In Nyanza, there is the “Nyalenda Base, The Chief Squad, Nyamasaria Massive, Baghdad for Peace, Karamajong Boys, Saba Saba, Artur Margaryan and Kebago (ibid.: 13-14) militia groups/gangs. In addition, there are other groups/gangs such as the Amachuma, the Karanja youth, Kuzacha boys, Baghdad boys, Kaya Bombo, Jeshi la Mzee, Jeshi la Embakazi, Runyenjes Football Club, Jeshi la Kingole, Youth Wingers (Majeshi la Wazee) that is [Elders Armies], Jeshi la Mbela, Dallas Muslim Youth, Sakina Youth, Kamjesh, Charo Shutu, and Banyamulenge (IRIN News, 14 March 2002). As noted from the list some of the names seem to capture the present political, cultural/socio-economic Kenyan context. For instance after the pre-trial of “the Ocampo 6”⁵¹ a new group known as “The Hague”⁵² was formed.

As will be captured in the research informed chapters, the student respondents mentioned some of these groups and also others such as the “Tiacha Home Boyz” who operate in Nyanza province. Some of the youth respondents claim that this group is allied to a politician in Kisumu. They also pointed out some groups that operate in Mombasa such as the Forty thieves, Kambi Kikuyu, the Mombasa Republic Council (MRC) and the Bokole warriors. Importantly, as shown in the list the ethnic militia groups operate alongside mushrooming gangs (Schuberth, 2011/12; KNDR, 2010). A profile of the members of these groups based on the views of the youth respondents is shown in chapter four below (Box 1 Profile of a typical militia and gang member).

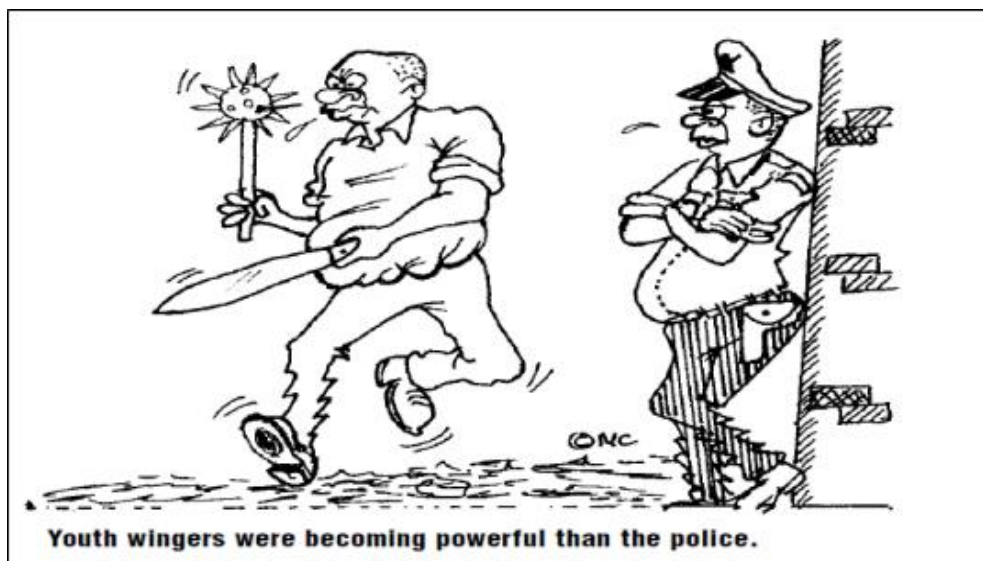
⁵¹ This refers to six prominent Kenyans who were suspected of master-minding the post-election violence - being committed for trial in the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague (Forti and Maina, 2012).

⁵² Some of these groups were confirmed during the fieldwork by the student respondents and key informants - that were working with or interested in youth and their issues.

However, when president Kibaki got into power in 2002, eighteen militia groups/gangs were outlawed. The Mungiki and “Taliban” groupings, were among the groups banned and equally Jeshi la Embakasi, Jeshi la Mzee, Bagdad Boys, Sungu Sungu, Amachuma, Chinkororo, Dallas Muslim Youth, Runyenjes Football Club, Jeshi la Kingole, Kaya Bombo Youth, Sakina Youth, Charo Shutu, Kuzacha Boys, Kosovo Boys, Banyamulenge and KamJesh (IRIN News, 14 March 2002). Also in Kibaki’s first tenure, the Kenya National Youth Alliance party (KNYA) associated with the Mungiki was de-registered prior to the 2007 elections (Rasmussen, 2010). These moves and the extra-judicial killings of about 500 members of the Mungiki - by a police squad known as the Kwekwe squad “said to be a Special Crime Unit mandated to curb the Mungiki movement – (Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, September 2008) created tension between the Mungiki and the government and this seems to be the case to date (Kagwanja, 2005; Branch, 2011).

Despite the crackdown on these militia groups and gangs, it seems that these groups are on the increase as noted above. Equally, as depicted in Cartoon 2 below, they tend to act like “quasi-governments” - engaging in unlawful and violent activities as articulated in the Waki report (2008) and the National Steering Committee (NSC, 2009)⁵³. For example, in the post-2007 election violence, militia groups and gangs supporting different leaders and communities took control of both cities and rural areas and seemed to commit atrocities unabated (Waki Report, 2008, KNCHR, 2008, Human Rights Watch Report, 2008).

⁵³ For further reading refer to the Master thesis by Schubert, M. (2011/12). “The impact of drug trafficking ...” incident where the “Sungusungu” militia/gang attacked the anti-narcotics police to avoid detention of their leader.



Cartoon 2 Youth winger with his fighting tools

Source: library.fes.de/pdffiles/bueros/kenia/01399.pdf Source: nd: 5⁵⁴

The attitude of the Kenyan “militia” group/gangs to the authorities compares well with the ethnic militia group, the Oodua People’s Congress (OPC), affiliated to the Yoruba tribe of Nigeria as captured in the Cartoon 3 below.



Cartoon 3 Oodua people's congress party - ethnic militia

Source: Guichaoua, 2006:22

⁵⁴ The KANU youth wingers and other militia groups and gangs in Kenya use this tool as a weapon by attaching nails to a wooden club. Other such tools are ordinary clubs, iron bars, “pangas” (machetes), kitchen knives and stones since they are easily available.

As shown above in this chapter, militia groups and gangs are sometimes used by leaders especially politicians to engage in violence (Dimova, 2010). As shown in Table 2.2 below, 9.3 percent of cases - youth involved in the post election violence – were manipulated by leaders to engage in violence. 31.6 percent of cases involved killing or violent attacks. Only 1.6 percent of cases are portrayed as engaging in peaceful activities (Media Focus Group, 2009: 26).

Table 2.2 Youth involvement in the post election violence

Youth's Role in Post Election Violence	Counts	Percentage Cases
Looting/Stole properties	718	46.9
Killings/Violent attacks	484	31.6
Protests/Blocked the roads	456	29.8
General destructions i.e. Railway line	193	12.6
Used by Leaders to get power	142	9.3
Gang rape	137	9.0
Fought against others	91	5.9
Self Defense	55	3.6
Issued threats	37	2.4
Demanded for the rights	34	2.2
Caused hatred	26	1.7
Brought Peace	25	1.6
Drug Abuse	4	0.3
Cattle rustling	5	0.3

Source: Media Focus Group, 2009:26

Significantly, there was widespread violent unrest in secondary schools between May and July 2008. 254 secondary schools out of a total of 5600 were affected (Barno, 2008; Hansard, Parliamentary Debate - Kenya, 22 July 2008: 1962-1968). Table 2.3 below shows the number of schools affected by the unrest. The highest number of schools involved was in Central province 68 (27 percent), 55 (22 percent) and 53(21 percent) in Rift Valley and Eastern provinces respectively. Western province had the least number of schools 8(3 percent). Notably, only the schools in the North Eastern province were not affected by the violence.

Table 2.3 Number of schools affected by student unrest in 2008 by province

Province	No of schools	Percentage
Nairobi	12	7%
Nyanza	27	11%
Coast	24	9%
Eastern	53	21%
Rift Valley	55	22%
Western	8	3%
Central	68	27%
North Eastern	0	0%

*Source: Adapted from a report in the Daily nation, 21 July, 2008 cited in Kuria, S. et al.,
2010:7*

This widespread violence in schools amidst the other issues that the country was grappling with generated different responses. Some were expressed in popular media, as portrayed by these headlines from the main local daily newspapers, as shown in (Box 2 below).

Box 2 Media highlights: responses to youth violent unrests in schools, July 2008

“Minister picks team to probe unrest”.

“Parents blamed for rising indiscipline in institutions”.

“Unrest: Students face prison life”.

“Tough new rules to curb school strikes”.

“Nine students charged with arson”.

“Stop this madness in schools”.

“Tribal politics in play as more schools are hit by strikes and fire”.

“Students give their side of the story”.

“When teachers spare the rod, they ruin the country”.

“Brave boy loses his life in an inferno for the sake of colleagues”.

“You are to blame for school riots, students tell lawmakers”.

Sources of headlines: Daily Nation online and Standard online July 2008

Importantly, widespread violent unrest is not a new phenomenon in learning institutions in Kenya. Between the early 1960s and late 1990s, strikes, riots and demonstrations were a common occurrence in institutions of higher learning. The causes of these riots and demonstrations ranged from personal issues such as food and accommodation to issues of governance at all levels, within and without the university (Klopp, 2002; Balsvik, 1991; Omari and Mihyo, 1991). During these unrest students went to the streets, blocked public roads and pelted motorists with stones. In response, the anti-riot police reacted with excessive force for instance by use of clubs and batons, tear gas and/or kicking, slapping, roughing up and in some isolated cases, raping of female students (Khaminwa and Nyambura, July 2006). In

all these varied acts of violence, there was loss of life, destruction of property and lawlessness. However, in the late 90s, there was a marked shift with unrests taking place in secondary schools. Table 2.4 below, shows that unlike the situation in 2008 where school unrest happened in seven of the eight provinces, in 2001 all the schools in the provinces were affected.

Table 2.4 Number of schools affected by student unrest in 2001 by province

Province	Existing number of secondary schools	Number of schools that experienced student unrests	Percentage of schools going on strike	Gravity
Central	630	85	13.5	Violent and destructive
Coast	151	4	2.6	Destruction of school property
Nyanza	680	7	1.0	Destruction of school property
Eastern	626	76	12.4	Destruction of school property and loss of life
Rift Valley	625	50	8.0	Violent and destructive
Western	408	19	4.7	Minor destruction to school property
Nairobi	93	2	0.02	Minor damage to school property
North Eastern	21	7	33.3	Destruction of school property

Adapted: Source: Ministry of Education Science and Technology Kariuki, C.W. 2001

As shown in Table 2.4 above, in all the schools that had unrest, there was destruction of school property and in one of the provinces there was loss of life. This loss of life happened in Kyanguli secondary school in the Eastern province Kenya where two aggrieved students set one of their dormitories on fire leading to the death of 67 boys (Standard Team, Wednesday, April 4, 2001: 2; Hansard Parliamentary Debate - Kenya, 2 August 2001:2075-2077). The cases of students setting or

attempting to destroy school property especially dormitories and administration blocks are not rare in Kenya. The question that this raises is, “Why target the administration blocks and the dormitories”? This could be likely due to the fact that the unrests are as a result of grievances about school administration high handedness and/or excessive powers delegated to prefects (Kuria, 2010: 13, Crowley, 2008). But, on the other hand the students could be reacting as a result of overcrowded and dilapidated dormitories among other issues (Wachira, 21 May 2001).

Prior to these youth unrests, isolated cases of youth violence were witnessed in a number of schools across the country. Some got special attention not only in Kenya but internationally as was the case of the girls from St Kizito mixed boarding secondary school where school boys stormed into their dormitories and raped 71 of them. In an attempt to escape the ordeal, 19 girls lost their lives and hundreds of others were traumatised (Wachira, 1998; National Council of Churches Kenya (NCCCK) 1992, Imathiu, July 1991) and the Kyaguli case already mentioned above. There was also a case in Central province on the 23 May 1999 where four prefects were locked up in a cubicle and set on fire by some aggrieved students in their school. The four students died and the student that was found guilty was detained under the president’s pleasure (StandardgroupKenya, July 10, 2011). In another incident on 7 March 2012 students in the North Eastern province, Kenya rioted and destroyed property and injured twenty police officers including the Officer Chief Superintendent. The riot was triggered by the cancellation of the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) 2011 examination results affecting a number of schools in the province due to irregularities (National television (NTV), Kenya, Daily Nation, 6 March, 2012).

Another form of youth violence in Kenyan schools that has sometimes led to permanent injuries and/or death of students is bullying. In the school in Central

province already mentioned above, a student died of injuries as a result of repeated acts of bullying (Standard Team, Wednesday, April 4, 2001: 2). The boy had reported the matter to his mother but requested her not to inform the school authority for fear of further bullying. This case of bullying is not an isolated one. Findings of a research on bullying carried out in selected public secondary schools in Kenya, showed that bullying is prevalent (Ndetei, et al. November, 2009). Ndetei, et al.'s research had a total sample of 1012 students and "between 63.2 per cent (640) and 81.8 per cent (828) of students reported various types of bullying, both direct and indirect, with significant variations found for sex, age, class and year of study..." (ibid.,: 45).

2.4 SOME RESPONSES TO YOUTH VIOLENCE IN SCHOOLS AND WIDER SOCIETY

Following the school violence as mentioned above, the Ministry of Education (MOE) identified a team to carry out a survey in order to establish the root cause(s). Two such surveys will now be highlighted. The Wangai Commission, 2001 was set up to investigate the 2001 school unrest in country. The findings were tabled in parliament. The unrest was attributed to institutional management, poor leadership, changing societal norms and drug abuse (Hansard Parliamentary Debate-Kenya, 2 August, 2001: 2075-2077). The second survey by the Ministry of Education in conjunction with the parliamentary education select committee was carried out after the post election violence when there was widespread violence throughout the country and violent school unrest as well (The Standard Team, 21 July 2008). The findings on the violent unrest in schools were tabled and discussed in parliament. Some of the causes tabled in parliament were: Fear of mock examination, weak institutional management, political and other external influences, drug and substance abuse, misuse of mobile phones in schools to name just a few (Hansard

Parliamentary Debate-Kenya, 22 July 2008: 1962). As well as discussing the findings, the Minister of Education tabled the measures that had been taken after the findings such as: banning the use of mobile phones in schools, curtailing use of luxury gadgets in school vehicles, for instance television and radios. In addition, principals were asked to provide the names of those who were engaged in the unrest so that they could be arraigned in court. Also, there was a directive to intensify the guidance and counselling in schools (ibid: 1963). The Minister of Education also indicated that plans were underway for capacity building courses for the school authorities in order to assist them improve on their management skills. Other measures included the reinforcement of the School Safety Manual published in 2008 to assist in making schools safe learning environments (refer to Appendix 7). In addition, the Minister of Education pointed out that the education stakeholders among them parents and members of school boards (Board of Governors (BOG) and Parents Teachers Association (PTA) would be expected to familiarise themselves with the government official documents on child protection such as the Children's Act 2001 (Appendix, 8.), the Sexual Offence Act (2006) and the School Safety Manual (2008).

Another measure was the introduction of the peace education programmes (PEP) as a non-examinable subject to address the immediate violence and as a preventive measure (Karega, 2008). Since the implementation of the programme was expected to be immediate in both primary and secondary schools, over 1000 teachers were identified and trained (Ministry of Education, 2008; Sundet et al., 2007). However, as noted in chapter one, peace education still remains an area of debate. One, is the dearth of a philosophy that informs the ample peace education activities across the world. Two, the inadequate evaluation on the successes and/or failures of these types of activities in ensuring sustainable peacebuilding and three, the

effectiveness of activities that tend to focus mainly on children and youth ignoring the fact that adults too are equally key actors in conflicts and peacebuilding (Salomon and Cairns, 2010, Schimmel, 2009; Cairns, 1996.).

Notably, when referring to responses to varied forms of violence in Kenya, including the school violence, Ouch (2002: 1) points out that commissions are set and surveys are carried out whose findings are either partially or never acted upon. He further maintains that the official findings are rarely in public domain unless the media highlights them. Similar views were expressed by members of parliament in both the parliamentary meetings in 2001 and 2008 (Hansard Parliamentary Debate-Kenya, 2 August 2001; Hansard Parliamentary Debate-Kenya 22 July 2008). For instance, the Koech Report (1999) on reform in education was rejected by the retired president Moi, and findings of the Sagini Report on mass indiscipline in schools was neither implemented nor made public (Makori, 2005; Hansard Parliamentary Debate-Kenya, 6 December 2006: 4179-4188).

Importantly, several concerted efforts to address conflicts, especially youth violence in its varied forms in Kenya, have been carried out by the different government sectors in partnership with the private sectors, civil society, local and international non-governmental organisations, Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) and Community Based Organisations (CBOs). The researcher interviewed some of the key informants from some of these organisations and others that are not included. Below are some of the responses.

National Steering Committee (NSC) on peacebuilding and conflict management

This committee is a multi-agency organisation in the Office of the President, Ministry of State for Administration and Internal Security.⁵⁵ For instance

⁵⁵ The National Security Council membership is made up of key government ministries and departments. Equally it works with the Civil Society Organisations, Faith Based Organisation and

in the aftermath of the post-election violence, it carried out various activities especially towards healing and reconciliation among the different communities across the country. In addition, great attention was given to ways of strengthening the District Peace Committees as there was concern that, males had been recruited to militia groups and gangs and mobilised to commit atrocities during the post-election period (Waki report, 2008; also information from the interviews and literature given to the researcher by some key informants from the National Steering Committee).

Faith Based Organisations (FBOs)

Faith Based Organisations some aligned to the mainstream churches such as the Roman Catholic Church and the National Council of Churches Kenya (NCCCK) have been actively involved in responding to varied violence in Kenya since 1991. The intervention programmes to address this violence have been mainly tailored to address youth and youth issues. These FBOs have well established secretariats dealing with a cross section of groups, functional youth co-ordinating offices and active Justice and Peace Networks. Two such examples that the researcher had the opportunity to interact with during the field research were organised and run by the Catholic Diocese of Kitale and Catholic Diocese of Nakuru.

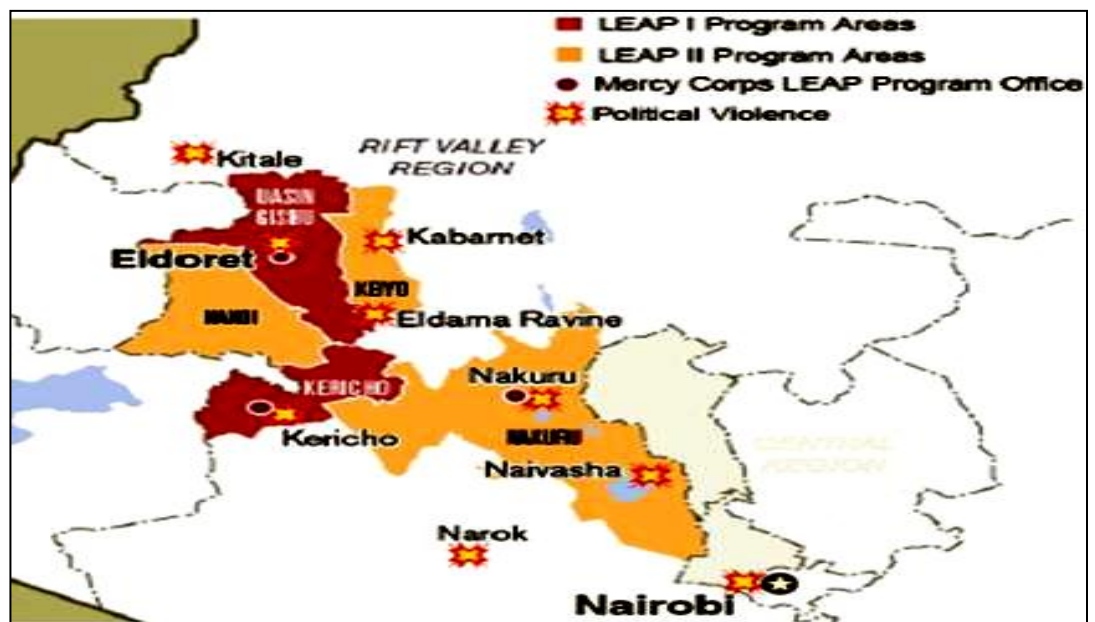
Apart from offering guidance and counselling and spiritual assistance to youth the Faith Based Organisations engaged in capacity building activities ranging from trade to recreational activities and also activities specifically addressing issues relating to the post-2007 election violence. They have also carried surveys on youth violence such as the survey on the school unrest by the NCCCK, 1992 (information gathered from the interviews and literature given by these organisations). Findings

Non-Governmental Organisations, other development partners, a cross section of groups such as women organisations. It is mandated to co-ordinate all peace works in Kenya. It works closely too with the Nairobi provincial peace forum that deals with peacebuilding, conflict management and security strategy.

from such surveys are disseminated to the relevant government and private bodies but as pointed out in this chapter, sometimes they are not effected (Ouch, 2002).

The Mercy Corps LEAP programmes

The Mercy Corps, Local Empowerment Programmes (LEAP) was funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID). It is a programme that is geared to economic empowerment of youth. It also promotes social networking among youth. The Mercy Corps assumption is that economic empowerment can act as a deterrent for youth to engage in violence. However, while economic empowerment can play a key role in addressing youth violence as noted in chapter one of the thesis, youth violence is complex and not monocausal. Map 6 below shows some of the areas in the Rift Valley region that were affected by violence and Mercy corps response.



Map 6 Responses to areas affected by political violence in the Rift Valley

Source: Mercy Corp, June 2011: 12.
http://www.mercycorps.org.uk/sites/default/files/full_report_-_kenya_youth_and_conflict_study.pdf

Picha Mtaani (Swahili for the Street Gallery)

Picha Mtaani (Swahili for *street gallery*) is a youth initiative by the youth themselves. It was launched in 2009 by a Kenyan youth journalist, Boniface Mwangi and his co-project co-ordinator George Gachara. Mwangi used photographs he had taken while covering the post-2007 election violence to create spaces for dialogue, reflection on issues of importance such as unity in diversity, forgiveness, reconciliation, national cohesion, and election related issues especially on the need to elect responsible, accountable and focused leaders in electoral positions. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) are key supporters of this initiative (information from personal communication with Mwangi and also literature available in *Picha Mtaani* website).

Yes Youth Can (“Vijana Tunaweza” or “Mwamko wa Vijana”)

Another youth initiatives funded by USAID with its implementing partners such as the Mercy Corps discussed above is “*Vijana Tunaweza*” or “*Mwamko wa Vijana*” (Swahili for Yes Youth Can). This initiative encourages young people to have “youth-run and youth-led *bunges* (Swahili for parliaments), where youth can express themselves without intimidation (USAID, 2012). Equally dealing with the youth and youth issues is the B-NEP (Building a Network of Peace – Bridging peace messages in Kibera).

B-NEP (Building a Network of Peace – Bridging peace messages in Kibera).

CARE international teamed up with twenty CBOs in Kibera, Nairobi to form the B-NEP (Building a Network of Peace – Bridging peace messages in Kibera). Some of its main activities were capacity building, life skills, peace procession and rallies, and football tournaments, all targeting the in and out of school

youth. For example, the youth participated in peace forums, debates, poetry, essay writing, drama and dance in aim of enhancing peace. One group that benefitted from B-NEP is the former Gogo boys (gang) that has now reformed and changed its name to *Youth Reform* (information on this organisation is from literature material given to the researcher by one of the key informants of the CARE international).

Other organisations that participated in this research were Save the Children – UK (Kenya), Child Fund Kenya (CFK) and Kenya Youth Empowerment Project (KYEP). The key informants belonging to these three groups highlighted on the programmes that they have that deal with youth and youth issues. They pointed out that the key aim of their programmes is to ensure that the children/youth have save spaces in which to express themselves and also to actualise their potential.

However, the list of organisations that deal with youth and youth issues in Kenya is not exhaustive. Figure 2.2 below shows the financial allocations for the different peacebuilding initiatives organised by twenty-one international organisations who initiated, funded and co-ordinated programmes in conjunction with the relevant government Ministry such as the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYAS), Ministry of Gender and Special Programmes, the Faith Based Organisations and the Community Based Organisations. It would seem that these bodies' three key areas of focus were democratic governance, peacebuilding and conflict prevention (UNDP, 2009:46). The main targets of these projects/programmes were mainly the youth in the areas most affected by the post election violence for example in the Nairobi informal settlements (the slums) and in the Rift Valley province especially in the rural areas (information gathered from the interviews and literature given by these organisations).

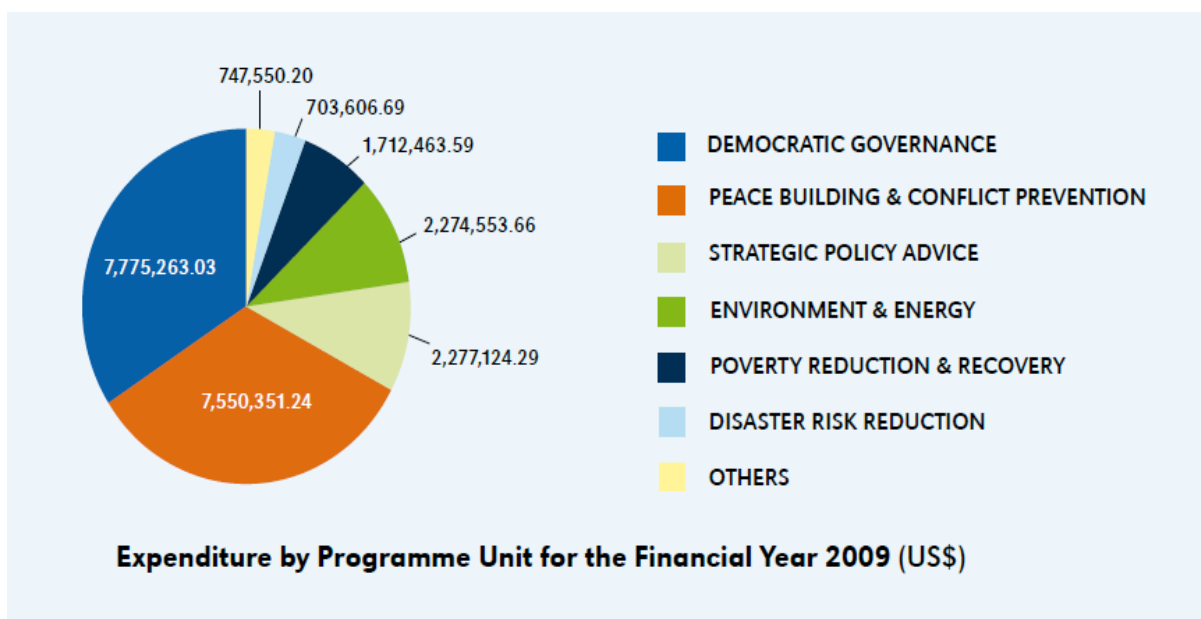


Figure 2.2 Donor responses: contribution to peacebuilding and development initiatives

Source: Road to 2015: Driving the MDGs (UNDP, 2009:46)

The captured responses to violence in this chapter are not exhaustive. Interestingly, despite the interventions mentioned above, the conflicts in both the schools and wider society in Kenya remain incessant.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, a panoramic geo-political history and socio-economic view of Kenya is presented. The colonial period, and the social, political and economic legacy in Kenya was explored, and the recurring ethnic, land and political conflicts examined. Importantly, these conflicts - which were *inherited* from colonial governments – have not been adequately addressed.

From the analysis, Kenya is portrayed as a country of paradoxes and extremes. She is the economic hub of Eastern Africa and at the same time the hub of the region’s transnational organised crime activities (Gastrow, 2011: xi). A country that has since independence in 1963 experienced relative peace amidst neighbours that for decades have lived through civil wars. Kenya is home to refugees from the neighbouring countries especially Somalia, Sudan and Ethiopia, but ironically the

internally displacement persons have still to be relocated. She has plenty within her borders but has been rated among the lowest in the Human Development Index. In addition, over half of the population lives on less than a dollar a day and some in the northern part of Kenya die of hunger. There is an irreconcilable gap between the poor and rich as exemplified in Nairobi's Kibera and Mathare slums and its mansions in Karen and Lavington.⁵⁶ Equally, there is a well-developed infrastructure in the urban and town centres and inadequate infrastructure in the rural areas. Kenya is a "vibrant youthful" country with an economy that rose to 7% in 2002 yet grapples with a high rate of unemployment and an increasing militia groups and gangs problem.

Therefore, by highlighting Kenya, the context in which the youth violence is situated, chapter two lays a foundation for chapter three which highlights the apposite methodology, methods and locations of the research. This is vital in order to understand the nature of the youth violence and the context within which this dynamic is occurring.

⁵⁶ Kibera, an informal settlement in Kenya, is regarded as one of the largest slums in the South of the Sahara. Karen and Lavington are some of the upmarket residential areas mainly catering for the wealthy in Kenya.

CHAPTER THREE

FIELD RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

After an analysis of Kenya in which context the youth violence occurs, in this chapter the researcher introduces the research methodology, methods, the field research location that was selected and the key informants, who participated in this research. The chapter also aims at responding to the research questions already highlighted in the chapters above:

- c) *What narratives are used by the youth to describe, explain, and justify their participation in and/or observation of violent conflicts in Kenyan secondary schools and wider society?*
- d) *In what ways can approaches to peacebuilding and the Kenyan education systems respond to youth violence?*

Birks and Mills (2011: 15) state that, “[A] research design is the blue print for [one’s] study”, thus a research design that would allow for this exploration was identified. The design helps the researcher to identify the philosophical and methodological positions within the study, and the methods necessary to achieve the research goals (ibid: 24). This research adopts a mainly qualitative approach to data collection. Qualitative approaches “... study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, a phenomenon in terms of the meaning people bring to them...” (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998: 3). Collecting and analysing qualitative data provides the opportunity to interact with respondents, capturing their

perception of the world and the narratives they use to explain their experience of it. The qualitative approach utilised is Grounded Theory (GT).

The rationale for this selection, as opposed to other qualitative approaches - such as ethnography and phenomenology, is that GT by its very nature, "... results in the generation of new knowledge in the form of theory" (Birks and Mills, 2011: 16). It also allows for the use of multiple means of data collection, as opposed to phenomenology, which relies on only one source - the views and experiences of the participants (Goulding, 2002: 23). Youth conflict, education and peacebuilding in Kenya - from the young peoples' perspective - has not been adequately explored before. Hence this area would benefit from a study using GT approaches. Knowledge acquired through the GT approach is both subjective and inter-subjective – meaning it not only develops in the context of and according to social and cultural structures, but it also influences how people interpret and respond to events around them.

However, the different paradigms⁵⁷ which have emerged from first-generation grounded theorists like Glaser and Strauss (1968, 1998; Glaser, 1998; Strauss, 1987) and Strauss and Corbin, 1990, 1998), and second-generation theorists like Clarke (in Morse et al, 2009) and Charmaz (2006) posed a dilemma for the researcher. It was necessary to identify the paradigm which would best explain the phenomenon being studied, expressed in the research questions above. In order to do this the researcher had to acquire an understanding of the central components of the different grounded theory approaches. Coding practices, memo-writing, theoretical sampling, saturation, data sorting, theory reconstruction, draft writing, and reflection are key elements of the grounded theory approach.

⁵⁷ For an in-depth analysis of these paradigms see the seminal works of Denzin & Lincoln (1994, 1998) and Guba & Lincoln (1994).

After critically analysing each of the paradigms - examining their merits and disadvantages - the researcher decided to utilise Charmaz's constructivist approach to Grounded Theory (Charmaz, 2006). The main factor which influenced this choice was that Constructivist Grounded Theory aims at "... [understanding] ... research participants' beliefs, their purposes, the actions they take, and the reasons for their actions and inactions, from their perspectives" (Charmaz in Morse et al: 2009: 131, Charmaz, 2006: 130). Also the researcher's decision was informed by her own underlying understanding of the world, which is constructivist. Birks (2011: 5) shows the importance of identification, with regard to one's underlying assumptions of the world, and to how we can be positioned philosophically and methodologically. Furthermore, in the Constructivist Grounded Theory approach it is useful that the role of the researcher is clearly identified as Charmaz explains:

A real world exists but is never separate from the viewer who may see it from multiple standpoints and whose views may conflict with research participants' standpoints and realities (Charmaz cited in Morse et al., 2009: 130).

Importantly, the researcher is expected to be reflexive about their own interpretations, and those of their participants, throughout the research process. In essence, this method demands that one approaches the field of study with an open mind, which is maintained throughout the research - from data collection and analysis, to the writing and presentation of findings.

3.1 FIELD RESEARCH: WHAT IS THERE TO DISCOVER?

Initially, a pilot study was carried out in the two provinces identified for the study, Nairobi and the Rift Valley. The main purpose of the pilot study was to fine-tune the research tools and identify problems. This involved checking the survey questionnaires for clarity, with regard to wording and length of the questions. This

was done bearing in mind that the questionnaire presented a *one-shot* attempt to gather data, and that - as Gray states (2009: 359) - questions needed to be simple, comprehensible and accurate. Some parts of the questionnaire were also used as an interview schedule to carry out semi-structured interviews with student respondents. Also the questionnaire was used to draft the schedule for the students' focus group discussions (Appendix 3) and the key informants' interviews (Appendix 4). It was important to keep the language simple, so that respondents from the secondary levels of education (Form one to four) and also from schools situated in the rural and urban areas could participate. The researcher was also keen to ensure that the questions were *student friendly*, in order to elicit the narratives vital to this study. Furthermore, it was essential to anticipate problems the students might have and address them before the main research began.

During the pilot study, problems emerged concerning a particular section of the questionnaire. In order to address these problems, the researcher consulted her supervisor and a decision was made to present some questions with multiple choice answers. One section that was changed was Section E: *Youth and involvement in militia activities whether in/out of school*. This had eight questions, some of them with multiple choice answers. One of the questions that proved problematic was: *How would you describe a typical member of militia groups and gangs?* The majority of the pilot respondents said they "did not know", without providing an explanation. The restructured question utilised variables of interest and became: *How would you describe a typical member of militia groups and gangs? Age ... Gender ... Education... Likes and dislikes ... Religion ... Dress ... Ethnicity ... Language ...* This refined question was given to three secondary school students in the researcher's neighbourhood; two were males (Form two and one) and one female

(Form three). The students had no difficulty responding to the new question. This gave the researcher the confidence to embark on the main survey. From the pilot experience, it became evident that no single method of data collection was adequate to address this complex area of study. More on the identified shortcomings of this method will be discussed below under the sub-heading on *limitations/challenges*. Backup methods to complement these shortcomings are addressed below under *triangulation*.

Kenya's capital Nairobi and the Rift Valley, often referred to as the *food basket* (Map 7 below), were identified as locations for this study. The Westlands constituency of Nairobi and the Uasin Gishu district of the Rift Valley provinces were selected for the pilot study – which took place between 1.2.10 - 14.2.10. The Westlands constituency, home to many different communities, is situated in an affluent part of Nairobi, close to the city centre. It has a number of people on high income (rich/wealthy) and those that have average income (middle class). This can be observed from the type of schools which are mainly private schools - from pre-school to secondary - , colleges, and one of Kenya's key private universities that charge exorbitant fees. The Uasin Gishu district is home mainly to the Kalenjin, Luyha and Kikuyu ethnic communities. The main socio-economic activity in this district is agriculture (largely small scale farming). Politically, the Uasin Gishu district is regarded as a cauldron of violent conflict in the Rift Valley, which often pits the dominant community the Kalenjin against other ethnic communities - especially the Kikuyu and Luhya (Wachira, 1998).



Map 7 Field research locations (Nairobi and Rift Valley provinces)

<http://www.un.org/Depts/Cartographic/map/profile/kenya.pdf> (January, 2004)



Pilot study in Nairobi (Westlands constituency) and in the Rift Valley (Uasin Gishu districts).



Field research in Nairobi (Westlands and Starehe constituencies) Rift Valley (Molo, Nakuru and Njoro districts)

In total four schools were identified for the pilot, one all-girls and one all-boys in each of the two provinces. Two were private day schools (in Nairobi province) and two were public boarding schools (the Rift Valley province). The aim of this selection was to capture the different categories of schools in Kenya – that is, public and private, day and boarding, boys and girls. All the schools participated in the pilot questionnaire, however the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions were not conducted in Nairobi province because data already collected in the two schools in the Rift Valley was adequate to enable the researcher address the problematic issues that emerged.

As shown in Table 3.1 below, 25 questionnaires in total (from all the pilot schools) with more open than closed questions were completed. Eight students participated in the semi-structured interviews and the focus groups each contained ten - twelve students.

Table 3.1 Number of participants involved in the pilot study

School Code ¹	Type of school	Province	District	Semi-structured interviews	Focus groups (No in the group)	Survey
1LM	GD ²	Nairobi	Westlands	-	-	7
2SM	BD ³	Nairobi	Westlands	-	-	6
3LTU	GB ⁴	Rift valley	Uasin Gishu	5	12	7
4SPM	BB ⁵	Rift valley	Uasin Gishu	3	10	5
TOTAL				8	22	25

¹Code: The numerals and letters refer to the schools

². GD.Girls day school (private)

³ BD Boys day school (private)

⁴. GB Girls boarding school (public)

⁵.BB Boys boarding school (public)

Field research in the Rift Valley province was conducted between 16.2.10 – 16.3.10, and in Nairobi province between 18.3.10 – 27.5.10 (interviews in schools from 18.3.10 – 29.3.10). However, the researcher had to travel back to one of the national schools in the Rift Valley after the 16.3.10 to conduct the survey questionnaires, a focus group discussion, and a semi-structured interview with a school administrator. Table 3.2 shows the number of participants in the actual research.

Table 3.2 Number of participants involved in the actual research study

Participants in Survey	Methods of collecting data	No. of schools in Nairobi	No. of schools in Rift Valley	No. involved in Nairobi	Dates	No. involved Rift Valley	Total No. involved
Student respondents	Questionnaires Surveys	5	9	168 (32.8%)		344 (67.2%)	512
	semi-structured interviews	0	2	0		16 ¹	16
	Focus groups	5	7	S1=8 S2=7,12 S5=9 S9=11 S14=13 Total No. 60	20-29 March 2010	S3=12,7 S4=12 S6=7 S8=8 S10=7 S12= 12 S13=9 Total No. is 74	134
Total	Three main approaches	5	7	228		434	662

¹Semi-structured interviews 7 in school coded S7 and 9 in school coded S11

Since schools open in January and break for holidays in early April, resuming in May, the researcher prioritised engagement with student respondents.

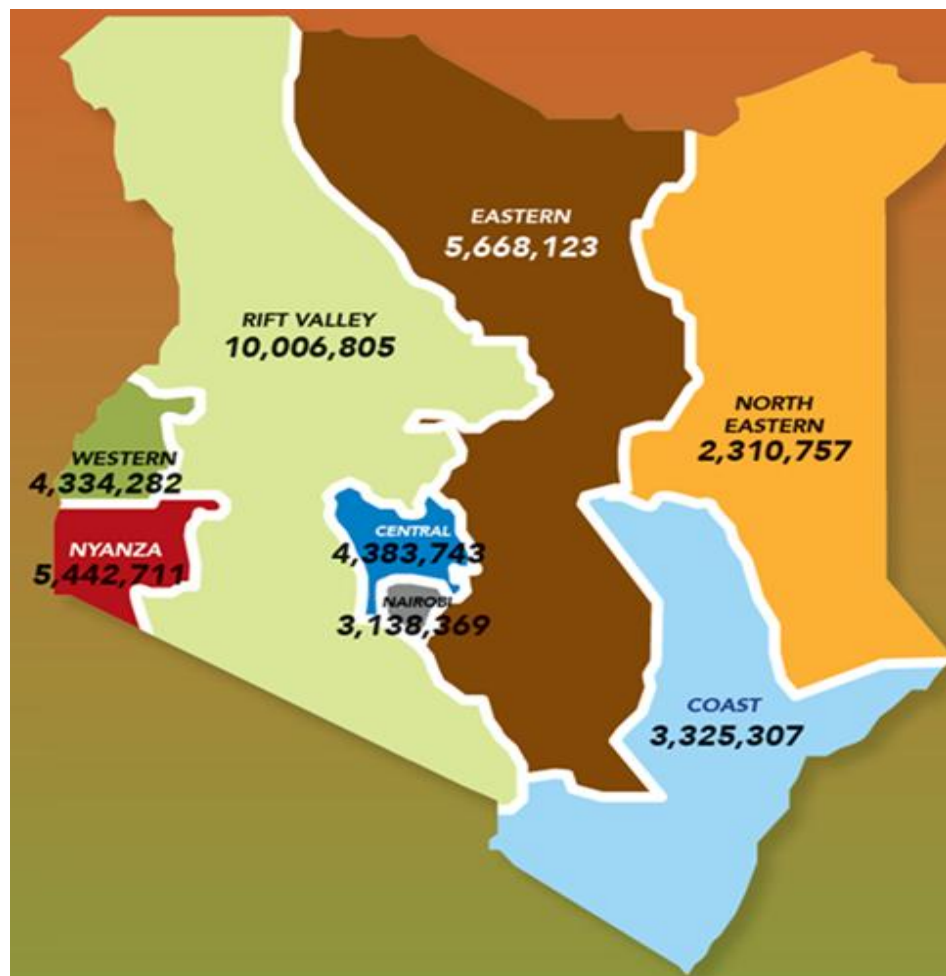
However, key informants for instance school authorities, teachers, youth leaders, government officers mainly from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Youth Affairs and the security sector were interviewed within the same period, alongside the student research. In a few cases, the interview questions were emailed to key informants, after obtaining their consent either in person, by telephone or email.

Ideally it would have been better to interview students in the Nairobi schools first, since most of the schools scheduled for the research were day schools. In these schools, the researcher was expected to meet students during particular times within the day as students had to leave for home, some of them travelling by public transport which tends to be unreliable due to traffic jams or delays caused by careless driving. Also due to proximity to Nairobi city centre and adequate facilities in most of the city schools, students tend to be engaged in more *innings* (activities within the school) and *outings* (activities that involve students going out of their own school setting). This makes it difficult to schedule a suitable time to accommodate students from the different Forms and those engaging in different schools' activities such as school clubs and societies. However, the political climate in the Rift Valley was unpredictable so the researcher decided to start there, in case the situation worsened. Firstly, there was sensitivity about individuals – who were suspected of master-minding the post-election violence - being committed for trial in the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague (Forti and Maina, 2012). Secondly, some of the prominent government leaders were implicated in the so-called *maize scandal* (Ndegwa, 2009). Thirdly, the internally displaced persons (IDPs) situation was deteriorating - creating resentment among the victims (Kaberia, 2009).

In order to collect data in the field, an authority letter from the Government of Kenya was required. In addition, in Kenya researchers are required to report to the relevant authorities in the geographical area where the research is to be carried out.

Therefore, the researcher had to report to the Ministry of Education Office and the Government provincial headquarters, in the Nairobi and the Rift Valley provinces.

The Rift Valley is the largest province in Kenya with a population of 10,006,805, and Nairobi is geographically the smallest province – although its population, of 3,138,369, is more than that of the much larger North Eastern province. This is shown in Map 8 below.



Map 8 Kenya's population by provinces

Source Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2010

As mentioned in chapter two, a population census report - released in July 2010 by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) - showed the population to be 38,610,097 (19,192,458 male and 19,417,639 female). While these statistics demonstrate that overall there were more women than men in Kenya that was not the

case in three provinces including Nairobi and the Rift Valley. The population in Nairobi province was 3,138,369 (1,605,230 male and 1,533,139 female) and in the Rift Valley 10,006,805 (5,026,462 male and 4,980,343 female).

In secondary schools enrolment of girls in both provinces (Nairobi and the Rift Valley) was lower than that of boys and this reflected the national picture. For example, as shown in chapter two, in 2008 country-wide secondary school enrolment was 1,382,211 – that was 746,513 boys and 635,698 girls. In the same year the secondary school enrolment in Nairobi province stood at 33,602 boys and 25,273 girls, and in the Rift Valley there were 174,366 boys and 140,919 girls enrolled (Ministry of Education, June 2009: 8). However, the enrolment figures for the Rift Valley are questionable, since those obtained from the Rift Valley Provincial Director of Education's Office (in Nakuru) were different. For instance in 2008, 185,954 boys and 165,471 girls were enrolled in secondary schools – much higher numbers than those given in the Kenyan census.

Table 3.3 below shows that fourteen secondary schools participated in the field research – five in Nairobi and nine in the Rift Valley provinces. The number of participating schools was determined by the size of the province. The schools were also selected in accordance with the criteria stated earlier in this chapter. The schools are coded for anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the research. Also to protect the key informants who were selected in particular schools due to their key roles and therefore they would be easily identifiable.

Table 3.3 Distribution of student respondents by school

Code Name of school¹	Frequency	Percent
S1N	41	8.0
S2N	20	3.9
S3RV	35	6.8
S4RV	45	8.8
S5N	35	6.8
S6RV	52	10.2
S7RV	27	5.3
S8RV	36	7.0
S9N	36	7.0
S10RV	28	5.5
S11RV	35	6.8
S12RV	51	10.0
S13RV	35	6.8
S14N	36	7.0
Total	512	100.0

S+Numeral = school code, N=Nairobi and RV= Rift Valley provinces

Figure 3.1 below shows that of the five schools where the survey was carried out in Nairobi province, two were national (all-boys), two provincial (all-girls) and one district school (mixed). In the Rift Valley, three were national schools (one all-boys, one all-girls and one mixed), three provincial schools (one all-girls, one all-boys and one mixed) and three districts schools (all mixed). Therefore, these schools can be categorised as national, provincial, district, private, boarding, day and boarding, all-boys, all-girls, and mixed. Figure 3.1, below, shows the distribution of student respondents by the type of school.

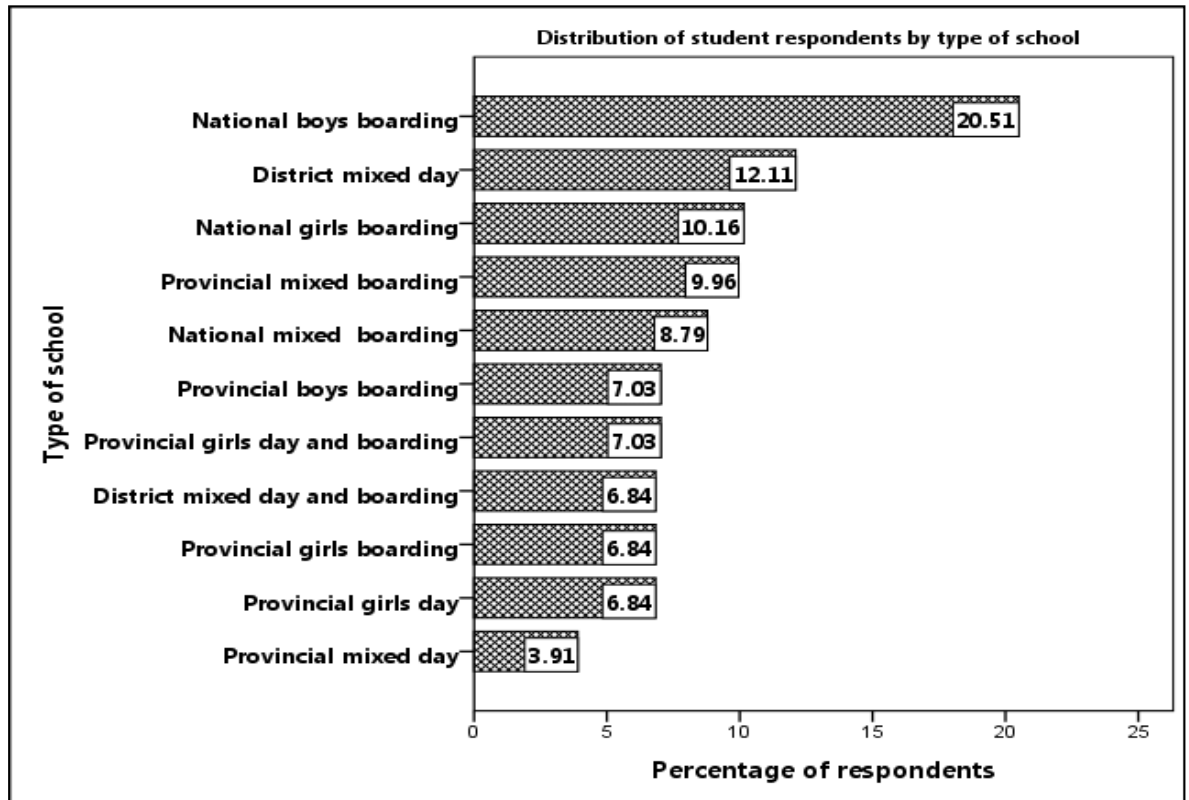


Figure 3.1 Student respondents by the type of school

Figure 3.1 above does not show the percentage of girls or boys in each category, so a cross-tabulation was generated to find out this information (Table 3.4 below).

Table 3.4 Types of schools of student respondents by gender

Type of schools	Gender of student		Total
	Male	Female	
National boys boarding	105	0	105
	40.4%	.0%	20.5%
National girls boarding	0	52	52
	.0%	20.6%	10.2%
National mixed boarding	23	22	45
	8.8%	8.7%	8.8%
Provincial boys boarding	36	0	36
	13.8%	.0%	7.0%
Provincial girls boarding	0	35	35
	.0%	13.9%	6.8%
Provincial mixed boarding	40	11	51
	15.4%	4.4%	10.0%
Provincial girls day and boarding	0	36	36
	.0%	14.3%	7.0%
Provincial girls day	0	35	35
	.0%	13.9%	6.8%
Provincial mixed day	13	7	20
	5.0%	2.8%	3.9%
District mixed day and boarding (option for boys)	19	16	35
	7.3%	6.3%	6.8%
District mixed day	24	38	62
	9.2%	15.1%	12.1%
Total	260	252	512
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Students are selected for secondary school after attaining the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE), on completion of eight years primary school attendance. Selection is normally done from the pool of students that selected from the three categories of schools while in primary schools - national, provincial and district schools. The top performing students in the different provinces are selected to national schools (these are schools that select students that have attained the top marks in the KCPE) through a quota system. The result is that in some of the national schools this means only one or two students from a particular province are

accepted. This is also determined by the size of the province in terms of the number of districts in it and the population, for instance the Rift Valley (refer to Map 8 above). Importantly, the new constitution has divided Kenya into counties (Githongo, 2010). This change from the province system of governance to the counties system is in the process of implementation and will now have an effect on selection of students to schools. Since there are only a few national schools in Kenya, with a limited number of places, compared to the other categories of schools, the top students that are not selected go to provincial schools – which select from districts within the same province. In order to address this problem, the government of Kenya is currently establishing national schools in each county by elevating some of the provincial schools into national schools (Hansard Parliamentary Debate-Kenya, 29 May 2011; Muindi, 2012). Those not selected to join the provincial schools go to the district schools. Some schools have been given special consideration status, for instance those that take a high percentage of bright but disadvantaged children.

Until about six years ago the principals conducted the national selection exercise manually, however, the process is now computerised. It is now more efficient and capable of reducing the number of malpractices and lack of accountability, among some officers and the general public, which used to occur.⁵⁸ For students and parents the pressure has always been to get into a prestigious national school, which admits high caliber students, is multi-ethnic and multi-cultural in character, and well equipped - compared to provincial and district

⁵⁸ Semi-structured interview, KYM#32RV (principal), February, 2010. This is also true from the researchers' own personal experience of eight years as principal of both provincial and national schools.

schools. All students admitted to national schools board, giving them adequate time for their studies and interaction with students from different parts of Kenya.

It is important to note that there has been an ongoing debate about the quota system. Early in 2012, the Minister of Education announced that more students from public schools, and fewer from private schools, would be selected for the national schools. This generated heated discussion, especially among the education stakeholders, some of whom perceived this as a way of *locking out* children from private schools – who are mainly from wealthy families (Wafula, 2011). This prompts the question: Could this stratification and selection criteria be a variable with regards to violent youth conflict in schools? This will be addressed in the next chapter.

A brief discussion about boarding schools in Kenya is now necessary, to enable an understanding of the current demand, especially, for all-boys boarding places. There are not as many boarding schools for boys as there are for girls. Some key informants tried to justify the need for more boys' boarding places. One said that boys were becoming an *endangered species* (this is a term used for the wildlife that is in danger of extinction due to poaching). By referring to boys as *endangered species*, he sees the boys as a section of the population in Kenya that needs to be protected. Further his concern was that some of the boys ended up in bad company, engaging in drug and alcohol abuse or joining militia groups, such as the Mungiki,⁵⁹(already discussed at length in chapter two on analysis of Kenya).

⁵⁹ Semi-structured interview KYM#15RV (Education Officer), February 2010.

3.2 RATIONALE FOR SELECTION OF LOCATION

The schools were chosen by the researcher because she was familiar with their locations, and for practical reasons⁶⁰. For example, they were close to each other, so this reduced travel costs. They could also help test some of the selection criteria, in that they were multi-cultural and multi-ethnic, rural or urban and all-boys, all-girls or mixed schools. The two provinces selected contained a cross-section of the different categories of schools in Kenya, and a diverse society – including rural, urban, slum and squatter (see in chapter two the analysis of Kenya). The Rift Valley has the largest proportion of the Kenyan population (see Map 8 above). Nairobi is home to the largest informal settlements (slums) - that is Kibera, which began in 1921 and now has an estimated population of 950,000 and Mathare which began in 1963 at the time of Kenya's independence and now has an estimated population of 500,000 (Mutisya, 2011: 201). These figures are contested. In both these informal settlements people lack basic needs, such as proper sanitation and adequate education facilities. This has resulted in a high level of crime and recurrence of violent conflict. It is home to some of the militia groups, such as the Mungiki and the “Taliban” (ibid).

The two chosen provinces are home to a number of public and private Higher Education institutions, among them the established universities of Nairobi and Kenyatta, and in the Rift Valley Egerton and Moi universities. These universities are known for the contribution they have made to the development of education and research in Kenya, but also for widespread student unrest in the 1970s and late 1990s.

Importantly, the two provinces were selected to participate in this study because they are instrumental in understanding the violent events in which the youth

are key actors, both in the schools and wider society. These provinces have also become as it were the epitome of Kenya's politics. During the last two decades, they have become home to militia groups and gangs. The researcher was also interested in the responses the students in these two locations would give; whether they could help shed light on the current political, socio-economic and cultural reality of Kenya. For example: What was their view and experience of the post election violence that took place in December 2007 and early 2008? What role did the youth play in this conflict? How do they perceive/experience the leadership and governance of their country? What is their view of the youth involvement in violent militia groups and gang activities, in both the schools and wider society? How aware are they of the militia and gang activities in their own schools? See section E and F of the questionnaire for more examples (Appendix 2), however, this will mainly be addressed in chapter four of this thesis.

3.3 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS: SENSITIVITY IN THE FIELD

Key to any research is the Code of Ethics adopted, including the nature of contracts and protocols, informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, access, participant privacy, and, the *do-no-harm* principle. It is important too that research regulations ensure that the participants and the researcher's rights for instance to privacy and safety are not violated (Fox et. al, 2007:98). The pilot study and main research was carried out bearing in mind several key ethical issues. The researcher familiarised herself with various ethical standards, including the Code of Research Ethics stipulated by the University of Bradford. The researcher's supervisor played a major role in assisting in the preparation and identification of the research tools before going for fieldwork. The respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. This was important because the study focused on sensitive issues.

Another consideration was the fact that Kenya was still grappling with the aftermath of the post-2007 election violence and investigations were still going on to find out those who planned, incited and participated in the violence (Waki report, 2008; Kenya National Commission of Human Rights, 2010). These investigations had created fear and suspicion in the country and this was evident during this research. It was therefore necessary that the researcher informed the participants that the investigations were for an academic study and not part of any other investigation that was ongoing in Kenya at the time. This often elicited laughter from the students and sometimes the thumbs-up sign which the researcher interpreted as a sign of acceptance.

One important task in the school setting was to seek informed consent from the school authorities for example, the principals before beginning the research, because, in Kenya, these authorities - or their delegated representatives - decide who can participate in research. However, the researcher also gave the students the opportunity to decide whether they would participate even after consent had been given by the adults. This was a way of recognising that,

... children are not passive objects but rather competent and active agents ... capable of reflecting upon and making decisions about things that concern them, and recognizing that their actions have consequences (Mayall (2002) cited in Skånfors, 2009: 1).

The key informants that had been identified for participation in the research were also consulted in ample time to allow them time before obtaining their informed consent. As Cohen et al, (2000: 52) notes, informed consent forms,

... the basis ... of an implicit contractual relationship between the researcher and the researched and will serve as a foundation on which subsequent ethical considerations can be structured.

Therefore, informed consent involved, among other things, stressing the right of individuals to choose to participate. Specifically, the students were guided through the procedure of giving consent. This choice was also stated at the beginning of the survey questionnaire. However, the researcher was aware that students might feel pressurised to participate, fearful of how their peers might view them if they declined. To guard against this, the researcher reminded the participants that participation was voluntary, they were free to leave at any stage of the research and should they decide to leave no one would victimise them in any way.

In addition, before starting any interviews or focus group discussions, the participants were given the choice for verbal or written consent. Regarding consent for participation in the survey the information was incorporated in the introduction and the researcher/research assistant went through it carefully with the students explaining any parts that needed clarification before they started completing the questionnaire. This was to ensure that the students were familiar with the different terms such as anonymity, informed consent and confidentiality. Due to the nature and dynamics of the focus group discussions, the students selected to participate in this activity were informed on what was expected of them before they were asked to give their consent (Krueger, 2002).

As one engages in the field further ethical and legal issues can arise. Birks and Mills (2011: 26-27) attribute this to the fact that in the initial stages, researchers do not know the precise nature of their enquiry, the characteristics of the people they work with, or how many sources of data they will need. Hence, the researcher had to

be constantly focused, in order to ensure that these matters were properly addressed as the research progressed. It was with this in mind that the researcher decided to begin with a sample pilot survey. This was achieved through use of a purposive sampling technique as explained below.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION METHODS: SAMPLING AND RESEARCH TOOLS

Purposive sampling allows one to select people or events which are considered to be critical to the research and for the production of valuable data (Descombe, 2010: 35; Robson, 2002: 265). However, it is important to understand how this term was particularly applied in this thesis. For Charmaz (2006) - whose principle of grounded theory informs this research - purposive sampling has a different connotation from that posited by Robson. Robson (2002 :193) equates purposive sampling in grounded theory to *theoretical* sampling. However, Charmaz (2006: 100-101) contends that there is a difference between purposive sampling and theoretical sampling. According to her, theoretical sampling is concerned with conceptual and theoretical development, as opposed to sampling, and used in order to address initial research questions, represent a population, or increase statistical generalisability. Further, she asserts that theoretical sampling starts with initial sampling - directly where the study should take place. Initially purposive sampling was used in this research for the selection of the secondary school youth. Since the aim of this research was to secure youth narratives, in order to investigate youth violence; so the views of the youth participants were vital.

The youth do not live in isolation from the rest of society. Therefore, in order to obtain a holistic view of the area of study, the researcher also used purposive sampling to obtain the views of key informants who are actively involved with the youth, such as school authorities, youth leaders, government officers for instance

from the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Youth Affairs and local and international non-governmental organisations (refer to a detailed list in Appendix 1: categories of key informants). These informants were identified on the basis of their “...experience or expertise to provide quality information and valuable insights on the research topic...” (Descombe, 2010: 35). Snowball sampling (Robson, 2002: 265) was also used, mainly in the security sector as the researcher did not know which officers had the expertise to inform this study. As the data were coded and analysed simultaneously, theoretical sampling was applied in order to assist in the development of additional codes, concepts and categories/themes.

Charmaz (2006: 14) points out that grounded theory methods can increase the flexibility of following leads as they occur as one collects the data, which is characteristic of qualitative research. It was this flexibility which encouraged the researcher to adopt qualitative methods for this study. Focus group discussions and semi-structured interviews were utilised to capture student narratives, and semi-structured interviews were also used to gather information from the key informants. More detailed information on the three main methods used for this research are highlighted below.

Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used during the pilot study and main study. In the pilot study they assisted in refining the questions for the focus group discussion and the survey questionnaires. Semi-structured interviews are mainly used because of their flexibility and they also allow for the probing of participants' views. Furthermore, they are a way of getting at the subjective meaning respondents ascribe to concepts and events (Gray, 2008: 373). While this was true in this study, in addition there was a practical reason which necessitated the use of semi-structured

interviews with students in two of the schools in the Rift Valley. The researcher made this decision after discussion with the school authorities who shared that there was still ill feelings and suspicion among the students and teachers from the different ethnic communities as a result of the post-2007 election violence. This was also confirmed among the students who were reluctant to share in groups. Of the schools surveyed, schools coded S7 and S11 (both mixed day schools) were the most affected. Therefore, the semi-structured interviews proved the best option for these two schools. Those interviewed shared their views easily and seemed secure - evidenced by both verbal and non-verbal communication, captured in the researcher's shorthand notebook. The researcher made the decision to record the narratives in a notebook on the request of the school authorities who had given consent on behalf of the students. Also the students themselves did not want their voices recorded electronically.

As shown in Table 3.2 above, seven females and nine males were interviewed. In school coded S7 (four females and three males), and in the school coded S11 (three females and six males). The semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions and survey questionnaires were conducted on school premises. Thus, only four interviews could be done in one day. Interviews with key informants took 45 minutes to one hour, depending on availability. They were conducted mainly in the workplace or venues convenient to the informants, and usually at lunch time or after work.

During the interviews, the researcher used a flexible interview schedule in order to create a non-threatening, relaxing and informal atmosphere. This was intended to best elicit the respondents' views and narratives, in such a way that the researcher could gather "...specific data for developing theoretical frameworks as

[she] proceeded with conducting the interviews” (Charmaz, 2006: 29). However, there were a number of hurdles. For example, the semi-structured interviews were time-consuming and dealing with the information, at all stages of the research process – from data collection and coding to data analysis –, was tedious. This was compounded by the methodology used to carry out the study – Charmaz (2006) constructivist grounded theory - which is, by nature, pain staking. Initial findings of the data in the Rift Valley assisted in the collection and data coding in Nairobi province.

Focus groups discussions

The rationale for using focus group discussions was because these are dynamic and also to find out whether the perceptions, attitudes and narratives of youth regarding the research questions, while operating independently, can be influenced by what others say and do or from their need of being part of a group. Some students for example expressed strong feelings of dissatisfaction about issues such as the school diet, school entertainment and the prefects’ body. They did this by responding with one word or phrase - such as: “Yes, that is true”; “Yeap”; “There!”; “Umesema” (Swahili for “There! You have said it”); “Hapo” (Swahili for “There!”); and “Yes, it is happening in our school.” They also used non-verbal communication such as thumbs up sign; a tap on their peer’s back; a smile of approval; hands up in an effort to show support; looking at each other and nodding approval; and shaking their heads to show disapproval. In this study the difficulty was to assess what was going on, for instance were the students supporting a view because they agreed with it or was it due to fear of disagreeing with the dominant voice or need to be part of the peer group? As pointed out in (Krueger, 1998: 44-47) participants tend to change views due to influence of others in the group, especially those with dominant voices.

Focus groups were conducted in twelve schools (five in Nairobi and seven in the Rift Valley). In each school, apart from one mixed school in each of the provinces, there was one focus group discussion. In the two exceptions there were two focus group discussions. In one of the schools in Nairobi there was one focus group with the junior classes (Form one and two) and another with the senior classes (Form three and four). This was necessary because the older and younger students were not comfortable with each other. In the same school (S2) the researcher observed a notice in Swahili on the door of one of the Form four classes warning those in Form two not to go near their classroom.

In another, a girls' boarding school (S3) in the Rift Valley the researcher organised a focus group discussion for the prefects. Since the issue of prefect leadership had emerged as an initial code the researcher decided to conduct a theoretical sampling of prefects, as this would assist in focussing the code and eventually building a category(ies) or theme(s).

Yet in another, a mixed boarding school (S12) in the Rift Valley, the participants for the focus group were all boys from Form two. This was because the school was phasing out girls' education and Form two was the first group in the school without girls. The school authority was keen that only Form two students should be involved in the focus group - the argument being that they were more settled than Form one students who had recently registered in February, 2010. Also Form two was not under the same academic pressure as Forms three and four students, who during the research were engaged in continuous assessment tests (CATS). From the time the researcher gained access to the school, she noted that the few girls left were very quiet and only spoke when spoken to. The boys, on the other hand, expressed themselves with ease and were very active and ready to engage with

the research. They were of great assistance to the researcher, especially in making the arrangements for the venue for the focus group discussion and the distribution and collection of the questionnaires. Also they assisted the researcher in facilitating their focus group discussion. The researcher tried to put the girls at ease by engaging them in conversation. This took some time but eventually the girls started playing an active role and joined the boys in mobilising the other student participants. During the analysis of the data, the researcher also paid particular attention to the girls' responses to the open questions assuming that they may be able to express themselves more freely than they had done during the preparation stages for the survey.

All the focus groups had between seven to twelve participants. But in one of the boys' boarding school there were thirteen participants. In the mixed schools both boys and girls participated in the focus groups, except in the school coded S12 in the Rift Valley - as mentioned above. These focus groups discussions each took about 40 minutes - the equivalent to one lesson in secondary schools. Since secondary school students are able to engage in discussions about issues affecting them without much supervision the researcher offered only minimal instructions and intervened only when necessary. These focus groups generated valuable data.

However, focus groups have their limitations. One is that they tend to be difficult to control, as was experienced during this field research. Sometimes two or three student respondents talked at the same time – especially when an area of particular interest was raised. Then it was necessary that the researcher facilitated the discussions without affecting the enthusiasm of the group. One such occasion was when the issue of the prefects' body excessive powers was being discussed, and the researcher had to intervene because the comments had become very negative. The

group was reminded of the ground rules they had set at the beginning of the discussion. Sometimes the quiet students were encouraged to give their views (Krueger, 1998b). The researcher's experience with young people, and her communication skills, were utilised to ensure that the discussions were managed appropriately.

Survey questionnaires

As mentioned already, this study employed both qualitative and quantitative approaches – which are viewed as complementing each other rather than being opposing entities (Flick, 2009: 27). A questionnaire was appropriate for this study as it provided an approach that was relatively simple and straight-forward. Also some of the quantitative survey data that was analysed helped minimise the subjectivity that tend to characterise purely qualitative research.

To ensure the questionnaire complied with the tenets of Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT), the researcher included more open than closed questions - which allowed for more flexibility when capturing the students' narratives. This strategy proved invaluable, as the researcher was able to fully examine the respondents' knowledge and understanding and explore salient issues (Bryman, 2008: 232). Using a questionnaire also meant that while ensuring anonymity and confidentiality, a large number of students could be offered the opportunity to share their narratives and was less time consuming. With regard to the multiple response questions, steps were taken to ensure that the students could provide their own responses/choices, under the option "other".

The particular survey questions (Appendix 2) were organised around basic bio-data, perceptions and experiences of conflict and peace in general and in the school setting, underlying students views on the school in general (administratively,

facilities, level of student involvement). The purpose of those initial sections was to have students begin to narrate some general principles on peace and conflict, and second, to consider their own general relationship to the school environment.

The survey continues (Part B-D) into the area of school-based and student conflicts, who has responsibility for dealing with particular conflicts, how students felt it was handled and to what degree they felt it was resolved. The purpose of those questions was to look at more specific or situation conflicts in the school environment and begin gathering some broad data on how students perceived the nature of those conflicts and their or the school administrations' involvement in any conflict resolution process.

In Part E of the survey, the focus shifts to questions around any youth involvement in militia activity in/out of the school. This helps to identify some initial areas for further qualitative interviews (as do the previous questions) concerning one of the key issues identified in the research concerning militias, schools and violence.

The last part of the survey (Part F) examines the issue of post election violence and youth involvement in it. These questions follow the trend in the above section in order to situate youth involvement, and the role of militias, in post election violence.

It is important to recognise that a survey, unlike open-ended interviews which are more firmly driven by the respondents, has an impact on shaping the participants' narratives by delineating the topics and potential responses. On the one hand, the questions by their very nature limit the scope and nature of responses/narratives by setting forth closed questions and short responses. Descombe (2010: 170) states that pre-coded questions can bias or shape the findings towards the researcher's, rather than the respondent's way of seeing things. More

importantly, the use of questionnaires to respond to opinion questions can be problematic as they are “difficult to interpret, partly because of social desirability bias and partly because respondents may not have thought of the topic before being presented with it on the questionnaire” (Bowling, 2002: 301). This poses a challenge as the respondent may not have a considered opinion.

Furthermore the use of self-completion questionnaire is problematic as the researcher is “ignorant of many of the factors influencing the choice of response to a question” (Robson, 2002: 253). More importantly, Gray (2009: 166, 339) argues that the researcher’s choice of survey questions – those they select and those left out reflects their worldview in both design and individual questions no matter how objective they try to be. Having this in mind, the researcher has to take extra caution to ensure that they remain objective throughout the research period regarding the survey questionnaires. On the other hand, the survey is important first, as a tool to complement the later qualitative interviews, both by identifying possible areas of student perceptions, concerns, and experiences to explore further, and second, to provide some initial ideas of possible coding nodes.

The use of the survey in this research made it easier to collect quantitative data for triangulation. It also made it possible to gather information from large number of students and provided some statistical measurements. In addition, the survey was a complementary process to the Constructive Grounded Theory (CGT) and provided some initial ideas for coding nodes and later surveys.

The questionnaires were distributed and collected on the same day. Originally there were 513 student respondents in all who agreed to participate in the survey, however one withdraw because he was tired after sitting examinations all day. His questionnaire was not taken into account as he had only responded to two

biography data questions. The majority of the respondents took about 40-45 minutes to complete the questionnaire. After completion, the questionnaires were collected either by the researcher or the research assistant. Where there were delays for instance if one teacher did not allow the students to leave class at the scheduled time the completed questionnaires were collected by a student, put in a sealed envelope in the presence of all the respondents and collected by the researcher/research assistant later the same day. This reassured respondents that no one in the school would access their completed questionnaires. The students seemed content with this arrangement and from the responses it was evident that they found the survey a useful forum for self-expression. Some of them expressed that they were able to comment *without intimidation*. One said, “*At least I feel someone is serious about our issues.*” and another stated, “*You seem a serious lady and so I know that our issues will now be looked at.*”

However, the researcher was in a dilemma how to deal with these high expectations from the participants but she made sure that she did not make any promises. Other shortcomings of this method are discussed further in this chapter under the sub-heading on limitations/challenges.

Rationale for using triangulation

As previously discussed triangulation methods were employed in this study. Denzin and Lincoln (2008: 8) view triangulation as “... a crystalline form, as a montage, or as a creative performance around a central theme, ... as a form of, or alternative to, validity thus can be extended.”⁶¹ Triangulation is also seen as *a simultaneous display of multiple, refracted realities* (ibid.). There are different types of triangulation, which Denzin and Lincoln refer to as bricoleur. *Methodological*

⁶¹ For in-depth reading of this, see “Introduction: The discipline and practice of qualitative research” in Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. 2008 pp. 1-43.

bricoleur - meaning the use of different methods in research - includes ‘... intensive self-reflection and introspection’ (ibid.). *Theoretical bricoleur* refers to the use of interpretive paradigms such as feminism, constructivism, and Marxism. *Interpretive bricoleur* refers to the process where research is considered an “... interactive process shaped by the researcher’s own history, biography, gender, social class, race and ethnicity, and by those of the people in the setting” (ibid). Data triangulation, says Denzin (2006), is related to *time, space, and persons*. Apart from enriching and enhancing the research, triangulation of methods is vital if one is to make comparisons, or to complement or verify the collected data, or to enhance understanding of the phenomena being studied.

Triangulation was also used in this study to ensure that the weakness of one methodological approach was compensated for by the strength of another. For example, the survey questionnaire is an effective approach for “... studying of attitudes, beliefs and motives” (Robson, 2002: 233). This is less true of the focus group, as it is difficult to decipher whether what one is observing or listening to is influenced by the group or is the result of an individual’s view. Additionally, focus groups may be inappropriate in situations where unease might occur, and “...when participants may not be comfortable in each other’s presence” (Madriz 2000 cited in Bryman: 2008: 489). This was the case in two schools - as was explained earlier in this chapter. However, as noted by Bryman (2008: 625), when attempting to triangulate epistemological and ontological impediments can arise – so use of all these approaches in both data collection and analysis requires critical appraisal.

Apart from triangulation of these methods (semi-structured interviews, focus groups and questionnaire-based survey), the researcher also observed students in different activities. For instance during the initial preparations, before engaging in

the field, she attended a performance by primary and secondary schools, organised by the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission in Nairobi⁶². Also when the field research was underway in the Rift Valley, the researcher was invited by the Education Officers, participating school authorities, and drama teachers and students to attend drama festivals and activities. Drama festivals, occasions for students to showcase their talent, offer schools that do not perform well academically a chance to compete on an equal platform. The activities range from solo and choral songs - on themes that depict society issues, for instance equality in education, child abuse, gender violence, and the environment; creative dance which tells a story; and drama (with the schools usually deciding what to perform). The creative themes are mainly topical, for instance after the post-2007 election violence some students performed a dance depicting the grand coalition government (formed after the post-election violence between President, Mwai Kibaki and the Prime Minister, Raila Odinga as discussed in chapter two) - as a marriage that had a lot of issues to grapple with – a so-called *marriage of convenience*. In the drama performance that the researcher was invited to, one school recited a poem about the school diet-related issues and the conflict this engenders. Another school performed a drama about the use of modern technology and how adults who are unfamiliar with it get caught in embarrassing and difficult situations. They depicted the story of an old man who dates a school girl on Facebook - not realising that it was his own son's girlfriend.

Participating and observing what was going on in the drama festival was instrumental to advancing the aim of this research. Through the drama skits, solo and choral songs and creative dances the researcher was able to identify emerging

⁶² Theme of the day: Students as agents of peace. Venue: Loreto Msongari Convent Hall, Nairobi on 21 November, 2009. This was organised by the Association of Sisterhoods of the Kenya Justice and Peace Commission to celebrate the World peace day.

themes, useful to the study. Some questions which could be asked were: How similar were these themes to what the researcher had already noted in her findings? Could the researcher relay the passion of these themes, portrayed in the acting, song and dance, in her own work? What would the key informants say about these themes? How did the themes which emerged at the festival relate to the questions the researcher poses for the study, for example: *Are there clubs and societies in your school? Could you name those that you are interested/participating in? What contributions are they making to your school? Do you have anything more to say about these clubs and societies?* (chapter four below). The researcher also participated in an induction exercise of new students (Form one) in one of the girls' schools in the Rift Valley. While conducting the pilot study in a boys school in the same province the researcher observed two dormitories that had been burnt down. The school authority and students reported that a former student was responsible, and that this kind of incidents occurred every term in the school calendar – that's three times a year.

In addition, the researcher also checked the schools' log books - especially the records of activities such as celebrations, sports days, and outings, and also incidents of violence, for example strikes. She also read the schools' magazines, to find out what the students were interested in. Some of the questions that guided gathering the data regarding the school magazines were for instance, who was the editor? Who contributed, were students involved, and what issues did they write about? If these were student initiatives, what type of support, if any, did they receive from the school authorities? If they generated funds were students involved in budgeting and spending money, and were the school authorities open and accountable?

3.5 COLLECTING AND CODING: UNPACKING THE DATA

In keeping with the grounded theory methodology, data collection and analysis were done concurrently. Although tedious it turned out to be the best approach as it gave the researcher the opportunity to seek clarification, or more information from respondents. In addition, it acted as a guiding tool for where to probe for more information in key informant interviews and the focus groups. The researcher continued collecting data until no more new data appeared to be forthcoming. In some situations it was difficult to know whether to probe or prompt, or just to sit and listen in silence. Following Bryman's (2008: 201) advice that rapport encourages an interviewee's willingness to participate, the researcher made an effort to establish good working relationships.

Coding started with the preparation of the questionnaires – in accordance with the findings of the pilot study. Each of the 512 student questionnaires were coded. This will be dealt with later in this chapter. In keeping with the Constructivist Grounded Theory approach the researcher attempted to reflect the respondents' *voices* wherever possible. The challenge was to ensure that the researcher's own *voice* did not overshadow, or interfere with, that of the respondents. But, Charmaz cautions that while in the field researchers should not be *passive* recipients of the data they collect. She states:

Researchers and research participants make assumptions about what is real, possess stocks of knowledge, occupy social statuses, and pursue purposes that influence their respective views and actions in the presence of each other. Nevertheless, researchers, not participants, are obligated to be reflexive about what we bring to the scene, what we see, and how we see it (Charmaz, 2006:15).

Grouping the questions into sections during the first phase of questionnaire preparation the researcher later facilitated the coding of data for analysis. Below are the six sections of the questionnaire.

Section 1 Bio-data and general demography

Section 2: A-E

- A. Perception of conflict/peace
- B. Student's level of involvement in his/her school
- C. Out of school activities the student is involved in
- D. Nature of conflict that takes place in neighbouring schools
- E. Youth involvement in militia activities in /out of school
- F. Youth involvement in post election violence

The questionnaire consisted of more open than closed questions. While it is the practice in quantitative survey to have more closed questions, the researcher chose to have more open questions. The main aim of the survey was to get the different views of each respondent as opposed to generation of similar responses. A number of questions offered were multiple response choices, which required a multiple response data analysis procedure. This will be explained in more detail in chapters four and five. In order to code and analyse the quantitative data a statistical data analysis software package - Predictive Analytics Statistics Software (PASW 18) - was used. Using a statistical package is one of the most effective ways of ensuring accuracy in data coding and analysis (Robson, 2002; Bryman, 2008). In addition, it also offers a meaningful way of presenting quantitative data. However, this process can be both challenging and time-consuming as the researcher experienced when coding and analysing the data she had collected. The influential work of Birks and

Mills (2011); Charmaz (2009, 2006); Flick (2009); Field (2009); Greasley (2008); Bryman (2008); Kumar (2005); and Bryman and Gramer (2005) - together with the knowledge already acquired from the Graduate school, University of Bradford - guided this coding and analysis of the collected data.

Out of all the questions in the survey questionnaires, forty six questions (closed questions) were identified for quantitative coding and analysis. These are marked with an asterisk in the complete questionnaire, (Appendix 2). As noted earlier in this chapter, they were analysed using the statistical package (PASW). The rest of the questions (open-ended) were analysed thematically but guided by the methodology adopted - Constructivist grounded Theory by Charmaz, 2006. Therefore coding and analysing of the data was done simultaneously.

Some of the variables that the researcher considered when selecting the student participants for the research was gender, the location and the different categories of the schools – for example, public/private and the different national/provincial/district. However, these were not the only key guiding principles for the study. Charmaz (2006: 182-183) outlines a four-point guideline for Grounded Theory study, that is: credibility, originality, resonance and usefulness. These criteria help the researcher to be reflexive, so it is worth considering them in a little more detail. **Credibility:** one of the key questions to be asked is whether the research has achieved intimate familiarity with the setting or topic, and whether there are strong logical links between the gathered data and the argument and analysis. **Originality:** one of the key questions to be asked is whether the research challenges, extends, or refines current ideas, concepts and practices. **Resonance:** one of the key questions to be asked is whether the grounded theory makes sense to the participants or people who share their circumstances. Also, whether the analysis offer participants deeper

insight into their lives. **Usefulness:** one of the key questions to be asked is whether the analysis can offer an interpretation that can be utilised.

The following section below is an analysis of some of the bio-data and general demography information provided.

Section 1 (bio-data and general demography).

The student's bio-data provided a way of capturing the heterogeneity of the schools that were surveyed. This information focused on their backgrounds, for instance, their education, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, how many people there were in their families (this included their nuclear/extended families or guardians/sponsors), and their socio-economic status.

Although age was not a key factor in determining the initial purposive sampling cohorts, the respondents were asked their age. Figures 3.2 and 3.2a below show the frequency and percentage, respectively, of the age distribution of the student respondents. Of the 512 students, 129 were 16 years old and 156 were 17 years old. There were nearly the same number of 15 year olds (69) and 18 year olds (70) in the sample. Seventy-four respondents were 14 years old and 19 years old (45 and 29 respectively). The remainder was 13 years old and between 20-25 years old. Each of these groups had less than 10 respondents.

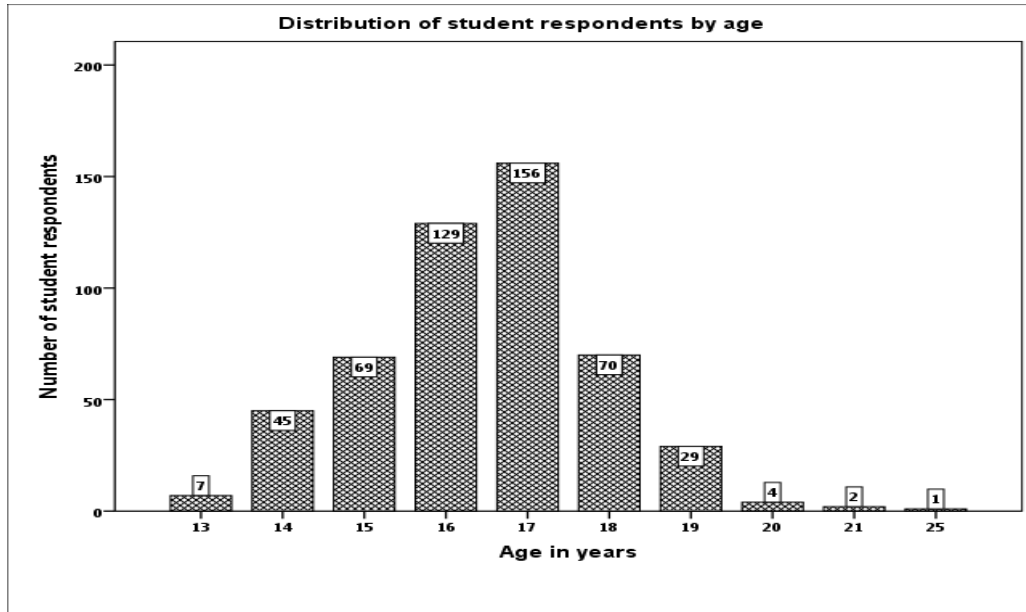


Figure 3.2 Frequency of student respondents by age

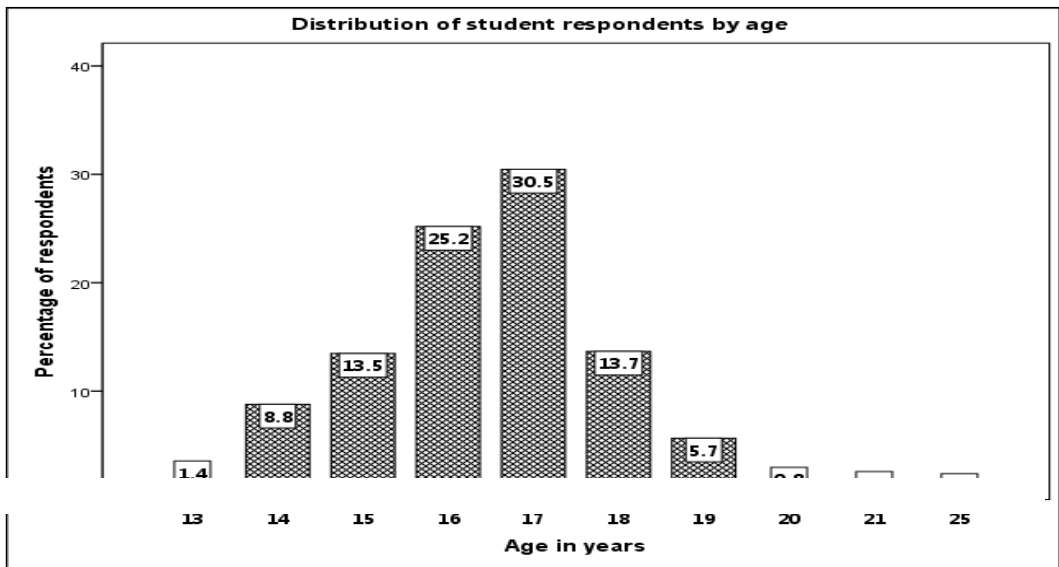


Figure 3.2a Percentage of student respondents by age

From Figures 3.2 and 3.2a, above, it can be seen that 285 of the 512 students - that is 55.7% - were 16 and 17 years old. More information on the ages of the students is given in the histograms in Figure 3.3 below. The two histograms in Figure 3.3, below, show the male and female students' age distribution in years – between 13 to 25 years. It is clear that the respondents' age is normally distributed between the genders, and that the majority of respondents are 16 and 17 years old –

with few 13 year olds or students older than 21 years. The 25 year old is treated as an *outlier*. The variance in the age will be explained later in this chapter.

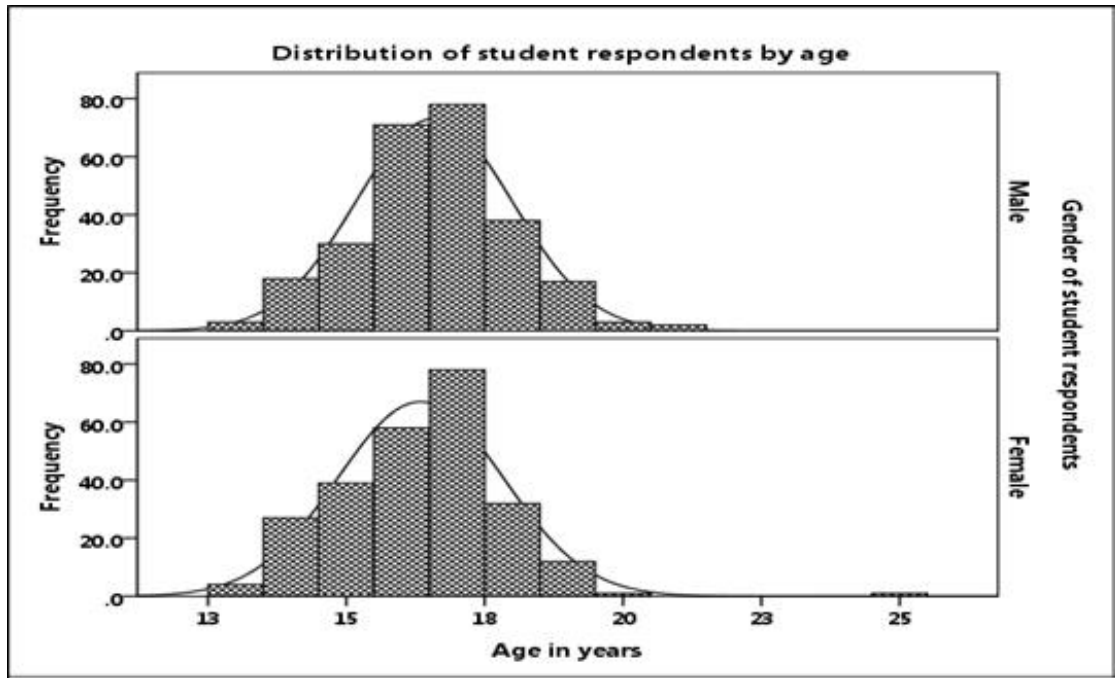


Figure 3.3 Normal distribution of student respondents' age by gender

Interesting, from Table 3.5 below we can observe that the greatest percentage of students in Form one were 14 and 15 years old (37.5 and 36.3 percent respectively). In Form two the students were mainly 15 and 16 years old (31.1 and 35.9 percent respectively). In Form three the students were mainly 16 and 17 years old (39.9 and 41.6 percent respectively). Finally, in Form four the students were mainly 17 and 18 years old (40.4 percent and 35.8 percent respectively).

Table 3.5 Student respondents' age distribution by education levels

Age in years	Education level of student				Total
	Form 1	Form 2	Form 3	Form 4	
13	6	1	0	0	7
	7.5%	1.0%	.0%	.0%	1.4%
14	30	12	2	1	45
	37.5%	11.7%	1.1%	.7%	8.8%
15	29	32	8	0	69
	36.3%	31.1%	4.5%	.0%	13.5%
16	9	37	71	12	129
	11.3%	35.9%	39.9%	7.9%	25.2%
17	5	16	74	61	156
	6.3%	15.5%	41.6%	40.4%	30.5%
18	0	3	13	54	70
	.0%	2.9%	7.3%	35.8%	13.7%
19	0	2	8	19	29
	.0%	1.9%	4.5%	12.6%	5.7%
20	0	0	2	2	4
	.0%	.0%	1.1%	1.3%	.8%
21	0	0	0	2	2
	.0%	.0%	.0%	1.3%	.4%
25	1	0	0	0	1
	1.3%	.0%	.0%	.0%	.2%
Total	80	103	178	151	512
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

From Table 3.5 above, it is clear that some ages cut across the different Forms, for instance students aged 16 could be in Form two or three, and students aged 17 could be in Form three or four. This is because in the Kenyan education system age does not necessarily correspond with the Form levels. Although children are expected to begin primary school by the age of six or seven, this has not been enforced – so some children start much earlier or later. Until 2002 when the government in power introduced compulsory Free Primary Education (FPE), entry to formal schooling was dependent on the parents' financial status. Also today

secondary education is subsidised – which was introduced by Mwai Kibaki’s government in 2002 –, more children and young people are going to school. The variation in ages could also be due to the practice of students being forced to repeat Forms due to poor performance, a practice that the Ministry of Education has discouraged though some school authorities continue to defy the Ministry’s guidelines (Oduor, 2011). In some cases it could be girls who had dropped out of school due to pregnancy but now have a chance to continue with their education following the Ministry of Education re-entry policy for such girls (Wanyama and Simatwa 2011). These reasons may explain the relatively wide range of ages within the different Forms (Table 3.5 above) – meaning the Form corresponds to the appropriate educational level but not necessarily to the age of students.

Gender distribution of student respondents

Since gender was an important variable in this study it was recorded on the questionnaires. In one of the surveyed schools coded (S12) the number of boys is nearly three times the number of girls (the reason for this was given earlier in this chapter). Of interest to this study would be for instance to find out the boys and girls perceptions of for example peace and conflict, are there differences and the similarities? What are the main conflicts that the girls or boys experience in their schools? Are there differences and similarities in the way the boys and girls deal with the conflicts? The cross-tabulation and thematic analysis in chapters four to six have responded to some of these questions.

As can be seen in the frequency Table 3.6 below, 260 (50.8 percent) students were male and 252 (49.2 percent) female. Hence, the gender difference is minimal.

Table 3.6 Gender composition of student respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	260	50.8
Female	252	49.2
Total	512	100.0

Table 3.7 below, shows the gender composition of the student respondents by location. Of the total of 512 students 344 were from the Rift Valley - 49.4 percent of them male and 50.6 percent female. Of the 168 students in Nairobi 53.6 percent was male and 46.4 percent female. This shows that about the same percentage of male and female students responded in each of the two provinces.

Table 3.7 Gender distribution of student respondents by school location

Gender	Location of school		Total
	Rift Valley Province	Nairobi Province	
Male	170	90	260
	49.4%	53.6%	50.8%
Female	174	78	252
	50.6%	46.4%	49.2%
Total	344	168	512
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The student respondents were also asked to indicate their education levels. The aim was to ensure that all the Forms in the Kenyan secondary school nomenclature were represented in the cohort. Importantly, it would be interesting to find out how respondents from the different education levels would interpret events,

relating to conflict and peace in their schools and wider society, how similar or different?

Table 3.8 below, shows the distribution of student respondents by educational level and gender: that is, Form one (15.0 percent males and 16.3 percent females), Form two (18.1 percent males and 22.2 percent females), Form three (39.6 percent males and 29.8 percent females) and Form four (27.3 percent males and 31.7 percent females). In this sample Form three had the highest percentage of respondents, while Form one students were least represented – being the group which had only recently enrolled. The percentage of female respondents in Form one, two and four is slightly higher than that of the male students in the same Forms - but this is not true for Form three. Form three had the highest number of respondents (34.8 percent) and most were males (39.6 percent).

Table 3.8 Education levels of student respondents by gender

Education levels	Gender of student		Total
	Male	Female	
Form 1	39	41	80
	<i>15.0%</i>	<i>16.3%</i>	<i>15.6%</i>
Form 2	47	56	103
	<i>18.1%</i>	<i>22.2%</i>	<i>20.1%</i>
Form 3	103	75	178
	<i>39.6%</i>	<i>29.8%</i>	<i>34.8%</i>
Form 4	71	80	151
	<i>27.3%</i>	<i>31.7%</i>	<i>29.5%</i>
Total	260	252	512
	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

Interestingly, the students said they valued the fact that all ages were represented in the survey – that is, there were respondents from all the Forms. This was despite the fact that in a number of schools there was initially some concern that the focus groups would be mixed, in terms of different Form representatives. Interesting, why would students from one Form feel uncomfortable about mixing with students from other Forms? How important is *rank* in Kenyan schools? This will be explored further in chapter four.

Ethnic composition of student respondents

Ethnic composition was another key variable in this research; the aim being to determine to what extent different ethnic communities were represented in the schools. Also the long term goal of determining if the violence was ethnic-based. However, it was not possible to have all the 42 different ethnic communities in Kenya represented in this research. An important question to ask was, would the analysis of the students' responses demonstrate patterns of inclusion or exclusion in schools along ethnic lines? and, was this replicated in the wider society? As discussed in chapter two, the national ethnic/ethno-linguistic composition is a vital consideration for an understanding of Kenyan politics – particularly the issue of youth militias.

Figure 3.4 below, shows the ethnicity of the respondents. It should be noted that out of 512, 509 responded and 3 were missing. The ethnic community with the highest percentage of respondents was the Kikuyu (29.1 percent); followed by four other communities with more than 10 percent of respondents - that is, the Kalenjin, the Luo, the Luhya and the Kisii (14.3 percent, 11.8 percent, 11.6 percent, 10.8 percent respectively). The remainder had below 10 percent representation – they are the Kamba (7.7 percent), and other ethnic communities combined (7.1 percent) for

example, the Taita, the Turkana, and the Pokot. At less than 5 percent representations were the Somali, the Maasai and the Meru (3.1 percent, 2.6 percent and 2.0 percent respectively) Figure 3.4 below demonstrates this.

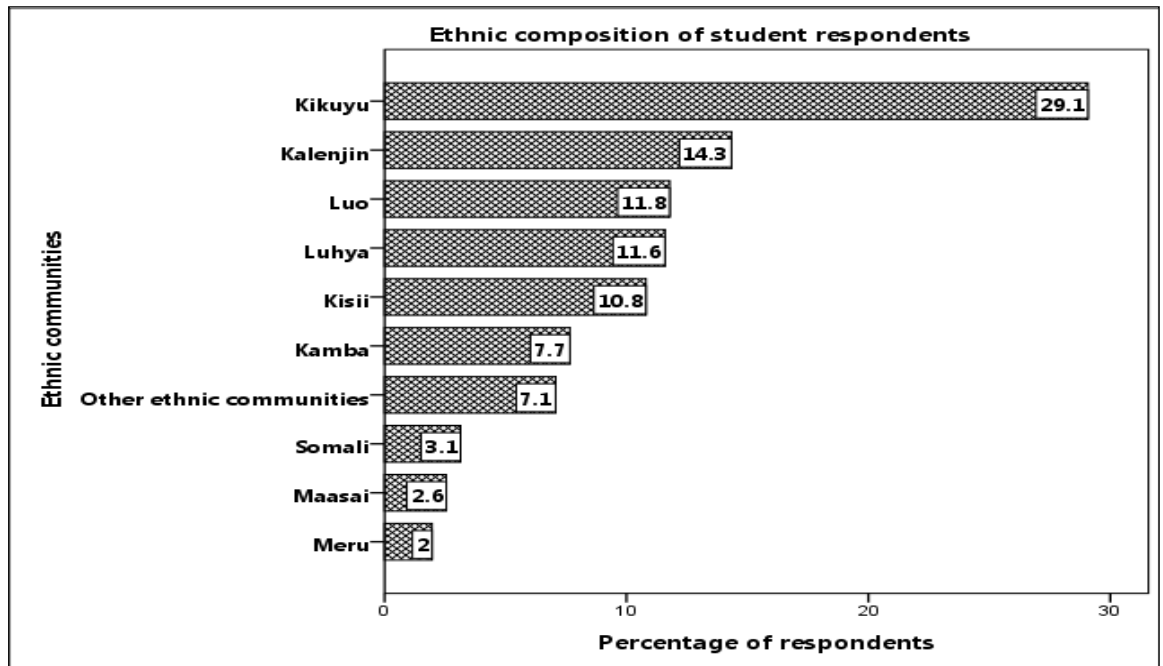


Figure 3.4 Frequency of ethnic composition of student respondents

Further analysis of ethnic composition was carried out, in order to show the distribution of the student respondents by school location. Table 3.9 below, shows that the ethnic communities in the Rift Valley with the largest percentage of student respondents were the Kikuyu (33.6 percent), the Kalenjin (19.6 percent) and the Kisii (13.7 percent). In Nairobi province there are four dominant communities, the Kikuyu (19.8 percent), the Luo (19.2 percent), the Luhya (18.0 percent) and the Kamba (16.2 percent).

Table 3.9 Ethnic composition of student respondents by school location

Ethnic communities of student respondents	Location of school		Total
	Rift Valley Province	Nairobi Province	
Kikuyu	115	33	148
	<i>33.6%</i>	<i>19.8%</i>	<i>29.1%</i>
Luhya	29	30	59
	<i>8.5%</i>	<i>18.0%</i>	<i>11.6%</i>
Kalenjin	67	6	73
	<i>19.6%</i>	<i>3.6%</i>	<i>14.3%</i>
Luo	28	32	60
	<i>8.2%</i>	<i>19.2%</i>	<i>11.8%</i>
Kamba	12	27	39
	<i>3.5%</i>	<i>16.2%</i>	<i>7.7%</i>
Kisii	47	8	55
	<i>13.7%</i>	<i>4.8%</i>	<i>10.8%</i>
Meru	7	3	10
	<i>2.0%</i>	<i>1.8%</i>	<i>2.0%</i>
Maasai	12	1	13
	<i>3.5%</i>	<i>.6%</i>	<i>2.6%</i>
Somali	4	12	16
	<i>1.2%</i>	<i>7.2%</i>	<i>3.1%</i>
Other ethnic communities	21	15	36
	<i>6.1%</i>	<i>9.0%</i>	<i>7.1%</i>
Total	342	167	509
	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

From Table 3.9 above, it is evident that in Nairobi, and in the town schools in the Rift Valley, the student respondent population was cosmopolitan. This mix of ethnic communities was expected. However, in the rural areas in the Rift Valley

people are mainly grouped according to their ethnicity, as shown in chapter two. Hence, the province and district schools were dominated mainly by student respondents from three ethnic communities – that is, the Kikuyu, the Kalenjin and the Kisii (Table 3.9 above). The fact that the school communities seem to reflect the national make-up could be due to the government's promotion of equality and unity among the different ethnic communities. Interestingly, the four communities with the highest percentage of students in the schools reflect the make-up of the country's population at large. In the national census of 2009 - whose results were released in 2010 by The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics - the largest ethnic community in Kenya was the Kikuyu (6,622,576), followed by the Luhya (5,338,666), the Kalenjin (4,967, 328), the Luo (4,044,440), and the Kamba (3,893,157).

It is also important to note that a number of respondents went as far as identifying themselves according to their sub-groups e.g. Kalenjin (Kipsigis), Kalenjin (Nandi), or Kalenjin (Keiyo), Luhya (Bukusu), Luhya (Maragoli), Luhya (Isukha), or Luhya (Idhako). A few indicated that they were of mixed ethnicity, for example, Kikuyu and Kalenjin, Luo and Baganda, or Kamba and Kikuyu. Others said they were Bantus hence choosing not to identify themselves with any particular ethnic community. However, identifying oneself with ones ethnic community is important so long as it is not manipulated to exclude and cause violence as happens in Kenya especially prior to and during general elections (chapter two above). The reflections and discussions that follow demonstrate the complexity and demands of carrying out research in the field.

3.6 SHARING FIELD RESEARCH EXPERIENCES: LIMITATIONS/CHALLENGES

Field research is both exciting and challenging. The researcher's field experience was enriched by her encounters – but there were some difficulties. Key to the success of this study, among Kenya's youth, was the ability to listen to their narratives and experience their world by interacting with them – through the semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, survey questionnaires, and observation (especially of the provincial drama festival). Equally valuable was the information (views and experiences) offered by the key informants. A memo pad and diary proved to be a valuable research tool enabling the researcher record the youth narratives and her own field research experiences. Throughout the data collection and analysis, the researcher was in touch with the difficulty one encounters while carrying out research in violent and difficult situations (Sriram et al., 2009). Also she was aware that a great deal of what happens in the field remains tacit and silent (Charmaz in Morse et al.2009: 131). However, along with the successes there were limitations/challenges – the most important of which will now be discussed.

Limitations/challenges as a result of the methods used and how these were addressed in the research

One notable challenge was the use of the survey questionnaire. Although the survey questionnaire is a useful tool for data collection because it ensures anonymity and reaches a wide range of participants, it also has some shortcomings as mentioned above in this chapter. One of the key shortcomings is that it can shape/structure the research in a particular way. For instance, the outcome is determined by the particular choice of questions asked and the multiple choice answers offered. This may explain why, for instance in this research, gender violence did not emerge as a major theme – although some respondents highlighted it as one of the causes of

violence in schools, and also there has been much discussion about it in Kenya. More explanation on this is given below. Also another area that did not emerge as a major theme was the existing peacebuilding approaches/interventions such as the peace education programme introduced after the post-2007 election violence – the successes and challenges. Another drawback of the questionnaires is that they are only suitable for the literate (Kumar, 2005; Robson 2002). Also, since questionnaires usually have to be completed within an allocated time, they cannot accommodate slow learners or those who are dyslexic.

While preparing the multiple response questions, the researcher though aware of gender-based violence from the initial literature before going to the field, chose not to ask directly about one aspect of gender-based violence – the sexual abuse - mainly for the following reasons: First this was due to the strict guidelines laid down for conducting research with vulnerable young people. Second, this was dictated by the situation on the ground after doing the pilot survey and realising that people were still grappling with the aftermath of the post-2007 election violence. Considering there was reporting of widespread gender-based violence during the post-election violence, the researcher decided not to ask questions regarding the sexual abuse as explained in detail below.

Young people in residential settings, such as boarding schools, are vulnerable because they do not have their parents to provide guidance and protection. Gender-based violence such as sexual abuse is highly stigmatised and conducting research into it, in particular questioning children, places a great responsibility on the researcher. For instance, ethical guidelines stipulate that the researcher must *do not harm*, and asking children about for instance sexual abuse may well increase their vulnerability. Also researchers are required to protect their subjects, particularly

children, from trauma and possible retaliation for instance it may be that a student's guardian is the perpetrator of the abuse, and that disclosing it may place her and her family at risk of financial difficulty, when financial assistance is no longer provided.

Although efforts have been made in Kenya to introduce legislation and policies, which safe guard abused children such as the Children's Act 2001, (Appendix 8), the Sexual Offences Act (SOA) 2006 (FIDA-KENYA) that came to force on the 21 July 2006, the School Safety Manual, 2008 (Appendix 7), efforts of children organisations such as the CRADLE – a children's foundation, UNICEF and Save the Children to name just a few, there is currently no appropriate structures for the investigation and management of childhood maltreatment, particularly sexual abuse. For instance, girls who disclose they have been sexually abused are often highly stigmatised by the society (Kameri-Mbote, 2000).

While the researcher believes all forms of child maltreatment should be exposed, the decision not to question the student respondents about victimisation was considered ethically prudent as she did not have the ability or means to protect them. Further, as a doctoral candidate, it would have been difficult for her to ensure that the research participants were not re-traumatised by her questioning. Instead, as will be seen in chapter four below, the researcher provided the research participants with the opportunity in the questionnaire to disclose whatever else they wished to write on the causes of violence in their schools and neighbouring schools – that is how the researcher learned that some of the boys had been sexually abused by their female teachers. This was confirmed by one teacher in charge of guidance and counselling in the school who sought guidance from the researcher on how to handle the issues. The researcher aware of the ethical issues that guide any research ensured that she did not compromise the research by taking on a counselling role but instead advised

the teacher to seek guidance from the relevant school authority. The researcher also learned from some of the boys that some of the girls had been sexually abused – when they made statements about teachers stealing their *manzi* (Sheng for girlfriends). Also she learnt of sexual abuse in one of the surveyed girls' schools from a focus group discussion. In this discussion the girls reported teachers of using sexual derogatory remarks when they gave wrong answers during lessons or when they were absent from school. In this case because of the seriousness of the allegations, the researcher – bearing in mind the ethical issues especially *anonymity* and the *do no harm principle* – informed the school authority to investigate the allegations.

Limitations/challenges as a result of high expectation from the student participants

The researcher was aware that as a former principal of reputable schools this gave her an advantage. Equally due to the frustrations that the students were experiencing, they saw the research as an opportunity to air their views and there were also high expectations that the researcher would forward their requests to the relevant authorities. Students also hoped that having been a secondary school principal the researcher could assist them deal with some of their personal problems. In one case highlighted below where the boys in a particular school requested the researcher to advise them as a mother, the researcher obliged.

While the researcher was also concerned by what the students shared and what she had observed, equally aware of the magnanimity of the problems and her limits as a researcher, she was reflexive and adhered to the research guidelines by not offering solutions or making promises which could raise the participants' expectations. However, these are indeed issues that are important and that would need to be addressed by the relevant educational and government bodies in Kenya.

Limitations/ challenges of dealing with the unexpected

In one of the schools, while conducting a focus group, there was a power blackout. One student provided a torch so that the discussion could continue uninterrupted. After it ended the students requested the researcher if she could give them advice, as a mother, and she obliged. The students were interested in discussing issues on relationships – specifically girl-boy relationship. This took about half an hour. When the lights came back on, the students accompanied the researcher to the principal's office and on arrival found the deputy head and two teachers anxiously waiting outside. Assuming this was due to the half hour delay, the researcher apologised, only to discover that they had been concerned about her safety during the blackout. While this was out of genuine concern for the researcher's safety, she was left wondering how violent the school was, and what perception the school authorities had of the students for them to react in this way. Also the researcher made a connection between the students' allegations in their narratives that the school administration did not trust them.

Limitations/challenges as the result of bureaucracy

The researcher had five months to collect the data, but even though prior arrangements had been made with the school authorities and other key informants sometimes follow-up appointments were difficult to schedule, due to bureaucracy. This was more difficult in some places than others. Sometimes power dynamics were at play, where people wanted to *flex the muscle* of their status. This demanded patience as the researcher often depended on good will to secure an interview. At other times the person being sought by the researcher would be out of the office on official duties and unwilling to delegate – so a decision could not be made until they returned. This was frustrating and time-consuming. Additionally, some officials

refused to be interviewed, saying that the researcher could get the information required from their organisations' vision and mission statements on websites.

Limitations/challenges as the result of access and safety issues

The youth were the key targets of this study, and accessing them was dependent on the school authorities. While students were ready and willing to participate in the research, some interviews and focus group discussions were cancelled or rescheduled at the last minute. The excuses were that students had been sent home for school fees⁶³ or that the teachers had scheduled continuous assessment tests (CATs), or that the students were practising for Drama and Music festivals. The researcher attributed these problems to lack of co-ordination between the school authorities, the principals, the teachers, and the student body. This was frustrating for both the students and the researcher. Rescheduling other dates proved difficult due to a number of activities, such as the district and provincial Drama festivals. However, the dates were eventually rearranged but this process proved costly in terms of the students' enthusiasm - they were initially excited about the research - and the researcher, who was operating within a timeframe and limited resources. Sometimes these delays meant arrangements had to be made for a new set of respondents to participate, as some of the original students were still at home. On one occasion the next available date was four days later, however some of the students were still

⁶³ In Kenya there is compulsory free primary education but secondary school education is subsidised since mid 2002. Despite this subsidy some parents are not financially stable to cater for the other fees required. Students who owe the monies are often sent home and return to school with the required monies or accompanied by parents who will have an opportunity to discuss the monies issue with the school authorities.

unavailable. This replacement exercise was often cumbersome. Students had to seek clearance from their teachers, who had to ensure that those participating had paid their school fees – or settled the issue with the school authorities. In some schools the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with the few students that were available.

Another access problem concerned the obtaining of sensitive information. From the beginning the researcher had to grapple with the issue of not been able to access some sensitive literature in both the schools and wider society. Despite the assurance of anonymity and confidentiality, some government officials and school authorities preferred to give their verbal synopsis of these sensitive documents. However, relying on the officials' memory of the document was problematic, as the information could not be authenticated.

Limitations/challenges as the result of privacy requirement

In any field research, privacy is considered as "...one of those interests most fundamental to the protection of human dignity" (Stanley and Sieber, 1992: 83). Privacy means the respecting of personal space and giving research participants the opportunity to share only what they are comfortable sharing. Privacy is particularly important for young people due to their vulnerability so the researcher asked the students where they would feel most comfortable. However, the venues were eventually dictated by school settings and timetables. The interviews, focus group discussions, and questionnaires were conducted either in classrooms, science laboratories, or libraries, or outside sitting on the grass. In one of the schools the focus group interview was conducted in the board room. Aside from this venue, the others were not especially suitable for focus group discussions – because of the noise within the schools and other distractions, for instance chemical smells and science

experiment preparations in the laboratories. It was also difficult to form a circle for a discussion in such a setting. Despite these limitations, the researcher had frequent checks with the participants to ensure they were still comfortable and at ease with the venue.

Limitations/challenges as the result of trust requirement

Collecting data at the height of the investigation into the post-2007 election violence had an impact on the research. This was because at the time Moreno Ocampo, the chief prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague, was in Kenya collecting information, especially in the Rift Valley province - where the masterminds of the violence were thought to have come from. Some of the key informants were reluctant to share information with the researcher. This was despite assurances that the enquiry was for academic purposes only. Even the permit that bore the researcher's personal identification details, and the purpose of the study, did not help dispel the fears of some of the government officials – particularly those working in the Rift Valley. However, in some of the cases the researcher's experience as a principal in two different categories of schools, as mentioned in the genesis of this research worked in her favour. For example, some of the principals and Education Officers she had interacted with previously, during the annual Heads of Schools meetings, provided background information on the two research locations - especially pertaining to security issues and identification of key informants.

Having also worked in the Rift Valley during the 1992/93 so-called *ethnic clashes*, the researcher was also aware of the different tensions which existed between the various ethnic communities. These tensions tended to increase during election periods - such as at the time when the research was conducted – when Kenya still grappled with the aftermath of post-2007 election violence. The

researcher had to be particularly careful because she was researching in her own country, which demanded she remained vigilant and not make assumptions or become too familiar, in a way that could compromise the research and her security.

Limitations/challenges as the result of biases

Sometimes the researcher experienced mistrust. It was difficult to interpret what was being communicated through different non-verbal cues. This happened mainly with the key informants in the Rift Valley when, for instance, the researcher interviewed some senior men. It was difficult to decipher what was at play; whether this was due to power dynamics or a cultural disinclination to permit a woman to question male authority. The research assistant, who was male and familiar with the location where the research was taking place because his family lived there, provided the necessary support, for instance informing on best ways of approaching some cultural aspects on gender roles and/or different expectations of some of the members of the communities in the research location(s). This was to ensure that the study proceeded with few or no problems. One way of dealing with these biases, that seemed to work for the researcher, was to allow the informants set the pace - by using only a few of the questions in the interview schedule. There was a disadvantage in this, as a large amount of data was generated which was not useful to the study. However the advantages outnumbered the disadvantages and the researcher had factored in enough time for each interview - in preparation for any eventuality in the field. This was a valuable lesson she learnt from her supervisor, who had wide experience of field research. A brief daily reflection of the data helped the researcher address the biases. Some of the questions she asked herself, on reflection, were: What is going on? Is the difficulty I am experiencing about gender, cultural difference, or the way the question has been framed? Is it difficulty about the

surroundings, the interview time or the circumstances? Was interview consent initially given just to please the boss?

The researcher was also fearful, and held inherently biased views, about working in unfamiliar territories. Her sense of danger was particularly heightened during interviews she conducted with a former gang group in Nairobi province and members of militia groups in the Rift Valley province. She was also concerned about conducting a focus group discussion in one of the internally displaced person's (IDPs) camps in the Rift Valley - an environment unfamiliar to her. The research assistant proved invaluable in these circumstances as he had lived and worked in the Rift Valley before transferring to Nairobi. In the IDPs' camp, the focus group discussion - consisting of five women and three men - took place in one of the dilapidated tents, considered the best for the purpose. But as the interview proceeded the rain gently fell inside the tent, making streams and soaking the participants' feet. The biases the researcher had for instance, that the people in the camp may be hostile and unwilling to participate in the interviews were challenged as all those that were approached were friendly, willing and gave consent for both interviews and focus group discussions.

Denzin (2008: 8) says that research is an *interactive process*, that is shaped by the researcher's own "... personal history, biography, gender, social class, race and ethnicity, and by those of the people in the setting." Reflecting on the experiences with the group of the IDPs and the other participants in the research, the researcher realised the nature of the biases she had carried into the field as noted above. This assisted her to be a more reflexive person as she carried on with the research.

The other bias that the researcher noted was that she did not seek to involve students with disability in this study. One of the dilemmas the researcher had was whether to include information about disability in the bio-data section on the questionnaire. In Kenya, physical or learning disabilities are not readily accepted or adequately catered for in schools, government offices, or wider society - although there are schools that cater for people with special needs, especially if the disability is severe. In schools disabled children are sometimes bullied or excluded and generally are not provided with the necessary basic facilities to meet their needs – such as wheelchairs ramps, special toilet facilities and lifts. As will be noted in the chapters below, sometimes teachers use derogatory remarks to refer to academically weak students. This creates fear and also withdrawal symptoms in such cases. Therefore asking these students to identify themselves might have made them more vulnerable. However, after making the decision not to include information about disability in the questionnaire the researcher became concerned that she was endorsing the status quo – that is sidelining those with disabilities, in this research the narratives of those who may not have been able to adequately respond to the questionnaires due for instance to their level of competence in English as a second language. Also it did not cater for those that could be dyslexic.

Limitations/challenges of researching schools in informal settlements (slums)

Researching young people who live in informal settlements (slums) was not an easy task. In recent times Kenyan slums have become the hiding place for militia and insurgent groups and gangs. Therefore gaining access necessitated that the researcher look for someone who had contacts with these groups. The researcher interacted with a reformed gang group in a focus group discussion and in semi-structured interviews, and also shared a meal with some members of the group and

their leaders. This helped to create good rapport. However, the slum environment is emotionally draining and the researcher left with more questions than answers. One of the questions was: How can the potential of these groups of youth be tapped for ensuring sustainable peace in Kenya?

Limitations/challenges of researching in violent schools

In two of the schools, the researcher noted that caning was being used to address mis-behaviour. In one of these schools, during the focus group, some boys were being caned in the adjacent room. This incident confirmed the narratives of the students and key informants about the use of the cane in this school.

Limitations/ challenges of dealing with gray areas

Finally, there is the issue of the *gray areas* that one encounters in field research. With regard to this research an example of this occurred in one of the schools. The principal of this school interrupted an ongoing focus group discussion requesting to see the researcher in private. Once outside the room he informed her that he had revoked the decision for students to engage in a focus group discussion. When the researcher enquired about this change of mind, the principal explained his fears. The principal's fears were based on an earlier experience with a recognised, non-governmental organisation that had interviewed his students after the post-2007 election violence. Recounting his experience he pointed out that "*after these interviews, we lost all the gains we had made. The students were left disturbed.*"⁶⁴ The researcher assured the principal that the research would be carried out with sensitivity and in adherence to the research ethical guidelines. After convincing the principal the focus group discussion continued but the researcher had to spend some

⁶⁴ Semi-structured interview, KYM#32RV (principal), February 2010

time assuring the students - who by now were anxious - that all was well and whatever they shared would remain confidential, and not be attributed to anyone in particular.

Thus, a researcher has always to be sensitive and flexible to what is happening, not only to the participants but also within their social environment. The on-going reflection, during data collection, coding and analysis, brought home to the researcher that field work is complex. Each day there are negotiations to be had as one engages with research participants. In addition, as this engagement is contextual, a balanced, reflexive, and open mind is required throughout the research process.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter, the methodology and methods used in this research are discussed at length. Also the chapter highlights the pilot study that was carried out to test the tools and field research. In addition, there was an initial analysis of the data contained in section one of the questionnaire, that is, the bio-data. This consists of general demography, including variables such as age, gender, religious affiliation, ethnicity, and socio-economic background of the students.

Chapter three also highlighted the ethical issues applied in the thesis. A great deal of attention is given to the limitations/challenges encountered while carrying out this research from the pilot to the actual study. The limitations/challenges capture the research methods and also the sampling of the participants. One of the key limitation/challenge was in reference to the use of the survey questionnaires. As noted earlier in this chapter, the survey questionnaire tends to shape/structure the research in a particular way. For instance some of the issues such as the gender-based violence particularly sexual abuse did not emerge as a main theme though it was evident in the literature review chapters and the research informed chapters.

Also some of the interventions used in the school to address youth violence such the peace education programme - introduced in Kenya after the post-2007 election violence - did not feature in the youth narratives. Hence, by not asking the students specifically on peace education, it was difficult to establish the effectiveness of such peacebuilding programmes in the Kenyan context.

Chapter four below will focus mainly on the youth narratives on the violence they participate in and/or observe in both the school and the wider Kenyan context.

CHAPTER FOUR

YOUTH NARRATIVES: VIOLENT CONFLICTS AND EXPECTATIONS

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is a detailed analysis of the survey questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus group interviews. It is in aim of responding to the research questions recapped below.

- a) *What narratives are used by the youth to describe, explain, and justify their participation in and/or observation of violent conflict in Kenyan secondary schools and wider society?*
- b) *In what ways can approaches to peacebuilding and the Kenyan education systems respond to youth violence?*

The chapter will mainly concentrate on the first part of the above research questions which deals with the youth narratives on the conflicts they participate in and/or observe. Importantly, where applicable the key informants' responses are incorporated. The sections that are already mentioned in chapter three are included in this chapter for the purposes of guiding the analysis.

Section A. Perception of conflict and peace

Section B. Student level of involvement in the school

Section C. Activities that the student is involved in while out of school

Section D. Conflicts that take place in students' own schools and in the neighbouring schools.

Section E. Youth and their involvement in militia group and gang activities whether in or out of school.

Section F. The post election violence and youth involvement.

Regarding the structure, firstly, there is an analysis of the student respondents' opinions on the definition of conflict and peace. Of interest is to find out whether the way they define and experience conflict and peace can shed light on their engagement in violent conflicts. Secondly, their views and experiences of conflicts in their school, neighbouring schools and wider society are analysed. These act as foundation to the understanding of what for instance makes the students unhappy, feel misunderstood, excluded and disrespected. On the other hand, what makes them happy, feel understood, involved and respected. The underlying question is: What is their ideal of a peaceful school and society?

Importantly, the existing youth conflicts in both the schools and wider society have in recent times taken on a militia and gang component. Regarding the youth militia groups and gangs, the assumption is that having an idea of who these groups are, what they do and why youth join them, addresses one of the key research question as pointed out above. Could for instance some of the youth, their peers, friends, and siblings be members?

Additionally, special attention is given to the post-2007 election violence that engulfed Kenya in what was termed a "stolen election"? (Waki, 2008). Notably, there was an interest in finding out whether there was a link between the post-2007 election violence and the widespread violent school unrests that affected nearly 300 secondary schools across Kenya in July 2008. Equally, whether the post-2007 election violence could be a contributing factor in the changing form of violence in schools? The subsequent chapters below provided some insights.

Since some of the questions in this chapter have more than one response, a multiple response data analysis procedure was applied. As pointed out in chapter three above, the data was analysed using a quantitative data analysis package

(PASW).⁶⁵ Before proceeding with any analysis in this chapter, it suffices to explain the multiple response data analysis procedure that was applied to all multiple responses question throughout this and the subsequent chapters below.

Explanation: multiple response data analysis procedure

In a multiple response data analysis procedure variables are coded as “dichotomies” with either “yes” for any selected option or “no” if option not selected for instance “yes”=1 and “no”=2. In the second option, “categories”, the number or responses given are each allocated a code for instance if one was asked to select their favourite colours, white could be coded as 1, yellow=2, green=3 and blue=4. Additionally, in this procedure the third column (percentage of cases) is usually the percentage of interest as it shows the percentage of those who select a particular option(s). Therefore the figures in the third column do not add up to 100 percent as some respondents could select more than one option. In a given question, one respondent might decide to choose ten of the given choices, yet another might choose only one. This procedure is helpful as it shows at a glance the percentage of cases that have selected a particular option. Hence, the percentage of cases column shows the “valid cases” and therefore is the column of interest. Those who have not responded in the affirmative by selecting the options or expressing their preferences are treated as “missing cases”.

In this study, the researcher decided to code the variables using dichotomies (1=yes for any or all selected option and 2= no for any option not selected. Hence, only those cases that are coded 1 were included and those coded 2 were excluded and treated as missing cases. However, these missing cases are reflected at the summary section on the Tables and in the analysis section of both the Tables and Figures.

⁶⁵ The rationale for using this quantitative statistical analysis package PASW 18 is explained in chapter three above.

In a multiple response question, there is a different procedure that allows one to create a variable that would include those that do not select a particular option. However, the onus is on the person that has collected the data to apply this procedure or not. In this study, the researcher decided not to carry out this procedure. The rationale for this decision was the fact that the researcher was only interested in finding out the percentage of cases that selected a particular option(s). Multiple response data can also be analysed using frequencies or crosstabulations. Table 4.1 below shows the multiple data analysis interpretation of results.

Table 4.1 Multiple data analysis procedure functions

List of conflicts in school	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Poor diet	375	23.9%	73.5%
Fighting among students	257	16.3%	50.4%
Fighting among students	238	15.1%	46.7%
Poor student-teachers' relationship	358	22.8%	70.2%
Rudeness to teachers	344	21.9%	67.5%
Total	1572	100.0%	308.2%

Figures do not add up to 100 percent – a multiple response question

¹Data: part of the researcher’s own field research data collected during the field research 2010. The field research graphic ideas are informed by the work of Dr Barr (2003: 40).⁶⁶

Having explained in detail the multiple responses data analysis procedure, some of the questions that are analysed in this chapter employ this procedure. This means that the total figures do not add up to 100 percent as explained in Table 4.1 above. As pointed out in the introduction, initially the student respondents were

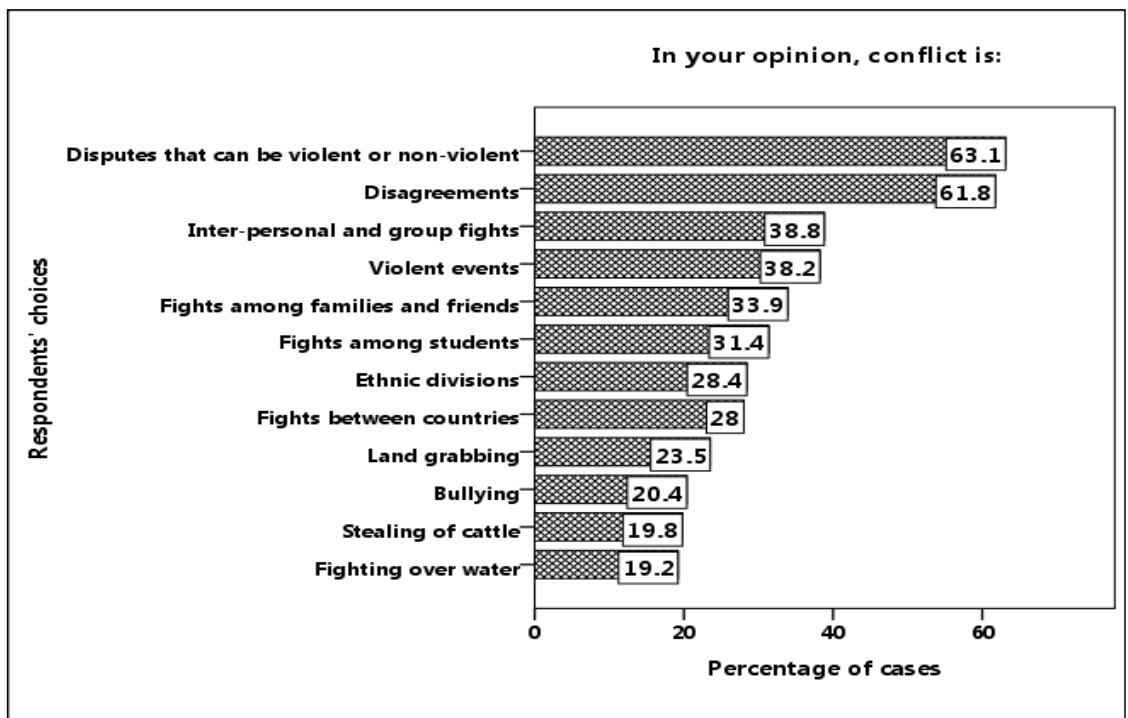
⁶⁶ For more information refer to Barr, S. (2003). Quantitative data analysis for Human Geographers using SPSS. p. 40. <http://ebookbrowse.com/spss-handbook-2004-doc-d138353330>

asked to give their opinion on what conflict and peace is. Their selected options were captured using a multiple response analysis as shown below.

4.1 STUDENT RESPONDENTS' AND KEY INFORMANTS' PERCEPTION OF CONFLICT AND PEACE

From the onset the researcher's aim was to find out how the youth define some of the key terms in this study such as conflict and peace. The following root question to a multiple response question: *In your opinion conflict is ...?* acted as a point of departure. As shown in Figure 4.1 below, the total number of student respondents was 512. Of these the valid cases were 510 (99.6 percent) that selected from the given options and 2 (0.4 percent) missing cases (those that did not choose any of the given options)⁶⁷. The question generated 2,074 total responses. The total percent cases were 406.7. The student respondents were given twelve choices from which they could choose as many options as apply. In order of highest percentage of cases that selected from the list the possible definitions of conflict, 63.1 percent and 61.8 percent cases chose "disputes that can be violent or non-violent" and "disagreements" correspondingly. On the other hand 38.8 percent cases and 38.2 percent cases chose "inter-personal and group fights" and "violent events" in that order. Interesting, 33.9 percent cases chose "fights among families and friends" and 31.4 percent cases "fights among students". 28.4 percent, 28 percent, 23.5 percent, 20.4 percent cases opted to define conflict as "ethnic divisions", "fights between countries", "land grabbing" and "bullying" in that order. On the other hand, "stealing of cattle" (19.8 percent) and "fighting over water" (19.2 percent) were selected by the least percentage of cases.

⁶⁷ This interpretation of all that did not choose any of the given options will apply to all multiple choices in this chapter and the subsequent chapters. In the code book these missing cases were coded as 2=No therefore not included in the analysis.

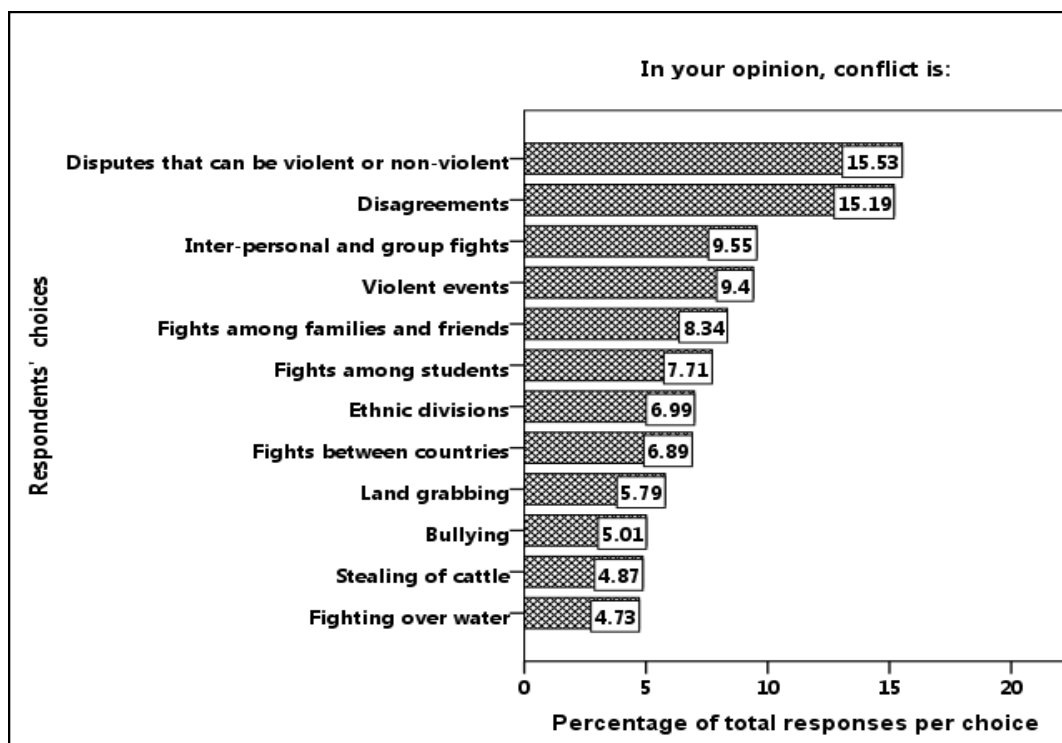


Figures do not add up to 100 percent – a multiple response question

Figure 4.1 percentage cases definition of conflicts

Curiously, one would have expected most percent cases to select “Fights among families and friends” and “Fights among students” as their first and second option. The assumption is that in a home and school setting these types of conflicts occur with more frequency and at times are more violent than some of the selected options in Figure 4.1 above.

Figure 4.2 below shows an analysis of the data that could be generated if the respondents were asked to choose only one option to this same question. This shows the percentage of the total number of responses represented by each option, tallying to 100 percent. However, the interest in this study is the respondents (cases) and the weighting they give to a particular option (s). Hence, of importance is the percentage of cases as opposed to the percentage of responses.



Percent of total responses=100 percent

Figure 4.2 Percentage of total number of respondents on definition of conflict

From the frequency Figure 4.1 and 4.2 above, it is not possible to decipher how the different genders selected their options. In response to this, a cross-tabulation of the responses by gender was carried out. As portrayed in the cross-tabulation, Table 4.2 below shows that out of 512 student respondents 64.5 percent, 55.2 percent and 38.6 percent of male cases selected “disputes that can be violent or non-violent”, “disagreements” and “inter-personal and group fights” in that order. On the other hand, 68.5 percent, 61.8 percent and 41.8 percent of female cases selected “disagreements”, “disputes that can be violent or non-violent” and “violent events” correspondingly. However, the least percentage of male cases (17.0 percent and 17.8 percent) selected “stealing of cattle” and “bullying” in that order. The least percentage of female cases (20.3 percent and 22.7 percent) selected “fighting over water” and “stealing of cattle in that order. It is interesting that the percentage of female cases per choice were higher than that of the percentage of male cases except in two selected options that is, “disputes that can be violent or non-violent” (64.5

percent male and 61.8 percent female) cases and “ethnic divisions” (30.9 percent male and 25.9 female) cases. Additionally, both the male and female cases differ in the third selection where the male cases define conflict as “inter-personal and group fights” (38.6 percent) while for the female cases it is “violent events” (41.8 percent).

Thus, what could be the implication of these differences as far as addressing conflicts especially in mixed sex-school is concerned?

Table 4.2 Student respondents’ definitions of conflict by gender

In your opinion conflict is	Gender of student		Total
	Male	Female	
Violent events	90	105	195
	34.7%	41.8%	
Disputes that can be violent or non-violent	167	155	322
	64.5%	61.8%	
Disagreements	143	172	315
	55.2%	68.5%	
Fights among families and friends	77	96	173
	29.7%	38.2%	
Inter-personal and group fights	100	98	198
	38.6%	39.0%	
Ethnic divisions	80	65	145
	30.9%	25.9%	
Fights between countries	64	79	143
	24.7%	31.5%	
Bullying	46	58	104
	17.8%	23.1%	
Stealing of cattle	44	57	101
	17.0%	22.7%	
Land grabbing	48	72	120
	18.5%	28.7%	
Fighting over water	47	51	98
	18.1%	20.3%	
Fights among students	74	86	160
	28.6%	34.3%	
Total 510(99.6%)valid cases 2(0.4%) missing cases	259	251	510

From the initial analysis of Table 4.2 above, it is construed that the student respondents' perception of conflict is "disputes that can be violent or non-violent" and "disagreements". Curiously, the option "bullying" was not selected by most percentage cases though as noted in chapter two, there is evidence of prevalence of bullying in Kenyan secondary schools (Ndetei, 12 November, 2009). Apart from the options given in Table 4.2 above, the student respondents were also given the freedom to give their own definitions which were factored in under the option "other". These responses were thematically coded as shown in Tables 4.3 below.

Table 4.3 Students' own definitions of conflict

STUDENT RESPONDENTS CODE NO¹	OWN DEFINITION OF CONFLICT
S2FN#43	<i>molestation from male parents and teachers</i>
S2MN#51	<i>cultural misinterpretations, interdenominational difference</i>
S6FRV#193	<i>hostile treatment among people due to their differences</i>
S3FRV#213	<i>fight for friends especially those of opposite sex</i>
S14MN#488	<i>girls' mistreatment</i>
S14MN#499	<i>fighting over pens, books and other things</i>
S14MN#503	<i>not given a chance to make decisions, dictatorial kind of imposed decisions</i>
S3FRV#76	<i>state of being in a compromising situation either personally, socially, nationally or internationally and resulting in irrational decisions</i>
S7FRV#255	<i>harvesting other people's crops without permission</i>

¹S+numeral=school code, M=male and F=female, N=Nairobi and RV= Rift Valley, numeral after #= Student respondent's identification number in the survey questionnaires

In addition, during a focus group interview in one of the girls' schools in Nairobi, the girls shared their definitions of conflict using "Sheng". Sheng⁶⁸ is slang, a mixture of English, Swahili and some vernacular for instance, Luo and Kikuyu. It is a common language that the youth in Kenya use to communicate among themselves (chapter three). Sheng is also developing very fast.⁶⁹ The student participants informed the researcher that they use Sheng most of the time. This was also evidenced in the fact that some of them opted to define conflict and peace using Sheng instead of their vernacular. The majority of those who chose to use Sheng were mainly the youth from Nairobi and town centres, for instance Nakuru (the administrative town of the Rift Valley province). Others preferred to use Sheng as their own vernacular language when they made statements such as "*in my language, the word for conflict is "noma"*"; yet "*noma*" is Sheng for problem or disturbances. The responses in Table 4.4 below are the Sheng words that these students used to define conflicts during one of the focus group interviews. The analysis of these words shows that the respondents attach different meanings to the different names or phrases they use for conflict in Sheng. For instance, the word they use to refer to problems is "*ngori*". On the other hand, they use "*mengo*" to refer to hostile treatment among people due to their differences or in reference to two people who are fighting.

⁶⁸ For further reading on "Sheng" refer to SAMPER, D. A. (2002)

Table 4.4. Student respondents' definition of conflict in Sheng

STUDENT RESPONDENTS CODE NO ¹	DEFINING CONFLICT USING 'SHENG'	MEANING
S9FN#3	<i>wana mengo</i>	<i>When we are talking among ourselves in school, we use different words for conflict e.g. we might say “wana mengo” – this would be hostile treatment among people due to their differences/disagreements</i>
S9FN #6	<i>ngori</i>	<i>Yes also we can say “ngori” meaning problems</i>
S9FN#4	<i>beef</i>	<i>or beef – hatred e.g. we might say “tunabeef na shule” (we have hatred with the school)</i>
S9FN#1	<i>ihero koko (Luo), shida, noma</i>	<i>Also other words that we use are “koko” (Luo for quarrelling e.g. might say ‘ihero’ “koko”, “shida” and “noma” are also other words that express conflict)</i>
S9FN#2	<i>nikundilala/tafash</i>	<i>We could also say (nikundilala/tafash) this means problems⁷⁰</i>

¹S+numeral= school code, F= Female, N=Nairobi province, #+numeral= students focus group identification

Furthermore, the respondents were asked to give the names for “conflict” and their meanings in the respondents’ own vernacular. To facilitate this, the following questions acted as a guide: *What is the word in your vernacular that you would use for conflict? What is the meaning of the word?* Since not all the definitions would be included, a few examples have been factored in to capture some of the respondents’ responses. It would be interesting to find out whether there is variance in the definitions especially in the large communities that have sub-groups such as the Luyha and Kalenjin. This is because from the student bio-data, some of the student respondents went further to show the sub-groups in their communities, for instance

⁷⁰ Focus group discussion in a girls’ school coded (S9) in Nairobi, March 2010

Kalenjin (Tugen, Kipsigis and Nandi among others). The examples of the definitions of conflicts in the vernacular of student respondents that have been selected are from the Luhya, Somali and Kikuyu vernaculars (Tables 4.5, 4.6 and 4.7) below.

Table 4.5 Words and meaning of conflict in students' own vernacular (Luyia/Luhya)⁷¹

STUDENT RESPONDENTS CODE NO ¹	NAME FOR CONFLICT IN OWN VERNACULAR	MEANING
S14MN#488	<i>okhukhayana (Bukusu)</i>	<i>people not understanding one another in society over internal matters</i>
S4FRV#131	<i>vikhua/chishida</i>	<i>things that cause problems or insecurity</i>
S3FRV#96	<i>varembana/vakubana</i>	<i>people who are quarrelling or fighting</i>
S2MN#53	<i>umwoyo umulai daye kuhundi</i>	<i>bad feelings towards other person or something</i>
S6FRV#188	<i>vusolani (Isukha)</i>	<i>Disagreement</i>
S2FN#52	<i>Obulwani</i>	<i>war between people or conflict among people</i>
S14MN#483	<i>Risolo</i>	<i>fight, hate, disagreement, disorder or quarrel among people or group</i>
S3FRV#77	<i>Mavira</i>	<i>the state in which people are in disagreement and conflicts</i>

¹S+numeral=school code, M=male and F=female, N=Nairobi and RV= Rift Valley, numeral after #= Student respondent's identification number in the survey questionnaires.

⁷¹ The Luhya ethnic community also known as (Avaluhya, Abluhya or Luyia) inhabit mainly the western province of Kenya (refer to chapter two of this study). During the Kenya population census conducted in 2009, results published in 2010 (KNBS, 2010; Jenkins, 2008) the Luhya population was 5,338,666 people out of the total 38,610,097. The Luhya ethnic community consists of over 16 sub-tribes speaking different dialects: bakhayo, Banyala (East and West Nyala), Banyore, Batsotso, Bukusu, Idakho, Kabras, Kisa, Marachi, Maragoli, Marama, Samia, Tachoni, Tiriki, Tura, Isukha, and Wanga. With Maragoli been the highest 618,340. Some of the student respondents included these divisions in the bio-data.

Table 4.6 Words and meaning of conflict in students' own vernacular (Somali)⁷²

STUDENT RESPONDENTS CODE NO¹	NAME FOR CONFLICT IN VERNACULAR	MEANING
S1MN#07	<i>human/digal</i>	<i>disagreement about people which may be violent or non-violent but cause hatred</i>
S1MN#11	<i>Olaad</i>	<i>disagreement or conflicts among people or communities</i>
S1MN#12	<i>Dagal</i>	<i>condition where there is constant fighting</i>
S2MN#56	<i>iskudhaac</i>	<i>results after disagreement over issues which lead to killing one another</i>
S2MN#5	<i>Khilaaf</i>	<i>misunderstanding each other in a certain issue or matter</i>
S3FRV#72	<i>Olki</i>	<i>when there are many wars</i>

¹S+numeral=school code, M=male and F=female, N=Nairobi and RV= Rift Valley, numeral after #= Student respondent's identification number in the survey questionnaires

⁷² The Somali ethnic community of Kenya inhabit mainly the northern part of Kenya and a substantial population is found in the Eastleigh area in Nairobi which caters for one of the largest informal settlements (the slums of Mathare) earning the area the name Mogadishu "ndogo" (Swahili for little or small Mogadishu). They are divided into different sub-groups. For instance during the Kenya population census conducted in 2009, whose results were published in 2010 (KNBS, 2010) indicate that the Somali population was 2,385,572 people. Among the Kenyan Somali the sub-groups recorded were six: Ajuran, Degodia, Gurreh, Hawiyah, Murile and Ogaden. Of these Gurreh and Ogaden had the largest number of people (693,792 and 621,885) respectively. Some of the student respondents included these divisions in the bio-data.

Table 4.7 Words and meaning of conflict in students' own vernacular (Gikuyu)⁷³

STUDENT RESPONDENTS CODE NO ¹	NAME FOR CONFLICT IN VERNACULAR	MEANING
S1MN#33	<i>mena kũĩndũ</i>	<i>They have some troubles among them.</i>
S14MN#478	<i>Haro</i>	<i>misunderstanding that may cause harm to either or both parties yet be violent or non-violent</i>
S1MN#22	<i>Gucanio</i>	<i>opposing of views that may be physical or verbal</i>
S3FRV# 82	<i>Kũmenana</i>	<i>a state of hate for no major or sensible reason</i>
S6FRV#185	<i>kwaga kũiguana</i>	<i>lack of agreement and respect of the other</i>

¹S+numeral=school code, M=male and F=female, N=Nairobi and RV= Rift Valley, numeral after #= Student respondent's identification number in the survey questionnaires

⁷³ The Agĩkũyũ ethnic community is found mainly in the central part of Kenya. Among the Agĩkũyũ community, people usually identify themselves with the place they come from for instance the Agĩkũyũ people from Kiambu and the Agĩkũyũ from Nyeri, or those from Kĩrĩnyaga (the official Gĩkũyũ name of Mount Kenya, the dwelling place of *Ngai*, (name for God among the Agĩkũyũ people). The divisions of the Agĩkũyũ people are more based on the distinct dialects as opposed to sub-groups. In the Kenya population census conducted in 2009, results published in 2010 (KNBS, 2010) the Agĩkũyũ population was 6,622,576.

Table 4.8 below is a synopsis of the students' definition of conflict.

Table 4.8 Synopsis of students' definition of conflict

SOURCE OF COLLATION	SYNOPSIS OF STUDENTS' DEFINITION AND MEANING OF CONFLICT(S)
Captured from the analysis on their selected options: <i>In your opinion conflict is ...</i>	<i>disputes that can be violent or non-violent, disagreements, inter-personal and group fights, violent events</i>
Summary of students' own definitions	<i>fight over friends especially those of opposite sex, fighting for things like pens and books, imposing decisions, hostility molestation from male teachers and parents, "mengo"= hostile treatment; "ngori"/"nikundilala"/ "tafash"= problems, "beef"= hatred (in Sheng)</i>
Summary of meaning attached to the definitions of conflict(s) in students' own vernacular.	<i>disagreements, misunderstanding, quarrels, fighting and hatred, troubles, wars among communities, killing</i>

From what has been analysed so far, it is evident that there are varied interpretations definitions of the same phenomenon, in this case the concept of conflict by individuals and between genders. It is also interesting that both genders selected the definition of conflict as an abstract concept. It can therefore be interpreted that the student respondents' definition of conflict is theoretical. However, under the option, "other" it is apparent that a number of the students' definitions are closely related to their own environment and experiences. This was different from some of the choices made in the given multiple choice questions, where they mainly selected definitions for conflict in abstract terms for instance "disagreements" and "violent events". Importantly, one would have expected the options "bullying", "fights among students", "fights among families and friends" to be selected by most of the cases. Could it be that these types of conflicts are too close to their experiences that they have become normalised?

The key informants were also asked to define “conflict”. Interestingly, as shown in the Table 4.9 below, three out of the four of their responses demonstrate that they define conflict by giving its opposite “peace”. This is in contrast with the student respondents’ responses who define conflict in its own right and not as the opposite of peace.

Table 4.9 Word and meaning of conflict in key informants’ own vernacular

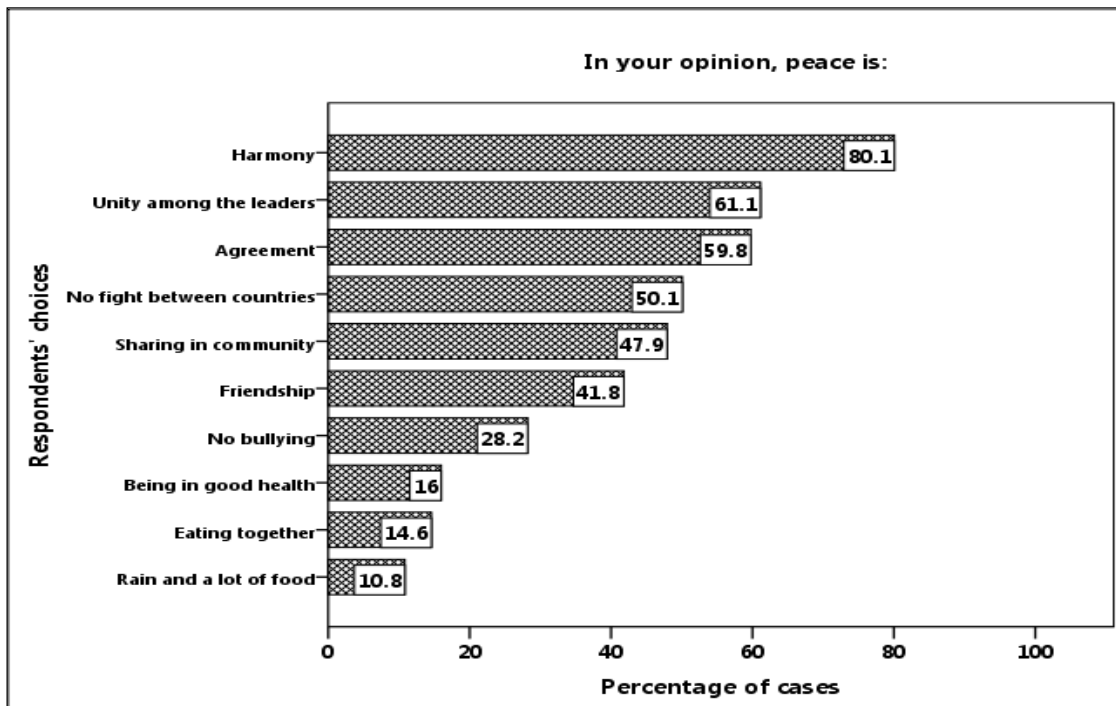
KEY INFORMANTS CODE NO¹	ETHNIC COMMUNITY	NAME FOR CONFLICT IN VERNACULAR¹	WHAT IS THE MEANING?
KYF#23N	Embu ⁷⁴	<i>In greeting we say “waro wega” but problems are not included especially for the men. But one can add if there is a problem for example, coughing the whole night then one might say “waro wega”–but it is not ok because we have coughed the whole night.</i>	<i>Conflict is something people cannot agree/dilemma, outer and inner issue, interest differ</i>
KYM#19RV	Gikūyū	<i>Gūchanio</i>	<i>Pulling in opposite direction</i>
KYF#10RV	Luyia/Luhya	<i>This is the opposite of vulayi or mirembe which means peace.</i>	<i>When in conflict even animals cannot stop at your enemies homestead. You cannot greet them, associate with them in any way. You cannot eat with them and when you are left to be on your own we consider and treat you like a witch.</i>
KYF#18RV	Turkana ⁷⁵	<i>Turkana have a word for conflict since there is always conflict with neighbours for instance the Pokot, Merile- Sudan, Karamajong – UG, Dinka from Sudan and Samburu – Kenya; the word does not need to be violent”</i>	<i>Divergent views, departure of opinions on things</i>

¹KY= Key informant, M=male and F=female, #+numeral=Key informant identification number in the semi-structured interviews, N=Nairobi and RV= Rift Valley

⁷⁴ The Embu people are found in the eastern part of Kenya and in the Kenya population census of 2009, results published in 2010 (KBS, 2010) the people were 324,092 of the Kenya population (38,610,097).

⁷⁵ The Turkana people are found in the northern part of Kenya and are mainly nomadic. In the Kenya population census of 2009, results published in 2010 (KNBS, 2010) the people were 988,592 of the Kenya population (38,610,097).

Following the analysis of student respondents own definitions, the names and meaning of “conflict” from their own vernacular, the student respondents were given a list of definitions of peace. The following root question acted as a guide: *In your opinion peace is:* The total respondents were 512. Of these, the valid cases were 507 (99.0 percent) and the missing cases were 5 (1.0 percent). The respondents were given ten choices from which they could tick as many options as apply. The question generated 2,081 total responses. The total percentage of cases was 410.5 percent. The selected options were captured as multiple response presented in Figure 4.3 below. Of the percentage of cases that selected from the list of the possible definitions of peace, 80.1 percent and 61.1 percent cases chose “harmony” and “unity among the leaders” correspondingly. On the other hand 59.8 percent and 50.1 percent cases chose “agreement” and “no fight between countries” respectively. 47.9 percent and 41.8 percent cases chose “sharing in community” and “friendship” correspondingly. On the other hand, 28.2 percent cases selected “no bullying”. The choices selected by the least percent cases (16 percent, 14.6 percent and 10.8 percent) were “being in good health”, “eating together”, and “rain and a lot of food” in that order.



Figures do not add up to 100 percent - a multiple response question

Figure 4.3 Percentage of cases definition of peace

From Figure 4.3 above, an observation that cannot go unnoticed is that the highest percentage of cases selected “unity among the leaders”. Importantly, during the research the country was still grappling with the aftermath of the post-2007 election violence. Also the two opposing principals, President Mwai Kibaki and Prime Minister, Raila Odinga had agreed to have a coalition government where both would share power equally in order to end the impasse (Juma, 2009). One wonders whether this reality would have influenced the selection in this particular question - where it is noted that the second highest percentage of cases selected “unity among the leaders”.

Analysing these responses further, and seeking to establish the responses across genders, a cross-tabulation was used for this purpose. As shown in Table 4.10 below, 78.0 percent, 56.5 percent and 55.7 percent male cases selected “harmony”, “unity among leaders” and “agreement” in that order. On the other hand, 82.1

percent, 65.9 percent and 63.9 percent female cases selected “harmony”, “unity among leaders” and “agreement” in that order. 10.2 percent and 11.5 percent male and female cases respectively selected “rain and a lot of food” as the option that defines peace least well.

Table 4.10 Student respondents' definition of peace by gender

In your opinion peace is	Gender of student		Total
	Male	Female	
Harmony	199	207	406
	78.0%	82.1%	
Being in good health	41	40	81
	16.1%	15.9%	
Eating together	37	37	74
	14.5%	14.7%	
Rain and a lot of food	26	29	55
	10.2%	11.5%	
Unity among the leaders	144	166	310
	56.5%	65.9%	
Agreement	142	161	303
	55.7%	63.9%	
Friendship	115	97	212
	45.1%	38.5%	
No fight between countries	114	140	254
	44.7%	55.6%	
No bullying	66	77	143
	25.9%	30.6%	
Sharing in community	123	120	243
	48.2%	47.6%	
Total 507(99.0%) valid cases; 5(1.0%) missing cases	255	252	507

Figures do not add up to 100 percent - a multiple response question

As observed in the frequency analysis above, the choices with the most percentage cases between both genders are “harmony”, “unity among leaders” and “agreement”. However, when the respondents’ selected choices are cross-tabulated by gender as shown in Table 4.10 above, more percentage male cases than the

percentage of female cases selected “being in good health”, “friendship” and “sharing in community”. These options selected by more percentage of male cases than the female cases portray a sense of personal comfort and desire for interaction and relationships. On the other hand, more percentage of female cases than the percentage of male cases selected “no fight between countries” and “no bullying”. It can be observed that these options were prefixed by a negative, “no”. Could these responses be pointing at the different genders expectations, stereotypes and also expressing their views of the world? For instance are the males expressing their need for friendship, well-being and a world where people share and interrelate? On the other hand, are the females looking for a caring and inclusive environment and a world that is harmonious? These questions act as a reflection on the importance of capturing the views of the different respondents paying attention to the different variables such as gender.

The student respondents’ own definitions of peace that were captured in the option “other” were collated and are presented in Table 4.11 below.

Table 4.11 Student respondents' own definition of peace

STUDENT RESPONDENTS CODE NO¹	OWN DEFINITION OF PEACE <i>In your opinion peace is ...</i>
S2MN#51	<i>mutual forgiveness of one's wrong deeds</i>
S4MRV#98	<i>free talk between people, no discrimination between elders and youth</i>
S4MRV#125	<i>'I love you'.</i>
S5FN#171	<i>a noiseless environment</i>
S12MRV#395	<i>no stealing cattle</i>
S2FN#43	<i>love within the school and understanding</i>
S14MN#508	<i>peaceful co-existence and cohesive power among people of different communities</i>
S3FRV#91	<i>time when there is a lot of love, understanding and no tension</i>
S14MN#492	<i>peaceful coherence among the human race and other phenomena on the earth surface</i>
S4FRV#129	<i>being with oneself</i>

¹S=numeral=school code, M=male and F=female, N=Nairobi and RV= Rift Valley, numeral after #= Student respondent's identification number in the survey questionnaires

From their own definitions, a common thread is “love” (“I love you”), “co-existence with people and the environment” and “acceptance of differences”.

Furthermore, the respondents were asked to give the name of peace in their own vernacular and their meaning. To facilitate this they were asked the following questions: *What is the word in your vernacular that you would use for peace? What is the meaning of the word?* Some of the student respondents' responses were selected for purposes of illustrations. Below are some of the student respondents from the Somali, Maasai and Kalenjin communities (Table 4.12, 4.13 and 4.14)

Table 4.12 Words and meaning of peace in respondents' own vernacular (Somali)

STUDENT RESPONDENTS CODE NO ¹	NAME FOR PEACE IN VERNACULAR	MEANING
S3FRV#72	<i>Nagay</i>	<i>here is no war or any form of conflict and people are in good terms and happy together</i>
S2MN#56	<i>Nabad</i>	<i>There is no disturbance of any kind.</i>
S2 MN#57	<i>Nabad</i>	<i>to be one hand in doing something</i>
S2MN#60	<i>Nabad</i>	<i>to live together in harmony</i>
S2FN#61	<i>nabad wa fitinka adunko</i>	<i>Peace is the light of the world.</i>
S1MN#7	<i>Amaan</i>	<i>living as one blood community and sharing ideas, matter affecting the community</i>

¹S+numeral=school code, M=male and F=female, N=Nairobi and RV= Rift Valley, numeral after # = Student respondent's identification number in the survey questionnaires.

Table 4.13 Words and meaning of peace in respondents' own vernacular (Maasai)⁷⁶

STUDENT RESPONDENTS CODE NO ¹	NAME FOR PEACE IN VERNACULAR	MEANING
S3FRV#64	<i>Kiserian</i>	<i>peaceful people who live together and united with yourself</i>
S3FRV#74	<i>Soriani</i>	<i>being in good relation with others or harmony</i>
S3FRV#91	<i>Eshipare</i>	<i>good times</i>
S6FRV#184	<i>na boisho too enyorat we nyorata</i>	<i>love and unity among leaders</i>
S12MRV#418	<i>Osotua</i>	<i>living together without conflict</i>

¹S+numeral=school code, M=male and F=female, N=Nairobi and RV= Rift Valley, numeral after # = Student respondent's identification number in the survey questionnaires.

⁷⁶ The Maasai people are found in mainly the Rift Valley. In the Kenya population census of 2009 results published in 2010 (KBS, 2010) (the Maasai people were 841,622 of the total 38,610,097.

Table 4.14 Words and meaning of peace in respondents' own vernacular (Kalenjin)⁷⁷

STUDENT RESPONDENTS CODE NO¹	NAME FOR PEACE IN VERNACULAR	MEANING
S4MRV#98	kalyet (Nandi)	<i>being in good terms with someone or among people regardless of their tribe or social class</i>
S4MRV#103	kalyet (Tugen)	<i>the state of harmony and no conflicts of any kind</i>
S3FRV#86	kalyet (Kipsigis)	<i>the state of being in harmony and understanding among the people</i>
S1MN#41	kalyet (Kalenjin)	<i>living in happiness with other people</i>
S1MN#31	chemyet (Kipsigis)	<i>love/peace/unity</i>
S6FRV#209	kalia (Pokot)	<i>presence of harmony between tribes living together</i>
S4MRV#130	kalia (Pokot)	<i>presence of harmony and good relation and interaction with other members of the society</i>

¹S+numeral=school code, M=male and F=female, N=Nairobi and RV= Rift Valley, numeral after #= Student respondent's identification number in the survey questionnaires.

⁷⁷ The Kalenjin ethnic community inhabit most parts of the Rift Valley (refer to chapter two of this study). During the Kenyan population census conducted in 2009, results published in 2010 (KNBS, 2010) the Kalenjin population was 4, 967,328 people out of the total 38,610,097. The Kalenjin ethnic community is made up of over 19 sub-groups in total. These groups are: the Kipsigis, Nandi, Terik, Pokot, Arror, Bung'omek, Cherangany, Dorobo, Elmolo, Endo Keiyo, Marakwet, Ogiek, Sabaot, Samor, Sengwer, Tugen and Endorois. Of these, the Kipsigis and Nandi sub-groups had the largest number of people, 1,916,317 and 949,835 respectively. Sometimes the Pokot are at the periphery and the Terik grouped with the Nandi (Lynch, 2008; 2011). Some of the student respondents included these divisions in the bio-data.

From the analysis, it is evident from Table 4.14 above that there is no one definition of peace even in one given ethnic community's vernacular. To recap some of the student respondents' responses from the different sub-group of the Kalenjin ethnic community shown in Table 4.14 above, one respondent from the Tugen sub-group says that peace in his vernacular is "*kalyet*" which means "*the state of harmony and no conflicts of any kind*" and the other a member of the Kipsigis sub-group says that peace is "*kalyet*" which means "*the state of being in harmony and understanding among people*". Yet another from the Nandi sub-group says that peace is "*Kalyet*" which means *being in good terms with someone or among people regardless of their tribe or social class.*"

These definitions from the student respondents in their own vernacular and later those of the key informants may be similar to or different from the student respondents' own definition of peace as shown in (Table 4.11 above). Some of the student respondents used words or phrases from 'Sheng' for instance, "*hakuna noma*" (no problem, no disturbances, no worries or conflict) "*tuko poa*" similar to "*We are cool*" a phrase that is common among youth which could mean a sense of calmness and relaxation. From this analysis "harmony", "agreement", "living together happily", "good relations among people" feature as the favourable definition of peace in most of the students' vernaculars. The synopsis of the different definitions of peace from their selection of the choices given in the survey questionnaires, own definitions, definitions from words in their own vernaculars and from their narratives collated from the interviews (semi-structured and focus groups) are shown in Table 4.15 below.

Table 4.15 Synopsis of student respondents' definition of peace

SOURCES OF COLLATED STUDENT RESPONDENTS DEFINITION OF PEACE	SYNOPSIS OF THE MEANING OF PEACE
Captured from the analysis on their selected options: <i>In your opinion peace is:</i>	<i>harmony, unity among leaders and agreement; the males also chose "being in good health", "friendship" and "sharing in community", while the female chose "no fight between countries" and "no bullying"</i>
Student respondents' own definitions	<i>love ("I love you"), co-existence with people and the environment and acceptance of differences, tuko poa (we are cool), hakuna noma (no trouble, no problems), tuko fiti (we are fine)</i>
Definitions from their vernacular and the meaning attached to these definitions	<i>harmony, agreement, living together happily, good relations among people regardless of tribe and social class, acceptance of differences</i>

Table 4.16 Words and meaning of peace in key informants' own vernacular

KEY INFORMANTS CODE NO¹	ETHNIC COMMUNITY	NAME FOR PEACE IN VERNACULAR¹	WHAT IS THE MEANING?
KYF#10RV (a parent)	Luyia/Luhya	Mirembe, vulayi	<i>You have to be friendly with the neighbour for example invite them to your home when there is a function. Also do not miss their functions. Treat your neighbours well. Sharing food.</i>
KYM#22RV (a youth leader)	Kikuyu but using Swahili and Sheng	<i>Tulia, tumetulia, tuko poa, hakuna noma</i>	<i>Calm, understanding, no trouble</i>
KYM#48N (a religious leader)	Kalenjin	<i>Kalya(peace) and Kalyet(the peace) which is the outcome of reconciliation</i>	<i>means order, tranquillity, harmony, well-being and being at rest (but not in the case of death)</i>
KYF#18RV(an education officer)	Turkana	<i>Ekisil</i>	<i>Is broader than the word peace, it includes reconciliation – gentle understanding between people and neighbours</i>

¹KY= Key informant, M=male and F=female, #+numeral=Key informant identification number in the semi-structured interviews, N=Nairobi and RV= Rift Valley

With the initial understanding of the way the student respondents and the key informants define conflict and peace, this section seeks to find out the magnitude of violent conflicts in their school and neighbouring schools. The assumption is that normal conflicts are part and parcel of life but violent conflicts are not. In chapter two, there is an indication that violent conflicts in schools intensified especially in 2001 and 2008. The increase of militia groups and gangs component to this violence is also highlighted. Bearing this in mind, the next section will deal with the youth narratives on their engagement in and/or observation of violent conflicts in schools and wider society.

4.2 YOUTH NARRATIVES: EXPERIENCES OF VIOLENT CONFLICTS IN SCHOOLS AND WIDER SOCIETY

In order to find out the extent of violent conflicts in schools, the respondents were asked: *Have you ever had violent conflict(s) in your school?* The responses for these questions were coded 1 = Yes, 2 = No and 3 = Missing value. The following are the students' responses to the first question on the conflicts in their own schools. All the 512 respondents answered this question. From the responses, Figure 4.4 below shows that a vast majority of respondents (77.9 percent) indicated that there were violent conflicts in their school while slightly over a fifth (22.1 percent) said "no".

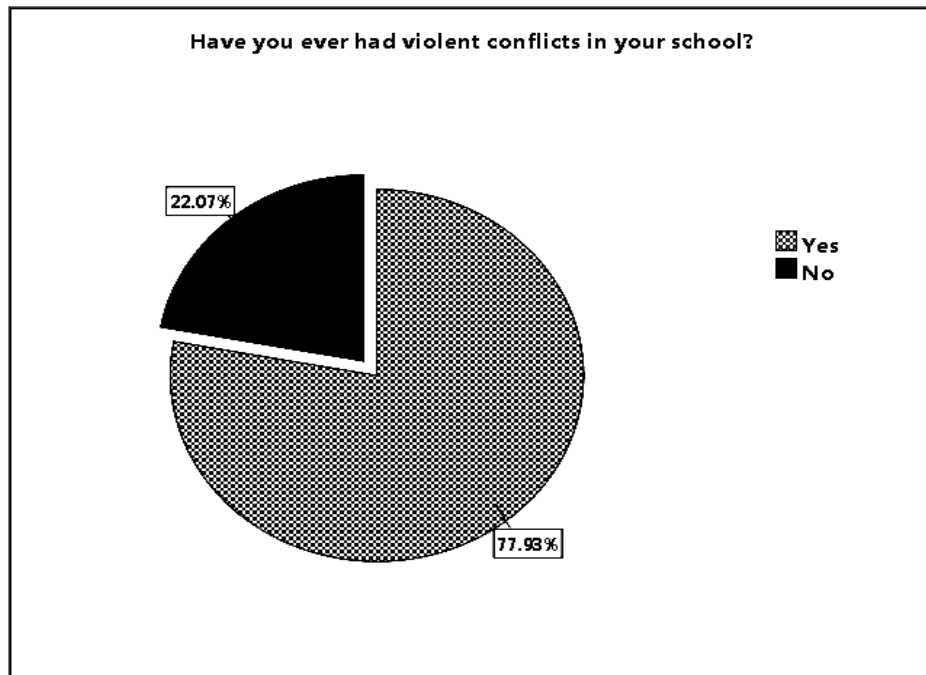


Figure 4.4 Students responses: occurrence of violent conflicts in own schools

The result captured in Figure 4.4 above (analysis of the closed question of the survey questionnaire about conflicts in students’ own school) is substantiated by the responses to the open questions which were captured in the qualitative thematic analysis. The majority of students indicated that the violent conflicts that took place in their schools were between the administration and students, support staff and students, students among themselves and also between parents and the administration. They also reported that in some cases there was destruction of school property for instance dormitories and the administration blocks, marching out of school and demanding to be addressed by a Ministry of Education Officer, throwing out the school food in protest or engaging in “*a war of silence*” by declining to respond to teachers during lessons.

In the responses to the open question on how often they experienced violent conflicts in their schools, the responses were varied with some claiming that they have them weekly, others once a term, yet others yearly as this respondent noted:

“Annually, as I said, this year too.”⁷⁸ Yet in other cases “rarely” or “never”. Even so, they pointed out that non-violent conflicts are experienced frequently, “*Wat!!! Lyk [What like] personal conflicts between friends are sooo! Frequent!*”⁷⁹ They experience them daily for instance in the case of noisemaking in class, misunderstanding and quarrels among themselves.

From the responses in Figure 4.4 above, it is not possible to find out how many male or female students were claiming to have had violent conflicts or not in their schools. Therefore, seeking to establish the responses across genders, a cross-tabulation was used. Figure 4.5 below illustrates the responses of the student respondents by gender. The total number of respondents was 512 and all responded. Those who said that they had conflict(s) in their schools were total 41.6 percent males and 36.3 percent females. 9.2 percent males and 12.9 percent females said that they did not have conflict(s) in their schools.



Figure 4.5 Student respondents: violence in own schools by gender

⁷⁸ Survey questionnaire, S4M#125RV, March 2010

⁷⁹ Survey questionnaire, S4F#133RV, March 2010

From Figure 4.5, above, it is evident that both the males and females had conflicts in their schools. Considering that some of these respondents are from an all girls' school, the results are revealing. This is due to the fact that popular views are that girls are more "disciplined" and "less violent than boys". In cases of conflicts in mixed schools, sometimes the girls have been perceived as victims therefore the peacebuilding programmes/interventions have focused more on boys' alone. Yet both boys and girls could benefit from such peacebuilding programmes that could be tailored to deal with the uniqueness of each gender.

Regarding violent conflicts in their neighbouring schools, the respondents were asked: *Do you know of any conflict(s) in secondary schools near your school?* All the 512 students responded positively. It is interesting to note the sharp contrast in the respondents' responses about conflicts in their own school and what goes on in their neighbouring schools. Curiously, student respondents know of widespread violent conflict(s) in their neighbouring schools but not all of them are aware of it in their own schools. For instances some were quick to point out that violent conflicts are common in the neighbouring schools "*at least in that school it happens every term.*"⁸⁰ This was corroborated by one of the key informant, a support staff and parent in a neighbouring school:

*"In our neighbouring school the boys destroy property, then they hide in the forest. There are times that the boys used a weapon. This is a school that has problems all the times."*⁸¹

This raises the question: What were the issues of discontent experienced in the neighbouring schools that were different from those in the students' own schools?

⁸⁰ Survey questionnaire, S12M#397RV, March 2010.

⁸¹ The interview was conducted in Kikuyu on KYM#3RV (parent and support staff), February 2010 (could not speak Swahili or English).

As a follow-up to the earlier question on whether there are violent conflicts in the student respondents' schools and neighbouring schools, the student respondents were asked: *Were you involved in the conflict?* From Table 4.17 below, of the 512 students, slightly over a quarter (27.3 percent) said "yes" whereas 72.7 percent said "no". It is often the case that a relative minority are involved in violent conflicts. Interestingly, in this case, slightly over a quarter (27.3 percent) were involved which is a high percentage of respondents to be ignored. Could this preliminary finding assist in explicating the current trend in youth violence as highlighted in chapter two, (Section 2.3 Youth violence: from the past to the present)?

Table 4.17 Student respondents involvement in conflict(s)

	Frequency	Percent
Were you involved in the conflicts?		
Yes	140	27.3
No	372	72.7
Total	512	100.0

Additionally, cross-tabulations by gender, location and education levels were carried out for comparison. Figure 4.6 below illustrates that out of 512 students (260 males and 252 females), slightly over a quarter, 27.3 percent (15.4 percent males and 11.9 percent females) indicated that they were involved in the conflict(s). However, 72.7 percent (37.3 percent females and 35.4 percent males) indicated that they were not involved in the conflict(s). Notably from the data, the percentage of males who indicated that they were or not involved in the conflicts is close to that of the females. As noted earlier, there are popular views that boys' schools are more violent than girls' schools. It is likely that violence in boys' schools is more overtly

expressed than in the case of the girls' schools. But it could also be due to some cultural influences that tend to encourage boys to be aggressive and girls to be gentle (Kameri-Mbote, 2000).

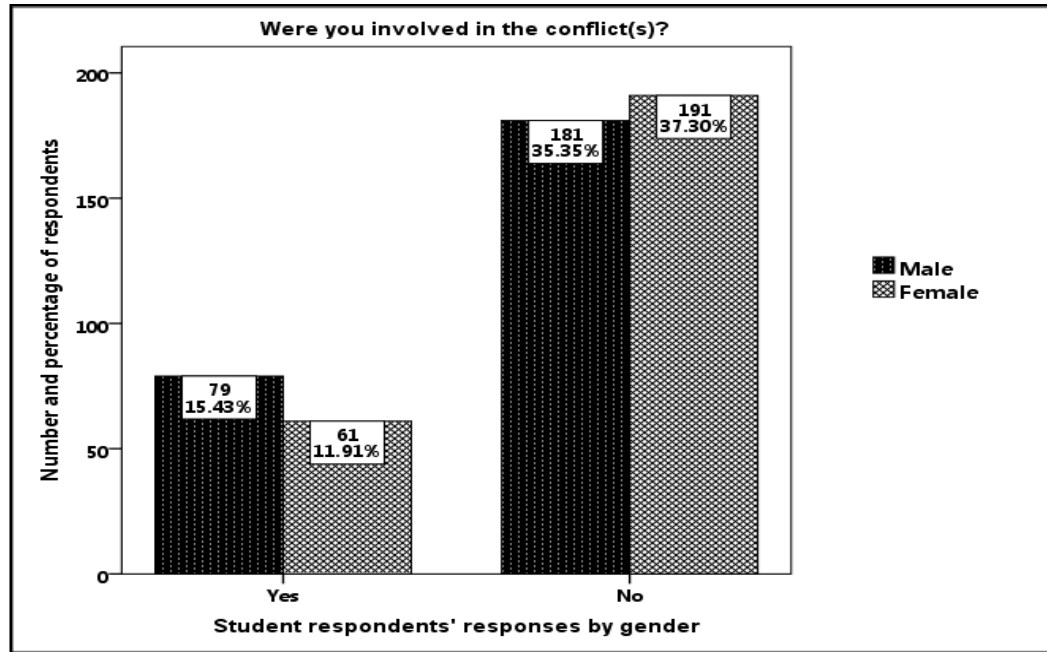


Figure 4.6 Student respondents involvement in conflict(s) by gender

A cross-tabulation by location of schools was carried out to find out the youth involvement in the violent conflicts in their school in the two locations. From Table 4.18 below it can be observed that a vast majority of students 72.4 percent in Rift Valley and 73.2 percent in Nairobi provinces indicated that they were not involved in the conflict(s). However, slightly over a quarter (27.6 percent and 26.8 percent) in the Rift Valley and Nairobi provinces respectively responded in the affirmative. As noted in the analysis, Figure 4.6 above the percentage that is involved in these violent conflicts in both the locations cannot be overlooked.

Table 4.18 Student respondents involvement in conflict(s) by school location

Were you involved in the conflict(s)?	Location of school		Total
	Rift Valley Province	Nairobi Province	
Yes	95	45	140
	27.6%	26.8%	27.3%
No	249	123	372
	72.4%	73.2%	72.7%
Total	344	168	512
	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>100.0%</i>	<i>100.0%</i>

Further, of interest was to find out how the different Forms (one to four) responded to this question. Table 4.19 below shows that of those who claim to be involved in the conflict(s), only Form four had over a third of respondents (35.8 percent) who said that they were involved. The other three Forms (one, two and three) had (25.0 percent, 24.3 percent and 23.0 percent in that order) of student respondents who indicated that they were involved in the conflict(s). Could it be that the Form four students, who are in their final year of secondary schooling, would have engaged in more conflict(s)? However, if this were the case, what explains the fact that the Form three percentages of respondents (23.0 percent) is the lowest among all the Forms that claim to have been involved in the conflicts in their schools? Therefore one can assume that the Form three were reluctant to show their involvement in the violent conflicts.

Also, what is the explanation of the high percentage of Form one student (25.0 percent) respondents that were involved in violent conflicts considering they were relatively new in their schools? The responses from some of the student respondents in Form one may partly explain this. Some Form one respondents

indicated that they had been involved in violent conflicts in their primary schools but not in the secondary school. The main conflicts that they cited were fights and use of derogatory remarks against a rival school. Also they shared that they would gang up and waylay a teacher whom they experienced or perceived as their “enemy”. Since some of these teachers lived in the students’ neighbourhood, aggrieved students could waylay them with ease.

Table 4.19 Student respondents involvement in conflict(s) by education levels

Were you involved in the conflict(s)? By education levels	Education level of student				Total
	Form 1	Form 2	Form 3	Form 4	
Yes	20	25	41	54	140
	25.0%	24.3%	23.0%	35.8%	27.3%
No	60	78	137	97	372
	75.0%	75.7%	77.0%	64.2%	72.7%
Total	80	103	178	151	512
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Importantly, in the open-ended question, both the male and female students pointed out that they were involved in the day-to-day conflicts but not the violent ones. They indicated that some of the main conflicts they experience and observed on a daily basis in the schools are among others: abuse of power by prefects, noisemaking in class and use of abusive language by students, teachers and support staff. Also other conflicts are caning and a chain of bullying especially of junior classes by the senior ones. Notably, *monolisation* is a form of bullying of new students in the school especially Form one, but as noted in some of the narratives the students have accepted it as a form of induction from primary schools to high school

(Kamunde, 2010). This form of bullying tends to be enhanced by ranking in schools. This will be revisited in this chapter. While the students consider these conflicts as normal conflicts the researcher regards some of them such as bullying and abuse of power by prefects as violent as will be analysed later in this chapter and other chapters below.

To respond to an earlier question above, a brief explanation on ranking in the Kenyan schools would suffice at this point. Ranking is experienced in different ways in the different schools captured in the survey. It is not uncommon to find schools where students in the senior Forms (four and three) and prefects enjoy privileges that the students in the junior Forms (two and one) or students who are not in position of leadership do not have. For instance, in some boys' schools, students from the senior Forms (three and four) are allowed to wear trousers while those in the junior Forms (one and two) are expected to be in shorts. In some of the surveyed schools where this is a practice, the students in the junior Forms were expressing their dissatisfaction for these discriminative practices that happen in their schools. They indicated that even in the cold seasons they are not allowed to be in trousers.

In some boarding schools rank is also experienced in the dormitories where the students from junior Forms sleep in dormitories that lack privacy (one building without partition), where beds are arranged in rows with only one narrow passage to allow students access to their beds. In most of these schools there is only one exit door per dormitory posing danger in times of emergencies. Important to note is that some students have died in such dormitories due to fires set by aggrieved students or whose genesis and motive is unclear. One such incident is the Kyanguli tragedy highlighted in chapter two. On the other hand, the students in the senior Forms share cubicles usually four students per cubicle.

Interesting, during the field research, one of the key informants - a parent and support staff in one of the surveyed schools - expected ranking to be applied in the school to differentiate those girls that have undergone the rite of passage - the female genital mutilation (FGM). He expressed dissatisfaction that his daughter had to use the same changing room while preparing to go for sports as the “uncircumcised girls” and boys in the school.

After establishing to what extent the respondents were or not involved in the violent conflicts, of interest were to find out what led to these conflicts in both the student respondents’ schools and the neighbouring schools. In the case of the student respondents’ schools, the students were asked an open-ended question: *In your opinion, what do you think led to the conflict(s)?* This was to give them freedom to share as many factors as possible that led to these conflicts. All the 512 students responded. Some of the factors they gave were food related issues, interference with entertainment, teachers’ use of excessive force in administering punishment, accumulated stress, favouritism shown towards prefects whom some referred to as “*little teachers*” or “*macho (Swahili for eyes) of the administration*”, high handedness of school authority and lack of consultation on issues that affect students, for instance, selection of prefects and modifying or introducing new school rules.

However, regarding conflicts in the student respondents’ neighbouring school, the following question acted as a guide: *In your opinion, what do you think led to the conflict(s)? (Please tick those that apply from the list below).* The respondents were also given an opportunity to give their own views under the option “other”. It was also in order to gauge some of the key factors that could explain the prevalence of youth conflicts in other schools.

There were 512 student respondents. Of these, 500 (97.7 percent) were valid cases and 12 (2.3 percent) were missing cases. The student respondents were given nine choices from which they could choose as many options as applied. The question generated 1406 total responses. The total percentage of cases was 281.2. The selected options were captured as multiple responses presented in the Table 4.20 below. 62.0 percent cases selected “lack of understanding from the administration” followed by 52.8 percent and 49.2 percent cases that selected “poor diet” and “stress from academic work” respectively. On the other hand, 33.6 percent cases opted for “insufficient food”. The least percentage of cases (12.0 percent and 11.0 percent) selected “lack of learning materials” and “lack of water” in that order.

Table 4.20 Students on factors leading to conflict(s) in neighbouring schools

<i>In your opinion, what do you think led to the conflict(s)?</i>	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Poor diet	264	18.8%	52.8%
Insufficient food	168	11.9%	33.6%
Poor boarding facilities	114	8.1%	22.8%
Lack of learning materials	60	4.3%	12.0%
Stress from academic work	246	17.5%	49.2%
Lack of understanding from the administration	310	22.0%	62.0%
Lack of commitment from teachers	84	6.0%	16.8%
Lack of water	55	3.9%	11.0%
Peer influence	105	7.5%	21.0%
Total 500(97.7%) valid cases; 12(2.3%) missing cases	1406	100.0%	281.2%

Figures do not add up to 100 percent - a multiple response question

From the above analysis, it seems that the factors that led to violent conflicts in their neighbouring schools are poor administration approaches, student welfare issues such as poor diet, insufficient food and stress from academic work.

Additionally, some of the key factors that the key informants attributed to youth violence was lack of understanding of youth and youth issues from the leaders as this key informant, an education scholar contends, “*Adults need to modify their pedagogical experiences and opportunities to go with the way the youth see reality if they have to deal with youth.*”⁸² Lack of good role models, lack of involvement in decision making, lack of leisure activities, lack of job opportunities indiscipline, drug and alcohol abuse, involvement in militia groups such as Mungiki, and parents shunning their responsibilities were some of the other responses from the key informants explaining reasons for youth participation in violence. Curiously, some of these views echo the youth narratives in schools as regards exclusion from decision making, lack of leisure time and lack of good role models. This is revisited mainly in chapter six.

4.3 YOUTH NARRATIVES: EXPRESSING FULLFILLED AND UNFULFILLED NEEDS

In order to probe more the issue of conflicts and what might contribute to or act as triggers to such conflicts a key question was: *Which things in your school are you happy about?* There were 512 respondents. 505 (98.6 percent) were valid cases and 7 (1.4 percent) were the missing cases. The question generated 1,520 total responses. The total percentages of cases were 301.0 percent. The student respondents were given six options and asked to tick those that applied. Table 4.21 below shows that three choices were selected the most between the genders but there was a difference in the order of preference. For instance, 71.8 percent, 57.1 percent

⁸² Semi-structured interview, KYM#38N (University lecturer), April 2010

and 56.0 percent of male cases selected “the school facilities”, “school outings” and “clubs and societies” in that order. 63.4 percent, 62.6 percent and 50.8 percent of female cases selected “clubs and societies”, “the school facilities” and “school diet” in that order. The other popular choice was the “the school timetable” which was selected 46.3 percent of male cases and 49.2 percent of female cases respectively. However, as has been the pattern the least percent of cases (23.6 males and 27.2 females) selected “the prefects’ body”. An interesting observation is that more female cases selected “clubs and societies” than the male cases. The issue of “clubs and societies” will be dealt with at length in chapter six (Section 6.5 - ways of coping with conflicts).

Table 4.21 Students on things they are happy about by gender

Which things in your school are you happy about?	Gender of student		Total
	Male	Female	
School diet	117	125	242
	45.2%	50.8%	
The prefects’ body	61	67	128
	23.6%	27.2%	
The school timetable	120	121	241
	46.3%	49.2%	
The school facilities	186	154	340
	71.8%	62.6%	
Clubs and societies	145	156	301
	56.0%	63.4%	
School outings	148	118	266
	57.1%	48.0%	
Total 505(98.4 percent, missing 7 (1.4 percent))	259	246	505

Figures do not add up to 100 percent because it is a multiple set response question.

A further analysis was carried out cross-tabulating the student responses by location. From Table 4.22 below, among the cases 62.6 percent and 76.8 percent in both the Rift Valley and Nairobi respectively selected “the school facilities”. Next 56.7 percent and 65.5 percent cases in the Rift Valley and Nairobi respectively selected “clubs and societies” and 50.7 percent and 56.5 percent cases in Rift Valley and Nairobi provinces correspondingly selected “school outings”. 53.0 percent cases in Nairobi province chose the “school diet” while in the Rift Valley the cases were 45.4 percent. The least percent cases (24.9 percent and 26.2 percent) in the Rift Valley and Nairobi provinces respectively selected “the prefects’ body”. Except for those cases that selected “the school timetable” in the Rift Valley which were slightly higher than in Nairobi (47.8 and 47.6 percent cases) respectively, all the cases that selected particular options were higher in Nairobi than in the Rift Valley.

Table 4.22 Students on things they are happy about by location

Which things in your school are you happy about?	Location of school		Total
	Rift Valley Province	Nairobi Province	
School diet	153	89	242
	45.4%	53.0%	
The prefects’ body	84	44	128
	24.9%	26.2%	
The school timetable	161	80	241
	47.8%	47.6%	
The school facilities	211	129	340
	62.6%	76.8%	
Clubs and societies	191	110	301
	56.7%	65.5%	
School outings	171	95	266
	50.7%	56.5%	
Total	337	168	505

Figures do not add up to 100 percent because it is a multiple set response question

From the responses to the open questions, it was evident that there were more varieties of leisure activities offered in schools in Nairobi province than in the Rift Valley. The assumption is that there are adequate and developed facilities the fact that Nairobi is a capital city. However, in the students' narratives, it is evident that there are inadequate leisure facilities in some of the schools in the informal settlements (slums) in Nairobi and also in some rural schools in the Rift Valley. Further they point out that this has sometimes led to violent conflicts in their schools and neighbouring schools.

Probing further in order to find out what the students are happy about in their schools, the responses were cross-tabulated by student's education level. The rationale was to find out what issues are of interest to students in the different Form levels. How comparable or contrasting are they? Of importance would be the implication of what such an analysis would reveal for those who are involved in the running of the school. For instance, how are needs of the different Forms in the school catered for? Are needs of a particular Form, for instance to engage in an activity, generalised as the need for the whole school? At a glance, Table 4.23 below shows that among the student respondents the highest percent of cases in Form one and two (78.5 percent and 81.6 percent) respectively, selected "the school facilities". In addition, the percent of cases in Form one and two (73.4 percent and 64.1 percent cases) in that order selected "clubs and societies". 53.2 percent and 50.5 percent in Form one and two respectively selected "the school timetable". On the other hand, the percentage of cases in Form three (55.4 percent) selected both "the school facilities" and "school outings". 54.3 percent cases selected "clubs and societies". However, the highest percentages of cases in Form four (65.5 percent, 62.2 percent and 55.4 percent) selected "the school facilities", "school outings" and "clubs and

societies” in that order. However, apart from Form one whose lowest percentage of cases (36.7) selected “school outings”, the least percentage of cases in the other three Forms (24.3 percent, 22.3 percent and 23.0 percent in that order) selected “the prefects’ body”. It is not surprising that the least percentage of cases in Form one selected “school outings” because at the time of the survey the Form one students had just reported and were still adjusting to the secondary school milieu.

Table 4.23 Students on things they are happy about by education levels

Which things in your school are you happy about?	Education level of student				Total
	Form 1	Form 2	Form 3	Form 4	
School diet	36	51	85	70	242
	45.6%	49.5%	48.6%	47.3%	
The prefects’ body	30	25	39	34	128
	38.0%	24.3%	22.3%	23.0%	
The school timetable	42	52	78	69	241
	53.2%	50.5%	44.6%	46.6%	
The school facilities	62	84	97	97	340
	78.5%	81.6%	55.4%	65.5%	
Clubs and societies	58	66	95	82	301
	73.4%	64.1%	54.3%	55.4%	
School outings	29	48	97	92	266
	36.7%	46.6%	55.4%	62.2%	
Total 505(98.4 percent) missing 7 (1.4 percent)	79	103	175	148	505

¹Figures do not add up to 100 percent because it is a multiple set response question

From the above analysis, as expected, different Forms have shown their preference for particular options. A brief look at some of these may be of interest as a way of informing this study. For instance, Form one and two showed that they were happy with the “school timetable” and less percentage cases selected “school

outings”. Could this be an indication that they need assistance and time to structure their lives between studies and leisure? Or is this a case of preference for a structured way of life to enable them settle in a secondary school setting? Assuming that Forms three and four have developed a study pattern would they be expecting a more relaxed timetable than those students in Form one and two? It would be interesting to find out how for instance students’ issues and interest from these varied educational levels of the Kenyan secondary school nomenclature are catered for in the different schools. Does the school structure cater for these differences? What mechanisms are in place to ensure that only the parties that are involved in an issue, for instance conflict(s), are also involved in the problem solving? Could these differences create conflicts if not handled effectively? Chapter five and chapter six below shed more light on this.

A follow-up question to the previous one (on things that the respondents are happy about) was: *Which things in your school would you like to see done differently?* In total there were 512 respondents 490 (95.7 percent) of valid cases and 22 (4.3 percent) missing. The student respondents were given six options and asked to tick those that apply. From Table 4.24 below, it is apparent that 60.5 percent, 52.2 percent, 49.4 percent of male cases selected “school entertainment”, “the relationship between teachers and students” and the “school diet” in that order. Among the female cases, 57.4 percent, 53.2 percent and 40.5 percent selected “school entertainment”, “the relationship between teachers and students” and “the school rules” in that order. In terms of priority, the male and female cases first two selected choices were similar but differed in the third choice. While most of the male cases selected the “school diet”, most of the female cases chose “the school rules”.

However, 21.3 percent male cases and 13.9 percent female cases selected “the prefects’ body” the least.

Table 4.24 Students on things they would like to see done differently by gender

<i>Which things in your school would you like to see done differently?</i>	Gender of student		Total
	Male	Female	
The school rules	105	96	201
	41.5%	40.5%	
The relationship between teachers and students	132	126	258
	52.2%	53.2%	
School entertainment	153	136	289
	60.5%	57.4%	
School visiting days	76	72	148
	30.0%	30.4%	
School diet	125	82	207
	49.4%	34.6%	
The prefects’ body	54	33	87
	21.3%	13.9%	
Total 490(95.7 percent) missing 22 (4.3 percent)	253	237	490

¹*Figures do not add up to 100 percent because it is a multiple set response question*

From the selection above, the choice “the school rules” by most of the female cases and “school diet” by the male cases are interesting. First, considering the female choice, “the school rules” this confirms some of the popular views that were noted during this field research. Some of these views were captured in the narratives of the principals and other key informants where most of them stated that girls need to be protected. Therefore there seemed to be too many rules in the girls’ schools especially concerning going out and relating with the opposite sex. This was confirmed when the researcher studied some of the schools’ log books and daily

routine records for instance the punishment book (referred to in some schools as the *black book*). In all the surveyed girls' boarding schools, there were too many rules restricting the girls from leaving the school premises except when they were attending organised functions. Equally, there was evidence of greater restriction in the girls' day schools than in similar type of boys' schools. Some of the girls shared that they had been punished for speaking to people near the school fence or for inviting a music icon or not carrying a hymn book to church. One girl narrates,

*“Sometimes “kuna vikwazo mingi sana” [Swahili for there are too many restrictions or rules] where you are always told to stop doing something e.g. to stop misbehaving or to stop speaking loudly or to stop engaging in activities we enjoy doing.”*⁸³

Interestingly, such restrictions are not common in the boys' schools. In fact in one of the schools surveyed, the boys are free to go out on weekends.

From the student narrative above and the views of the key informants, there is evidence of structural barriers that tend to enhance violence against the female students and also enhance cultural prejudices where the female is seen as vulnerable (Kameri-Mbote, 2000). The implication of this is that it could enhance the discrimination that girls normally experience both in the schools and the wider Kenyan society. This also leads to the overlooking of the girls' needs for self-expression, adventure and freedom of association with both sexes. Importantly, by restricting them from activities they enjoy doing, this may curtail their opportunities for personal development that could otherwise benefit them.

Supporting the narratives on the issue of too many rules and regulations that students experience in their schools is an example from one of the mixed schools. In this school the students are restricted from relating with each other as expressed in

⁸³ Focus group discussion, S3F#5RV, February, 2010

this narrative: “*Conflicts in a school happens when there is no freedom to relate with the opposite sex and yet the school is a mixed one.*”⁸⁴. The students from this school also expressed their dissatisfaction with the fact that they are not allowed to relate with the opposite sex except while in the classroom. Those who defy this rule are punished. One gave his own personal experience when he was suspended for speaking to a girl in their school. He attributed this to the fact that their school is a committed Christian school.

Interestingly, the male cases selected the “school diet”. Considering the popular belief and stereotypical attitude in both the schools and wider society, that the males in schools are happy with whatever school diet is provided as long as the amount is adequate, this is not true according to the male student respondents. They claim that the school authority does not consider this as an important issue. For example, in the focus groups the students kept referring to the statements that the principals use when they (the students) request a discussion on the school-diet related issues. Some of the examples captured were: “*Does this add value to your learning?*” “*What brought you to school?*” “*Remember you are in school to learn, other things are secondary.*” Further, they stressed that this attitude of the school administration has led to some of the unrest in schools. Interesting, could the reaction of the school authority to school-diet related issues raised by students be emanating from the fact that in Kenya there is a tendency to over rate academic performance especially in national examinations that welfare issues such as adequate and quality food, leisure activities, their personal issues and capacity building for problem-solving and students expectations are considered as not important and therefore are left on the periphery. These and other grievances that have been pointed

⁸⁴ Survey questionnaire, S4M#97RV, March 2010

out so far seem compounded by the fact that there is minimal involvement of students in the running of their schools. These are areas that need expounding and thus will be dealt with in more details in chapter five and six below.

Additionally, it seems that most of the cases selected those areas that they had a passion for and have expectations that they can manage to change. For instance, in the open questions and the semi-structured interviews, the students were very animated about the school entertainment. They pointed out that in their schools and some of their neighbouring schools violent strikes had taken place after those in authority had interfered with the school entertainment. They viewed the school entertainment as a time for them to interact with each other especially the opposite sex, to develop their talents and to *chuck*⁸⁵ stress. As far as they were concerned, this was the only time they could be on their own without adults' interference. The link between school entertainment and conflict in schools will be revisited in chapters five and six below.

Further, the responses to this same question were cross-tabulated by education levels (Table 4.25 below). It was interesting to observe the pattern of selection in the different education levels. For example, among the student respondents, 44.0 percent of cases in Form one selected the "school diet" while 61.1 percent and 70.3 percent cases in Form two and three respectively selected the "school entertainment". 69.6 percent cases in Form four selected "the relationship between teachers and students". This analysis shows each Form's main preference.

⁸⁵ Students use this word to mean "releasing stress".

Table 4.25 Students on things they would like done differently by education levels

Which things in your school would you like to see done differently?	Education level of student				Total
	Form 1	Form 2	Form 3	Form 4	
The school rules	23	46	80	52	201
	30.7%	48.4%	46.5%	35.1%	
The relationship between teachers and students	25	43	87	103	258
	33.3%	45.3%	50.6%	69.6%	
School entertainment	27	58	121	83	289
	36.0%	61.1%	70.3%	56.1%	
School visiting days	14	29	56	49	148
	18.7%	30.5%	32.6%	33.1%	
School diet	33	46	72	56	207
	44.0%	48.4%	41.9%	37.8%	
The Prefects' body	15	21	28	23	87
	20.0%	22.1%	16.3%	15.5%	
Total 490(95.7 percent) missing 22 (4.3 percent)	75	95	172	148	490

¹Figures do not add up to 100 percent because it is a multiple set response question

Of interest would be to find out why some Forms have opted for some options and not others. For instance, what explains the high percentage of Form four that selected “the relationship between teachers and students”? It is likely that the Form four who are in their final year of secondary school consider closeness to teachers a key factor in ensuring that they pass the examination. These responses show the importance of not generalising when dealing with conflicts whether in the school or the wider society. For instance, some student respondents pointed out that sometimes violent unrest emanates when individual students are blamed “*for things that their Form has done*” and that this also happens when “*all the Forms are punished when only one Form is responsible for the misbehaviour.*”

From the selection above, it would seem that there is a preference that “the prefects’ body” remains the same. It is likely that the student respondents would

rather not have anything to do with the prefects' body. But on the other hand it could be due to the fact that their input was not sought during the process of selecting prefects. Equally, the students could have misinterpreted the question considering the fact that throughout this research, the respondents have been consistent in selecting the prefects' body as an area of tension and a trigger to some conflicts in the school setting.

Despite the measures that are now in place to address the issue of the prefects and their leadership roles in the schools, through the introduction of the student councils and the annual students' representative meetings as noted in chapter two this remains a real challenge. As noted in chapter two (section 2.3, youth violence) above, prefects have been targets of attack by the rest of the students' body and some have lost their lives as a result. Also in the focus group with some prefects in one of the girls' boarding school in the Rift Valley province the prefects expressed the fear, humiliation and abuse - mainly psychological - that they experience when students and teachers use derogatory remarks about them and their ability to carry out their prefectorial duties. One expressed her frustration when she pointed out,

“The students chose us but they do not want to obey. When you ask them to do something they are rude, sometimes they walk away and gang against you with their friends. The teachers blame you for everything. You are expected to do so much and pass well in examinations. When you don't you are told as a prefect you should be at the top academically. Where do you belong? It is very difficult. Yet when you want to leave the responsibility of being a prefect, you are asked so many questions. It is difficult to be a prefect. It is full of stress, yani!”⁸⁶ [“yani” is a Swahili common expression which could literally be translated as “I tell you.”]

The above narrative received support from the prefects in the focus group. Some contributed to the discussion by noting that the expectations from both the students

⁸⁶ Focus group discussion, S3F#3RV, February, 2010
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and the administration is too high and yet all should know that prefects are students as well.

A further analysis was to establish the level of dissatisfaction concerning the prefects' body across the different Forms in the schools? Figure 4.7 below shows how the different Forms would have responded if the question was “Which things in your school are you happy about? and then were given only one option to show whether they agree or not. In this case the choice is “the prefects' body”. Using the data that was already coded in the multiple response question (Table 4.25 above), the analysis would present the results below (Figure 4.7). 30 (5.9 percent) Form one, 25 (4.9 percent) Form two, 39(7.6 percent) Form three and 34(6.6 percent) Form four would respond in the affirmative. On the other hand, 50 (9.8 percent) Form one, 78 (15.2 percent) Form two, 139(27.2 percent) Form three and 117(22.9 percent) Form four would respond in the negative. Hence, what could be the problem between the students and the prefects? Why the widespread dissatisfaction? This will be dealt with in chapters five and six below.

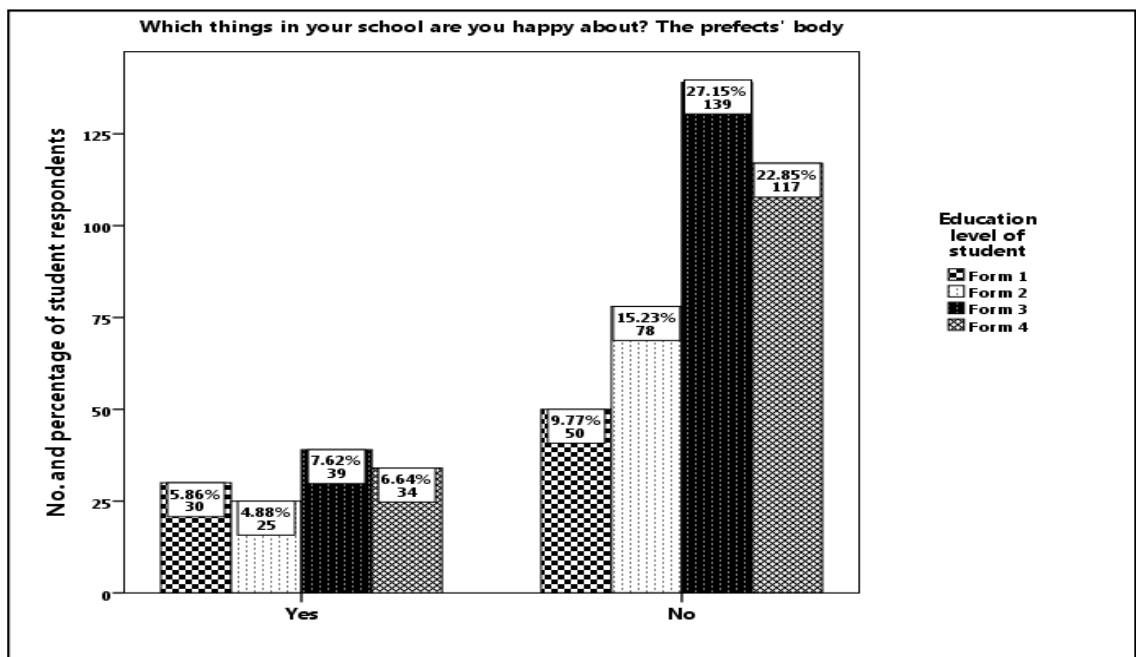


Figure 4.7 Students' views on prefects' body by education levels

The next section of this chapter is an analysis on youth's narratives, on youth militia groups and gangs, their participation in and/ or observation of these militia groups and gangs and their activities.

4.4 YOUTH DEFINING MILITIA GROUPS AND GANGS, THEIR ACTIVITIES AND YOUTH INVOLVEMENT

Given the increase in youth militia groups and gangs in Kenya (chapter two 2.3 on youth violence revisited at the beginning of this chapter) and youth involvement in militia and gang activities in both the schools and wider society, especially during the post-2007 election violence and to some extent in schools, some fundamental questions are raised. How do the communities and the government authorities view the militia groups and gangs? How comparable are these views with those of the students and the youth militia and gangs participants in this survey? The responses to these questions are discussed below and in chapter five and six.

Before analysing the youth narratives on the activities of militia groups and gangs, it was of interest to find out how the youth define these groups. One open-ended question was used as a guide. *How would you describe a typical member of militia groups and gangs?* To respond to this question, the respondents were given some variables as a guide such as age, gender, education, religion, mode of dress and mode of communication. Their responses were collated, coded and analysed using a statistical package as noted in chapter three (methodology). Only some of these variables will be analysed that is age, gender, education level, ethnic compositions and mode of communication. In addition, the student respondents were asked to give their views on why the youth join militia groups and gangs. Importantly, the members of militia groups/sects and gangs in this study had an opportunity to share

their narratives. The rationale for this was to give them the opportunity to express themselves and also for a better understanding and comparison of their own definitions, experiences/perceptions and that of the student respondents, key informants and the wider society. It was also to investigate the truth of the claim from the student respondents themselves that pressure from their peers and the violence they experience from the teachers and the school principals sometimes leads them to join these groups. Equally, they shared that they join militia groups and gangs voluntarily for bonding and comfort because they feel accepted in these groups, for security especially financially, to have extra pocket money “*which we do not have to account to parents*”⁸⁷ (a view supported by the student in a focus group in the school coded S3

Table 4.26 below shows the student respondents’ views on the age of a militia group or gang member. Over half (56.2 percent) of males and 59.8 percent of females respondents indicated that a member of a militia group and gang is between 16-20 age in years. However, 22.3 percent of males and 15.7 percent of females said that they are between 11-15 years in age. 14.2 percent of the males and 16.9 percent of the females indicated that they are between 21-25 years in age. Below 10 percent of both males and females indicated that the members were over 25 years of age. Below 2 percent said that they did not know. Figure 4.8 is a graphic representation of the data captured and analysed in Table 4.26 below.

⁸⁷ Focus group discussion, S3F#10RV, February, 2010
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Table 4.26 Students' views: age of members of militia groups and gangs by gender

How would you describe a typical member of militia groups and gangs? Age	Gender of student		Total
	Male	Female	
11-15	58	39	97
	22.3%	15.7%	19.1%
16-20	146	149	295
	56.2%	59.8%	58.0%
21-25	37	42	79
	14.2%	16.9%	15.5%
26-30	11	10	21
	4.2%	4.0%	4.1%
31-35	6	2	8
	2.3%	.8%	1.6%
36-40	1	4	5
	.4%	1.6%	1.0%
I do not know	1	3	4
	.4%	1.2%	.8%
Total	260	249	509
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Regarding the gender composition of a typical member of militia groups and gangs (Table 4.27), a vast majority (81.5 percent) male and 73.8 percent female respondents indicated that they are “male only”. On the other hand, 17.7 percent males and slightly over a fifth (22.6 percent) female respondents indicated that they are composed of “both (males and females)”. Below 10 percent of both male and female respondents indicated that they are composed of “female only”. Interesting, while 0.4 percent females respondent selected the option “I do not know” no male respondent (0 percent) selected this option.

Table 4.27 Students' views: gender composition of militia groups and gangs by gender

How would you describe a typical member of militia groups and gangs? Gender composition	Gender of student		Total
	Male	Female	
Male only	212	186	398
	81.5%	73.8%	77.7%
Female only	2	8	10
	.8%	3.2%	2.0%
Both (male and female)	46	57	103
	17.7%	22.6%	20.1%
I do not know	0	1	1
	.0%	.4%	.2%
Total	260	252	512
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

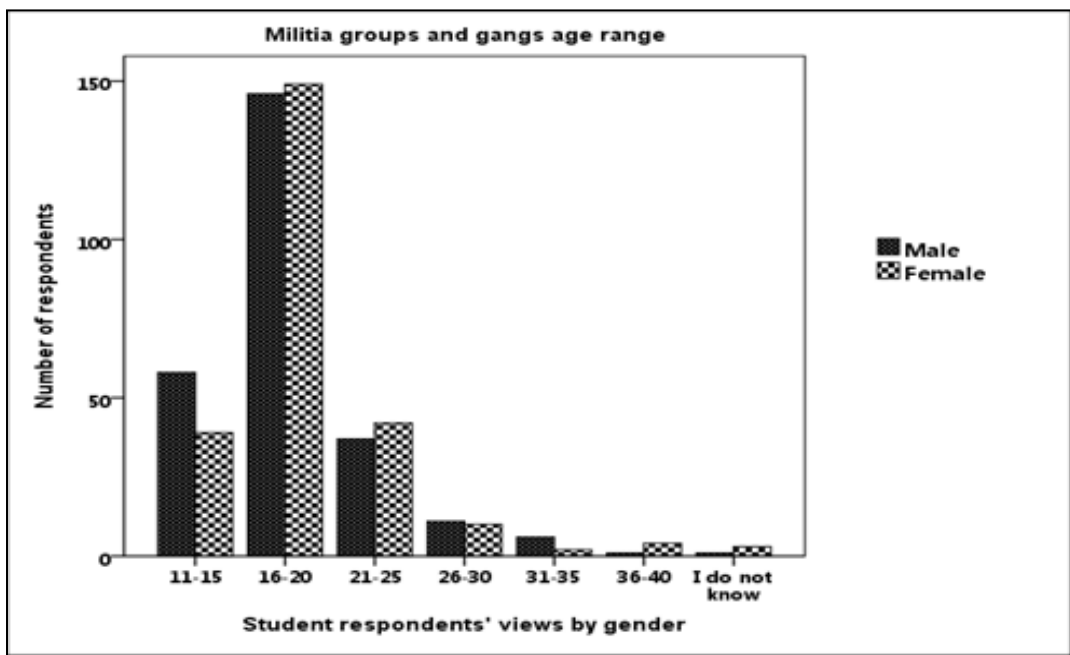


Figure 4.8 Graphic representation of Table 4.27

The information captured in Table 4.27 above supports the literature in chapter two (section 2.3) and corroborates the data collected through the other methods used in this study that militia groups and gangs are mainly male but are not exclusive of females. Could this view also be informed by the public discourses and the media coverage of the post-2007 election violence where images of male youth carrying crude weapons were a common sight on televisions and other popular

media? As pointed out above, those who said that the composition is “female only” were below 10 percent. What is interesting is that while the percentage of males was higher than that of the females in indicating that these groups’ composition is mainly male, the female percentage is higher where they indicate that the composition is “both (male and female) and “female only”. An interesting question would be to find out why this is the case, whether this selection is a sign that the female are members themselves or know some of their female friends who are members.

When referring to the education level of the members of the militia groups and gangs in Figure 4.9 below, slightly below a third (31.8 percent) of the respondents indicated that these members are at “primary level” of education and slightly over a fifth (21.8) had the view that they are at “secondary school level”. Those with the view that these groups have “no formal education” were 18.0 percent. 12.7 percent of the respondents were of the opinion that the members “did not complete formal education” while 10.4 percent of the respondents said that the members had “completed formal education but no jobs”. Those who said that the members are at “college /university level” were 4.5 percent. Only 0.8 percent indicated that they “did not know”. Importantly, combined, those that indicated that the members are in primary or secondary school level are 53.6 percent. This seems to confirm the reports from the government officers and teachers especially in Central province of Kenya about the recruitment of students in both primary and secondary school to the outlawed Mungiki militia/group/sect (Kigotho and Muiruri, (April 29, 2009).

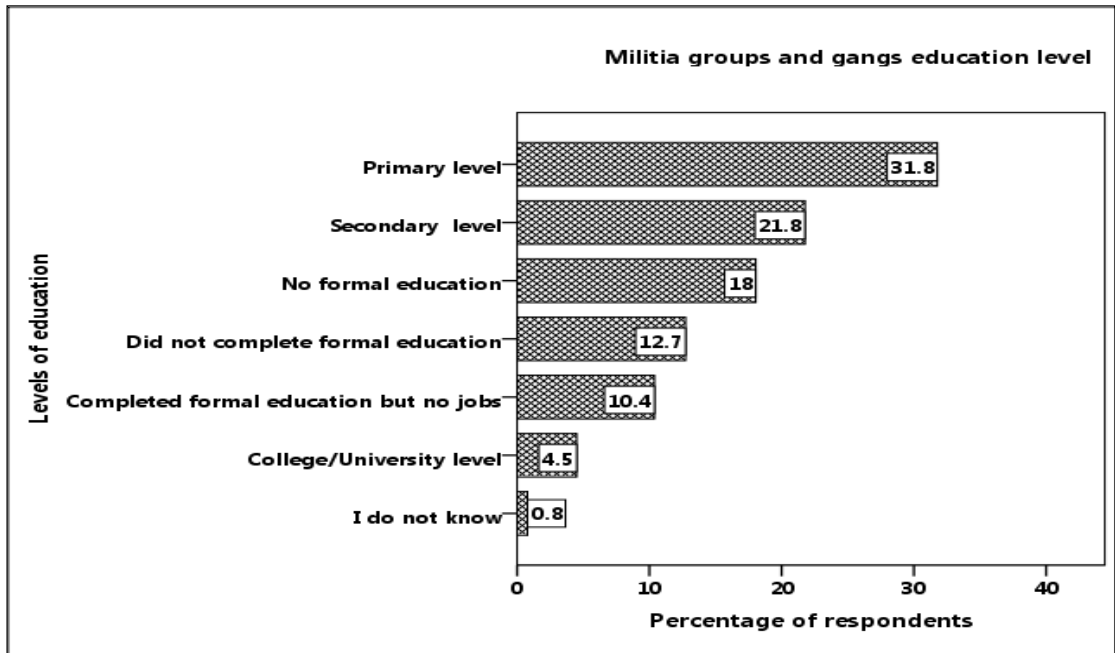


Figure 4.9 Students' views: education levels of militia groups and gangs

The next variable was the militia groups and gangs ethnic composition. The responses were cross-tabulated by location. This comparison is important as Nairobi is a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic metropolitan city. On the other hand, the Rift Valley though multi-cultural and multi-ethnic is largely rural. As shown in Table 4.28 below 56.0 percent of the respondents in the Rift Valley indicate that the militia groups and gangs belong to one ethnic community. Slightly over half (51.5 percent) in Nairobi province describe these groups as belonging to different ethnic communities. Could this be due to the fact that in the Rift Valley province, the militia groups, mainly in the rural areas identify themselves with the ethnic communities they belong to for instance the Sabaot Land Defence Force (Sabaot) in the Mount Elgon area, the Chinkororo (Kisii) bordering Rift Valley and Nyanza and the Mungiki (Kikuyu) mainly in Central province but also found in Laikipia bordering the Rift Valley (refer to chapter two initial debate regarding these ethnic militias).

Table 4.28 Students' views: ethnic composition of militia groups and gangss by school location

How would you describe a typical member of militia groups and gangs? Ethnic composition	Location of school		Total
	Rift Valley Province	Nairobi Province	
Belong to one ethnic community	192	77	269
	56.0%	46.1%	52.7%
Belong to different ethnic communities	149	86	235
	43.4%	51.5%	46.1%
I do not know	2	4	6
	.6%	2.4%	1.2%
Total	343	167	510
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

For further analysis on the militia groups and gangs, the coded responses were cross-tabulated by the mode of communication these groups use. This analysis may shed more light on the data on ethnic composition as it would bring out whether the views were stereotypical, for instance that youth militia groups and gangs in rural areas speak in their own languages only or may also use other languages such as Sheng, a language whose origin is the Eastlands estates in Nairobi. From Table 4.29 below, in both provinces - Rift Valley and Nairobi - three responses had over 20 percent of the respondents. For instance, in the Rift Valley, 29.7 percent, 28.3 percent and 24.2 percent said that the militia groups and gangs “communicate in their own vernacular”, “communicate in different languages” and “communicate in Sheng” in that order. On the other hand, those in Nairobi show that 26.8 percent, 24.4 percent and 23.8 percent “communicate in different languages”, “communicate in Sheng” and “communicate in their own ethnic language” in that order. The other responses had less than 10 percent of respondents, for instance those who said that

they “communicate in English or in Swahili”. Interestingly, a higher percentage in Nairobi (13.1) percent indicated that they “communicate in coded language” as opposed to 8.2 percent in the Rift Valley.

Table 4.29 Students' views: mode of communication of militia groups and gangs by school location

How would you describe a typical member of militia groups and gangs? Mode of communication	Location of school		Total
	Rift Valley Province	Nairobi Province	
Communicate in their own vernacular	102	40	142
	29.7%	23.8%	27.8%
Communicate in different languages	97	45	142
	28.3%	26.8%	27.8%
Communicate in English	5	1	6
	1.5%	.6%	1.2%
Communicate in Swahili	23	16	39
	6.7%	9.5%	7.6%
Communicate in Sheng	83	41	124
	24.2%	24.4%	24.3%
Communicate in code language	28	22	50
	8.2%	13.1%	9.8%
I do not know	5	3	8
	1.5%	1.8%	1.6%
Total	343	168	511
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

It is likely that the selection of Sheng in Table 4.29 above in showing the militia groups and gangs mode of communication is an indication that a great number of the militia groups and gangs are youth. Sheng is a language that is widely associated with youth in Kenya both in the urban and rural areas (chapter four).

Importantly, youth speaking in sheng is expected as youth tend to develop their own mode of communication. Of interest, could the youth take advantage to organise and “execute” violence in school and wider society due to the fact that only a few adults are familiar with Sheng?

Below (Box 3) is a profile of a typical militia and gang member as captured in the youth narratives.

Box 3 Profile of a typical militia and gang member

Who is a militia and gang member?

Youth

Age

11-25years in age: (19.1 percent) of the respondents

16-20 years in age: (58.0 percent) of the respondents

Gender

Male: (77.7 percent) of the respondents; Both male and female (20.1 percent) of the respondents

Ethnic affiliation:

Belong to one ethnic community (52.7 percent) of the respondents

Belong to different ethnic communities (46.1 percent) of respondents

Educational level

Primary level (31.8 percent) of the student respondents

Secondary level (21.8 percent) of the student respondents

Language/mode of communication

Communicate in their own vernacular (27.8 percent) of the respondents; communicate in different languages (27.8 percent) of the respondents.

Communicate in ‘Sheng’ (24.3percent) of the respondents

In order to find out how the wider community views the militia groups and gangs, the student respondents were asked: *How are these groups viewed by the community?* The rationale is to find out whether the community views them as a positive or negative factor? Do they view them as members of the community or outcasts? The assumption is that how the community views them will determine how they will treat them, that is violently or with respect, include or exclude them from the day-to-day activities. Chapter two has highlighted on some of the militia groups and gangs, their activities and their link with the communities and the leaders in the wider society and to some extent the school setting.

In response to the above question, the total respondents were 512. Of these, the valid cases were 509 (99.4 percent) and the missing cases were 3 (0.6 percent). The question generated 1703 total responses. The total percentage of cases was 334.6 percent. As indicated in Table 4.30 below, of the cases, 72.5 percent cases selected “a threat to the community”, 65.2 percent and 54.2 percent cases selected that they are viewed as “criminals” and as “indisciplined youth” respectively. 51.9 percent and 51.1 percent cases selected that they are viewed as “law breakers” and “a tool that politicians use during election period” respectively. However, the least cases (21.8 percent and 17.9 percent) selected that they are viewed as “people who provide security” and “the voice of the community” respectively.

Table 4.30 Students' choices on community's views of militia groups and gangs

How are these groups viewed by the community?	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
People who provide security	111	6.5%	21.8%
A threat to the community	369	21.7%	72.5%
The voice of the community	91	5.3%	17.9%
Indisciplined youth	276	16.2%	54.2%
A tool that politicians use during election period	260	15.3%	51.1%
Law breakers	264	15.5%	51.9%
Criminals	332	19.5%	65.2%
Total Valid cases 509(99.4%) Missing 3(0.6%)	1703	100.0%	334.6%

Figures do not add up to 100 percent - a multiple set response question

Table 4.31 below shows the student respondents' views of who the militia groups and gangs are and the activities they are involved in.

Table 4.31 Students' narratives on militia groups and gangs and their activities

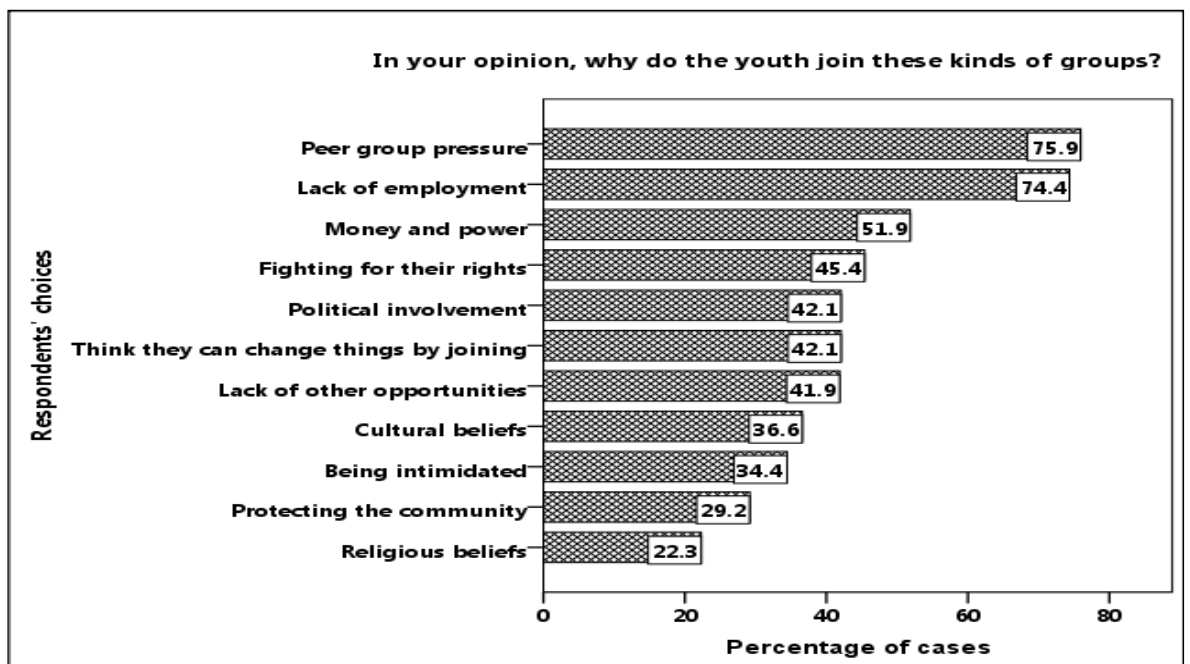
STUDENT RESPONDENTS CODE NO ¹	NARRATIVES ON WHO MILITIA AND GANGS ARE, WHAT THEY ARE ABOUT AND DO
S3FN#93	<i>use violence but with a very good reason; armed youth</i>
S12MRV423	<i>They fight because some people are very rich while they are poor. They say wealth should be equally distributed.</i>
S6FRV#177	<i>They bully other students.</i>
S13MN#468	<i>They are youth involved in shedding blood, under the leadership of malicious adults and sometimes on drugs</i>
S4FRV#110	<i>They are people who join together thinking they can change things and are mostly into tribalism (every community has its own militia group)</i>
S4FRV#129	<i>They are groups of young people who do things in the community so as to show what they do not like/like.</i>
S14MN#508	<i>They basically try to air out their grievances in violent ways as possible so as to prove a point that may have been ignored.</i>
S2MN#50	<i>They provide electricity to the slums.</i>

¹S+numeral=school code, M=male and F=female, N=Nairobi and RV= Rift Valley, numeral after #= Student respondent's identification number in the survey questionnaires

From the responses above, it is evident that the student respondents view militia groups and gangs as mainly organised and aggrieved groups of young people who are taken advantage of by “*malicious adults*”. However, some of them point out that the members of militia groups and gangs in schools are “*bullies*”.

Further, on the youth militia groups and gangs, the student respondents were asked: *In your opinion, why do the youth join these kinds of groups?*

The total respondents were 512. Of these, the valid cases were 511 (99.8 percent) and the missing case was 1 (0.2 percent). The student respondents were given eleven options and asked to tick those that apply. As shown in Figure 4.10 below, among the percentage of cases, most chose three options “peer group pressure” (75.9 percent cases), “lack of employment” (74.4 percent of cases) and “money and power” (51.9 percent of cases). However, the least percentage of cases (22.3 percent) selected “religious beliefs”. Interestingly, most percentage of cases did not select the popular views regarding reasons why youth join militia groups and gangs such as “protecting the community” which was selected by 29.2 percent cases, “lack of other opportunities” (41.9 percent of cases) and “political involvement” (42.1 percent of cases).



Figures do not add up to 100 percent - a multiple response question

Figure 4.10 Students' choices on why youth join militia groups and gangs

From the selection as shown in Figure 4.10 above, the students seem to support the view that “peer pressure”, “lack of employment” and “money and power” are some

of the key factors why youth join militia groups and gangs. However, from the recorded responses from the open questions of the survey questionnaires, the sharing in the semi-structured interviews and focus groups interviews (Table 4.32 below), the majority of the students show that it is mainly “to bond”, “feel part of the group”, “to earn a living” and to be able “to express grievances” and “retaliate against adults by seeking gang support”.

Table 4.32 Students' narratives on why youth join militia groups and gangs

STUDENT RESPONDENTS CODE NO ¹	NARRATIVES OF RESPONDENTS ON FACTORS THAT LEAD YOUTH TO JOIN MILITIA GROUPS AND GANGS
S2FN#43	<i>support and fight the rights for us</i>
S6FRV#207	<i>so that they can get the feeling of belonging or fitting</i>
S14MN#508	<i>They have been ignored for too long and they want their demands listened to.</i>
S7MRV#230	<i>poor leadership from leaders at the top</i>
S7MRV#254	<i>Militia are important people in the society e.g. when the Kalenjin people are fighting Kikuyu and then they are threatened that mungiki are coming, they stop harassing, they protect their community, speak for the community.</i>
S7FRV#233	<i>I have heard of the Mungiki. They kill people, taking the property and raping. Why do they take part - started when they were young therefore cannot stop. People say that it is because they have no jobs but for me job is not the issue.</i>
S7MRV#235	<i>They engage in conflicts because they want their issues to be heard. They would like to be considered and not taken like a criminal that is harshly. They would like to be taken as important people in the society.</i>

¹S+numeral=school code, M=male and F=female, N=Nairobi and RV= Rift Valley, numeral after #= Student respondent's identification number in the survey questionnaires.

Additionally, they point at poor parenting, lack of credible role models, lack of good governance and exclusion of youth in dialogue on matters that affect them.

The students also point out that joining militia groups and gangs is one way of escaping from the violent environment in school for instance from “physical psychological abuse” (such as caning, fear of expulsion, and abusive language from teachers). Furthermore, respondents cited what goes on in school, especially “stress from academic work” as a factor for the youth to join militia groups and gangs.

According to the students, the key reasons why the youth join militia groups and gangs is to bond for support (“*peer/gang powers*”)⁸⁸ and to fight for a cause, especially unresolved grievances, whether at school or in the wider society. The phrases *peer/gang powers* were used freely in all the discussions. The students claim that it is the only way to counter the “adult power” in school and wider society. They further assert that when they are forced to leave school both through “*silent suspension*” or expulsion then they will one day gang with their friends and revenge. They explain “*silent suspension*” as the case where teachers or principals are afraid of the legal tussels which could result if a parent considers the punishment meted to their child as a personal vendetta and bring the matter to court. The militia groups and gangs on the other hand are ready to accept them and in these groups the students do not feel judged or rejected. It is here that they feel a sense of identity, feel loved and secure, away from “*malicious adults*”.

Some of the female students in both Nairobi and Rift Valley pointed out that sometimes they are looking for extra pocket money which they do not have to account for to their parents. They claim that these groups - militia and gangs - provide the opportunity for them to get this money as noted in this narrative from a focus group discussion in one of the girls’ school in the Rift Valley:

Why we do what adults like our parents do not like, is because for instance we are looking for pocket money that we do not have to account to our parents or any adult. Since they are always following the one they have given us, we keep that one safe in case they ask and start quarrelling about it. This other one we can use the way we want.”⁸⁹

Furthermore, the members of the militia groups/sect and gangs that were interviewed were categorical that they are not idlers or criminals that the community and the government label them to be. Narratives from the surveyed “militia” group/gang/sect in the Rift Valley province and the reformed gang in Nairobi province are used to illustrate this.

*“Every young person is labelled as Mungiki even when they are not. This is what makes us very aggressive. The authorities should address historical injustice and dialogue with us instead of killing, arresting and harrassing all youth in the name of the outlawed Mungiki”.*⁹⁰

*“Yes, before we used to be very bad. We had grouped together and since we needed food and money we attacked our targets and snatched whatever they had. Then one day we asked ourselves: ‘What are we doing to ourselves’? It is then we decided to change for good. Now we collect garbage from people’s places and then we are paid. Landlords also involve us to evict peacefully those tenants who refuse to pay their rent. We are also planning other projects once we have some money from the government, may be the one for ‘kazi kwa vijana’ [work/jobs for the youth], or enough money from our work or from donors.”*⁹¹

⁸⁹ Focus group discussion, S3F#10RV, February, 2010

⁹⁰ Focus group discussion, Mgm#5RV(sect/group/militia), March 2010

⁹¹ Focus group discussion, GgM#7N(former gang members), March 2010

The *Kazi kwa vijana* [Work for the youth] that the youth are referring to is a government of Kenya project under the Ministry of Youth Affairs (MOYAS) meant to assist unemployed youth. However during the research, the student respondents and all the key youth informants reported that this project had many challenges especially that it was too bureaucratic. For the youth they have dubbed it “*Kazi kwa vijana na pesa kwa wazee*” (Swahili for work/jobs for the youth but the adults get the money). They clarify further by claiming that they do the work but it is those in charge (within the government) and the elderly in the Kenyan society that are remunerated. They assert that this happens because those in authorities, both in school and wider Kenyan society are corrupt and use the money for themselves. Whether these claims were based on facts or not was difficult to tell.

Comparison between the youth views and experiences on why youth join militia groups and gangs and views of the key informants for instance - those in leadership position in both schools and the wider society and those generally working with youth in the different sectors - might be of interest in understanding further this phenomenon. For instance how do the key informants define these groups? What reasons do they give for youth involvement in the militia groups and gangs? Initially, the key informants show that youth join militia groups and gangs because they are “idle”, “indisciplined”, “rebellious”. Also that they want “to extort money”, “to abuse drugs and alcohol” and in some cases because they are “incited especially by politicians” or they “want to protect their ethnic communities”. As noted some of these views concur or differ with those of the student respondents.

Interesting, as regards the youth involvement in militia groups and gangs, contrary to the popular views on why youth join these groups for example coercion from peers, lack of employment and security for their communities, the research

findings show that some of the youth voluntarily join these groups mainly for bonding, boosting their self-esteem, feeling of acceptance and as an escape mechanism from abusive adults and violent school environments. From this analysis so far, it is evident that the youth narratives and those of the key informants differ considerably as far as views on militia groups and gangs are concerned. Hence, what is the implication of this regarding peacebuilding approaches among youth in conflicts in this context? This will be addressed especially in chapters five and six.

Following the analysis on the militia groups and gangs is the issue of the post-2007 election violence, one of the key issues in this study. The survey questionnaire had a variety of choices to allow for wide responses. This was in consideration that some of the respondents may have been involved in the atrocities as actors, victims or both. It would also give some sense of freedom for the respondents to express how the post-2007 election violence affected them personally or their families and friends. The questions therefore ranged from simple to complex. The next section will deal with the student respondents' narratives on their experiences/observations/involvement in the post-2007 election violence.

4.5 EXPERIENCING YOUTH VIOLENCE IN A STATE OF CONFUSION: THE POST ELECTION VIOLENCE CONTEXT

In order to gauge the nature and extent to which the violent conflicts had affected not only the school but the wider Kenyan society the student respondents were asked the following question: *Was your school/area/home affected by the post-election-violence?*

All the student respondents responded to this question. Figure 4.11 shows that over three quarters (76.4 percent) reported that they were affected by the post election violence. However, 23.6 percent responded in the negative, indicating that they were not affected by the violence.

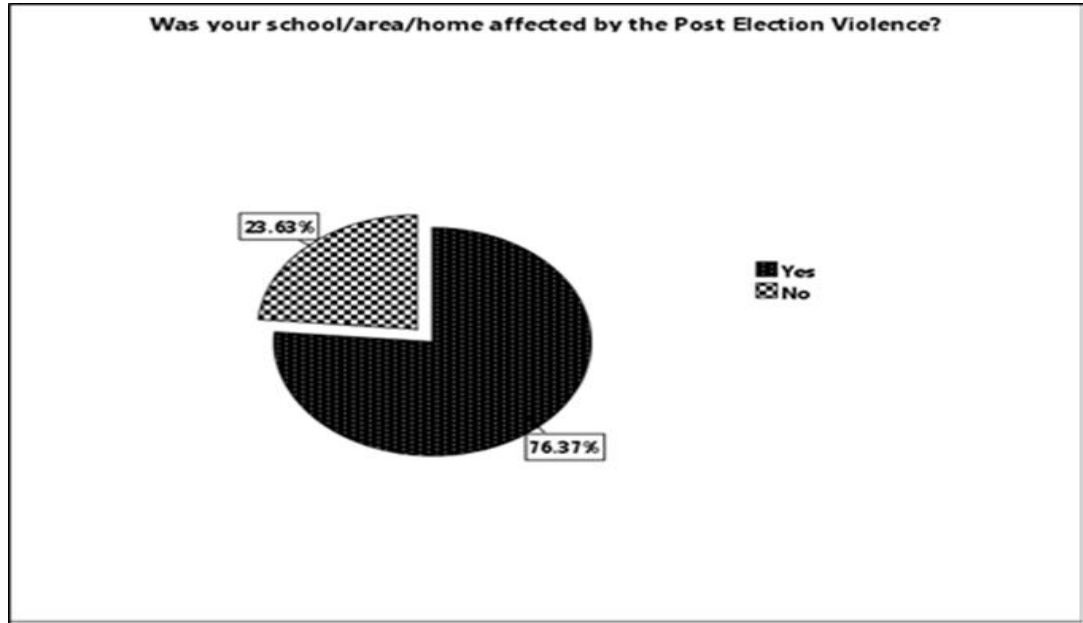


Figure 4.11 Student respondents on effects of the post election violence

Those who indicated that they had experienced the violence stressed that it became worse when the schools reopened after the two leaders, President Mwai Kibaki, and the Prime Minister Raila Odinga had signed the agreement for a grand coalition government in February 2008 (chapter two). For instance some shared that they were bullied due to the ethnic community they belong to and that comments such as: *“You Kalenjin are killers.”* or *“You Kikuyu are thieves you should go back to where you belong”* were used with ease.

According to the student narratives, the conflicts in some of the schools had started taking on an ethnic interpretation and this played out during the lessons in class with teachers favouring students from their own ethnic communities. In one boys’ school in the Rift Valley the student respondents and a key informant, confirmed that in their school, the students were divided along tribal lines and that this was evident in the school conflicts. The principal was working towards these issues during the period of this research. Others shared that their homes were

destroyed, they were displaced, and some of them lost their parents and other members of their families. Some of the parents who did not want to disrupt the learning of their children left them in rented accommodation⁹² as they left to safer places within the country or in the neighbouring country, Uganda. This was confirmed by an Education Officer from the Rift Valley province as shown in his narrative below.

“The problem of youth violence and militia has also to be sorted out especially after the post-election-violence. A number of students (girls and boys) are living in rented places here and this is not a very good situation to be in. These young people have no parental supervision. The girls could engage in prostitution to make ends meet and the boys can become easy target for gangs, drug traffickers and militia groups. We are really concerned and wish we had more funds and qualified staff.”⁹³

Table 4.33 below captures some of the student narratives on the post election violence.

⁹² In Kenya, secondary school students would normally be either in boarding schools or day schools. Rented accommodation for secondary school students is not normal practice in Kenya.

⁹³ Semi-structured interview, KYM#13RV (Education Officer), February 2010.

Table 4.33 Students' narratives on the post election violence

STUDENT RESPONDENTS' CODE NO.¹	NARRATIVES ON WHAT HAPPENED DURING THE POST ELECTION VIOLENCE
S1MN#12	<i>Although in most parts of Kenya was a lot of killing and destruction of goods but my home area, North Eastern there was nothing like that</i>
S1MN#40	<i>Yes. People of different ethnic groups were chased and house gutted down.</i>
S4FRV#97	<i>The people used to sleep in the forest at night fearing to be found in their houses by gangs.</i>
S5FN#159	<i>Because of the govt [government] leaders, they made people start fighting and killing one another</i>
S6FRV#186	<i>Some students arrived late at school because they were distracted and others were traumatised.</i>
S11MRV#387	<i>A group of young men came armed with weapons and burned our houses.</i>
S10MRV#345	<i>Some youth were given money by the leader to fight other communities and others were killed by the police</i>
S12MRV#396	<i>People were mercilessly beaten, others preferred to throw themselves in big dams (water bodies), and others were circumcised by force</i>

¹S+numeral=school code, M=male and F=female, N=Nairobi and RV= Rift Valley, numeral after #= Student respondent's identification number in the survey questionnaires.

Additionally, the students were asked to give their views on what led to the post-2007 election violence and how it was handled. Their views on how this was handled will be dealt with in chapter five below. The responses concerning the reasons why youth engaged in the post-election violence ranged from monetary gain and protection of the community to manipulation from politicians. From these responses, it is apparent that the youth were actors, victims and indeed both in the post election violence. Furthermore, the leaders are portrayed as initiators and

fundamentals of the violent conflicts and this corroborates with the analysed information in chapter two above. The following are some of their responses (Table 4.34).

Table 4.34 Students' narratives on factors that led to the post election violence

STUDENT RESPONDENTS' CODE NO. ¹	NARRATIVES ON WHAT LED TO THE POST ELECTION VIOLENCE
S3FRV#95	<i>Ignorance by the pple [people] that your neighbour is like a brother and not that Mr Politician</i>
S4FRV#124	<i>Political leaders psyche to destroy each other for power, leading their ethnic groups by manipulating them with money and lies</i>
S4FRV#129	<i>Greed for power by the leaders who sparked up feelings of hate and jealousy among their people when they didn't get what they wanted</i>
S4MRV#136	<i>Hypocritical and greedy leaders incited people to fight over something that was their own cooking</i>
S4MRV#140	<i>Our leaders were too much egocentric to admit defeat.</i>
S1MN#15	<i>Impunity among leaders</i>
S1MN#37	<i>Greed for power. If Raila had given up that seat to Kibaki and vice versa, my girlfriend would be alive.</i>
S6FRV#211	<i>I think because of negative attitudes among people of different ethnic groups.</i>
S14MN#485	<i>Tribalism and lies by politicians</i>
S14MN#490	<i>The greedy politicians funded the riots to fulfil their dreams of getting huge salaries.</i>
S14MN#498	<i>It is the lack of listening to each other the lack of dialogue and thinking about yourself. It is pure selfishness</i>

¹S=numeral=school code, M=male and F=female, N=Nairobi and RV= Rift Valley, numeral after #= Student respondent's identification number in the survey questionnaires

From the above responses, the youth attribute the conflicts to leaders that are greedy, ego-centric, exploitative and not ready to involve youth in decision making or leadership positions at any level. According to their other narratives in response to

the above question, leaders want to remain too long in leadership positions hence denying the youth chances for leadership or actualisation of their potential. They further see the leaders as people who abuse power and have no regard and respect for the rule of law. What can be inferred by this is that the leaders do not inspire and are not good role models for the youth.

As well as the above responses on the post-election violence, students were asked why youth engage in violent activities despite measures that the government has put in place. This open-ended question generated a number of responses. Analysis of these responses shows that the youth expect the government to listen to them and involve them on issues that concern them. They also expect leaders to be credible and effective role models. However, this is not the case, they view their leaders as corrupt, non-visionary and dictatorial. This view corroborates the literature on Kenyan leaders since independence (chapter two). They also claim that the government decides what to do for them without involving them as noted in narrative *5FN#145* in Table 4.35 below. Hence, their justification of the violence they engage in as they claim that they are left with no other option. Other views are captured in Table 4.35 below.

Table 4.35 Students' views on why youth engage in violence

STUDENT RESPONDENTS' CODE NO ¹ .	YOUTH NARRATIVES ON WHY YOUTH ENGAGE IN VIOLENT ACTIVITIES DESPITE MEASURES GOVERNMENT HAS PUT IN PLACE
S3FRV#64	<i>They don't care and they also have not been raised well by their parents.</i>
S3FRV#71	<i>Some engage in violent activities for revenge due to past torment, and anger therefore do not care what threats they are given, neither the consequences.</i>
S5FN#145	<i>The youths want to be heard for e.g. hata government ikisema imeweka kazi juu yao, haijauliza really ni gani vijana wanataka na wakisia wajaribu kufanya juu chini wafanye hivyo [Swahili for "When the government says that it has jobs for the youth, it has not asked the youth which jobs they are interested in, and when the youth communicate they should by all means try to do exactly that.]</i>
S5FN#151	<i>Because they cry aloud and they are not heard so they think the best way is engaging in violence at least they can be seen</i>
S2MN#55	<i>This is because the government does not provide employment opportunities. If those opportunities are created these militia/gangs will finally come to an end.</i>
S2MN#47	<i>The government does not have proper dialogue with them.</i>
S14MN#509	<i>The govt doesn't deal with the events that lead to violent conflicts rather they prefer to await the mess then act.</i>
S14MN#480	<i>Drug abuse, unemployment, lack of involvement in leadership; neglecting of the youth, poor living standards of Kenyans yet tax is paid; hence youth seek to retaliate by causing havoc</i>
S4MRV#118	<i>The immobility of the govt [government] to keep its word. Corruption by our thieves-like politicians</i>
S4FRV#133	<i>Lack of jobs manze, then uchungu ya gava kukula pesa zetu yet they aren't questioned [Sheng, for lack of job man, then the pain due to the government misusing our money and they aren't questioned]</i>
S4MRV#136	<i>That is the only way to express their needs since the govt rarely considers them when presented in a peaceful way.</i>
S4MRV#140	<i>They have no jobs and are idle whereas through militia they can earn money</i>

¹S=school code, M=male and F=female, N=Nairobi and RV= Rift Valley, numeral after #= Student respondent's identification number in the survey questionnaires

CONCLUSION

This chapter portrays an initial analysis of the coded closed questions interspersed with analysis of some responses from the open ended questions. Equally, the youth's concepts of conflict and peace and the way these concepts are linguistically articulated in some ethnic groups were analysed. These concepts were also analysed using descriptive analysis (frequencies and cross-tabulations) especially by gender, location and education levels. The responses from the semi-structured interviews and focus groups were factored in as well. The respondents advanced several possible definitions of conflicts ranging from disputes, disagreements, hatred (*"mengo"* in Sheng), and divisions in communities to school fights over things such as pens and books and also fights for students of the opposite sex.

On the other hand, definitions of peace included harmony, unity among leaders, agreement, sharing in community, friendship, no bullying, good health, *"I love you"*, *"hakuna noma"* (Sheng for no problems, or troubles) and *"kua poa"* (Sheng for cool) among others.

The analysis so far indicates a prevalence of violence in the surveyed schools and the neighbouring schools. When asked their views on the factors that led to the violence in their own schools and neighbouring schools, a majority of the respondents mentioned misunderstanding, lack of involvement in the running of the school, peer influence, lack of adequate leisure facilities, insufficient food, poor diet and teachers' lack of commitment. Equally, they attributed the violence to dismissive attitudes of the school authority especially on issues that matter to them, for example those that are school-diet/and or leisure- related. Some of these issues are captured in two questions that sought the students' opinions on things they are happy with in

school and those they would like to see done differently. Generally they were happy with clubs and societies, school entertainment and school outings among others. However, they were discontented with the prefects' body, the school diet and current ways of problem-solving for instance "*barazas*" (open forums) that the students' claim are for *showcasing*. They pointed out that these issues have been at the core of violent unrest in their own schools and neighbouring schools.

In an effort to unravel further this phenomenon of youth violence especially in the school setting, the views of the key informants were incorporated. The analysis reveals that in some cases their narratives corroborated with those of the student respondents especially on the need to seek new ways of addressing youth violence. However, in other cases their views differed significantly especially on youth militia groups and gangs in terms of who they are, why they engage in violent activities and the various reasons youth give for joining them.

Hence, according to them violence is another form of communication especially where all other efforts to communicate with their leaders have failed. To recap one of the students' respondents narratives captured in Table 4:35 above, use of violence is "*... the only way to express their [youth] needs since the govt [government] rarely considers them when presented in a peaceful way.*"⁹⁴

Regarding the reasons why the youth join militia groups and gangs, some said that they are forced to do so due to the violent environment in both the school and wider society, while others indicated that they do so voluntarily because militia groups and gangs make them "feel loved", "accepted" and "supported emotionally, psychologically and financially". They also view militia groups and gangs as "peer/"gang power" that they can utilise when aggrieved especially to retaliate against "*malicious adults*".

⁹⁴ Survey questionnaire, S4MRV#136, March 2010

The respondents' views were sought on what led to the post election violence. As one of the students in the already captured narratives (Table 4:34 above indicates, one of the factors that led to the post election violence was "*Ignorance by the pple [people] that your neighbour is like a brother and not that Mr Politician*".⁹⁵ In addition, there is an indication that the post election violence was a factor contributing to division among people especially those of different ethnic communities. This division was played out in the schools as documented in some of the student narratives and key informants narratives shown above.

Importantly, incorporating these views is an initial attempt to respond to the discussion on the youth's coping mechanisms and the responses to the violence which will be dealt with initially in chapter five and later in six below. Therefore, how these conflicts are dealt with in the school and wider society is fundamental.

⁹⁵ Survey questionnaire,S3FRV#95, February 2010

CHAPTER FIVE

DEALING WITH CONFLICTS WITHIN THE SCHOOL SETTING AND THE WIDER SOCIETY

INTRODUCTION

Of focal interest in chapter four above was the pervasive youth violence in schools which despite the measures taken to curb the violence is incessant. Chapter five will deal with the way conflicts within the school setting and the wider society are dealt with. As pointed out earlier in this thesis, the chapter will use the youth narratives and incorporate experiences, observation and expectations of how youth conflicts are handled in their own schools, neighbouring schools and the wider Kenyan society. Therefore, of interest will be to find out: What are the experiences of youth in schools regarding problem-solving? What are their expectations as far as solving conflicts in their schools and wider society is concerned? How is student leadership exercised in a given school? What structures are in place to enhance student participation in addressing conflicts in schools and wider society? How are students equipped or assisted in capacity building to enable them participate in peacebuilding in schools and wider society?

Of particular interest also will be to find out the expectations of the youth on how youth militia groups and gangs and their activities are generally handled. The chapter will also capture the youth narratives on how the post-2007 election violence was handled. In addition, this chapter will engage the youth narratives on the way the authorities deal with and treat the youth and their issues. What are the expectations of the youth concerning how they and their issues should be handled? This chapter's

core aim therefore is to further address the first key research question (a) and initiate a response to the second research question (b) below.

- a) *What narratives are used by the youth to describe, explain, and justify their participation in and/or observation of violent conflict in Kenyan secondary schools and wider society?*
- b) *In what ways can approaches to peacebuilding and the Kenyan education systems respond to youth violence?*

To engage these narratives therefore, the student respondents were asked: *Who dealt with the conflict(s)?* and given a number of choices where they were asked to pick as many as apply. As noted in chapter four above, for all the multiple response questions, a multiple response analysis procedure will be used. In this procedure the total figures as noted in chapter four do not add up to 100 percent. The area of interest is the number or percentage of cases that choose a particular option and not the number or percentage of responses.

5.1 YOUTH NARRATIVES: PROBLEM-SOLVING IN A SCHOOL SETTING

As an initial entry point to this analysis, the student respondents were asked: *Who dealt with the conflict(s)?* This was in reference to conflicts that they had experienced or observed in their own schools and neighbouring schools. 512 respondents participated in the survey. As shown in Table 5.1 below, of those that responded, the valid cases were 497 (97.1 percent) that selected from the given options and 15 (2.9 percent) missing cases. (These were the student respondents that did not select any of the choices). Therefore in reference to who dealt with the conflicts in their own schools the highest percentage of male cases selected the

“principal” (46.4 percent), the “prefects’ body” (44.4. percent) and the “students themselves” (34.9 percent). The choices were different among the female cases. In order of preference, the the highest percentage of female cases (52.2 percent) selected the “prefects’ body” followed by 36.3 percent that selected the “teacher-on-duty” then (35.5 percent) that selected the “principal”. The least percentage of male and female cases selected the “parents” (8.7 percent and 2.9 percent) respectively. The second least percentage of male cases 17.5 percent and female cases 10.6 percent selected “the police” Also among the female cases 10.6 percent selected the “boarding mistress/master”

Table 5.1 Students on problem-solving in own school

Who dealt with the conflict(s)?	Gender of student		Total
	Male	Female	
Prefects’ body	112	128	240
	44.4%	52.2%	
Teacher-on-duty	66	89	155
	26.2%	36.3%	
Class teacher	51	52	103
	20.2%	21.2%	
Boarding mistress/master	47	26	73
	18.7%	10.6%	
Deputy principal	80	86	166
	31.7%	35.1%	
Principal	117	87	204
	46.4%	35.5%	
School Board of Governors	69	35	104
	27.4%	14.3%	
Police	44	26	70
	17.5%	10.6%	
Parents	22	7	29
	8.7%	2.9%	
Students themselves	88	83	171
	34.9%	33.9%	
Total	252	245	497

Figures do not add up to 100 percent - a multiple response question

From the analysis above, it is evident that most cases selected the “prefects’ body”, the “principal” and the “student themselves” in reference to who dealt with the conflicts in their own schools. Surprisingly, of the choices given, the class teacher and the boarding mistress/master were not selected by high percent cases. Considering the fact that both play a major role in the school milieu in terms of contact hours with the students (class teachers on mainly academic issues and the boarding mistress/master on welfare issues such as accommodation), this is an interesting revelation. It is likely that the students do not have confidence in them. But it could also be the case that the principals in these schools do not delegate. On the other hand, the prefects’ body seems to have a lot of influence. It would be interesting to find out why considering the fact that throughout the analysis in the previous chapter there seems to be dissatisfaction with the prefects’ body.

When the responses under the option “other” were coded, majority of the students pointed out that some of the conflicts are sorted out by their peers (cubemates, deskmates and friends) and the support staff in the school. While some were happy with the way the support staff deal with their problems, majority expressed dissatisfaction that sometimes they use violent means. For instance in cases where students misbehave in the dining hall, the support staff punishes them by serving them little food, threatening them with the cooking ladle, “*throw abuses*”[that is they use abusive language, threatening language or derogatory remarks], looking at them with “*macho ya kazi*” (Swahili expression for ‘serious’ but they explain that the cooks give them a serious and angry face when they ask for additional food as a signal to stop disturbing them), pinch on the cheeks or pull ears, roughing up a student in anger, make false accusation about them to the authorities and in the case of the watchmen (security officers) they can make it difficult for them to leave the

school gate even if they have got the necessary school passes⁹⁶ and sometimes get other support staff to gang up against a student they consider a *hard core*.⁹⁷

The students were asked: *Who dealt with the conflict(s) in the neighbouring school(s)?* From Table 5.2 below, it shows that 512 respondents participated in the survey. Of these, the valid cases were 500 (97.7 percent) that selected from the given options and 15 (2.3 percent) missing cases. (These were the student respondents that did not select any of the choices). Of the valid male cases the highest percentage selected the “principal” (77.9 percent), followed by the “deputy principal” (60.1 percent) and then the “School Board of Governors” (55.0 percent). In order of preference, the highest percentage of female cases selected the “principal” (71.9 percent), “deputy principal” (57.0 percent) followed by the “School Board of Governors” (50.4 percent). The least selected by percentage cases among the males and females was the “prefects’ body” (13.2 percent and 14.5 percent) respectively. Interesting, the percentage cases of the male and female that selected particular options on who dealt with the conflicts in the neighbouring schools are close. This is different from the percentage of male and female cases that selected particular options in their own schools (Table 5.1 above and 5.2 below).

⁹⁶ This is a leave-out sheet to show that the student has official permission to leave the school premises. The security guards at the school gate are expected to allow the student to leave the school once this is presented to them. Also this allows the particular student back to school on the date specified on the sheet.

⁹⁷ The term used by both teachers and students to refer to difficult students.

Table 5.2 Students on problem-solving in the neighbouring school(s)

Who dealt with the conflict(s) in the neighbouring school(s)?	Gender of student		Total
	Male	Female	
Prefects body	34	35	69
	13.2%	14.5%	
Teacher-on-duty	68	56	124
	26.4%	23.1%	
Class teacher	44	44	88
	17.1%	18.2%	
Boarding mistress/master	56	69	125
	21.7%	28.5%	
Deputy principal	155	138	293
	60.1%	57.0%	
Principal	201	174	375
	77.9%	71.9%	
School Board of Governors	142	122	264
	55.0%	50.4%	
Police	103	77	180
	39.9%	31.8%	
Total	258	242	500

¹Figures do not add up to 100 percent - a multiple response question

From the above analysis, it is construed that the conflicts in the neighbouring schools are more violent from those experienced in the student respondents' schools. This is expected as there is usually a tendency for people to note areas of problems in situations or places other than their own. The grounds for this assumption are that the highest percent cases indicate that the conflicts in their neighbouring schools were dealt with by the principal, deputy principal, the Board of Governors (BOG) and the police as noted in (Table 5.2) above. Yet, in their own schools, conflicts were mainly dealt with by the principal, deputy principal and the prefects and thus did not involve any outside interventions such as the BOG and the police (Table 5.1 above). It is likely that the student respondents were trying to protect the image of their own school by showing competence in handling issues within their school setting. On the other hand, it could also be that the student respondents' schools have well

developed conflict resolving strategies. Or could this be an indication of how violent the conflicts are in the neighbouring schools to have this level of intervention? Could it be that the students in these schools have no confidence in their school administration to deal with problem-solving? Importantly, in Kenya, the BOG which is ratified by the Ministry of Education (MOE) has a managerial role in the school. Their intervention would only be required in a situation that the principal - who is the Secretary of the School Board of Governors - considers it beyond his/her control.⁹⁸

However, as reflected in the analysed data, both the respondents' schools and neighbouring schools have experienced violent conflicts in their schools. In the open questions, a majority of student respondents, especially from the Rift Valley province, seemed to value the role of prefects in settling disputes in school. As this response from a student in the Rift Valley shows "*The head boy deals with these conflicts. We are able to express our issues to the head boy or head girl.*"⁹⁹ In addition, a student respondent from one of the surveyed schools reported,

*"The students report to the head boy who tells the teacher-on-duty and then the principal. The principal takes time to talk to the students, assures them that the issue will be resolved and it is resolved."*¹⁰⁰

From this narrative, it can be seen that there is a hierarchical way of handling conflicts in the two schools. However, for the respondents in the Nairobi province, there was a great deal of dissatisfaction by the way the "prefects' body" deals with disputes. Two illustrations and an explanation from the two schools prefects' structure and its role help to shed more light on this. This will be discussed later in this chapter. The responses from the open ended questions show that a majority from

⁹⁸ This body is mandated to meet at least three times in a year that is, each term of the school academic year. Each board has an executive which is available at quick notice to deal with any urgent issues in the school such as strikes or other issues the school principal requires their input/consultation. They table their minutes on the issues discussed to the full board for ratification.

⁹⁹ Semi-structured interview, S11M#2RV, February 2010

¹⁰⁰ Semi-structured interview, S11F#8RV, February 2010

Nairobi province prefer to deal with the disputes among themselves and only refer to school authorities those cases they are not able to handle.

Interestingly too, in response to the open questions, the students indicated that they have also been involved in problem-solving especially in handling the day-to-day conflicts that they encounter as they interact with one another. From these views and experiences of the student respondents, there is a sense that there are some conflicts that happen in the school which the students consider within their ability to deal with. Therefore, in this case they would not expect any interventions from the significant adults either in or outside their schools. Also the findings from the youth narratives show that while the youth are happy with the involvement in their schools - no matter how minimal - generally they are angry and antagonistic at the way the authorities and significant adults in both the schools and wider Kenyan society use violent means such as caning, exclusion, curtailing their leisure activities and use of derogatory remarks in response to their problems. Further, as shown narratives below, the youth continue to experience frustration and anger at having their voices and concerns ignored, making it difficult for them to actualise their potential. The two narratives below are evidence of this.

The first said:

“This is true. Nobody listens to the youth because they keep saying we are the leaders of tomorrow. We get tired of being told we are the leaders of tomorrow and yet that tomorrow never comes.”¹⁰¹

The second said:

“The authorities should dialogue with us instead of killing, arresting and harassing all youth in the name of the outlawed Mungiki.”¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Survey questionnaire, S11RV#358, February, 2010.

¹⁰² Focus group interview with a *militia* group, Mgk2RV, March 2010. The word militia is in italics because the group that was interviewed did not define itself in this way.

Considering the narratives above, this raises the question on what can be done in order to address the anger and frustration experienced by the youth as expressed in the above narratives. This leads us to the second research question which seeks to find out: *In what ways can approaches to peacebuilding and Kenyan education systems respond to youth violence.* First and foremost, there is need to tap the youth potential as peacebuilders. This can be done by recognising their creativity and energy as a key component to peacebuilding. How then can the youth be engaged in a creative and meaningful way? As Mc Evoy-Levy (2001) notes, youth need to feel appreciated and also need a confirmation that their contributions matter.

To find out further about problem-solving especially in schools, the student respondents were asked: *Have you ever gone to your school leader (prefects/teachers/administration etc.) to deal with a conflict in the past one or two years?* This question was aimed at assessing the availability of the leaders in the school setting in assisting the students in problem-solving. Equally, this was to find out the students' confidence in their leaders as regards problem-solving. The time factor was to try and gauge how often the students go to their leaders for problem-solving. Also, underlying this question was the issue of leadership structures. For instance is there an *open door policy* as far as access to the school authority is concerned? Are there structures that allow students to seek assistance from the leaders in school without prior appointments? Could for instance an overly bureaucratic system in the school be a variable in the student violence? Some of these questions will be addressed as this chapter progresses and also in chapter six below.

The responses to the question whether the students had ever gone to their leaders for problem-solving was cross-tabulated by gender and the educational level of the respondents. There were 512 student respondents and all responded. Among

the student respondents, as shown in Table 5.3 below, 47.7 percent of males and 49.2 percent of females responded in the affirmative. 52.3 percent of males and 50.8 percent of females indicated that they had not gone to their leaders for problem-solving. Furthermore, the difference between the females who had gone to see their leaders and those who had not was minimal (49.2 percent who said “yes” and 50.8 percent that said “no”). From this analysis, it is apparent that some of the male and female students go to their leaders for problem-solving while others do not.

Table 5.3 Students on problem-solving by gender

Have you ever gone to your school leaders (prefects/teacher/school administration etc.) to deal with a conflict in the past one or two years?	Gender of student		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	124	124	248
	47.7%	49.2%	48.4%
No	136	128	264
	52.3%	50.8%	51.6%
Total	260	252	512
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

A further analysis on the same question generated the responses captured in Table 5.4 below. The analysis shows that slightly over two fifths (41.3 percent and 41.7 percent) of the respondents in Form one and two respectively and slightly over half in Form three and four (52.8 percent and 51.7 percent) respectively indicated that they had been to the school leaders for problem-solving. Nearly 60 percent in Form one and two (58.8 percent and 58.3 percent) respectively and 47.2 percent and 48.3 percent in Form three and four correspondingly had not gone to their school leaders for problem-solving.

Table 5.4 Students on problem-solving by education levels

Have you ever gone to your school leaders (prefects/teacher/school administration etc.) to deal with a conflict in the past one or two years?	Education level of student				Total
	Form 1	Form 2	Form 3	Form 4	
Yes	33	43	94	78	248
	41.3%	41.7%	52.8%	51.7%	48.4%
No	47	60	84	73	264
	58.8%	58.3%	47.2%	48.3%	51.6%
Total	80	103	178	151	512
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

From the above analysis, it would seem that some of the students do discuss issues with their leaders while others do not. While this would be the norm in any school setting or in the wider society, the high percentage of respondents, nearly (60 percent) in Form one and two who responded in the negative is of interest. For instance, what could be influencing this high percentage? One likely contributing factor could be the school tradition. For instance in a number of the surveyed schools, Form one students were inducted to the school by the Form two who were given the responsibility to deal mainly with adjustment and personal issues. But, it could also be that some of the Form ones are experiencing *monolisation* (a form of bullying as already dealt with in chapter four above) and to be dealt with later in this chapter and chapter six below. It could also be due to the school structures that are too bureaucratic and hierarchical that only certain students (for instance prefects or students from the senior Forms) are expected to consult the school authorities. Regarding the prefects' body one assumes that the reasons why the students do not go to them for problem-solving is due to the fact that these student leaders are far removed from the rest of the students' body. The responses to the statement that followed the above question (*give reasons for your answer*) shed more light on these

assumptions as to the reason why the students did not go to their leaders for problem-solving. A few of these are given in order to have an idea of the students' views and experiences (Table 5.5 below).

Table 5.5 Students: reasons for not going to school leaders for problem-solving

STUDENT RESPONDENTS' CODE NO ¹	STUDENT NARRATIVES ON WHY THEY DECIDED NOT TO GO TO THEIR LEADER(S) IN SCHOOL FOR PROBLEM-SOLVING
S1MN#39	<i>fear that my views might be used against me</i>
S1MN#24	<i>They [the leaders] meet the prefects, they are afraid of the raw truth 4rm [from] us.</i>
S4RV#105	<i>They only meet with the prefects' body! AT TIMES!</i>
S3RV#86	<i>The things that affect us are not looked into so no need of discussing them.</i>
S7RV#244	<i>lack of good relationship with authority</i>

¹S+numeral = school code; M=male and F=female; N=Nairobi and RV=Rift Valley; numeral after # = Student questionnaire identification

It was also important to find out the rate of satisfaction in the way their issues were handled. Therefore the respondents were asked the following question: *If yes, were you satisfied with the way the conflict(s) was dealt with?* To facilitate these student responses were cross-tabulated by gender. The number of respondents was 512. Of those who had responded "Yes" in the previous question (Tables 5.3 and 5.4 above), 23.8 percent of the two genders (8.8 percent males and 15.0 percent females) as shown in Figure 5.1 below were happy with the way the problem-solving was dealt with. However, 26.2 percent (16.0 percent males and 10.2 percent females) were not happy. Figure 5.1 shows that the female respondents were more content with the way the conflict(s) was dealt with than the male respondents. Interestingly,

half the percentage of the student respondents had earlier indicated that they had not gone to their school leaders for problem-solving in the past one or two years. This is represented in Figure 5.1 below as “Not applicable” since this question did not apply to them. Of these, slightly over a quarter (26.0 percent) were males and slightly below a quarter (24.0 percent) were females.

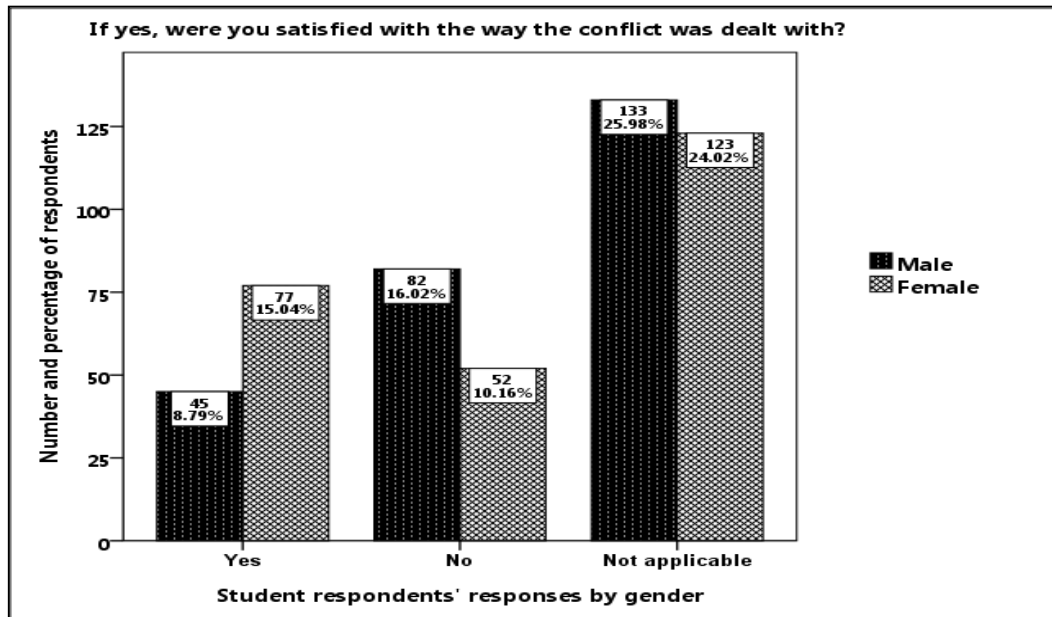
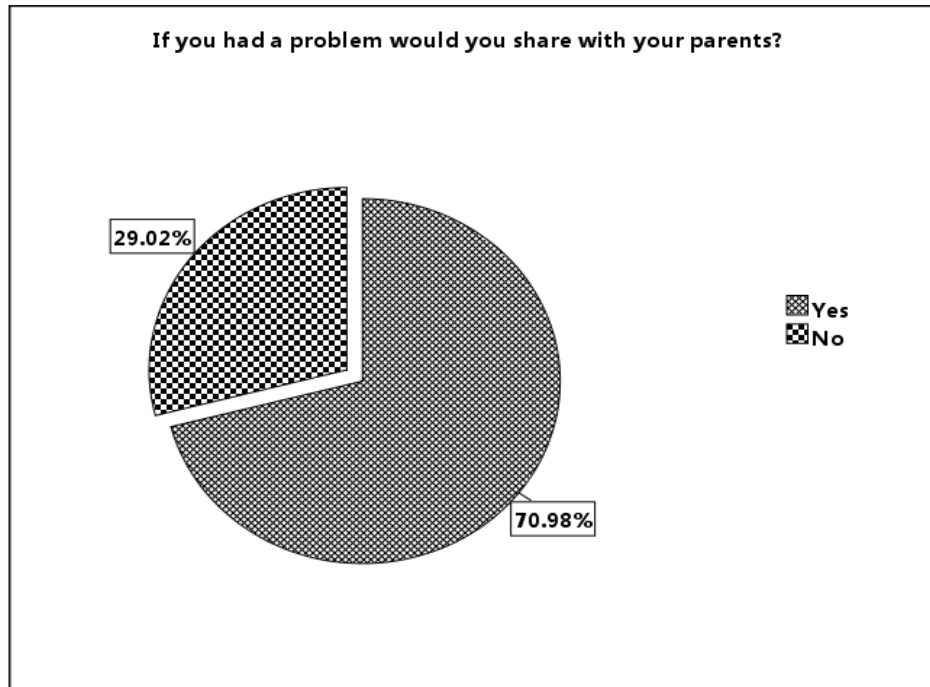


Figure 5.1 Students on how their conflicts are dealt with

In pursuing the issue of problem-solving further, especially how the students deal with conflicts in their schools, of interest was to find out whether the students involve their parents in problem-solving. Considering parents do play a key role in their children’s lives and formation, how for instance does this relationship affect the way the students deal with conflict/problem-solving situations in both the school setting, at home and wider society? Could a poor or healthy relationship with the parents be projected on to the school environment especially in the way a student perceives authority? If this were the case, this might shed light on the role of other models of authority in the student’s life both at home and in the school setting. In view of this, the students were asked the following question: *If you had a problem*

after school (holidays, evening after attending class or during the weekends) would you feel free to share with your parents?

Figure 5.2 below is the response to the above question. 512 students responded. Of these 2 cases were missing. The majority of the respondents 71.0 percent indicated that they would share their problems with their parents. On the other hand, (29.0) percent said they would not. The percentages that said “no” were high and this was expected. However, some reasons the respondents gave for sharing or not sharing their problems with the parents are captured after Figure 5.2 below.



**Data missing in 2 cases is not included here*

**Complete version of this question is in the questionnaire (appendix 2)*

Figure 5.2 Students on involvement of parents in problem-solving

Some initial responses that the respondents gave for sharing or not sharing their problems with the parents are noted below. For instance one of the respondents said, “No my dad is so strict and I fear him but sometimes I have courage and decide to face him with a little rudeness”.¹⁰³ Yet another said, “No. I prefer someone who’s

¹⁰³ Survey questionnaire, S4M#98RV, March 2010

lived in a newer generation cos [because] parents expect you to do the imaginable.”¹⁰⁴

On the other hand, some said that there are problems that they share with their parents. For instance one respondent shared, *“Some problems are easy to share with parents but others are very personal and I feel I can solve them for myself.”*¹⁰⁵

Another respondent finds the parents approachable, *“They are easy to talk to; be given advice by them is very key in such discussions. Plus, they don’t victimise.”*¹⁰⁶

To find out further other sources available to student for problems-solving the students were asked: *Whom do you prefer to go to when you have problems?*

Table 5.6 below shows that the male and female student respondents’ responses are close. Over half (51.4 percent of males and 54.8 percent of females) indicated that they prefer to go to their “parents” when they have problems. Interestingly, less than 10 percent (5.4 percent of males and 3.6 percent of females) indicated that they prefer to go to “the teachers”. Nearly 30 percent of males (10.0 percent and 18.1 percent) and nearly similar percentage of females (12.0 and 15.2 percent) would seek help from “siblings” and “friends and peers” respectively. Interesting, only 0.4 percent of females and 1.9 percent of males prefer to go to the “school authority”. Curiously, 0.8 percent of males and 2.4 percent of females’ preference is the “school counsellor”. Some of the respondents (4.2 percent males and 4.8 females) prefer to seek help from their relatives such as aunts, uncles, cousins and grandmother. Interestingly, 8.1 percent males and 6.8 percent females indicated that they seek assistance from “others”. These included their parents’ friends, a good neighbour and religious leaders among others.

¹⁰⁴ Survey questionnaire, S1M#25N, March 2010

¹⁰⁵ Survey questionnaire, S14M#486N, March 2010

¹⁰⁶ Survey questionnaire, S4M#108RV, March 2010

Table 5.6 Students respondents: Sources of problem-solving by gender

Whom do you prefer to go to when you have problems?	Gender of student		Total
	Male	Female	
Teachers	14	9	23
	5.4%	3.6%	4.5%
Parents	133	137	270
	51.4%	54.8%	53.0%
Siblings	26	30	56
	10.0%	12.0%	11.0%
Friends and peers	47	38	85
	18.1%	15.2%	16.7%
School counselor	2	6	8
	.8%	2.4%	1.6%
Relatives	11	12	23
	4.2%	4.8%	4.5%
School authority	5	1	6
	1.9%	.4%	1.2%
Others	21	17	38
	8.1%	6.8%	7.5%
Total	259	250	509
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The analysis of the responses Table 5.6 above is very interesting. There is an assumption that in a school setting, and especially in boarding schools, where students spend over nine months or more in the school, that they would seek all forms of assistance from the school authorities and the teachers. With this in mind, it is interesting to note that slightly over half percentage of both the males and the females still prefer to seek help from their parents as opposed to other significant adults in the school setting such as the teachers, school counsellors (mainly teachers with counseling skills) and the school principal. Important to note is that the Ministry of Education (MOE) lays great emphasis on the key and unique role of school counsellors in assisting students in problem-solving. On the other hand, the role of

the parents in the school has been relegated, remaining mainly functional, for instance to help in developing the school physical facilities, attending school meetings and especially the Annual General Meetings (AGM), catering for the financial needs of their children for instance payment of fees, providing personal needs especially for those children in boarding schools and attending to the medical treatment when the school is not able to handle the medical cases of students. Parents are sometimes considered a nuisance in the school and those who frequent schools can sometimes be seen by principals as interfering with the “smooth running” of the school. One wonders whether this could be the reason why some of the student respondents claim that the administration does not respect their parents. As one student in a focus group in Nairobi province shares,

“The way parents are treated by the administration especially when it is not visiting days can lead to a conflict. The students feel that their parents are not respected.”¹⁰⁷

From the analysis (Table 5.6) above it is evident that a vast majority of youth prefer to involve their parents rather than their school counselors – mainly teachers - in problem-solving. This raises the question: If such a high percentage of students - as compared with that, for instance of the school counselor - view the role of parents as key to addressing their problems, what does this say about youth violence in schools and the achievement of sustainable peace especially where the school authorities discount the value of parents? This question sets the stage for reflection on the crucial role of parents in peacebuilding. The assumption is that when parents – significant adult in the youth’s live - are actively involved in their children’s lives, this can minimise the conflicts as the youth will have another reliable source for problem-solving. The argument here is that relegating the crucial role that parents do and can play in dealing with problem-solving is unproductive. Hence, the role of

¹⁰⁷ Focus group discussion, S9F#3N, March 2010

parents in school should not be restricted for instance to providing financial support (payment of fees and supporting school infrastructure) and discipline issues (school rules and character formation) and/or academic performance as shown in the narratives below.

“In my opinion parents need to play an active role in the schools not only during academics. You see our parents come to school only to pay fees or to be told how one is performing in class. What about all the other issues we have said like the harshness and attitude of teachers towards us?”¹⁰⁸

“We agree. Parents should know what is exactly going on in school then they can help in guidance and counselling”.¹⁰⁹

From the above narratives, it is evident that the youth consider the parents’ role in problem-solving in schools as important. Therefore, to enhance the parents’ crucial role in peacebuilding, there is need for the school to set up guidelines and mechanisms that allow for the parents’ views, contributions and active involvement in the peacebuilding process.

Also of interest was to find out how far the youth are involved in problem-solving in their schools. Assuming the importance of involving the students in decision making and problem solving in issues that affect them, respondents were asked: *Does the school administration involve students in the running of the school?* This question is two pronged. Firstly, to find out to what extent the school administration recognises and values the potential of youth in problem-solving. Secondly, to test the popular belief in both the public sphere and among education stakeholders that attributes the high-handedness of the principal as the key factor to violent conflicts in schools. On the part of the students, it would be interesting to

¹⁰⁸ Focus group discussion, S5F#6N, March 2010

¹⁰⁹ Focus group discussion, S5F#3N, March 2010

find out their view on the ability of the authority to handle the conflicts that affect them. Additionally, it would be of interest to discover how confident they are in their own ability to solve some of the conflicts in their environs.

In response to the question above, all the 512 student respondents responded. The results are captured in Figure 5.3 below. Slightly over three quarters (75.4 percent) of the respondents said that they were involved in the running of the school. However, slightly below a quarter (24.6 percent) said that they were not involved.

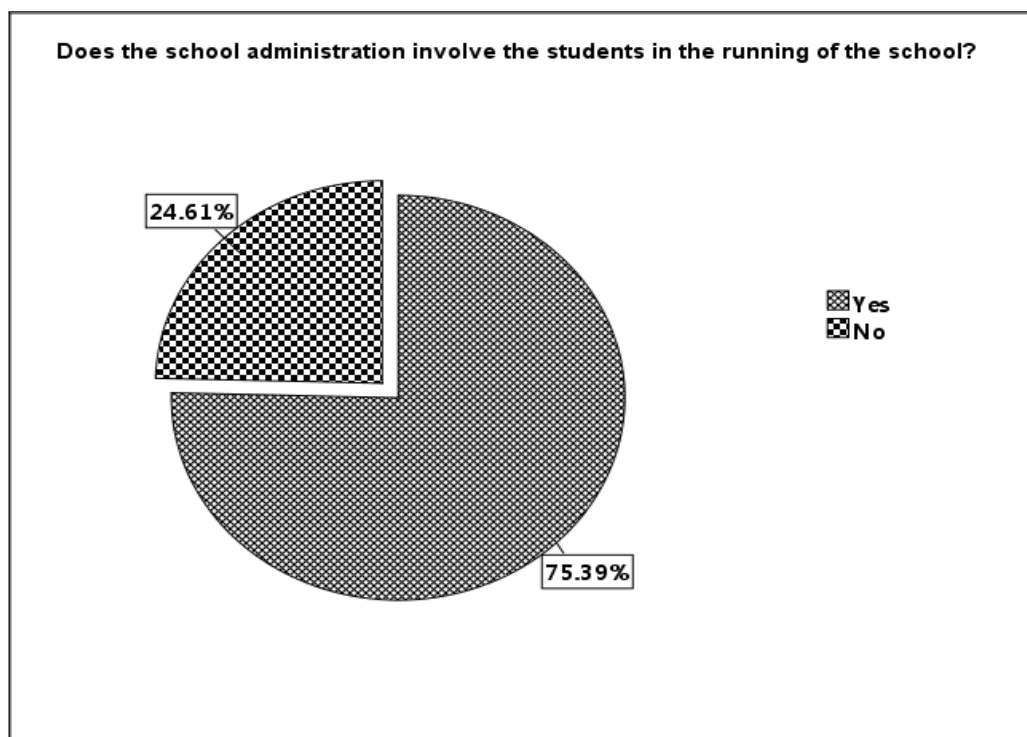


Figure 5.3 Students involvement in the running of their school by gender

Additionally, the responses were cross-tabulated by gender. Table 5.7 below shows that three quarters (75.0 percent) of males and slightly over three quarters (75.8 percent) of females indicated that the administration does involve the students in the running of the school. On the other hand, a quarter (25 percent) of the males and nearly a quarter (24.2 percent) of the females indicated that the school administration does not involve them in the running of the school.

Table 5.7 Students involvement in the running of their school by gender

Does the school administration involve students in the running of the school?	Gender of student		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	195	191	386
	75.0%	75.8%	75.4%
No	65	61	126
	25.0%	24.2%	24.6%
Total	260	252	512
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

In order to find out more on the issue of student involvement in the running of their schools the responses were cross-tabulated by school location. From Table 5.8 below, 80.4 percent and 73.0 percent of the student respondents in Nairobi and Rift Valley provinces respectively said that they were involved. On the other hand slightly over a quarter (27.0 percent) and 19.6 percent of student respondents from the Rift Valley and Nairobi correspondingly indicated that they were not involved. From the analysis, it is apparent that the students are generally happy with the involvement in the running of the school. However, those in Nairobi province seem to be more involved than those in the Rift Valley province.

Table 5.8 Involvement of students in the running of their school by school location

Does the school administration involve students in the running of the school? by school location	Location of school		Total
	Rift Valley Province	Nairobi Province	
Yes	251	135	386
	73.0%	80.4%	75.4%
No	93	33	126
	27.0%	19.6%	24.6%
Total	344	168	512
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

A brief on the duties and role of a secondary school principal in a Kenyan school setting is of essence at this point. This will act as a base to an initial understanding of the importance placed in this study on the role of leaders in problem-solving especially in a school setting. The principal co-ordinates, manages and executes the policies and guidelines of the government under the Ministry of Education. They are the accounting officers working closely with qualified staff (teaching and support staff). In a boarding school they carry added responsibilities of ensuring the safety of the whole school community (boarders and the staff who live in the school premises). For instance, in a national school (which admits top performing students in the country), a principal is in charge of a minimum of seven hundred (boarders), nearly fifty members of teaching staff and over fifty support staff. Principals are also the Secretary to both the Board of Governors (BOG) and Parents Teachers Association (PTA). These bodies are required to have regular meetings with the BOG having a minimum of three official meetings each year (this means one meeting per school term).

Since a national school setting often has better learning facilities than other types of schools, some of these institutions also serve as marking centres for both the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) and the Kenya Certificate Secondary Education (KCSE). The marking exercise takes place for at least a month each year (usually from the end of November throughout December). This means that a principal doubles up as the school principal and the examination Centre Organiser (CO). The CO's duties involves identifying extra support staff, remunerating all the staff on behalf of the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC), monitoring and ensuring that all the examinations are secured. The principal or the deputy is expected to be in the school premise throughout the examination marking exercise. This is usually the holiday break for the schools

which reopen in early January. In February, the principal is involved in the selection exercise of students to join Form one after completion of KCPE. This means that the principal of a school that is a marking centre rarely gets a holiday break at the end of the year. Although the KNEC remunerates those involved for these extra responsibilities the principals that participated in the survey argued that the remuneration is not commensurate with the responsibilities. This coupled with the minimal moral support they receive from the Ministry of Education (MOE) makes them feel demoralised and usurps their energy to attend to the demands of students – whom one principal refers to as “*the new crop of dot.com generation of students that want everything on a silver platter.*”¹¹⁰

Further this key informant asserts,

*“We do all the work but no recognition for what we do except blame from everybody; the teachers, the students, the parents, the community, and even the Ministry of Education Officers who are meant to understand you and appreciate what you do. The MOE just runs to your school when there is a strike to blame you. We are jacks of all trade but masters of none. This makes us feel demoralised, lack motivation and energy to give our best.”*¹¹¹

This view of the principal about the relationship between the principals and the MOE is confirmed by the narrative of an Education Officer who observes, “*The principals of schools today still carry baggages of the past.*”¹¹² When referring to their own role of supervision of schools and his own personal experience when executing his duty he notes,

¹¹⁰ Semi-structured interview, KYM#32RV (principal), February, 2010

¹¹¹ From the same interview as noted in the previous footnote 110. This was the experience of all the principals that the researcher interviewed and interacted with during the research period.

¹¹² Semi-structured interview, KYM#13RV, Education Officer, February 2010.

“There is lack of truthfulness especially among heads and teachers. Our teachers also have become ‘jacks of all trades’ with no specialised training. Most of them are operating from an old model which saw Ministry Officers before as enemies. The Ministry officers used to dictate and always go out looking for faults instead of acknowledging the work they had done and giving advice. This has changed but the heads and teachers still look at us as enemies. When they see us some run away.”¹¹³

This issue of teachers running away from the Ministry of Education Officers was observed while carrying out the research in Rift Valley. The research assistant saw teachers running to class as he and the researcher drove into one of the schools to organise and plan the interviews. The principal too was apprehensive when the researcher walked into his office but after the researcher identified herself and gave the reason for the visit, he became relaxed and explained that he had mistaken the researcher for an inspector of schools.

Equally the Education Officer above seems to confirm the allegations by the principals that the Ministry of Education Officers have played little role if any in supporting the principals in the schools. He shares,

“There is lack of funds for travel and also to operationalise the strategic plan. We do the work that is meant for the field in the office. Some of our officers do not have the necessary skills to deal with issues of conflicts among students. The schools are not empowered to do some of the work and we want to do the work and yet we are not able.”¹¹⁴

Interestingly, the principals and teachers that were interviewed concurred with some of the narratives of the key informants above about the preparedness in handling conflicts in the schools. They expressed concern that they are expected to

¹¹³ From the same interview as noted in the previous (footnote 112).

¹¹⁴ From the same interview as noted in the previous (footnote 113).

deal with different conflicts in schools yet they are not given opportunities for capacity building. They claim that such opportunities would enable them keep in tandem with the changing reality of the Kenyan context especially regarding youth and their issues. To support their point they gave examples from the newly introduced peace education programmes in response to the youth violent unrest especially after the post-2007 election which they claim “was forced” on them. They shared that they learnt about it through circulars from the Ministry of Education and the media. Those interviewed expressed concern that they were been “*forced*” to teach a subject they knew little about and had inadequate or no training. Those that had an idea indicated that this was through their own efforts especially reading from books that were “*simple and straightforward*” and easily available in the local bookshops. As evidenced in the narrative below of a teacher in Nairobi.

“I was asked to teach this subject but I really do not know what I am meant to do. I got this book I am using from the bookshop and I find it helpful. When I am teaching, the students are interested and would like us to continue discussing but we have to stop after the end of the lesson and you know this subject will not be examined.”¹¹⁵

A question that would be of interest at this point is: What is the implication of such experiences and views expressed by these key informants as far as their role in dealing with youth violent conflicts in schools and wider society? This points at the importance of actively engaging the different stakeholders in the school setting. More importantly, the Ministry of Education needs to engage those in the school administration in any peacebuilding programmes/activities to ensure their

¹¹⁵ Semi-structured interview, KYF#20N, (Class teacher), March 2010

effectiveness and sustainability. This means that efforts should be made to ensure that such programmes/activities are context specific and participatory.

As a continuation of the analysis about the school authority involving the students in the running of the school, the following question acted as a guide: *Are you happy with the level of involvement in the school?* Table 5.9 below shows that slightly over half (50.1 percent) and nearly sixty (59.6) percent of student respondents from the Rift Valley and Nairobi provinces respectively showed that they were happy with the level of involvement in the school. However, nearly half (49.9 percent) and slightly over two fifths (40.4 percent) of student respondents in the Rift Valley and Nairobi provinces correspondingly responded in the negative.

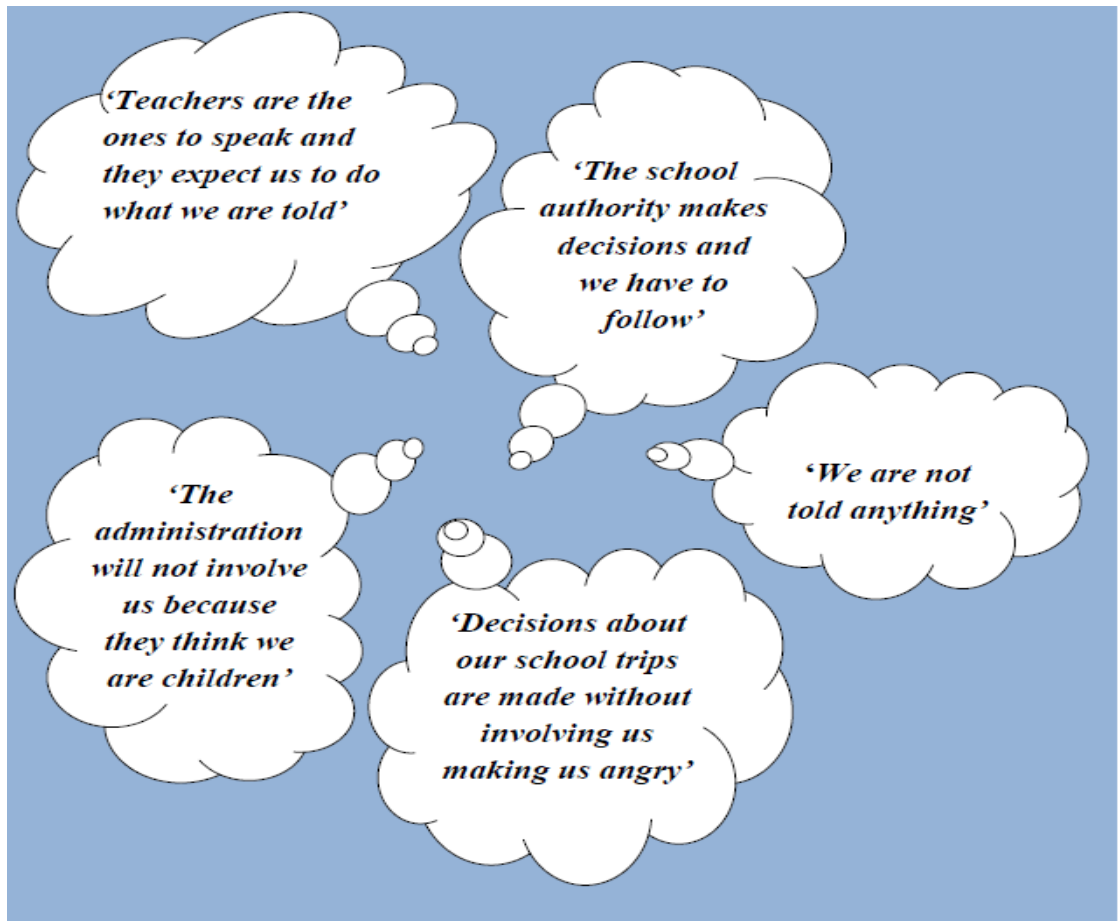
Table 5.9 Students: level of involvement in their schools by school location

Are you happy with the level of student involvement in your school?	Location of school		Total
	Rift Valley Province	Nairobi Province	
Yes	172	99	271
	50.1%	59.6%	53.2%
No	171	67	238
	49.9%	40.4%	46.8%
Total	343	166	509
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

From the above responses, there is an indication that the students are involved, and equally happy with the level of involvement. However, as shown in the student narratives in Box 4 below, this does not correspond to the level of satisfaction that is expressed in the percentages reflected in Table 5.9 above. In their narratives they claim that this involvement is dictated by the school authority so it is

cosmetic and “for showcasing”. Further they allege that the suggestion boxes supplied are rarely looked at and if they are, their suggestions or issues are rarely or never addressed. Also in the ‘barazas’ (Swahili for open forums), they cannot express themselves freely as they are not assured of protection from victimisation by the teachers or the principals themselves who organise these forums. Some of these narratives that were shared freely especially in the focus groups are a confirmation of students’ dissatisfaction with the school authority at all levels (Box 4 below).

Box 4 Students’ dissatisfaction with level of involvement in their schools



¹Collected and coded during the student interactions in the focus groups

Two other narratives from student respondents further endorse the collated narratives: *“I will not suggest anything because I think the teachers would not listen to me, they will just shout at me, mind the business that brought you here!”*¹¹⁶ Yet another: *“New rules always come up without our knowledge hence most of the students are continuously found in mistakes.”*¹¹⁷

The above narratives raise some questions that are of interest at this point. How does this exclusion contribute to youth perception of the world around them (wider Kenyan society and the global world inclusive of the environment)? Can exclusion be a factor in exacerbating youth violence in their school and wider society? Could incorporation of youth or lack of dialogue affect the way they relate with authority in both the school and at home? These questions are crucial as they set the ground for responses to the second research question: *In what ways can approaches to peacebuilding and education systems respond to youth violence.* In responding to these questions, this highlights the need to provide a platform where the youth can be free to express themselves by sharing their grievances and expectations. Furthermore, in designing and implementing the programmes, those concerned need to bear in mind the positive and potentially constructive contributions of the youth. Hence, a participatory approach to the peacebuilding process is therefore crucial if the violence is to be addressed with the sensitivity and effectiveness it deserves. This is aimed at eventually bringing about the change that the youth seek. as identified in the youth narrative below.

*“There are many things going wrong especially among the youth but no one cares to find out why e.g. our leaders keep speaking and doing things the same way and ignoring our voices Things then do not move and this is very frustrating.”*¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Survey questionnaire, S11RV#357, February, 2010

¹¹⁷ Survey questionnaire, S12RV#423, February 2010

¹¹⁸ Focus group discussion, S14M#6N, March 2010

Further information on the students' involvement in the running of their school was captured in the bio-data information (Appendix 2). Since this was an open question, the student respondents could fill in many options. The responses were collated then coded into four main options illustrated in Figure 5.4 below. Of the total 512 student respondents, 34.4 percent of them indicated their involvement as leaders in the school's clubs and societies as opposed to other position in the school's daily routine. Few, slightly above 10 percent (14.6 percent) show that they are involved as prefects. However, only one percent of the respondents are involved as class monitors. Half of the respondents (50 percent) indicated that they are not involved at all. The information on the prefectorial system in Kenyan schools and its functions will shed more light on this.

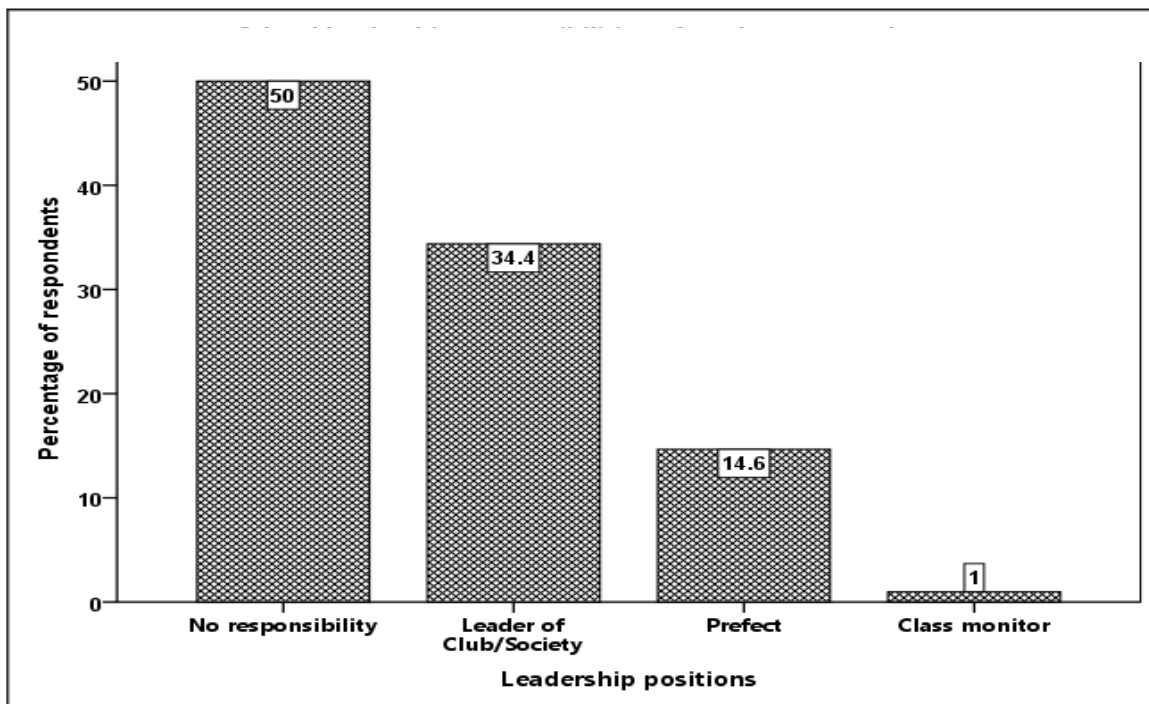


Figure 5.4 Students' leadership responsibilities in schools

Interestingly, from the analysis and illustrative representation (Figure 5.4) above, those who claim to have responsibilities are equal to those who claim not to be engaged in any responsibilities. It would seem that majority of the students

experience leadership roles in clubs and societies. Importantly, in the open-coded responses, focus groups and semi-structured interviews, most of the respondents state that they feel relaxed, valued, and energised when they are in clubs and societies. They claim that clubs and societies are student centred as these are organised and led by the students who hold the key positions. The teachers' role is to support the students. Further, the students claim that it is in these clubs and societies that they are able to *chuck* stress and learn many skills such as self determination, journalism, and healthy relationships. In these activities they bond with their peers and maximise their potential. Others indicated that they were not in any leadership position but contribute in clubs and societies (this will be revisited in depth in chapter six).

The following were some of the other narratives captured in the interactions of the focus groups in the surveyed schools on engagement in clubs and societies: *“Everyone there matters”*; *“Everyone can give their suggestions and we all learn from each other”*, or *“There are no adults here telling us off and what to do and not do”*; *“We have innings and outings and therefore share and feel as important as those who are prefects.”* This group of students is happy to contribute to the school irrespective of whether they are leaders or not especially in the clubs or societies. However, as seen in some of the responses of those who are not in leadership position, their views are that they only matter if they are prefects, class monitors or leaders of clubs and societies. Some went as far as showing that their gender matters as far as leadership is concerned. For example, they used qualifiers such as *“I am not in any leadership role as I am not a perfect”*; *“I am a mere student”*; *“I am a commoner”*; *“No, I am only a girl”*; *“No, I am nothing”*. It is likely that these respondents are communicating the attitude in their school that leadership is for a chosen few people and/or a preserve of the males. But on the other hand, it could be

a reflection of the Kenyan society where the males dominate in top leadership positions especially in government.

As pointed out already, the issue of prefects' body needs further analysis. This system of student involvement in governance of the school has been in the limelight. As already noted, there are ongoing debates on how best students can be involved in the governance of their school but this is not without major challenges. A critical analysis of these structures might shed more light on the dissatisfaction with the prefects' body and its leadership role. Also of interest is the new proposed student council system that is intended to replace the prefects' body in the schools. A brief on the prefectorial structure that has been operating in Kenya since independence is of essence at this point.

Prefects are students with a leadership role in the school. They can be appointed or elected by other students depending on the tradition of the school. They have a "twin" role, that is, they act as a link between the school authorities and the rest of the students' body and vice versa. All the schools in Kenya have key prefects who are senior and co-ordinate the other prefects. These would mainly be from the senior classes (Form three and four). The two prefects who co-ordinate this body are the school captains/head boys and head girls and their assistants. In a mixed school the authorities ensures that there is gender consideration in this positions. Usually in any given Form (one to four), there are two or three class monitors. Then there are other prefects depending on the roles specified in a particular school. Some schools have over seventy prefects while others have between thirty and fifty. This depends on the size of the school and also on its tradition. For instance one of the schools that has a population of about one thousand students has a well structured prefects'

body.¹¹⁹ In this system the students are in charge of all the activities apart from the classroom teaching. They are members of a cabinet which is headed by the director and meets fortnightly. The researcher compares this prefect structure and way of ranking with that of the military as students wear badges showing the different ranks of seniority (Figure 5.5 below). For this particular school, the prefect system seems to work as the school has not experienced student unrest.

The Prefectorial Structure

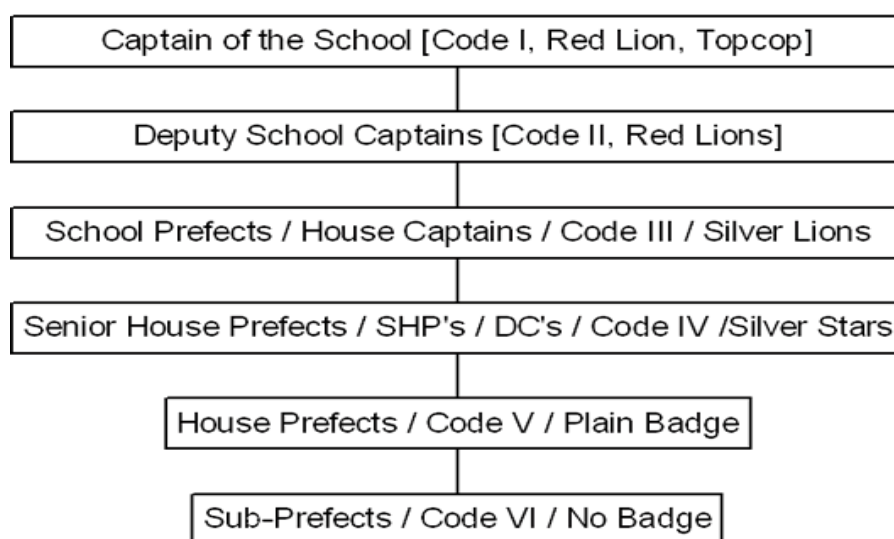


Figure 5.5 The prefectorial structure

Source: Starehe Boys' Centre and School official site, April 2011

However, in other schools, the prefects' body system is not as structured. For example, in one of the district schools in this survey, in an interview with the school authority, the researcher was informed that they have about twenty four prefects depending on the areas where key leadership role is needed. For instance, there are

¹¹⁹ This structure was introduced by the founder and director the Starehe Boys Centre and School - the late Dr Geoffrey William Griffin (1933-2005). Other sources on this school and its unique way of operation concerning the prefectorial structure refer to Ojiambo, P.C. (2007). PhD Thesis entitled, Educating Modern Kenyans: Dr Geoffrey William Griffin and Starehe Boys Centre and School p. 408-414.

class monitors, the library prefect, the environment prefect (in charge of the school grounds), the bell ringer, the church prefect (in charge of religious aspects of the school), the entertainment prefect, the prefect in charge of the sick, and prefects in charge of the games and dormitories. Depending on the number of dormitories, there could be at least two prefects per dormitory and this applies to most other areas in the school setting. One of the provincial schools had over forty prefects all having a specific role.

In 2009 there was the first Kenya secondary school students meeting which was held in Nairobi. It was at this meeting that the idea of replacing the prefects' body with the student councils was mooted as one of the ways of addressing the causes of student unrest. Figure 5.6 below is an example of the transition structure guideline model that was proposed to replace the current prefects system.

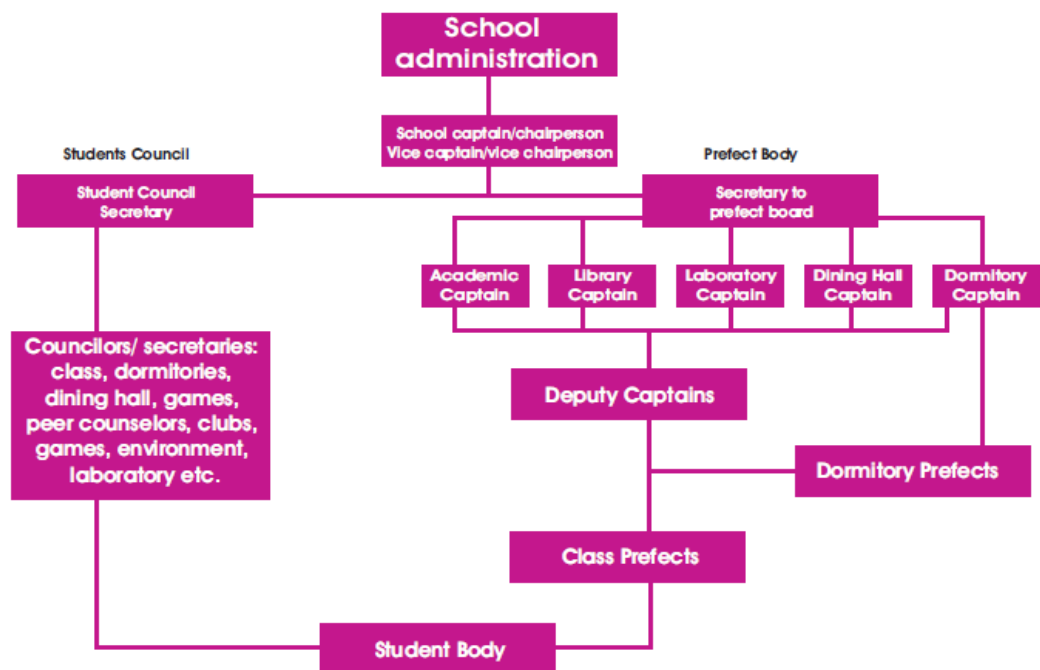


Figure 5.6 Proposed students' council for secondary schools in Kenya

MOE, KESSHA, UNICEF (2009). *Transition structure guideline: Booklet Implementation of Student Council in Schools*. pp. 1-2.¹²⁰

¹²⁰ Refer to this source for the implementation of Students Councils in Schools p. 1-25

The above proposed model (Figure 5.6 above) with variations (to be adapted by schools accordingly) was prepared with the input and approval of the Ministry of Education (MOE) Kenya in conjunction with the Kenya Heads of Secondary Schools Association (KESSHA) and United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund (UNICEF). During the time of the field research, some schools had already implemented it with variations and others were in the process. The plan was that all schools would have a Students council by August 2012. The proposed arrangement was that the schools have a hybrid (prefects and student council) at the beginning to ensure it runs smoothly. Some schools had their own reservations about it. The advice to schools was that the transition should be gradual and incorporate the two systems.

One of the schools - Nyahururu High school – in Central province adopted the new leadership structure with variations. In this school the student leadership is referred to as “the Student Council of Elders”. Central province is an area dominated by the Kikuyu ethnic community whose traditional system of governance had a Council of Elders. Some traditional families use this system of governance when dealing with marital, family or land disputes. Elders in the Kikuyu community similar to other African communities are held with high esteem and often deified. Having this as background knowledge, the use of this term in the school setting raises questions as to how this term will be perceived and also how this council hopes to function without getting into similar pitfalls that befell the prefects’ body in schools throughout the country. What feelings for instance does the term ‘Council of Elders’ as adopted by this school, conjure up on the students’ body?

As noted, from Figure 5.7 below this model is hierarchical with the Board of Governors at the top and the Form representatives (Forms one to four at the bottom).

The prefects' body has been retained. The rest of the students who are represented by the Form representatives are at the bottom of this organisational structure. This student council consists of thirty-four members (thirty-two students and two teachers). It is the duty of the students to select two students per Form based on a given criteria such as distinguished leadership qualities, good conduct and average academic performance. The "Council of Elders" appoints the chairperson who automatically becomes a perfect and proposes a teacher who is endorsed by the principal, and the principal appoints the assistant patron.

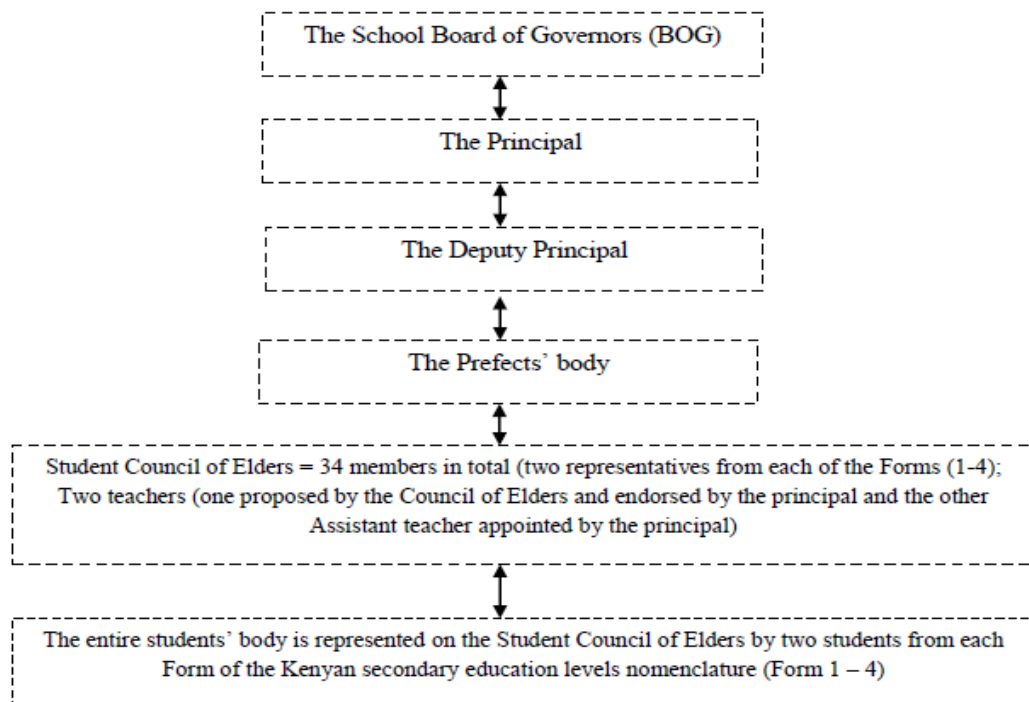


Figure 5.7 An example of the emerging models of students' leadership in schools

Source: Adapted from M. Karanja, Report: Student Council of Elders, Nyahururu High school, Central province¹²¹

This council is trained in conflict resolution and also meets once fortnightly. Some of the job description of this Student Council of Elders is to:

- Resolve conflicts between the Forms for instance between Form two and three
- Monitor inter-Forms relations to arbitrate on areas that can breed conflict
- Introduce topical discussions in weekly class meetings
- Liaise with other councils to resolve conflicts¹²²

The next section elicits the students' expectation pertaining to their role and involvement in problem-solving. The assumption is that youth have the potential to deal with problem-solving in the school setting and wider society. How this potential is harnessed is core to this thesis as it will address the concerns expressed in research question (b).

5.2 YOUTH POTENTIAL AND PROBLEM-SOLVING

To facilitate the responses, a series of questions were posed, the answers which will be analysed in this section. The student respondents were asked: *Can you influence the way conflicts and disputes in your school are dealt with?* This question was meant to elicit the youth's own views/experiences and reality as far as problem-solving in their context is concerned. To assist in the analysis, the responses to this question were coded into three parts: "Yes", "No" and "I do not know". Of interest was to find out how the student respondents from individual schools responded to this question. There were 512 student respondents. 508 (99.2 percent) were valid cases and 4 (0.8) were missing cases (Table 5.10). Of these, 59.0 percent indicated that they can influence how conflicts are handled in their schools. 40.2 percent noted that they cannot influence problem-solving in their schools. A minimal number of

¹²² M. Karanja, Report of Student council in Central province, <http://www.ksssc.ac.ke/Reports/KSSSC%20Central%20report%202010.pdf> .
<http://www.ksssc.ac.ke/Reports/Kagumo%20High%20School%20Report.pdf>
<http://www.ksssc.ac.ke/Reports/Alliance%20High%20School.pdf>

0.8 percent indicated that they did not know. Two schools (coded S2 and S14), both in Nairobi province, had a vast percentage (90.0 percent and 72.2 percent) respectively of those student respondents who said “yes”. In two other schools (S4 and S13), three fifths (60 percent) said “yes, they can influence in problem-solving”. Four schools, S1 (68.3 percent), S10 (67.9 percent), S8 (66.7 percent) and S5 (65.7 percent), and S12 with nearly 60 percent (58.8 percent), responded in the affirmative. The remaining six schools had slightly over half percent or less of those students who said “yes”. The percentage that said “no” was over 30 percent except for student respondents from schools S2 and S14. In school S8 some respondents (5.6 percent) said “No”.

Table 5.10 Students' views: problem-solving in their own schools

<i>Can you influence the way conflicts and disputes in your school are dealt with?</i>	Yes		No		I don't know		Total	
S1	28	68.3%	13	31.7%	0	.0%	41	100.0%
S2	18	90.0%	2	10.0%	0	.0%	20	100.0%
S3	17	48.6%	18	51.4%	0	.0%	35	100.0%
S4	27	60.0%	18	40.0%	0	.0%	45	100.0%
S5	23	65.7%	12	34.3%	0	.0%	35	100.0%
S6	23	44.2%	28	53.8%	1	1.9%	52	100.0%
S7	12	44.4%	15	55.6%	0	.0%	27	100.0%
S8	24	66.7%	10	27.8%	2	5.6%	36	100.0%
S9	15	41.7%	21	58.3%	0	.0%	36	100.0%
S10	19	67.9%	9	32.1%	0	.0%	28	100.0%
S11	19	54.3%	15	42.9%	1	2.9%	35	100.0%
S12	30	58.8%	21	41.2%	0	.0%	51	100.0%
S13	21	60.0%	14	40.0%	0	.0%	35	100.0%
S14	26	72.2%	10	27.8%	0	.0%	36	100.0%
Total	302	59.0%	206	40.2%	4	.8%	512	100.0%

Interestingly, from the focus groups discussions in these schools and researcher’s observation, the students had confidence in themselves. Despite the

different forms of challenges that were unique to each school, the students in their narratives show their willingness to be actively involved in their schools. They expressed their dreams for their schools. Part of these dreams was a desire for their schools to be places of excellence. They saw their role mainly in the contribution they make especially during the Drama and Music festivals, Sports where they win trophies and bring fame to their schools. They also noted that they contribute to the school finances by selling the school magazines and agriculture products from their clubs activities such as the Young Farmers Association (YFA). Equally they pointed out their care for the environment and the voluntary service they offer to the communities near their own schools. Additionally, they demonstrated ways in which they support each other especially through peer counselling during difficult times.

It is therefore evident from the focus group discussions that when the youth participate in the co-curricular activities, they feel fulfilled, happy and engaged. The youth also view these activities as ways of bonding, socialising, sharing ideas, learning team-building and fostering friendship. Equally, through these activities they are able to maximise their potential and learn to appreciate each other - irrespective of their different social and economic backgrounds. They also point out that these activities boost their self-esteem. However, when these activities are curtailed, this can aggravate an already delicate situation where youth feel angry, frustrated, dissatisfied, aggrieved by the way their issues are handled and also the sense that they are missing out on things that they consider important to them as the narratives below testifies (Table 5.11).

Table 5.11 Activities that students are involved in that assist them in problem-solving

STUDENT RESPONDENTS' CODE NO ¹	STUDENT NARRATIVES ON ACTIVITIES THEY ARE INVOLVED THAT ASSIST THEM IN PROBLEM-SOLVING IN THE SCHOOLS
S14M#510N	<i>In our school clubs during the day are discouraged and also going out during class times except for national functions otherwise other activities are cancelled. This reduces exposure and our talents are not utilised and we miss on a lot. Sometimes transport is not provided even for a school team e.g basketball</i>
S10FG#3RV	<i>More fun and dialogue in school and at home and there will be no conflict.</i>
S11Intv. F# 1RV	<i>The clubs and societies such as YCS and Journalism contribute to the students' welfare. The Journalism club helps us to improve our communication. We meet each week and gather information about what is happening in our school and around us.</i>
S1FGM#8N	<i>Drama festival is a powerful tool of communication, gives a lot of information. The audience is mainly students and teachers. Suggestion - design that there is bigger audience especially parents as some of the issues handled target parents.</i>

¹S+numeral=school code, FG= Focus group, Intv.= semi-structured interview, M=male and F=female, N=Nairobi and RV= Rift Valley, numeral after #= Student respondent's identification number in the survey questionnaires or focus group

In essence, these activities act as a platform for youth to express and address their issues. Therefore there is need for a system that could tap these creative ways to lay a strong foundation where peace can flourish in both the schools and wider Kenyan society.

Some student respondents especially from the school coded (S2), a day mixed school in Nairobi, expressed confidence in their new school principal's

leadership. Their narratives also reflected a good relationship between the students and their new principal as captured below:

*“Nowadays it is better because of the new principal who understands us.”*¹²³

*“They [the conflicts] are solved by the final super power in the school that is the principal.”*¹²⁴

*“The principal we had in 2009 liked assuming issues but the one we have now 2010 she is better.”*¹²⁵

This good leadership and relationship between the students and their principal can act as a fertile ground in which to positively engage with the youth. Notably, this could be a good starting point to positively engage the students in finding ways that can address their issues to create peaceful environments in their school.

Further in order to find out how the different genders responded, the responses were cross-tabulated. Table 5.12 shows majority (65.8 percent) males and slightly over a half (52.0 percent) females said that they can influence the way conflicts and disputes in their school are dealt with. 33.1 percent males and nearly a half (47.6 percent) females show that they cannot influence the way conflicts and disputes are dealt with in their school. Only 1.2 percent males and 0.4 percent females claim that they “do not know”.

¹²³ Survey questionnaire, S2F#43N, March 2010

¹²⁴ Survey questionnaire, S2M#47N, March 2010

¹²⁵ Survey questionnaire, S2M#53N, March 2010

Table 5.12 Students' views: problem-solving in their own schools by gender

Can you influence the way conflicts and disputes in your school are dealt with?	Gender of student		Total
	Male	Female	
Yes	171	131	302
	65.8%	52.0%	59.0%
No	86	120	206
	33.1%	47.6%	40.2%
I don't know	3	1	4
	1.2%	.4%	.8%
Total	260	252	512
	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

From the above analysis it is noticeable that close to half percent of the female respondents have the opinion that they cannot influence the way problem-solving is exercised in their schools. It would be interesting to find out why this is the case. Chapter six below might shed more light on this.

As a follow-up question, the students were asked: *Which conflicts do you think students can solve for themselves?* The student respondents were expected to choose any of the given options that apply.

There were 512 student respondents. 508 (99.2 percent) were valid cases and 4 (0.8) were missing cases. The options that were selected were captured as multiple responses and are presented in the Table 5.13 below. Most of the male and female cases (80.9 percent and 84.1 percent) respectively selected “noise making” as one of the conflicts that students can solve themselves. On the other hand, 75.1 percent male cases and 76.5 percent female cases selected “misunderstanding among students”. Interestingly, 70.8 percent male cases selected use of “abusive language” as opposed to 57.0 percent female cases. Interesting more female percent cases (71.7) selected “gossiping” as opposed to 58.0 percent male cases

Table 5.13 Students' views: conflict(s) they can solve themselves by gender

Which conflicts do you think students can solve for themselves?	Gender of student		Total
	Male	Female	
Misunderstanding among students	193 75.1%	192 76.5%	385
Bullying	96 37.4%	66 26.3%	162
Stealing	122 47.5%	92 36.7%	214
Noisemaking in class	208 80.9%	211 84.1%	419
Gossiping	149 58.0%	180 71.7%	329
'Sneaking' out of school	82 31.9%	50 19.9%	132
Use of abusive language	182 70.8%	143 57.0%	325
Total 508 (99.2%) valid cases 4(0.8%) missing cases	257	251	508

¹Figures do not add up to 100 percent - a multiple response question.

From the responses on Table 5.13 above, one can assume that the conflicts that happen most in girls' schools is mainly as a result of "gossiping" and for the boys "use of abusive language". It is also apparent that the students' are confident of their potential to deal with some of the conflicts that affect them. Equally, the implication could be that issues such as reducing noise in class should be students' concern rather the teachers. Hence, there is need to trust the youth and their abilities to deal effectively with the conflicts they consider within their ability to solve. Importantly, those in authority need to take on a supportive role when dealing with the youth and their issues. This means stressing their positive role in peacebuilding as opposed to highlighting their role as troublemakers. As a result, the adults are

challenged to work towards changing their mindsets as regards their perceptions of youth and their responses towards youth violence. As shown earlier in the youth and key informants narratives adults tend to label youth as ‘rebellious’ and ‘inexperienced’ therefore excluding them from active participation in school and wider society. Youth on the other hand, look up to the adults for mentorship. Therefore the challenge for the adults is to provide these good role models that will not be threatened by the youth creativity and ability to lead and drive the peace process themselves.

Further, of interest was to find out the views of the students on whether they thought their opinions would be taken seriously. Of the 512 that responded, a majority had reservations. They claimed that there would be no such opportunity to give their views as they are rarely involved in decision making in matters that involve them. This is compounded by the dismissive attitude of the school authority, especially when they consider student issues as petty. This will be dealt with in depth in chapter six below.

Following the question on conflicts that students can solve for themselves, the researcher sought the student respondents’ views on conflicts that can be handled by the school authority. This is important in this study as it might shed light on some assumptions and popular views in Kenya especially among students, teachers, parents, media and the general public who tend to equate majority of the problems in a school setting as emanating from the “high handedness of the principals”. However, without ruling this out as a factor, such argument may require a broader approach to youth violence which is complex and not monocausal.

The student respondents were asked: *Which conflicts should be handled by the school administration?* Table 5.14 below shows that the total respondents were 512. Of these, the valid cases were 510 (99.6 percent) and the missing cases were 2 (0.4 percent). 73.5 percent and 70.2 percent of the cases selected “poor diet” and “poor student-teachers’ relationship” respectively. On the other hand, 67.5 percent of the cases selected “rudeness to teachers” while 50.4 percent selected “stealing”. “Fighting among students” was selected the least by 46.7 percent of the cases. It would seem that the student respondents are confident that they have the potential to deal with fights among themselves. Therefore there is need for the authorities to tap this potential by creating opportunities where the youth can actualise their potential without coercion or intimidation.

Table 5.14 Students' views: conflict(s) the school administration can solve

Which conflicts should be handled by the school administration?	Responses		Percent of Cases
	N	Percent	
Poor diet	375	23.9%	73.5%
Stealing	257	16.3%	50.4%
Fighting among students	238	15.1%	46.7%
Poor student-teacher relationship	358	22.8%	70.2%
Rudeness to teachers	344	21.9%	67.5%
Total Valid cases 510(99.6%) Missing 2(0.4%)	1572	100.0%	308.2%

The responses to the above question were cross-tabulated by gender. This was in order to find out the pattern of selection in the views between the male and female student respondents. The rationale is that depending on their choices, this

may give an indication of how they view their roles and that of the administration in problem-solving. How confident are they with their school leaders as regards problem-solving? There were 512 student respondents. Of these 510 (99.6 percent) were valid cases and 2 (0.4 percent) missing cases (Table 5.15). Among the percent of male cases, 79.2 percent and 74.5 percent selected “poor diet” and “poor student-teacher relationship” respectively and 66.0 percent selected “rudeness to teachers”. Among the female cases, 68.9 percent, 67.7 percent, 65.7 percent cases selected “rudeness to teachers”, “poor diet” and “poor students-teacher relationship” in that order. Hence, in terms of priority, the highest percentage of male cases selected “poor diet” and female cases “rudeness to teachers”.

Table 5.15 Students' views: conflict(s) school administration can solve by gender

Which conflicts should be handled by the school administration?	Gender of student		Total
	Male	Female	
Poor diet	205 79.2%	170 67.7%	375
Stealing	121 46.7%	136 54.2%	257
Fighting among students	108 41.7%	130 51.8%	238
Poor student-teacher relationship	193 74.5%	165 65.7%	358
Rudeness to teachers	171 66.0%	173 68.9%	344
Total Valid cases 510(99.6%) Missing 2(0.4%)	259	251	510

From the findings above it would seem that the student respondents are in favour of the administration handling most of the cases that were given in the

multiple response question above. Curiously, if this is the case, would failure of the administration to handle these conflicts or delegating it especially to prefects be a source of further violent conflicts?

To probe further this issue of problem-solving, especially how conflicts are dealt with, the student respondents were asked to indicate what youth workshops/training (for instance peer counselling, leadership and any other form of training) are offered in their schools. This acted as a gauge in order to assess the opportunities available to the students in form of training, workshops, seminars or co-curricular activities. Additionally, the rationale was to find out whether the school has other avenues where the students can express themselves and actualise their potential. It was also to find out the structures and functions of these activities in the schools. What proportions of these activities have been initiated by the students themselves? Are they mainly academic or for leisure or both? How many of these are specifically tailored to equip youth for peacebuilding? Table 5.16 below is a synopsis of some of the student respondents' responses on workshops/training offered in the schools and who is expected to participate. As can be seen from the responses, the workshop/training is mainly geared to guidance, peer counselling and training for prefects.

Table 5.16 Opportunities for training in student respondents' own schools

STUDENT RESPONDENTS CODE NO ¹	YOUTH WORKSHOPS/TRAINING OFFERED IN RESPONDENT'S OWN SCHOOLS
S3FRV#63	<i>There is guidance and counselling group which counsels peers (anyone in need of advice).</i>
S5FN#152	<i>Our school offers peer counselling, leadership (for prefects only).</i>
S2FN#43	<i>life skills (to all the students)</i>
S14MN#483	<i>The school offers peer counselling services, leadership and career services (to all the students).</i>
S7FRV#243	<i>peer counselling to students who are having problems</i>
S4MRV#98	<i>They invite motivational speakers and employ trained counsellors (for principal and some teachers and students).</i>
S1MN#17	<i>There is a G/C dept [guidance and counselling department] but I've never heard of its work (only for Form ones).</i>
S1MN#19	<i>peer counselling and sex education (anyone who is interested)</i>
S1MN#31	<i>families which we have mentors (teachers; all students go to their mentor.</i>
S9FN#294	<i>leadership workshops but I have not attended any because they specialise only on the prefects and don't give others time to participate</i>
S10MRV#339	<i>peer counselling (given to peer counsellors); They enrich the peer counsellors with knowledge on how to solve conflicts and counsel those in problems.</i>
S11FRV#363	<i>guidance and counselling workshops (for all students)</i>

¹S+numeral=school code, M=male and F=female, N=Nairobi and RV= Rift Valley, numeral after #= Student respondent's identification number in the survey questionnaires.

As can be observed from the responses, the workshops/training mainly target the students' leadership. This means that the majority of the students miss out on

these efforts aimed at equipping the students with knowledge and skills such as good communication, problem-solving and trust building skills. While it is vital that the youth leaders in both the school and wider society get opportunities to build their leadership skills, it is equally important that the rest of the student body has the opportunities to develop and actualise their potential as well. In addition, the workshops/training need to be participatory and holistic so that the youth can be challenged to engage and actualise their potential. The assumption of the thesis is that by actively involving the youth in the peacebuilding programmes this will enhance bonding, co-operation, boost the youth's self-esteem and ensure that they are equipped to deal with the day to day conflicts in a peaceful way.

More importantly, as evidenced in chapter four, both the boys and girls experience violent conflicts in their schools therefore the challenge is to ensure that these workshops/training programmes are inclusive and gender-sensitive. Programmes that ignore the gender aspects especially those that are not sensitive to the girls can derail the success of the programmes thus compromising on the peace it is meant to promote (Schwartz, 2010:188). Hence, how well the school authority and the government will address the gender violence will determine the success of the peacebuilding programmes/activities. It is also important that the programmes aimed at addressing the violence the youth experience in both the schools and wider society are not "imposed packages" (Davies, 2004) as such programmes will have little or no positive impact on both the individuals and their milieu.

In order to find out whether the students are involved in any activities in their schools, they were asked: *Have you participated in any of the workshops?* The total respondents were 512. Of these 508 (99.2 percent) were valid cases and 4 (0.8 percent) were missing cases. As shown in the Table 5.17 below, slightly above half of the respondents (53.7 percent) said that they had participated in a workshop in the

school while 46.3 percent indicated that they had not participated in any of the organised workshops.

Table 5.17 Frequency: students' responses on their participation in workshops

Have you participated in any of the workshops?	Frequency	Valid Percent
Yes	273	53.7
No	235	46.3
Total Valid cases 508(99.2%) Missing 4(0.8%)	512	100.0

**Data missing in 4 cases is not included here*

Initial responses show that the majority of the workshops that the students are engaged in help them personally, for instance in building their self-esteem as this student indicates: *“Workshops help us to improve our confidence, interact and socialise.”*¹²⁶ They help in changing attitudes towards others in their schools as these student narratives shows: *“Workshops changed my attitudes towards the Form ones who are mostly hated by other students.”*¹²⁷ Yet for others it has helped in the way they perceive their schools. This will be dealt with in detail in chapter six.

However, from the semi-structured interviews and the focus groups discussions, it seems that the students, especially those in the rural areas, have minimal opportunities for leadership training or any other forms of personal development programmes. In the interviews with the key informants, mainly the Education officers, principals and teachers, majority of them cited lack of finances, adequate knowledge and expertise as the key obstacles in most rural schools to offer

¹²⁶ Survey questionnaire, S9F#294N, March 2010

¹²⁷ Survey questionnaire, S8M#285RV, March 2010

leadership training for students. This raises certain issues for instance regarding opportunities available to youth that can enable them actualise their potential. Equally this poses the question pertaining to equal distribution of resources in both the schools and the wider society.

From the narratives below it is evident that the youth are dissatisfied by the current disparity especially shown in distribution of resources. While the government is making efforts to build and adequately equip schools in the different parts of Kenya in order to address this issue, a great deal still remains to be done. To address this and avert further violence, there is need to put into practice the recommendations that have been highlighted in the past research which have pointed out different ways of bridging gaps by improving on the infrastructures of the different schools in the country.

Equally, systems can be put in place that will ensure that any recommendations from earlier research carried out on youth violence are acted upon to address the underlying causes and prevent further violence. In case the triggers pointed at are due to lack of leisure facilities this needs to be put in place in order for the youth to actualise their potential by engaging in activities such as Sports, Drama and Music. Also the relevant education authorities must put systems in place to minimise the disparities between different categories of schools to enhance unity in the schools and also to address some of the issues highlighted in the narrative below.

“I believe that if we improve services in all the regions then there will be no need for this.”¹²⁸

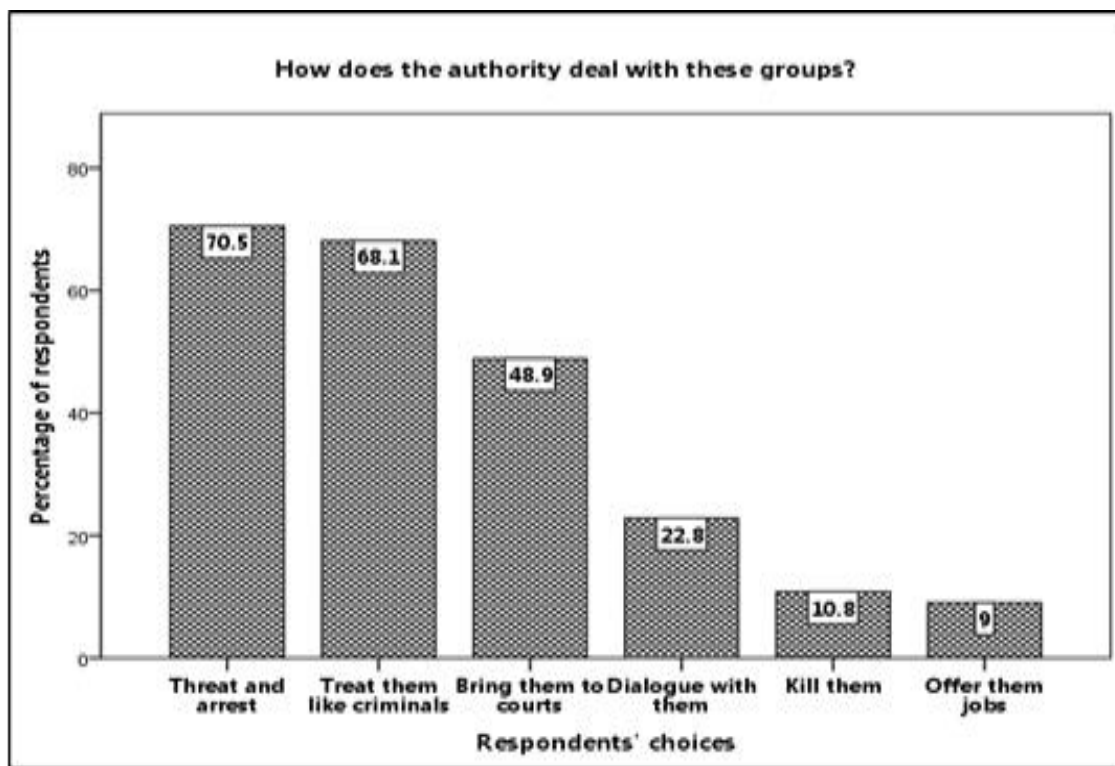
The above narrative was in response to an earlier view of one of the student respondent. The student had suggested that during the national selection exercise to

¹²⁸ Focus group discussion, S1M#4, March 2010

secondary schools in Kenya, the Ministry of Education could ensure that equal number of students from both the private and public primary schools is selected.

5.3 DEALING WITH YOUTH MILITIA GROUPS AND GANGS: PROBLEM-SOLVING AMONG YOUTH IN A STATE OF CONFUSION

Of interest was to find out how issues pertaining to youth engaging in conflicts within and out of school setting are handled by the authorities. A key component of this study is the youth militias and gangs. To facilitate this, the student respondents were asked the following: *How does the authority deal with these groups?* It would be interesting to find out what means is used to address these groups. For instance are violent means used in handling them? Are the groups given a chance to express themselves or brought to courts when caught breaking the laws. What about in the school setting? Can the school authority identify these groups and if they do, how do they handle them? The total respondents were 512. Of these, the valid cases were 499 (97.5 percent). 13 (2.5 percent) were missing cases (Figure 5.8 below). The question generated 1095 total responses. The total percentage of cases was 220.3 percent. As shown in Figure 5.8 below, 70.5 percent of the cases selected the choice that the authority deals with the militia groups and gangs through use of “threat and arrest”. While 68.1 percent of the cases indicated that the authority “treat them like criminals”, 48.9 percent of the cases selected “bring them to courts”. On the other hand, 22.8 percent of cases selected that they “dialogue with them”. Interestingly, 10.8 percent of the cases selected “kill them”. The least percentage of cases (9 percent) chose “offer them jobs”. The choice “Kill them” was not in the given main options but the students mentioned this in the option “other”. These responses were collated, coded and incorporated into the main options as also indicated in (Table 5.18 later in this chapter.



¹Figures do not add up to 100 percent - a multiple response question

Figure 5.8 Students' views: how authority deals with militia groups and gangs

Importantly, the view that the authority “kills” those they believe to be members of a militia group and gangs especially members of the Mungiki militia/gang/sect was captured in the literature review (chapter two) and in the semi-structured interview (with students and other key informants) and focus group discussions. For instance, they claim that when the authorities “catch them” [members of the militia group/gang/sect Mungiki] they rarely arraign them in court but instead some accept bribes from them and set them free or shoot to kill. They further allege that a special group of the government security forces referred to as the “*Kwekwe squad*” are used “to do the their dirty job for them of killing any young person they see roaming the street especially at night and say it is Mungiki.”¹²⁹.

As shown in Table 5.18 below, most of the male cases (72.3 percent) selected “treat them like criminals” as one of the ways that the authority deals with members of the militia

¹²⁹ Focus group discussion, S14M#10N, March 2010. Refer also to chapter two of the thesis – section 2.3 Youth violence: from the past to the present p. 80

groups and gangs. 69.6 percent and 48.2 percent of the male cases selected “threat and arrest” and “bring them to court” respectively. On the other hand, 71.5 percent of the female cases selected “threat and arrest”. 63.8 percent and 49.6 percent female cases selected “treat them like criminals” and “bring them to court” correspondingly. The least selected by both genders (9.9 percent male cases and 8.1 female cases) was to “offer them jobs”. Interestingly, 17.0 percent male cases and 4.5 percent female cases a¹³⁰“kill them”. This concurs with some of the claims in the data gathered in the other methods of data collection used in this study that the authority, through their machinery especially the security sector sometimes uses excessive force.

Table 5.18 Ways authority deals with militia groups and gangs by gender

<i>How does the authority deal with these groups?</i>	Gender of student		Total
	Male	Female	
Dialogue with them	57	57	114
	22.5%	23.2%	
Threat and arrest	176	176	352
	69.6%	71.5%	
Bring them to courts	122	122	244
	48.2%	49.6%	
Treat them like criminals	183	157	340
	72.3%	63.8%	
Offer them jobs	25	20	45
	9.9%	8.1%	
Kill them ¹	43	11	54
	17.0%	4.5%	
Total	253	246	499

¹This was as a result of the collated and coded responses in the open question under “other”.

Figures do not add up to 100 percent - a multiple response question

It would therefore be deduced from the selection above that both the male and female percent cases consider the attitude of the authority to the militia groups

¹³⁰ As pointed out in the main text pp. 283-284, “kill them” was not given as one of the options but respondents gave this as a response under the option “other”.

and gangs as hostile. More youth narratives on how the authorities treat the militia groups and gangs are shown in Table 5.19 below.

Table 5.19 Students' views: authorities' treatment of militia groups and gangs

STUDENT RESPONDENT'S CODE¹	VIEWS AND OBSERVATION: NARRATIVES ON HOW THE MILITIA GROUPS AND GANGS ARE TREATED BY THE AUTHORITIES
S11MRV#358	<i>When the government gets one of them, they are jailed or shot.</i>
S5FN#171	<i>The authority beat them thoroughly and got money from them.</i>
S2MN#45	<i>When authority gets them they punish and kill.</i>
S14MN#502	<i>send GSU [General Service Unit] and hit them like dogs and arrested them</i>
S14MN#480	<i>receive bribes from them and gave them military tools e.g. guns</i>
S3FRV#68	<i>kill them through gun shots</i>
S9FN301	<i>They kill them brutally.</i>

¹S+numeral=school code, M=male and F=female, N=Nairobi and RV= Rift Valley, numeral after #= Student respondent's identification number in the survey questionnaires

From these students' views and observations, also as expressed in the survey and other data collection methods that were applied in this study, the community and the authority treat militia groups and gangs with suspicion and contempt. Some of the labels they attach to them are "idlers, killers, rapists, extortionist, indisciplined youths, illiterate youths, misfits of the society and criminals". From these responses the community views on the militia groups and gangs is negative.

Though the youth in the survey do not support the activities of militia groups and gangs, they are not in agreement with the way the authority deals with them. They react to the violent means and the top down interventions that the authority uses to deal with these groups. Their expectation is that militia groups and gangs

should be treated “with respect”, “they should be listened to”, “brought and charged in court instead of killing them” and that they should be “offered jobs because the group [militia groups and gangs] gives them [the youth] job security which the government does not.” One of the student respondents shares his feelings on how these groups are treated,

“I feel this is not fair they should be treated as human beings but justice should be done e.g. imprison them but do not deny them food or overload them e.g. by not allowing them to have enough sleep.”¹³¹

Interestingly, the youth narratives above show that majority of the student respondents concur with some of the findings of scholars and practitioners on militia groups and gangs as shown in chapter two of this thesis. Equally, from the views of this group that identifies itself as Mungiki but not the militia mungiki - as the government refers to them - it can be deduced that the out-lawed group, - the Mungiki - , has units or factions that operate under the same name but have different vision and mission. It would be interesting to do a follow-up study on this.

One of the questions to this group was whether anyone can join them. Their response was:

“No, you have to be recruited to be a member. Our group is mainly made of Kikuyu but the other mungiki group is mixed. But when there is a threat to us we recruit by force even in schools e.g. during the post election violence.”¹³²

Their own definition of who they are and their dissatisfaction of the way they are treated is captured in Table 5.20 below.

¹³¹ Semi-structured interview, S11M#3RV, February 2010

¹³² Focus group discussion, MgF# Response 1, Table 6.10 chapter 6 p. 353 of this thesis

Table 5.20 Narratives of youth "militia" group in the Rift Valley province

KEY INFORMANTS FOCUS GROUP CODE NO	YOUTH IN A MILITIA/GANG/SECT¹ NARRATIVES ON HOW THEY ARE VIEWED AND TREATED BY THE COMMUNITY AND AUTHORITY
MGM1	<i>viewing us as a threat to their survival</i>
MGM3	<i>criminals that is why we are killed</i>
MGM5	<i>Today after the post-election violence we feel this threat is on the decline.</i>
MGM8	<i>Yes. We are being appreciated due to the tribal issues as we helped fight the enemy.</i>
MGM1	<i>We do not agree with them that we are only interested in going back to traditions, the old things our elders did.</i>
MGF7	<i>We, the women in this group are complaining that there are no husbands because the police have killed them. That is why we are recruiting members so that we can find someone to marry. We do this also by enticing young boys and girls in and out of school. We have government officers, teachers, secondary and primary students in our groups.</i>
MGF3	<i>We are not the militia ... Why can't they ask us to explain who we are? The community knows who we are.</i>
MGF4	<i>They are mistaken about us because we are not idlers. For instance, I am a graduate and have my own business.</i>
MGF6	<i>I am a hairdresser and run my own saloon.</i>
MGM7	<i>I am a tout and I do clean business.</i>
MGM2	<i>All of us have finished school and are not IDLERS.</i>

¹This group consisted of three women and five men. One of the women was the leader of the group. MG= youth "militia"; F=Female and M=Male; numeral=identification of youth in the focus group

From the narratives (Table 5.20 above) it is evident that the group feels aggrieved but there are no avenues through which they can be heard. As a result they feel excluded and denied their rights of expression. Further they indicate that they come together in order to bond. They also have a common dream, to fight historical

injustices which they claim have not been addressed (chapter two). As can be observed from their narratives, they claim that they are not idlers and that there is need for the government to dialogue with them instead of using violent means to deal with them. The government categorises the group as militia but the members disapprove of this label and define themselves differently. They define themselves as youth that have come together mainly to bond among themselves, to fight for historical injustices and in fact earn a decent living. Furthermore, they pointed out that they are not who people say they are. Therefore they expressed the need for people to ask them to explain who they are as captured in the narrative from one of the female members coded *MFG3* in Table 5.20 above.

“We are not the militia ... Why can't they ask us to explain who we are? The community knows who we are.”

There is need to understand these groups – who they really are, what they do and why they do it – in order to address the youth violence. Danesh (2008: 3) notes that the capacity of youth to form groups can pose both “threats and opportunities” and that youth can “easily be mobilised” to participate in violence but also “be targeted for peacebuilding”. This is true of the youth who are key to this thesis. As noted in the literature review (chapter two) and the youth and key informants narratives in the research-informed chapters (especially four to six) some communities have well established groups of youth (ethnic militia groups). Some of these groups bond during the initiation period which is part of the traditional rites of passage. Traditional rites of passage play a positive role especially in training youth in values such as trust, co-operation, good leadership and respect for elders. However, care has to be taken that these cultural aspects are not politicised as this can jeopardise the peace they are expected to foster. Notably, youth feel let down by adults who encourage them to engage in activities that contribute to instability or

certain behaviour that does not enhance peacebuilding as the youth narrative below testifies.

“Most students have been taken advantage of by people in authority and feel terrible after doing the wrong thing such as: contemplating on striking, mass action, selling illegal stuff in school e.g. food stuffs, drugs, joining militia groups such as the Kalenjin warriors and SDF after circumcision ceremonies to protect the communities as happened in the post election violence.”¹³³

The above narratives challenge those in authority to be good role models that the youth can emulate. One way of doing this is to critically reflect on cultural practices that may hinder or enhance peacebuilding.

As noted in the previous chapter, key to this research was to find out about the youth’s views on the causes and handling of the post-2007 election violence. Regarding how the post-2007 election violence was handled, the youth were asked the following question: *In your opinion, have the issues that led to the post election violence been adequately dealt with?* In response 512 respondents gave their views. Figure 5.9 below shows that of these respondents, a vast majority (83.0 percent) said that the post-2007 election violence issues were not adequately addressed while 17.0 percent said they were happy with the way the issues were handled.

¹³³ Focus group discussion, S3F#5, February 2010

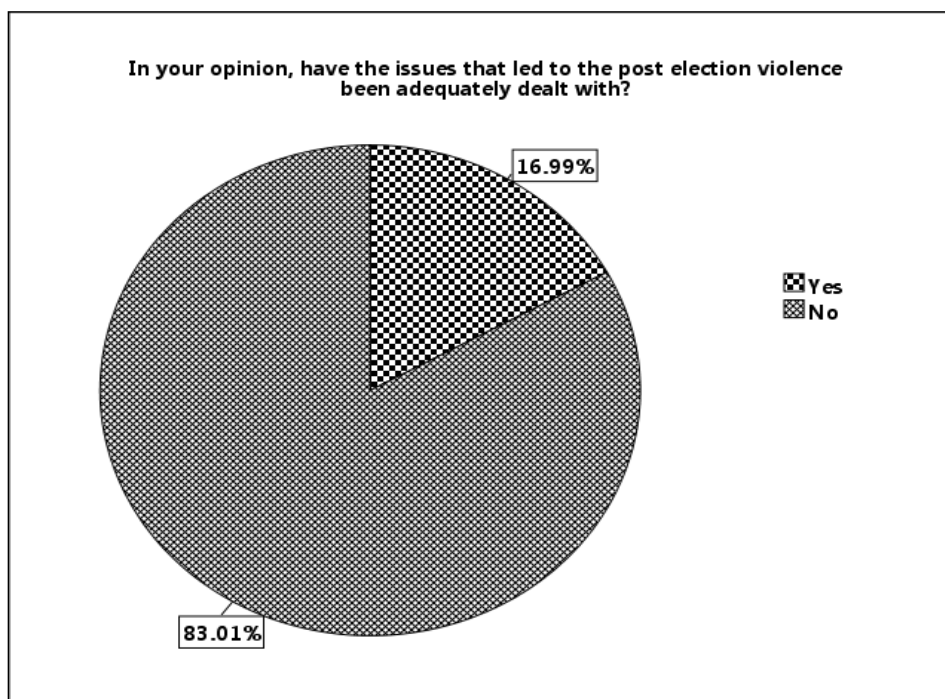


Figure 5.9 Students' views: how the post election violence issues were handled

In asking the above question, the interest was to find out the youth's views on how issues outside the school are dealt with. Also to get insight into the youth's views on what they perceive as the triggers to the post election violence. The supposition in this case is that a particular occurrence in a society cannot be looked at in isolation. Since the school is part of the society, could addressing the underlying causes of violent conflicts that occur in a society contribute to addressing those in schools and vice versa?

As a follow-up question, the respondents were asked whether they were happy with the way youth and their issues are dealt with in Kenya. Table 5.21 below shows that all the respondents gave their views with an overwhelming 80.9 percent indicating that they were not happy with the way youth and their issues are dealt with in Kenya. Only 19.1 percent were happy.

Table 5.21 Students' views: how the youth and their issues are dealt with in Kenya

Are you happy with the way youth and their issues are dealt with in Kenya?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	98	19.1
No	414	80.9
Total	512	100.0

As a follow-up of the above question, the student respondents were asked what advice they would give the leaders. This was captured in the thematic analysis as will be shown below. Furthermore they were asked: *Do you think your advice will be taken seriously?* All the 512 student respondents responded. From Table 5.22 below, slightly over two fifths (42.2 percent) said “yes”, their opinions will be taken seriously, but over a half (56.6 percent) said “no” and 1.2 percent said that they “did not know”.

Table 5.22 How leaders would respond to their advice on issues

Do you think your advice will be taken seriously?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	216	42.2
No	290	56.6
I do not know	6	1.2
Total	512	100.0

From the analysis above, it would seem that the respondents have no confidence in their leaders. However, the over two fifths (42.2 percent) that said “yes” is a considerable percentage to be ignored. Some initial responses from those who said “yes” that their responses will be taken seriously are captured below. One of the respondents said, *“Yes, I believe that all I have written [in the survey questionnaire] is true and it will be passed widely among the people.”*¹³⁴ Another had this to say to the leaders, *“Yes, the leaders just be a little wise and for once listen to the voice of the young people.”*¹³⁵ Yet another said, *“Yes, because once the person does this research, [in the survey questionnaire] compiles it and presents it to the leaders, they will have an idea of what we want as the youth.”*¹³⁶ One of the student respondents from Nairobi province asserted, *“Yes, we’ll enforce and force it.”* Yet others think that their advice will not be taken seriously. For instance one said, *“I would not give them advice. I would prefer that most of them be removed from power.”*¹³⁷ Another student responded, *“No, our leaders always forget what we tell them until we create chaos.”*¹³⁸ Yet another said, *“No, we are considered small as in we are too imaginative and our suggestions are whack.”*¹³⁹ Additionally this student respondent had similar views that the leaders will not listen to the youth because *“as always they are greedy, corrupt old men who want to keep themselves in office hindering visionary youth leadership.”*¹⁴⁰ In support of these views one student said, *“No because the people concerned in the government are old and corrupt, yet they know nothing about youth.”*¹⁴¹ Corroborating all these views one student contended,

¹³⁴ Survey questionnaire, S4M#112RV, March 2010

¹³⁵ Survey questionnaire, S6F#197RV, March 2010

¹³⁶ Survey questionnaire, S4F#129RV, March 2010

¹³⁷ Survey questionnaire, S4M#132RV, March 2010

¹³⁸ Survey questionnaire, S14M#477N, March 2010

¹³⁹ Survey questionnaire, S4M#102RV, March 2010

¹⁴⁰ Survey questionnaire, S14M#506, N, March 2010

¹⁴¹ Survey questionnaire, S7M#251RV, February 2010

*“No, politicians have no time for 17 year olds like me. They want MONEY and more of it.”*¹⁴²

From the above responses it is evident that the youth views and experiences are that the leaders have no time for them or their views and involvement. They view the leaders as greedy, selfish, and too egotistic that they have no time to listen to youth. Those who have responded in the affirmative indicated that the situation can change if “their” suggestions are taken seriously. Otherwise, as two of the captured views show, they will “enforce” and “force it” or have a change of guard by having “most of them removed from power”. Curiously, what are the respondents’ views in what they believe the leaders should be doing to address their issues? It will be interesting to find out from the responses to the open-ended questions which are thematically coded in chapter six below.

CONCLUSION

This chapter gives an analysis of who deals with the conflicts and how the conflicts are dealt with in students’ own schools, neighbouring schools and the wider society. The student respondents were also asked to give their views on whether they were satisfied or not with the way the conflicts in their school, neighbouring schools and wider society are dealt with. From these analyses it is apparent that majority of the conflicts in schools were dealt with by those in authority especially the principal, deputy principal and prefects. Others who dealt with the conflicts but were selected by the least percentage of cases are the class teacher, Board of Governors (BOG), teacher-on-duty, the police and sometimes the parents. Also the conflicts are dealt with in a violent manner.

¹⁴² Survey questionnaire, S3F#76RV, February 2010

Besides, when the students were asked the person(s) they would prefer to go to for problem-solving, they had diverse preferences. Some favour their friends, siblings and peers, while others prefer counsellors. A great majority of the students selected their parents.

Regarding student involvement in the running of the schools, there was an obvious disconnect between the quantitative and the thematic analysis. For instance, in the quantitative analysis the students indicated that they were generally satisfied with their involvement in the running of the school. However, this was not the case with the thematic analysis where they attributed their dissatisfaction to the fact that their opinions are rarely taken seriously. Equally, their assertion is that even though the school authority claims to involve them through “*barazas*” (open forums) and the “suggestion box”, this is only intended for authorities’ showcasing. Another area that has consistently shown the students discontent is the prefects’ body.

Additionally, views and experiences of the student respondents on how the community and the authorities deal with militia groups and gangs were analysed. From the analysis it is apparent that both the community and authorities have negative attitude towards the militia groups and gangs and treat them with contempt except when they want to take advantage of them. For example, the youth narratives indicate that the leaders, especially politicians, use the youth to carry out their violent activities during campaigns and elections or when their communities are threatened as happened during the post-2007 election violence. Equally, the youth claim that the authorities employ force, and violent means to deal with the youth militia as shown above in this chapter. The chapter has also highlighted the youth views on the causes of the post-2007 election violence and how the violence was dealt with. In addition, this chapter initiated and dealt with the second research

question: *In what ways can approaches to peacebuilding and the Kenyan education systems respond to youth violence?*

As pointed out in the previous chapters and at the beginning of this chapter, the aim of this study was to investigate the youth violence by engaging the youth narratives on the violence they participate in and/or observe, the mechanisms used to deal with the violence and the potential for peacebuilding to address youth violence in schools and wider society. Chapter six will engage with and consolidate the data analysed mainly in chapters four and five in aim of addressing further the research questions (a) and (b). This will then pave way for the concluding chapter (seven) - a reflection on the findings, contributions and areas for further research.

CHAPTER SIX

A THEMATIC ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE FIELD RESEARCH DATA

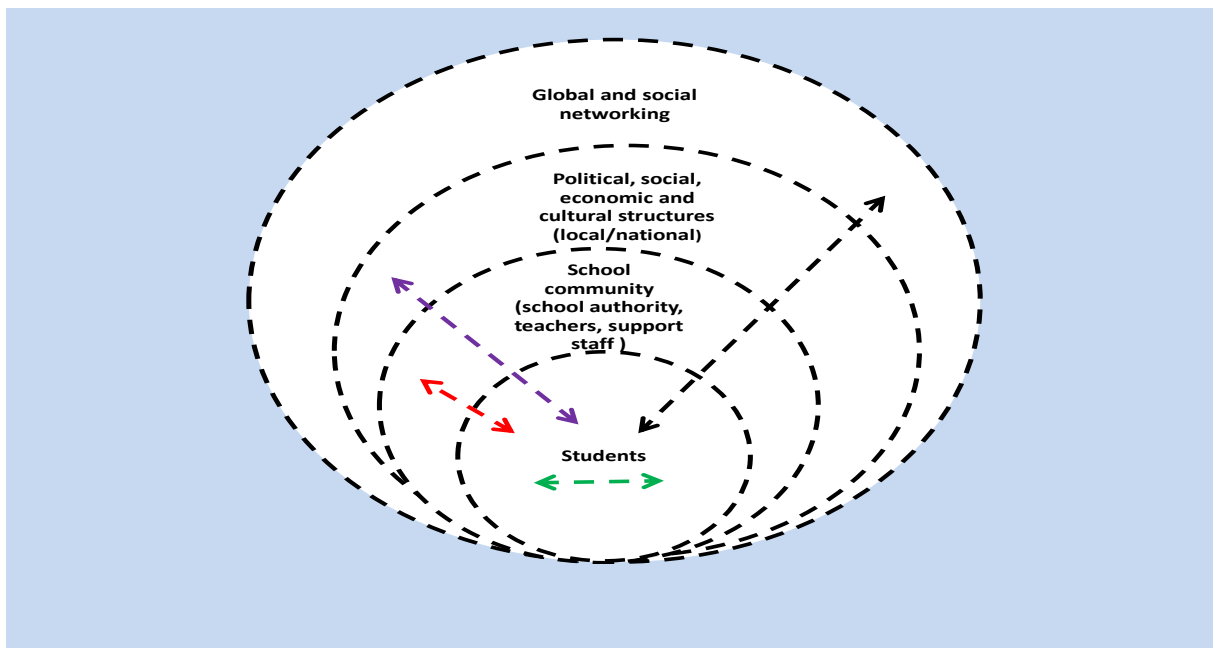
INTRODUCTION

From the data gathered from the different methods used in this research, especially in chapters four and five, when the students were asked about the conflicts they participated in and/or observed and how these conflicts are handled, it was evident from the responses that there were different types of conflicts in the school setting and the wider society. This ranged from the nonviolent to violent ones. Importantly, these conflicts are complex and experienced at the different levels. From the findings so far, it is evident that the mechanisms used to deal with conflicts in both the school and the wider society - whether of a trivial or serious nature - were dealt with in a violent manner.

This chapter (six) is a thematic analysis and ongoing discussion of the issues raised especially in chapters four and five. In addition, the analysis of the open questions in the student questionnaires, semi-structured interviews (student and key informants) and focus group interviews form a large part of this detailed analysis. This is in aim of engaging further with the first (a) and second (b) research questions highlighted below.

- a) *What narratives are used by the youth to describe, explain, and justify their participation in and/or observation of violent conflict in Kenyan secondary schools and wider society?*
- b) *In what ways can approaches to peacebuilding and the Kenyan education systems respond to youth violence?*

This thesis recognises the complexity of the phenomena of youth and conflicts. Youth as noted in chapter three (methodology) are not only a heterogeneous group with gender and age variety but are shaped and operate in a particular cultural, social, political, and economic context(s). Equally the context in which the youth interact with each other, in the school environment, their neighbourhood and wider society in general, as well as the global society is complex. As portrayed in Figure 6.1 below, they live and are influenced by the different levels of interactions: students among themselves, student with the school community, with the political, social, economic and cultural structures (local/national) and through global and social networking. Hence, the data collection, data analysis and findings of this study are analysed and interpreted bearing this complexity in mind.



The circles are not closed to show the interaction of students among themselves; with those in their immediate school community for instance school authority, teachers and support staff; interaction with cultural and social structures for instance their ethnic community, age set and with the global and social networking for example the youth groups, with others for instance on Facebook and Twitter.

Figure 6.1 Interactions within students' context

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Further, the youth narratives on the conflicts they participate in and/or observe and how these are dealt with were systematically analysed as shown in the previous chapters above. This was done using the chosen methodology, the Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) as advocated by Charmaz (2006). The initial thematic coding of the collected data (Appendix 6) assisted in identifying the emerging themes (Table 6.1 below).

Table 6.1 Students' narratives: initial and further coding

INITIAL CODING	FURTHER CODING	EMERGING THEMES
being caned, receiving severe punishment, suspension, being forced to kneel, punishing to stand in scorching sun, having ears pulled, receiving many strokes of the cane even on spine, gating, "deciding to lie low"	Being caned and severe punishment, denying leisure activities, "deciding to lie low", "gating"	Experiencing brutality (physical); "decide to lie low"
"being insulted", "throwing abuses at them", using derogatory remarks	experiencing insults, using derogatory remarks, "psychological torture"	labelling (psychological effects), experiencing low self-esteem, being pushed
refusing mixing of boys and girls, holding to outmoded ways, being afraid of change, talking more and less action, denying raves and bashes, "telling lies to avoid discussion"	fearing change, restricting freedom, maintaining the status quo	experiencing rigidity ; "being in a prison", "having no option but to explode", "feeling like going crazy"
fearing rejection, being intimidated, threatened, avoiding being named a coward	forming alliances, maintaining solidarity, avoiding rejection, exercising revenge	ganging for support , reaffirming solidarity, engaging in compensatory behaviour
favouring bright and rich students, discriminating others, excluding poor schools, denying identification cards	Desiring understanding, experiencing alienation, noting favouritism	feeling left out experiencing alienation and the "elbowed position"
teaching by example, being role models	seeking role models, questioning leaders ethics	observing deviance in social and cultural structures ; leading to rebellion, reacting to "old leaders and out-moded forms of leadership"

The six emerging themes (Table 6.1 above) were further explored and analysed. Five key themes emerged as shown later in Table 6.2 and Figure 6.2. These themes capture how the youth describe, explain and justify the violent conflicts they participate in and/or observe and the mechanisms they apply to deal with the violent conflicts. It is important to note that all these themes can be at play at the same time in a given context. These five themes are coded below.

1. Experiencing brutality
2. Experiencing rigidity
3. Experiencing coercion
4. Observing deviance in social and cultural structures
5. Coping strategies to the conflicts experienced (cuts across all the other four themes)

Table 6.2 and Figure 6.2 below are the graphic representation of the coded themes above.

Table 6.2 Coding: emerging themes

FIVE KEY THEMES	DESCRIPTION – EMERGING THEMES	STUDENTS’ PARTICIPANTS WAYS OF COPING WITH CONFLICTS ¹
experiencing brutality	physical acts of violence (being caned, severe punishment and denying leisure activities); labelling (insults and using derogatory remarks) psychological effects	‘deciding to lie low’
experiencing rigidity	using outmoded and “archaic” means in addressing issues, restricting freedom, maintaining the status quo, “overstretched misunderstanding” and “elbowed position”, looking for understanding, experiencing (alienation) “feeling like going crazy”, “feeling like being in a prison”	“left with no option but to explode”
Experiencing coercion	fearing peer exclusion, experiencing bullying, wanting to be part of a group, experiencing peer pressure to join militia and gang groups, to engage in drugs and alcohol abuse cultural contradictions – siege mentality – “see what they did to us”, “these people”, “these tribe”, “engaging in community sulking”,¹⁴³)	joining militia groups and gangs, experiencing peer pressure experiencing “community sulking”
observing deviance in social and cultural structures	questioning leaders ethics, observing leaders resolving conflicts violently, noting politicians engaging youth in violent acts	feeling let down, experiencing abandonment, seeking for good role models
coping strategies to the conflicts experienced	maintaining solidarity, bonding, grouping for revenge/retaliation	ganging for support, reaffirming solidarity and engaging in compensatory behaviour, feeling secure and supported, ganging for support, bonding for support, “building peer power” for personal support or to retaliate against “abusive adults like teachers”

¹In the detailed analysis, these ways of coping with the conflicts experienced in the school and wider society are treated as a separate theme as they cut across all the other four themes

¹⁴³ Semi structured interview, KYM#43RV (former member of “*Jeshi la Mzee*”, the army of the elder, now he is a youth leader working on peacebuilding among youth), February 2010.

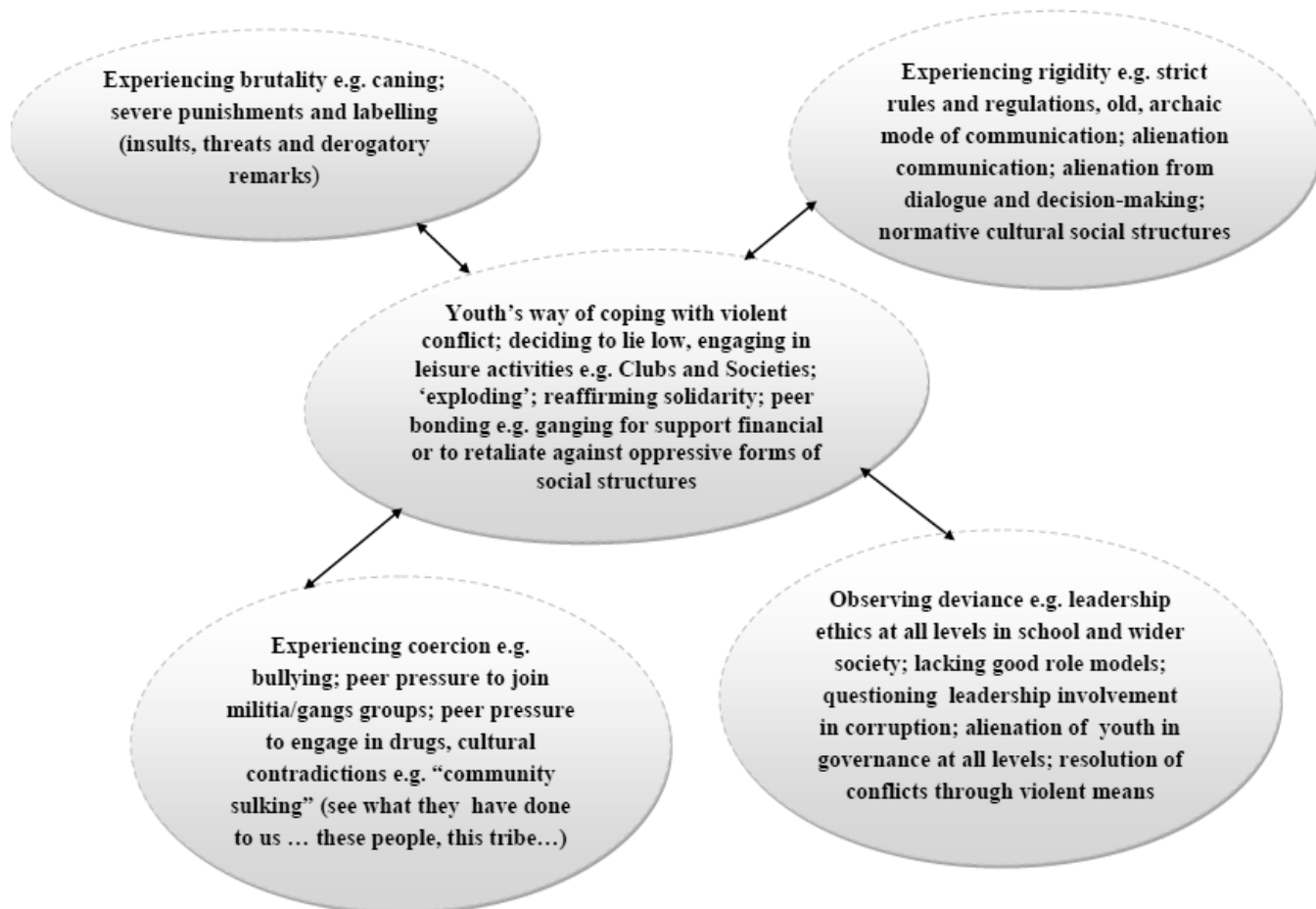


Figure 6.2 Five key themes: conflicts and youth's ways of coping

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6.1 THEME 1: EXPERIENCING BRUTALITY (physical acts of violence and psychological effects of violence - labelling)

In most of the schools surveyed, teachers and the school authorities use corporal punishment for instance the cane, making students kneel or stand in the scorching sun, pulling of ears and in extreme cases suspension, expulsion (or what the students' refer to as *silent expulsion*)¹⁴⁴ and denial of leisure activities for example *gating*.¹⁴⁵ There is also labelling (use of insults and derogatory remarks).

¹⁴⁴ Picking on a particular student and harassing them until they decide to ask their parents to look for an alternative school or the student drops out of school altogether. Teachers and school authorities do this in order to avoid the legal tussles that could follow if the procedure for administration of punishment especially regarding suspension and expulsion is not followed.

¹⁴⁵ This happens mainly in boarding schools where students sometimes go for school outings both for leisure and academic purposes.

Physical acts of violence

Table 6.3 below is an excerpt of narratives from participants in one of the surveyed boys' boarding school in Rift Valley. These experiences were corroborated by narratives of student respondents from the other surveyed schools.

Table 6.3 Students' experience/observation of violence in schools

PARTICIPANTS' CODE NO ¹ (FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION IN A BOYS' BOARDING SCHOOL)	STUDENT PARTICIPANT'S NARRATIVES ON THEIR EXPERIENCE/OBSERVATION OF PHYSICAL ACTS OF VIOLENCE
S8MRV#7	<i>Most teachers use boxing as a way of addressing conflicts with students, they use 'nyahunyo' (Kikuyu word for a whip made of rubber), pulling of ears, making students kneel.</i>
S8MRV#1	<i>In fact, the female teachers tend to be harsh. They usually ask you to write an apology letter which sometimes they share with other teachers in the staff room. They cane and pull ears.</i>
S8MRV#7	<i>I agree! You see the young female teachers have attitude towards us. They make you kneel for a whole lesson or report the matter to the deputy principal. They believe that you are looking down on them.</i>
S8MRV#4	<i>Yeap! But what about the male? The male cane e.g. 5 male teachers to cane one student each giving 8 strokes which adds up to 40 until you cannot walk. When you report the matter to the authority, they say you are not focused, you are a crook.</i>
S8MRV#5	<i>True! I agree with what Z²... has said. Sometimes we are caned because of not performing well in academics.</i>
S8MRV#2	<i>That is right! There is caning, beating in an inhumane way, caning on the head, spine etc. Students feel bad but there is nothing they can do because they are afraid of being suspended</i>

¹S+numeral=school code, M=male and F=female, N=Nairobi and RV= Rift Valley, numeral after #= Student respondent's identification number in the survey questionnaires.

²Z is just a letter used and not an initial of any of the respondents in the focus group

Supporting these narratives a student shared his own experience of an act of brutality. While this student supports punishment, however he felt that the punishment meted to him and his peers was not commensurate with the misbehaviour.

“One day we broke the window panes. We had to pay for the broken window panes. We were also asked to dig potatoes the whole day and we were beaten. The punishment was excessive, issue of suspension, digging potatoes and beating.”¹⁴⁶

The above narrative is corroborated by another student from the same school, *“You are caned thoroughly and given a very hard place to dig (hilly areas) or send home to call your parent.”¹⁴⁷*

Besides, these types of measures of “disciplining” were meted to those students perceived by the school authority and teachers as *hard core*. Throughout the research *hard core* was a term that was used with indifference referring to difficult students in schools by both the student participants and the key informants, especially the leadership (school authorities, teachers and perfects). For the school authorities and teachers, there seems to be justification for the use of violent means in dealing with this type of students. Importantly, caning, as a form of punishment for “indiscipline”¹⁴⁸ in school has been in operation in Kenya for decades, though it was outlawed in 2001 through the Children’s Act, Kenya (Laws of Kenya, 2001; Appendix 8). This, however, as evidenced in the student and key informant interviews, is still practised as a “disciplinary” measure (Mwandoto (April 3, 2008). More importantly, Davies (2004: 66) notes that, “[c]orporal punishment is still a phenomenon in schools in many parts of the world, and is supported by parents and

¹⁴⁶ Survey questionnaire, S11F#366RV, February 2010

¹⁴⁷ Survey questionnaire, S11M#357RV, February 2010

¹⁴⁸ Since the researcher has her own view on the blanket use of this word, throughout the research where this word is used it remains in quotes. In schools in Kenya this word seems to be used for all deviant behaviour.

teachers.” Therefore, caning seems to be institutionalised in people’s minds. For instance, during the interviews, some of the key informants were in support of the cane. One shared: “*We were caned and that is the reason why we have become what we are today.*”¹⁴⁹ The key informants also decried the “*removal of the cane without a replacement*”¹⁵⁰ Additionally, they pointed out that the Children’s Act 2001 in which corporal punishment and any other form of child abuse was outlawed, was a top-down decision: “*Teachers were not consulted when this law was passed so they are reacting.*”¹⁵¹

On the other hand, student respondents perceived the use of the cane and other out-moded forms of corporal punishment the adults use to discipline them in schools and home, as adults’ preoccupation with their own upbringing. They also considered this as adults nostalgia to revert to their past when handling today’s conflicts among the youth. A student respondent for instance, pointed out that the teachers “*usually relate us to their time of study back in high school life.*”¹⁵² This they claim may not work in their own context.

Furthermore, in reference to the cane, while the school authorities consider it as one of the effective ways of resolving conflicts of extreme measure of “discipline, for the student caning is perceived as an “*inhumane way of acting*” and also an extreme form of punishment.¹⁵³ Additionally, according to the students, caning causes so much stress to them yet some of them are aware that it was outlawed in Kenya.¹⁵⁴ Their expectation is that those teachers who use the cane “*... should be sacked yet they are still in school.*”¹⁵⁵ The students claim that they cannot talk about it or report to their parents in case they are “*suspended or expelled from*

¹⁴⁹ Semi-structured interview, KYM# 36N (government officer working with youth), Nairobi province, May 2010

¹⁵⁰ Semi-structured interview, KYM#17RV(Religious leader and an educationist), February 2010

¹⁵¹ Semi-structured interview, KYM#61N(Officer in the government security sector), May 2010

¹⁵² Survey questionnaire, S11M#388RV, February 2010

¹⁵³ Focus group discussion, S8M#5RV, March 2010

¹⁵⁴ Focus group discussion, S1M#1N, March 2010

¹⁵⁵ Focus group discussion, S10M#1RV, March 2010

school."¹⁵⁶ Similarly, it appears to be a way of exercising power over them. In their own case, they perceived themselves as powerless in this context as they pointed out: "*We become frustrated and stressed as you cannot answer them [teachers] otherwise you will be suspended or expelled for lack of respect.*" This view is corroborated by one of the teachers in a national school in the Rift Valley who claims that the cane is widely used as a form of punishment in her own school. She shares, "*There are silent grumbles from students that the cane is back but they are scared for fear of victimisation from the administration.*"¹⁵⁷ She does this expressing her concern that this could lead to a cycle of violence if the practice continues. Supporting this view, a key informant, an education scholar, cites his son's experience as an example. He shares, "*The students detest caning which is an old method of disciplining. This creates a clash between the students and the teachers or administration.*"¹⁵⁸ However, some students support the use of the cane as noted in this narrative where the student shares that caning should be used "*in extreme cases e.g. where a student is not willing to reform and his/her behaviour is affecting others and the school negatively.*"¹⁵⁹

From the narratives of both the student and key informants, some claimed that a student, who is forced to leave school as a form of punishment or "discipline", may act violently as a result. She/he "*... sometimes looks for friends and then they may waylay the teacher or teach her a lesson e.g. frighten her or beat her up depending on how bad she has been.*"¹⁶⁰

From these experiences of different mechanisms of dealing with youth "indiscipline"/misbehavior/ill-conduct/"hard cores" it is apparent that the violent acts carried out by the teachers and school authority seems to the student respondents

¹⁵⁶ Survey questionnaire, S2M#50RV, March 2010

¹⁵⁷ Semi-structured interview, KYF#27RV (class teacher), March 2010

¹⁵⁸ Semi-structured interview, KYM#38N (University lecturer), April 2010

¹⁵⁹ Focus group discussion, S14M#8N, March 2010

¹⁶⁰ Focus group discussion, S1M#4N, March 2010

unjustified. Hence, students cited alternative mechanisms that could be used instead of caning, use of severe punishment, suspension or expulsion for instance, “*involvement in problem-solving*” in order to give them room to express their “*side of the story*”, “*effective guidance and counselling*” or “*giving advice*” Hence, their expectation is that punishment should be administered with understanding that some of the mistakes youth make are part of the growth process. In other words, youth “*should be allowed to do silly things at times.*”¹⁶¹ Supporting this view below are other students’ narratives (Table 6.4)

Table 6.4 Students' views on how conflicts should be handled

PARTICIPANTS' CODE NO¹	EXPECTATIONS ON HOW CONFLICTS SHOULD BE DEALT WITH
S8Mfg#5RV	<i>Sometimes we make mistakes because of peer pressure and therefore we need understanding not punishment.</i>
S8Mfg#1RV	<i>I am saying that, show concern to me before taking a drastic action.</i>
S12MQn#422RV	<i>Leaders should put themselves in the youth's shoes.</i>
S8MfgRV#2	<i>Is it not better to advise or counsel instead of suspension?</i>

¹S+numeral=school code, M=male and F=female, N=Nairobi and RV= Rift Valley, numeral after #= Student respondent's identification number in the survey questionnaires. Fg=focus group, Qn=questionnaire

In addition, the youth contend that the older generation are not in touch with their (the youth) own reality as noted in this student narrative: “*Students should not be*

¹⁶¹ Survey questionnaire, S4#125RV, March 2010

¹⁶¹ Focus group discussion, S1M#7N, March 2010

forced to attend guidance and counselling when they do not like the counsellors because they are old and do not understand young people."¹⁶²

Not everyone, however, would regard guidance and counselling as an alternative to problem-solving. One of the key informants, a principal in the schools surveyed in the Rift Valley stated that guidance and counselling cannot work in certain situations for example, in the case of a student threatening another one, *"I will cane the student and he stops."*¹⁶³ This idea was corroborated mainly by the key informants that were in leadership positions in the schools surveyed, the teaching and support staff and others working with youth especially those that favour the use of the cane. One principal from a school in Rift Valley was categorical that as much as one talks about guidance and counselling, this tends not to work in the case of students, especially a male who is under the influence of drugs and alcohol. The only option is to use force or other extreme punishment. Sharing her experience she endorses this point:

*"For me, as a new head, there were issues of drugs in the school every week. Some of the boys were bigger than me and aggressive. I had no option than to use the police force. I got the police to lock them up but on the agreement that it was done in a humane way. Drug is a big problem in Rift Valley. If one does not deal with it well in the school, it backfires on your face and no one to support. Everybody will be blaming you. So it is a trial and error method. There is no time to call the BOG [School Board of Governors] or the PTA [Parents Teachers Association] for immediate attention. So the police are the only option."*¹⁶⁴

Her argument was that if the police intervention was not sought, such students when punished could attack or organise others to rebel *"before you know it you have a strike in your hands."*¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² Focus group discussion, S4#11RV, March 2010

¹⁶³ Semi-structured interview, KYM#32RV (principal), February 2010

¹⁶⁴ Semi-structured interview, KYF#50N(former principal in a boys' schools), March 2010

¹⁶⁵ From the same interview as footnote 164 above

However, other key informants in similar position opined that each case leading to misbehaviour is always unique. Thus, it should be dealt with accordingly. They favoured a hybrid way for instance, caning in some circumstances, suspension and expulsion in others, yet in others dialogue, guidance and counselling. Additionally, they supported other reformatory ways that they deemed necessary and that would act as a deterrent from further violent behaviour. This they claimed should be left to the discretion of the school administration.

For this class teacher, she decided what punishment to give different students. In the case of *“a student with a bloated ego I would make him kneel at the front and this seems to work; at other times, I plead with students.”*¹⁶⁶ She attributed her ability to deal appropriately and in a more inclusive way to exposure to other forms of problem-solving. From this example, one wonders whether making a student kneel because of having a bloated ego can bring positive change of behaviour. For instance, what does “seems to work” mean as far as the student receiving the punishment is concerned? On the other hand, how do their peers explain this form of punishment especially those who look up to them as hero/heroine? Could this type of punishment assist in entrenching misbehaviour and creating bad feelings towards the teacher(s) concerned?

Hence, this thesis argues for measures that should be put in place to enhance the law against corporal punishment and any form of extreme punishment in schools and wider Kenyan society such as the new constitution of Kenya 2010, Children’s Act 2001, Sexual Offence Act 2006 and the School Safety Manual 2008 that are already in place though seem to operate mainly in theory and rarely in practice.

Curiously, besides caning and severe punishment, students experience brutality while competing for food, leisure facilities and equipments such as games

¹⁶⁶ Semi-structured interview, KYF#26RV (teacher in the counselling department), March, 2010

equipment and access to television. It is in the playgrounds and entertainment halls that bullies seem to thrive as they use their “power” to manage these limited spaces and equipments.

Experience of bullying in its varied forms.

As noted in chapters four and five, bullying was selected least in the choices given on the definition of conflict and peace. However, this is not the case in this chapter. From the responses that have been thematically coded, bullying seems widespread. Peculiarly, according to the findings of this study, bullying that is experienced in schools is not only perpetuated by students but by teachers as well. A snapshot of bullying by teachers will be analysed later in this chapter. In both boys’ and girls’ schools, direct bullying is the most common. This range from taking items belonging to other students by force for instance the school uniform, writing material, or pocket money to threats, insults, taunting and harassing. However, indirect bullying is also experienced in the school setting for instance gossiping, false reporting and writing of anonymous nasty messages about other students on school chalk boards, desks, classroom walls, school notice boards and toilet walls. Interesting, direct bullying was more pronounced in the boys’ schools while the indirect bullying was more evident in girls’ schools. What is the implication of this as far as interventions/approaches of dealing with bullying in both the boys and girls schools is concerned and in mixed schools? This would call for reflection on ways of dealing with bullying in the different types of schools especially paying attention to differences in gender.

From the youth narratives, bullying was experienced as social alienation by several participants. This differ according to socio-economic background (students from rich and poor families), ethnic groupings, regional biases (from rural and urban); academic prowess groupings (bright and those not academically endowed);

groupings due to physical attributes such as colour of their skin (light or dark or in between)¹⁶⁷, length of hair (short or long, curly or not curly, soft or coarse), body shape (those perceived to be beautiful or ugly, skinny or obese). These last three groupings that relate to the students' physical attribute were experienced mainly in girls' schools. Girls also bullied other girls especially those that seemed to curry favour with the male teachers. As a result the affected student(s) would then stop going to these teachers for any assistance, academic or otherwise, hence compromising their learning.

Curiously, from the surveyed schools, there is evidence that bullying in secondary schools begins as early as the students' first years of high school (Form one). Importantly, cultural practices such as circumcision – a rite of passage - can also act as a vehicle for bullies in schools to intimidate and create fear in others whose communities do not circumcise. For instance, student respondents shared that Form one male students are stripped naked to check whether they are circumcised or not. This form of bullying exposes the victim to sexual harassment or creates a sense of loss of self-identity and self-esteem. Also, according to some ethnic communities, exposing of these areas especially when one has undergone the rite of passage is taboo as this is what differentiates who is/is not an adult as opposed to age in years.

Notably, this form of bullying was experienced mainly by students in Rift Valley province especially in mixed district schools and provincial boys' schools. For instance, one of the key informants in the Rift Valley shared that she had to circumcise her son after he sat the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) to ensure that he was not bullied when he joined Form one.¹⁶⁸ Interesting, Rift Valley

¹⁶⁷ Focus group discussion, S9, Nairobi province, March 2010. During the focus group discussion, the students gave racism as one form of conflict they were experiencing in school. Since they were all Africans, the researcher probed further on the use of the word "racism" in this context. The participant elaborated as shown in the text for instance, discrimination due to the fact that one girl has a darker skin or longer hair than another girl.

province is home to three key communities – the Kalenjin, Kikuyu and Kisii - who circumcise both boys and girls as a rite of passage. Additionally, some of the ethnic militias use circumcision as a recruitment strategy (chapter two). However, some families that have embraced Christianity do not engage in these rites especially the circumcision of girls.

Importantly, in all the surveyed schools, bullying seems to be accepted as one of the ways of inducting new students, especially those in Form one. One such way is *monolisation* – bullying of especially Form one or new students - already discussed in chapter four and five above. To support this view are narratives of three student respondents from both Nairobi and Rift Valley provinces.

“This makes you feel that now you are in high school. ‘Monolisation’ stops after that because it is done to make F1 to know they are in high school to make them mature.”¹⁶⁹

“Threats are also many which make the F1 so scared. These threats are sometimes ‘worked out at night’ [carried out at night]. Some students mask themselves and pretend to be ghosts. Others might go touch the F.1 in bed and then run away leaving them very frightened in bed. Some are too frightened to move.”¹⁷⁰

“Poor treatment of Form Ones e.g. referring to them as ‘ndufya’ [this is a Kikuyu word which means tea without sugar], thus tasteless, ‘mshamba’ (Kiswahili word for villager or from the rural area) thus uncivilised.”¹⁷¹

Curiously, could the “silent endorsement” of bullying in school through *monolisation* become entrenched informally in the school structures making it more difficult to eradicate? Davies (2004: 112) points out that bullying is on the increase in many countries and “... its links with a long term propensity to violence are

¹⁶⁹ Survey questionnaire, S11M#365RV, February 2010

¹⁷⁰ Focus group discussion, S5F#4N, March 2010

¹⁷¹ Focus group discussion, S4M#7RV, March 2010

obvious”. As noted so far from the literature review and research informed chapters, bullying seems entrenched in the Kenyan education systems and beyond.

However, bullying is not only restricted to Form one students. Student respondents also noted that bullying is widespread in the other Forms (two to four) especially in the case of indirect bullying. Bullies in the school use labelling (insults and derogatory remarks, symbolic language) to demean the others. Bullying could also be used as a threat tactic for instance when threatening comments are written on classroom blackboards or school notice boards, engraved in wooden desks and toilet walls. One such threat as already noted (in chapter four above) was observed on a Form four classroom door that read “*Onyo kali* [Swahili for strict warning] “*No Form 2 allowed here.*”¹⁷² Equally, bullying among students seems to follow a certain pattern. For instance, the senior students bully the junior ones as shown in the narrative below of a student respondent.

*“There is a chain of bullying but no one can speak about it e.g. F.4 bully F 3 and this chain continues with F2 bullying F 1s. Acts of bullying for instance, putting water in their clothes when they are wearing them. It is also exercised when we have entertainment or queuing for meals, the seniors go first. It is terrible.”*¹⁷³

In a testimony about bullying by one of the students in a junior class, a Form four student had threatened to beat him. He reported the case to the teacher who assured him that nothing would happen but actually he was beaten.¹⁷⁴

From the interviews both with the students and key informants, it was evident that due to the nature of bullying, especially use of threats and intimidation, often bullies get away with it as the victim is too scared to report the issue as noted in chapter two above. In some cases the students request a transfer, engage in truant behaviour or drop out of school altogether. However, in some cases the affected

¹⁷² S2 (Nairobi province) where the researcher conducted a focus group interview in March 2010

¹⁷³ Focus group interview, S4F#4RV, March 2010

¹⁷⁴ Survey questionnaire, S4M#123RV, March 2010

individual tries to fight back and this can lead to further bullying. Equally, other students can gang up in support of the bully as noted by this student.

“I think bullying in schools especially of Form 1s by senior classes can lead students to engage in conflict. A student might decide to fight back and then the senior classes’ gang up and beat him. I witnessed this happen in our school where a Form 2 was bullied by a senior boy and when he fought back the seniors all ganged up against him.”¹⁷⁵

A key informant, an Education Officer, observation corroborates this student respondents’ narrative. When referring to bullying and other forms of conflicts in a school setting, he stated that this is not only affecting negatively those in the school setting but also has a bearing on the wider society. Substantiating this, he pointed out that those directly affected tend to engage in truancy, drop out of school thus becoming soft targets for drug barons and militia groups and gangs that are on the increase in Kenya¹⁷⁶ (chapter two).

Additionally, from the schools surveyed, especially in boys’ only and mixed schools, both day and boarding, competition for food and other school-diet related issues was at the centre of most of the bullying as the following section will explore.

Competition for food and violent conflicts.

The intensity of bullying due to competition for food varies from school to school. The students find themselves constantly bullying each other especially during meal times while queuing for food. As this student respondent shares,

“Problems take place in school because of food and also theft of students’ things e.g. there is little food, the students are not satisfied, this creates a conflict especially between the junior and senior classes for instance, the seniors go first on the food queue, eat their food very fast and then come

¹⁷⁵ Focus group interview, S10M#4RV, March 2010

¹⁷⁶ Semi-structured interview, KYM#13RV (Education officer), February, 2010. This view corroborates with that of a number of officers working directly with the “in and out of school” youth.

back and take the juniors' food. This is done right in front of others and one cannot resist otherwise you will be beaten."¹⁷⁷

One of the key informants, a parent and member of a school parents and teachers association (PTA) said that in 2008 their school *"had another strike and this time the reason was food."*¹⁷⁸ She associated this with the delay by the government in sending the necessary funds.¹⁷⁹ Corroborating this view a key informant - a pastor - cited food as one of the triggers to youth conflicts in schools. This was among other issues such as lack of learning and reading material to corruption and misappropriation of funds by the school authorities. He stated,

*"This sudden food shortage means that the rations that the students get per meal are reduced. Sometimes there is complete change of diet leading to anger and in most cases violent strikes."*¹⁸⁰

In one such strike, a student respondent reported that the police used excessive force to disperse them: *"Students were hurt by the police as they protested calmly. Furthermore they were suspended and some expelled from the school."*¹⁸¹

Also, one key informant - a youth leader whose school was involved in a conflict surrounding food issues - had a similar experience where the police used excess force to disperse them.

"We were scared, yes! But I think we were right. It was better tuishie [Sheng for to disappear] in the forest and to stay there together in the cold and be afraid together than meet the 'govas' [Sheng for policemen] because wanaweza kushoot na hizo ma-gun zao na ukadedi bila wao kujali" [Sheng for "they can shoot with their big guns and you die and they will not care"]¹⁸².

¹⁷⁷ Focus group discussion, S8M#1RV, March 2010

¹⁷⁸ Semi-structured interview, KYF#10RV (member of PTA), February 2010

¹⁷⁹ The secondary education in Kenya is now subsidised (chapter two of the thesis).

¹⁸⁰ Semi-structured interview, KYM#1RV (Pastor), January 2010

¹⁸¹ Semi-structured interview, S7M#4RV, February 2010

¹⁸² Semi-structured interview, KYM#11RV (Youth leader), February 2010

From these experiences, the police used violent means to deal with the issue. The students on the other hand perceived them as people who are trigger happy as opposed to law enforcers.

A parent, who is also an employee in one of the schools surveyed, had observed that there was rationing of food in the school. *“Some students queue for food and when it is finished they go away but their friends call them and share what they have.”*¹⁸³ The parent claims that the students are fond of the headmaster and have informed him of the current situation but nothing has happened. The students are confident that the headmaster will find a solution as he has done in the past. However this parent finds this situation unacceptable but is afraid of informing the principal in case his colleagues accuse him of interference.

*“You see in this school you do not speak for anybody else. You mind your own business. If I go to the headmaster to inform him that the students are not getting enough food, then the cooks will say that it is because my child is in the school or I am the headmaster’s spy. They will tell me to concentrate on my department and do what I was employed to do.”*¹⁸⁴

Additionally, in boarding schools diet-related complaints/conflicts range from food preparation to food rationing. For example, in the national schools surveyed, the issue was to do with variety and taste or seeking ways of allowing students to bring along their own snacks. Complaints in the provincial boys’ schools were mainly to do with quantity and also permission to supplement this with snacks. Since the bread stocked in these schools canteen - as a supplement to what the students refer to as the meagre food rations - is not adequate, this leads to competition often between the students from the senior Forms and junior ones. This sometimes leads to violent conflicts such as labelling and fights. In the girls’ boarding schools, the main issue was to do with taste and the food preparation. For

¹⁸³ Semi-structured interview, KYM#31RV (Parent and support staff) February, 2010

¹⁸⁴ Same interview as footnote 183above

instance, some claimed that the food was uncooked and they were being forced to eat it. They too were demanding that they may be allowed to bring their own snacks. In the day schools too there were lunch programmes and the students had conflicts due to uncooked food, lack of variety and accountability to parents on how the lunch money was being utilised.

Even so, several key informants pointed out that while students may have a genuine reason for school diet-related complaints, sometimes they do not have adequate facts and just react. For instance, food shortage can be as a result of poor co-ordination between the departments concerned. A cateress in one of the surveyed schools voiced her frustration as regards student reaction to diet-related issues.

“May be the school has already purchased, and then tenders stay long to be paid. The vegetables are seasonal and this creates complaints. Students do not understand this. Money delays then things are not purchased on time, then you are blamed yet it is not your fault.”¹⁸⁵

Common to all these narratives, from both the students and the key informants, is the fact that conflicts surrounding food are manifest. The current ways of handling these conflicts do not seem to address the issues raised and when they do those in position to deal with the issues often employ violence.

From the findings, it is apparent that apart from conflicts emanating from food issues, students experience conflicts due to an over emphasis on academic performance. This has led to side-lining of some of the important aspects of learning, for instance co-curricular activities. Sometimes the clubs and societies which are usually student-led are compromised creating stress, anger and bad relationship between students and their teachers and/or the school authority. A discussion on the link between leisure activities and violent conflicts will highlight this connection.

¹⁸⁵ Semi-structured interview, KYF#23RV (Cateress), March 2010

Leisure activities and violent conflicts.

In chapters four and five, “entertainment”, “clubs and societies” and “school outings” generated a lot of interest from the students. From the student respondents, it is in these activities that they felt happy, accepted, loved, bonded with their friends and actualised their potential. The researcher also observed this during the provincial schools and drama festival in the Rift Valley where she was invited as a guest. However, the irony of this is that it is equally in these activities that bullying thrives.

Some of the student respondents said that they experienced bullying due to shortage of leisure equipments such as balls, inadequate play grounds and television. They also pointed out that students are constantly competing for these resources. This leads to violent acts such as pushing, shoving and beating or use of insults and derogatory remarks especially by students in the senior Forms (three and four) to junior Forms (one and two). The student respondents also shared that some students use force to exclude others from the playgrounds, reserve the best seats where they can watch the television and change the channels in order to watch their favourite programmes. This is done while disrespecting other students especially those in the junior Forms (Forms one and two). The narratives below capture the students’ frustrations.

“There is a very small TV for our entertainment. It causes kinda [kind of]¹⁸⁶ impromptu commotion when the time comes on who is who/stronger/bigger/tougher.”¹⁸⁷

“Form one and two are reminded that their time will come to enjoy these facilities so it is time now for you to wait. If they are in Form one then they are reminded they have at least three years of games.”¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ This word is used by the students when in conversation among themselves but not in formal communication.

¹⁸⁷ Survey questionnaire S4#125RV, March 2010

¹⁸⁸ Focus group discussion, S2F#3RV, March 2010

This type of argument and practice then paves the way for institutionalising or normalising bullying unless this is nipped in the bud. Additionally, these inadequate resources can lead to conflicts between the students and their teachers or prefects.

One student respondent from a boys' boarding school in the Rift Valley noted,

*“Games are another cause for conflicts in our school, there are few balls and most want to participate but every place is occupied so some stay idle. Those not participating in any game due to space and balls prefer not to change to games kit but get into trouble with the teachers.”*¹⁸⁹

Supporting this view, one key informant - a parent who is also a member of the support staff in one of the schools surveyed - pointed out that students especially girls get into trouble with their teachers during sports. Since the boys and girls use the classrooms as changing rooms before going for any form of sports, the girls wait for the boys to change first as a result they are late to engage in sporting activities.¹⁹⁰ This parent was opposed to the punishment of the girls and pointed out the need for different changing rooms in order to respect the different genders. Furthermore, as pointed out in chapter four, the parent argued for respect of cultural differences claiming that those girls - for instance his daughter - that had undergone the traditional rite of passage (female circumcision) referred to today as female genital mutilation (FGM) should not be sharing the changing room with “uncircumcised girls” or boys. While the researcher is not in agreement with this cultural view on FGM, could lack of inadequate changing rooms point to the need for gender sensitivity as a means of addressing some of the gender violence in schools. This will be revisited in the final chapter of the thesis under the future research section (chapter 7 section 7.3) below.

¹⁸⁹ Focus group discussion, S8M#3RV, March 2010.

¹⁹⁰ Semi structured interview, KYM#31RV (parent and support staff), February 2010.

Interestingly, when there is a strike due to leisure-related issues or school diet-related issues, all the Forms (one to four) gang up to attack the “common enemy”, often the school authorities, teachers, support staff or prefects. In addition, conflicts due to leisure activities can sometimes extend to other schools. During sports competition with other schools, for instance soccer matches, basketball, rugby, netball and also athletics, students act violently towards each other. In the following cited case, Table 6.5, the pattern of violence has become a tradition in schools as observed in the narratives captured in a focus group discussion of one of the national boys’ school in Nairobi province.¹⁹¹

¹⁹¹ Excerpt from the Focus group discussion in the school coded S1, Nairobi province, March 2010; 7 students (Forms 3 and 4). All the Form 2 had gone out for an education tour and those in Form one were too new in the school.

Table 6.5 Students' views on violence they experience/observe among themselves

FOCUS GROUP – RESPONDENT’S CODE NO¹	STUDENT PARTICIPANT’S NARRATIVES ON THEIR EXPERIENCE/ OBSERVATION OF VIOLENCE AMONG THEMSELVES
S1MN#1	<i>We have also conflicts between schools especially during sports. You know during sports especially district or provincial ones, rival teams tend to beat, intimidate each other. This attitude is carried on to the school therefore creating bad attitude later on. It becomes a grudge therefore if you meet them you beat the students and their school bus.</i>
S1MN#3	<i>We can even create names that make the school look inferior.</i>
S1MN#6	<i>Even some students take away their uniform e.g. tie or sweater or blazer or shoes and use the items for pleasure e.g. cleaning the classroom, rubbing the blackboard or cleaning the toilets. This grudge can be carried on that it becomes the school culture. [One offers to demonstrate what they do with these items. The rest are enjoying the whole act.]</i>
S1MN#3	<i>Do you know that they can also influence their favourite school to dislike that school and cause conflicts?</i>
S1MN#7	<i>By the way, if it is a boys school they might influence their friend school not to talk to the girls that this other school relates with or even their ‘manzi’ [Sheng for girlfriend].</i>
S1MN#4	<i>I support what they are saying. Relating to girls that are friends of the school e.g. the one we have “beef” [Sheng for hatred] with is not allowed.</i>
S1MN#2	<i>This also leads to individual conflicts brought by school friendship or enmity, by this I mean that for example, a F1 might be threatened by his F2 friend that if he talks to a F1 from the other school he will no longer be his friend, or ‘he will see’. This means he will be beaten or punished.</i>
S1MN#7	<i>It is true what they have said. The school starts forming an alliance to intimidate and beat other schools and this extends to the teachers. The students might attack the teachers especially if their team does not win and the teacher from the other school is a referee or they might use abusive language.</i>

¹S+numeral=school code, M=male and F=female, N=Nairobi and RV= Rift Valley, numeral after #= Student respondent’s identification number in the focus group discussions

These experiences seem to correspond to one cited by a key informant, a Security Officer in one of the boys' boarding school in the Rift Valley province.

*“We have violent conflicts every time we have sports or “friendly matches” between our school and others. You know when students are in a mob, for example during school matches, they harass even watchmen. Sometimes they are indisciplined like they make catcalls to some female teachers who dress in a seductive way. They do this and hide as they cannot be found out in a mob. Some even stone teachers or threaten them, especially those that are not from their schools.”*¹⁹²

As noted at the beginning of this section on analysis of different forms of bullying in schools, bullying is widely used by teachers as a way of punishing and intimidating students. The following section will analyse some of the student respondents' experiences of teacher bullies and how this leads or can lead to violent conflicts in the school.

Teacher bullies and violent conflicts

Patterns of this type of bullying include threats with statements such as, *“Watch out for your days in this school are numbered.”*¹⁹³ Noted also from the semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, teachers pick on students they do not like or do not belong to their ethnic communities. In addition, they pick on those that are not academically gifted and insult them for instance they might say to such a student: *“Mjinga, hakuna kitu unajua.”* [Swahili literal translation: “Fool you know nothing.”].¹⁹⁴ They call them names such as *“dunderhead, lockist, loadist.”*¹⁹⁵ Also, when a student gives an incorrect answer in class, the teacher might shout: *“Look at*

¹⁹² Semi-structured interview, KYM#52RV (Security officer in the school), March 2010. The original interview was conducted in Swahili.

¹⁹³ Semi structured interview, S11M#5RV, February 2010

¹⁹⁴ Focus group discussion, S2#1RV, March 2010

¹⁹⁵ Focus group discussion, S8Sp#3RV, March 2010

yourself so foolish. I do not know why you are in class.”¹⁹⁶ Some call the students whom they consider difficult to the staff room, parade them before other members of staff and insult them. A key informant, a teacher counsellor in a mixed school in Nairobi, corroborated this when she reported that teachers in her school call students to the staff room in order to humiliate them before other members of staff. Seeing the negative effects these insults and derogatory remarks have on the students, she has tried to challenge it but, “[T]he teachers do not listen. They decide to do what they like.”¹⁹⁷ She stated that this left her feeling demoralised, frustrated and let down by her own colleagues.

Importantly, students experience subtle ways of bullying when the teachers or school authorities use what they refer to as “*silent expulsion*”. This is often practised on students whom the teacher considers problematic. Teachers pick on this particular student, harass them until they cannot take it anymore. One student respondents’ narrative captured this experience.

*“In what is perceived serious cases of indiscipline the students are suspended, expelled to be an example for others. Sometimes there is ‘silent expulsion’. Since the heads and teachers know that you cannot expel them [problematic students] without the Ministry, they harass you so much that you drop out of school or your parents withdraw you from school and they are very happy to give you a transfer letter.”*¹⁹⁸

In other cases, bullying by teachers takes place in dormitories. Here the teachers tend to exercise excessive power as reported by these students:

“When the teachers come to wake us up in the morning, they shout and hit that at times one feels like collapsing and this is as early as

¹⁹⁶ Focus group discussion, S2Sp#11RV, March 2010

¹⁹⁷ Semi-structured interview, KYF#12N (Teacher - guidance and counselling), March 2010.

¹⁹⁸ Focus group discussion, S8M#7RV, March 2010.

4:00 a.m. We get angry as the teacher has no right to be shouting and hitting us at that hour.”¹⁹⁹

“Teachers are strict and this creates grudges with teachers, in fact ‘teachers are strict for nothing’ e.g. when asleep in the dormitory the teacher on patrol who is sometimes drunk comes to wake us up to check whether we are all there. Imagine and we are asleep and then you are woken up you can even get confused.”²⁰⁰

In support of this, some students experience bullying at the hands of teachers who come to school in a state of drunkenness, are ill-prepared for their lessons, or for no apparent reasons and the student perceive this behaviour to be originating from the teacher’s family problems. This is illustrated by some of the responses from focus group discussions in the two provinces:

*“Let me explain what I mean. You see teachers come late to class, do not prepare their lessons and are harsh for no reasons. This makes the students angry and stressed.”*²⁰¹

*“You know teachers when they are frustrated at home, they bring their anger in school and start using bad language, quarrelling for no reason at all.”*²⁰²

This analysis so far seems to partly answer the questions that the researcher had raised in chapter five. Why for instance when the students were asked “who dealt with the conflicts”, the class teachers, teachers-on-duty and school authorities were selected the least. The same was true when they were asked whom they would go to when they have a problem. It is likely that the students are reacting to bullying

¹⁹⁹ Focus group discussion, S8M#6RV, March 2010

²⁰⁰ Focus group discussion, S8M#8RV, March 2010

²⁰¹ Focus group discussion, S1M#1N, March 2010

²⁰² Focus group discussion, S8M#4RV, March 2010

by the teachers and school authorities. Hence, the issue of violent conflict in schools experienced through bullying cannot be underrated.

Therefore, what is the implication as far as interventions/approaches of dealing with bullying in the different types of schools is concerned? This calls for reflection on ways of dealing with bullying in the different types of schools especially paying attention to differences in gender. It also enhances the research by Ndeti (2009) which sought to find out the factors that lead to bullying in the secondary schools in Kenya. Due to the scope of the thesis, the issue of bullying as a trigger to the youth violence is forwarded as an area that needs further research. However, as an initial step in addressing some of the forms of bullying captured in these narratives, there is need to root out any form of bullying in the school and wider society. As pointed out by Davies (2004:ibid.), “[T]he message that problems can be solved by the abuse of the weaker by the stronger is a highly dangerous one”. Davies’ caution can aptly apply in this Kenyan context. Therefore there is need to step up structures that will provide the avenues for students to report any incidents of bullying or brutality of any form once it occurs.

Linked to the issue of physical acts of brutality are the psychological ones. In this chapter they are referred to as labelling (use of insults, derogatory remarks and threats).

Labelling (insults and use of derogatory remarks and threats).

According to the findings, labelling (insults and use of derogatory remarks and threats) seem to be widespread in the surveyed schools and their neighbouring schools. This is mainly perpetrated by the teachers, school authorities, the support staff, prefects and to some extent the rest of the students’ body.

From the student responses some teachers use abusive language such as “*sura mbaya*” [Swahili for an ugly face]²⁰³ to insult students if they have done something wrong or have not responded correctly to a question in class. These derogatory remarks from the teacher in reference to a student’s physical features can have adverse psychological effects. This is because a teacher’s status normally commands respect both in school and wider society. As a result, the teachers’ abusive language could lead to a student having a low self-esteem. Equally it could elicit a violent response from the student(s) as pointed out by both the student respondents and key informants. Such responses could be by “*waylaying a teacher*” or engaging in a “*war of silence*”. As expressed by one of the female students in a focus group in Nairobi.

*“This can make one do anything e.g. stealing to buy things to make you beautiful, waylaying the teacher to teach him or her lesson or ignoring him or her when he or she comes to teach. Yes! We have a ‘war of silence’.”*²⁰⁴

Underscoring the adverse psychological effects labelling by teachers can have on students, below is a narrative by one of the students in one of the schools surveyed in Nairobi. When she reported to school late after being sent home for school fees, the teacher reprimanded her: “*Huwezi kukaa mbila dozi moja kwa wiki*” [Swahili for “You cannot stay for a week without having one dose”].²⁰⁵ Her reaction was shock and anger at the teacher’s assumption that the reason for her absence in school was that she was engaging in prostitution. Her frustration is expressed in this narrative:

²⁰³ Focus group discussion, S5F#9N, March 2010

²⁰⁴ Focus group discussion, S5F#3N, March 2010

²⁰⁵ Focus group discussion, S5F#4N, March 2010

*“This can make one drop out of school and join our peers out there as they understand you better. It can also encourage drug and alcohol abuse due to all these stresses. You have not fees and your parents are struggling even looking for food and the teacher does not understand.”*²⁰⁶

Furthermore, teachers also use symbolic language to communicate. This is perceived by the students as a way of humiliating and endorsing their academic inability. For instance:

*“In an exam the teacher might put a mark 0 in the shape of an onion or a big eye which makes one look like a fool and feel so bad like beating the teacher or leaving the school for good.”*²⁰⁷

Besides the attitudinal and structural acts of violence experienced by some of the students, some language also used by the support staff while communicating to students is perceived as abusive, vulgar and cynical: *“The cooks use vulgar language and also the matron uses vulgar language e.g ‘matako’ - kalisha matako chini.”* e.g. [Sit down on your buttocks].²⁰⁸ *“She also might tell you, “Kurombosa or kujitangasa.”* – [They explain that this means expose yourself]. *“She accuses us of trying to expose our body which is not true for that could be your walking style.”*²⁰⁹ (They whisper as they see the matron coming towards the hall where we are meeting).

Apart from physical abuse (brutality) and psychological abuse (labelling) experienced in the school, the students also experience rigidity. Hence, the next theme “experiencing rigidity” will deal with the rigidity that the students experience at different levels in the school setting.

²⁰⁶ Same participant as in footnote 205 expressing her frustration

²⁰⁷ Survey questionnaire, S7M#234RV, February 2010

²⁰⁸ Focus group discussion, S9F#9N, March 2010

²⁰⁹ Focus group discussion, S9F#5N, March 2010

6.2 THEME 2: EXPERIENCING RIGIDITY (alienation and excessive use of power)

In the theme “experiencing rigidity” it is apparent that students experience different forms of rigidity which can be a source of violent conflicts. When students were asked about their involvement in the running of the school, what they were or not happy about in their school and what led to conflicts in their schools and neighbouring schools and wider society, it was evident that young people experience different forms of rigidity.

Rigidity in the school setting and wider society is experienced in acts that can be grouped under the themes of alienation and excessive use of power. Two key informants, youth leaders, referred to the rigidity youth experience as “overstretched misunderstanding”²¹⁰ (regarded as rebellious and immature) and “elbowed position”²¹¹ (excluded from any form of decision making). Furthermore, from their narratives, youth experience what they perceive as alienation and lack of interest in them and their issues. As shown in the findings, adults whether in a school setting or wider society, tend to stereotype young people. Table 6.6 below shows some of the stereotypes captured in the key informants’ semi-structured interviews.

²¹⁰ Semi-structured interview, KYM#16N, (youth leader and a former prefect in a national school in Nairobi), May 2010.

²¹¹ Semi-structured interview, KYM#22RV (youth leader in a Faith Based Organisation), March 2010.

Table 6.6 Key informants' views on youth and violent conflicts

KEY INFORMANTS' CODE NO	RESPONSES ON YOUTH AND VIOLENT CONFLICTS
KYF#23RV (Security officer in school), March 2010	<i>The mentality of youth is that of resentment.</i>
KYF#10RV (Member of Parents Teachers Association), February 2011	<i>Watoto wa siku hizi sijui vile wako. [I don't understand today's children/youth].</i>
KYM#07RV (Educationist and church leader), February 2011	<i>Students are never satisfied with anything.</i>
KYM#69N (Youth programme officer), May 2010	<i>Today's youth have an attitude, a negative attitude towards everything.²¹²</i>
KYF#23N (Officer in the Security Sector) May 2010	<i>This generation 'inatusumbua' [is disturbing us]</i>
KYM#30RV (Youth leader) March 2010	<i>Youth are rebellious.</i>
KYF#70N (Former principal) May 2010	<i>Young people are not the angels they pretend to be.</i>
KYF#17RV (Education Officer) February 2010	<i>Today's youth can never be told anything by their parents. They keep saying 'mnatukazia, mnatukazia' (Sheng to mean very strict, or literal meaning "restricting the air that we breathe")</i>

¹KY=key informant, M=male and F=female, N=Nairobi and RV= Rift Valley, numeral after # = Key informant identification number in the semi structured interviews

The next section will deal with the different forms of rigidity that the youth experience and observe.

Rigidity in School

This will be discussed under three sections:

1. *Rigidity: Selection system and distribution of resources in schools*
2. *Rigidity: Involvement in dialogue and decision-making*
3. *Rigidity: The prefect system*

²¹² Semi-structured interview, KYF#36N (government officer, working with and for youth), April 2010

1. *Rigidity: Selection system and distribution of resources in schools.*

Student participants and key informants all cited the quota system of selecting students to the various types of schools as one of the factors leading to the violence in schools. For instance, the perception among the student respondents is that this system acts as a form of discrimination and alienation and is a way of entrenching corruption and animosity among different ethnic communities in the country. They also argue that since the facilities and resources are not equally distributed this becomes a discriminatory factor, creating a wedge among themselves at different levels: those that are from rich families and others from poor families, the academically gifted and the less academically gifted, the developed and the less developed provinces. Some pointed out that they feel ashamed when they meet students from well to do schools. From the students' narratives, their expectations are that they will be treated equally and one way of doing this is to ensure that there is regional balance as noted in this narrative:

“Ministry of Education encourages segregation in the quota system which gives national schools more chances, facilities, high ration of teachers to students. This does not happen in other categories of schools e.g. districts. Most students in national schools are from private primary schools. There should be fairness in the intake e.g. 5 students from private and 5 from public.”²¹³

Supporting this view, a student respondent from the northern part of Kenya and studying in a national school in Nairobi shared his frustration about this type of system.

²¹³ Focus group discussion, S1M#2N, March 2010

“That point about favouring of some schools is not a lie. I have witnessed it in my home area and this can bring conflict. In our schools at home, the labs are not enough, textbooks are not enough. There are not enough teachers and inequality in everything. Politicians are calling this regional imbalance. I, myself, got into this good school which has everything but what about my friends in my area. This cannot go on. We are all Kenyans even if the government does not think so.”²¹⁴

While supporting these views on equality, their opinions differ on the mode of operation of such a system.

However, the above views differ from the Ministry of Education position which states that the quota system promotes equality by ensuring that children from both the public and private primary schools are selected to the different types of schools in Kenya, that is national, provincial and district (refer to chapter three above for details on this).

As pointed out in the chapters above, the selection using the quota system is a contentious issue that seems to reignite at the beginning of every year when the selections to secondary schools take place. However, just as in many other contentious issues especially relating to education, the way that the government has been dealing with the issues is by using “quick-fix solutions”. One of the student participants expresses his frustration in this state of affairs. This student respondent believed that the leaders should,

“Tackle root causes of conflicts e.g. we keep doing the same things in schools yet the school systems are not working, we fund projects that do not work, we do not check the documents, government never tackle any issues in schools out of the research. Things then do not move.”²¹⁵

²¹⁴ Focus group discussion, S1M#6N, March 2010

²¹⁵ Focus group discussion, S14M#1N, March 2010

The student respondent's expectation is that any recommendations by committees that have been set up to look into issues should be proactive.

2. *Rigidity in involvement (dialogue and decision-making)*

In the analysis captured in chapter five, a vast majority of students indicated that they were involved in the running of the school. This was mainly through the school prefects' body, being allowed to air their views in class meetings, "*barazas*" (Swahili for open forums/dialogue/discussions), suggestion boxes and for some discussing with teachers or the principal. However, in the open ended question responses, semi-structured interviews and focus groups discussions, there was a sense of dissatisfaction in the level of involvement and on how seriously their views were taken. From the findings, it is evident that the involvement is cosmetic as the sampled student responses shown in Table 6.7 below demonstrate.

Table 6.7 Students' views on involvement in dialogue and decision making

STUDENT RESPONDENT'S CODE NO ¹	RESPONSES TO THE OPEN ENDED QUESTION OF THE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE ON STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN DIALOGUE AND DECISION MAKING IN SCHOOLS
S6FRV#178	<i>The voices of the students are never heard. Opinions never create impacts.</i>
S12MRV#403	<i>The teachers only ask for opinions but don't put them into action but give their verdict regardless.</i>
S10MRV#348	<i>There is inability of the administration to listen to our needs and problems.</i>
S14MN#490	<i>When you raise an issue most of the times it is said to be wrong or we are told it will be done while nothing happens.</i>
S9FN#307	<i>They might use what you say against you in the future, since teachers gossip about what students say, in the staffroom.</i>
S4RV#106	<i>Not really! They [school administration] rubbish them i.e. our suggestion box has not been opened.</i>
S1MN#19	<i>No. The admin. [administration] takes dealing with errant students as their responsibility and students have no part in it .</i>
S6FRV#21I	<i>Teachers cannot listen to students' views and if they listen they don't consider them.</i>
S1MN #10	<i>No. I cannot share my views as I am sure grownups would see it as stupid.</i>

¹S+numeral=school code, M=male and F=female, N=Nairobi and RV= Rift Valley, numeral after # = Student respondent's identification number in the survey questionnaires

One student's expectation was that *"students' views should be listened to even if adults think that they are childish."*²¹⁶ This student respondent's view is supported by key informants - an education scholar - who asserts that, *"Youth's way of communication is different from adults but people tend not to take them seriously."*²¹⁷ This underscores the need for adults to give the youth an opportunity to air their views even if the adult's perceive them to be trivial, insignificant or utopian. Corroborating this view was a key informant working with youth in a Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) in the Rift Valley:

*"Young people should be allowed to address their own issues. Give them an opportunity to voice their issues. There is therefore need for dialogue. In a school situation, they need to be involved in the running of the school. Even if what they want is not possible, at least give them a chance to air their views. Allow for feedback and an alternative to what they want if not possible to give them what they want."*²¹⁸

In addition, current systems of governance in a school setting do not seem to bring on board students views for instance, in formulating and enacting the school rules and regulations. Hence this can create conflicts as expressed by this student participant from a school in Rift Valley, *"Conflicts also occur when new rules are introduced without involving the students yet the administration claims that it is 'democratic' because of use of barazas."*²¹⁹

Equally, it seems that traditional mode of communication is applied in both classroom teaching and in dealing with student issues in general. As a result communication is mainly vertical. However, the students' expectations are that the

²¹⁶ Focus group discussion, S10M#6RV, March 2010.

²¹⁷ Semi-structured interview, KYM#38N, (University lecturer), April 2010

²¹⁸ Semi-structured interview, KYM#3RV, (Youth project co-ordinator), February 2010.

²¹⁹ Focus group discussion, S14M#9N, March 2010.

schools should involve them at all levels of decision making. A student respondent in a focus group in a school in Nairobi shared his own view on this issue:

*“I suggest that there is horizontal communication as well with the administration, teachers and prefect because this will enhance dialogue with students as opposed to dictation. I think people, especially principals and teachers, fear change. They want to rule us the way they were done in their schools.”*²²⁰

Interestingly, lack of involvement coupled with an education system that underscores academic success can provide fertile ground for violent conflicts. Additionally, top down policies and guidelines from the education governing bodies can create stress. Supporting this view, a key informant, an educationist and church leader, opines that this kind of situation can lead to violent conflicts; *“like any chain, if you strain it will break.”*²²¹

However, rigidity is not only entrenched in the education system (in both the curriculum and the educational policies and guidelines) as experiences shared by the student respondents’ show that avenues for self-expression, dialogue and decision making where available are limited. Supporting this view, a student respondent reported that *“lack of dialogue with teachers, administration and parents leads to violent conflicts.”*²²² This seems to create a lacuna between the felt needs of the students and the relevant responses to these needs. Hence, one key informant advocated that the school authorities *“synergise what youth do as they have a lot of energy. This should be used as a gateway. There is need to negotiate with them [youth].”*²²³ Corroborating this view, a key informant, opined that the school authority should involve students for instance by sharing and discussing the vision

²²⁰ Focus group discussion, S1M#5N, March 2010

²²¹ Semi-structured interview, KYM#17RV (Religious leader and educationist), February 2010

²²² Focus group interview, S4#3N, March 2010

²²³ Semi-structured interview, KYF#55N (Member of Board of Governors), April 2010

and mission of the school. However, he advised that this should be done with moderation as *“students should not be treated like adults; to be totally democratic with them is not right.”*²²⁴ It is important to note that this view is held by several key informants. However, it is not clear what the term “totally democratic” means in this case. There is also an assumption here that the school authority knows the vision and mission of the school and has internalised it. Additionally, there is an assumption that the school structures articulate this vision, mission and democracy at all times.

The youth expectations on the other hand differ. As far as they are concerned, the leadership at all levels has to dialogue and constructively engage with them. This means that they have to be in tandem with the new changes as far as the youth reality is concerned. One student respondent shares:

*“In fact the barazas that once worked no longer do. There are forums but the students fear expressing themselves due to the repercussion. There seems to be one cliché in our school these days ‘something will be done about it’ but nothing has happened. They keep going back to the founder yet they should realise that things change – move with the change. This is only a defence mechanism.”*²²⁵

The other example of rigidity pertains to the prefects’ body.

3. *Rigidity in the prefect system*

Students’ experience of the prefects is that the administration treats them differently. This creates a rift between the prefects and the ordinary students. Sometimes prefects’ power goes beyond the mandate of prefects where in some cases they are treated equal to or above the teachers. In these cases they are allowed to discipline students hence creating animosity among the students’ body. A student participant from a boys’ school in the Rift Valley province maintained that, *“the*

²²⁴ Semi-structured interview, KYM#17RV (Religious leader and educationist), February 2010

²²⁵ Focus group discussion, S14M#7N, March 2010

conflict between prefects and the rest of the students is due to too much power given to them e.g. they punish even beat using 'nyahunyo' [kikuyu for a whip made of hard rubber] and belts. This can cause strikes."²²⁶

These narratives on the prefects are corroborated by a student during a focus group discussion in one of the schools in the Rift Valley who claims that "*the prefects have too much power that the students rebel.*"²²⁷ Based on their own experiences a vast majority take the view that the prefects are "*the macho*" [Swahili for eyes] of the school authority, "*little teachers*", "*teachers puppets*", "*the untouchables*" and "*not ordinary students*" or "*commoners like us*".

Besides, due to lack of a clear job description for the prefects, the students claim that there is a tendency to promote them "*the more they punish students.*"²²⁸ However, the prefects have a different view. According to them, the conflicts between them and the rest of the students are as a result of the students' lack of respect for them and their authority: "*As a prefect I can tell someone to do her duty and then she/he can quarrel with you as a prefect and refuse to do the work.*"²²⁹ Equally the prefects that were interviewed find themselves in a dilemma. One prefect pointed out that sometimes the teachers' abuse them before students. The students getting the cue from the teachers use the same phrase to annoy the prefect. Giving an example of this she shared her experience.

"One time I was told that I am the problem and should put my house in order. After that if I would tell any student to do something, the students would all shout out "put your house in order first". I felt very demoralised and wondered where do I belong. It is hard to be a prefect.

²²⁶ Focus group discussion, S10M#4RV, March 2010

²²⁷ Focus group discussion, S3F#4RV, February 2010

²²⁸ Focus group discussion, S14M#12N, March 2010

²²⁹ Focus group discussion, S3F#7RV, February 2010

You have to be on the side of the administration and also of the students.”²³⁰

However, this is not the view of the rest of the student body as this student pointed out.

“The slogan that the “teacher is always right” encourages teachers to beat you without explanation and this extends to the prefects. The prefect is always right. The prefect becomes the “macho” [Swahili for eyes] of the administration instead of supporting other students. We have no voice, no room for reasoning.”²³¹

Other students do not experience this rigidity from the prefects and are generally happy with the way the prefects carry out their duties. They express their respect for them. This was more evident in two mixed district schools in the Rift Valley province. Two of the students interviewed expressed satisfaction in the chain of command in the school of which the prefects are an integral part. One of them said,

“Students meet the prefects first if they have any issues; the prefects meet on their own and then forward their decision to the principal. The issues are then sorted out. This is done by all the students assembling together e.g. if it is a class issue, the class concerned meets with the prefects and sometimes if it is a serious issue the principal is called.”²³²

Another theme that emerged from the students’ narrative was experiencing coercion which will now be explored.

6.3 THEME 3: EXPERIENCING COERCION (peer pressure)

From the findings it is evident that students are coerced to join their peers for different reasons. They gang together in order to seek support of others, for instance to push a particular agenda. This could range from a non-violent move such as a

²³⁰ Focus group discussion, S3F#5RV, February 2010

²³¹ Focus group discussion, S8M#4RV, March 2010

²³² Semi-structured interview, S11#6RV, February 2010

change on the school timetable or a violent activity such as a strike as expressed by this student from a school in Nairobi province. *“In school you find that if you do not act or join other students e.g. if they are planning a strike then they mock you or arrange for other students to beat you up.”*²³³ Similarly, a student participant from a mixed school in the Rift Valley states, *“You see one has to fit into the group otherwise you are considered an outcast.”*²³⁴

However, others argued that youth are not coerced but join these groups due to their own personal interest as well. Sometimes this is due to indiscipline for instance disobedience to teachers and parents.

*“Indiscipline could be another reason why youth engage in conflicts. Some students do not obey their teachers or parents and want to do their own things. This can lead them to hate school and home and then join a gang to harrass people in the community.”*²³⁵

Other narratives showing how the youth experience coercion from their peers sometimes leading to the youth’s engagement in violence or other activities that could to “indiscipline and violent behaviour are shown in Table 6.8 below.

²³³ Focus group discussion, S2M#2N, March 2010

²³⁴ Focus group discussion, S5F#2N, March 2010

²³⁵ Focus group discussion, S5FN#5N, March 2010

Table 6.8 Students' views on why youth engage in violence

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES STUDENT RESPONDENTS' CODE NO ¹	STUDENT NARRATIVES ON POSSIBLE REASONS FOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT IN VIOLENCE
S14MN#477	<i>We see gang involvement basically in slums and also because of poverty.</i>
S1MN#6	<i>Also some students are then forced to drop out and join gangs like mungiki or abuse drugs and alcohol. Who is to blame then?</i>
S2MN#48	<i>Peer pressure can make youth engage in conflict e.g. some gangs such as mungiki want you to join them and when you refuse then you are in trouble or you can be killed.</i>

¹S=numeral=school code, M=male and F=female, N=Nairobi and RV= Rift Valley, numeral after # = Student respondent's identification number in the focus group

In reference to this theme, the key informants pointed out that youth gang up due to adults' influence. For instance this key informant, a principal in one of the schools in the Rift Valley shared that when children are growing up and especially during initiation which in most communities takes place when children are in their teens, they are taught to engage in ethnic rivalry which often is expressed in different words used for other communities for instance:

“When the Kalenjin are talking about the Kikuyu, they say that if you kill a “punyoot” [enemy]²³⁶ you have not sinned. It is like killing anyone. The Kikuyu on the other hand use the word ‘ndūrĩrĩ’ [multitude]²³⁷ when referring to other tribes. Thus have no identity. The Kikuyu are the chosen ones.”²³⁸

²³⁶ He explains that this is a Kalenjin word that is usually used to refer to mainly the Kikuyu people.

²³⁷ He explains that this is a Kikuyu word which is used by the Kikuyu people in derogatory way to refer to other ethnic communities – they see them as “uncivilised”.

²³⁸ Semi-structured interview, KYM32RV (Principal), February 2010.

To support his view he pointed out that the Kikuyu youth are initiated and taught Christian values “*to turn the other cheek*”. *Kalenjin youth on the other hand are initiated in the bush and given bows and arrows to be warriors.*”²³⁹ This stereotyping was evident in the narratives of several other non-Kalenjin key informants especially in the Rift Valley province.

Additionally, from the narratives the key informants seem to point at the key role that the system of initiation plays in enhancing ganging together of the youth either as a show of strength and belonging or defending one’s community identity. Further, these attitudes seem to come to the fore when there is conflict in the Kenyan society. This was evident in the schools especially in the aftermath of the post-2007 election violence (Chapter two above). One of the students from a mixed surveyed school in the Rift Valley confirmed this observation as noted in the narrative below.

*“The Kalenjin boy who beat the Kikuyu boy with the metal was being supported by the Kalenjin and the Kikuyu by the Kikuyu. The students had stones and were ready to kill. The Kalenjin were saying that Kikuyu are thieves and the Kikuyu that Kalenjin are killers.”*²⁴⁰

At this point, it is important to point out that joining gangs is not only motivated by peer pressure. In fact, the findings in this study reveal that youth can join militia groups and gangs for support. This aspect of ganging together for support (as a way of coping) will be dealt with in detail in the theme: “*Ways of coping*” later in this chapter. The following theme captures the youth views/perceptions on the failure of adults to act as good role models.

²³⁹ From the same interview as above (Footnote 238)

²⁴⁰ Semi-structured interview, S11M#3RV, February 2010

6.4 THEME 4: OBSERVING DEVIANCE IN SOCIAL AND CULTURAL STRUCTURES (seeking role models and questioning leaders' ethics)

From the findings, it is evident that it is not only the deviant behaviours of the students that contribute to violent conflict(s), but also the deviant behaviour among teachers and others in authority as well. Thus, another theme that is salient is the influence of “observing deviance in social and cultural structures”. From the findings, the “observation of deviance” finds expression through such phrases as lack of role models, and contradictory behaviours among the teachers or other members of the society. There is mistrust towards the students as one of them points out: *“In fact if you are outspoken or straight forward then you are victimised”*²⁴¹ or *“are referred to as an inciter.”*²⁴²

This discrepancy between the aspirations education promises and the ways that education provides for such aspirations brings about deviation. This experience was evident in the narratives of the student respondents and endorsed by some key informants. A case in point is the experience of this student as shared in a focus group in a school in the Rift Valley:

*“When one is suspended, you are expected to agree before your parents even when you are not guilty. This creates negative attitudes towards the administration and the school”.*²⁴³

In addition, the view that adults tell lies is captured in a number of student responses such as: *“The school authority keeps saying something will be done but nothing happens.”*²⁴⁴ and *“pretending to be democratic but they are not.”*²⁴⁵ As captured in this youth narratives below, adults are also seen to take advantage of the youth and sometimes influence them to engage in malpractices and violence.

²⁴¹ Focus group discussion, S1M#3N, March 2010

²⁴² Focus group discussion, S14M#1N, March 2010

²⁴³ Focus group discussion, S8M#4RV, March 2010

²⁴⁴ Focus group discussion, S14M#3N, March 2010

²⁴⁵ Focus group discussion, S8M#5RV, March 2010

“Most students have been taken advantage of by people in authority and feel terrible after doing the wrong thing, such as contemplating on striking, mass action, selling illegal stuff in school e.g. food stuffs, drugs.”²⁴⁶

“During elections it is usually because of political incitement e.g. what you see on paper is not what is in the grassroots e.g. Mungiki – they have ties with politicians and are funded; that is paid money. The politicians are the funders and then pretend that these are youth that are indisciplined or that have a hidden agenda.”²⁴⁷

Others in the focus group supported this point. Equally one of the key informants noted that, *“Youth treat adults’ position with suspicion. They think they are lying. This is the basis of their reality.”²⁴⁸* In one of the schools, the students claim that the matron tells lies to the parents:

“This same matron cons the parents by asking money that is not required. We feel very bad when she then cheats our parents that the money was spent when she bought extra food (samosas²⁴⁹) for us. She should be accountable.”²⁵⁰

Interesting too, one of the key informants, a journalist, states that one of the teachers he interviewed indicated that there is a lot of lying in schools. The teacher pointed out to the journalist that one of the lies is to do with the historical injustices. He revealed that as a History teacher in the school, he supports and trains one of the militia groups as he cannot stand by when the youth are being taught a lie. He further asserts that it is his duty to tell the students the truth and here lies his passion.²⁵¹ In essence the significant adult through their actions teaches dishonesty but verbally is

²⁴⁶ Focus group discussion, S3F#5, RV, February 2010

²⁴⁷ Focus group discussion, S14M#11N, March 2010

²⁴⁸ Semi-structured interview, KYF#38N (University lecturer), April 2010

²⁴⁹ This is a stuffed pastry usually used for snacks and associated mainly with Asian communities

²⁵⁰ Focus group discussion, S9F#1N, March 2010

²⁵¹ Semi-structured interview KYM#7N (Journalist), Rift Valley, April 2010

speaking to the students about values such as honesty, unity, acceptance and equality.

It is important to note, it is not only the people who are wanting in role modelling but also the government as a structure. For example, the respondents think that the government structures are not conveying peace since *“corruption is there – so not much is going on”*.²⁵² Their expectations are that the school settings too should be modelled towards peace. This may ensure a positive influence on the students. Therefore, according to one of the student participants, role modelling is not only about people, but also the environment. As he shows in this narrative, *“In order to stop conflicts in schools, I think schools should organise clubs for peace which will act as role models for students”*.²⁵³

Since the norms governing conduct seem to be contradictory, the respondents opt for deviant behaviours. Consequently, the deviant behaviours of the students seem to be the result of differentials in access to success goals set up by the social and cultural society, by legitimate means. This is highlighted by one of the student participants as noted in his narrative below.

*“In fact peer pressure will never end even among the grown-ups e.g. look at most adults; they will check what cars others have and then will desire the same. Peer pressure will never end. We should therefore have national interest, keep off peer pressure, diversify our thoughts, and behave Kenyans and not tribe.”*²⁵⁴

²⁵² Semi-structured interview, S7M#5RV, February 2010

²⁵³ Focus group discussion, S2F#3N, March 2010

²⁵⁴ Focus group discussion, S14#5N, March 2010

The key informants seem to agree that the reasons that peace does not prevail in schools is that there are no positive role models. According to a key informant – and educationist and church leader, role models that have values are not forthcoming and “*there is nobody showing the way. There seems to be no models they [the youth] want.*”²⁵⁵ Additionally, he supports this view showing Nelson Mandela as one of the role models that signifies dignity and one that the youth could identify with.²⁵⁶

Interestingly, in two girls’ schools that were surveyed, there was a conflict between the students and their deputy principal over a music icon that the girls regarded as their role model. The deputy’s action therefore was perceived as a sign of rigidity as expressed by this student respondent:

*“We are also restricted on entertainment and this makes us really mad. One time we had a music icon in school and the deputy head treated him so badly and refused us to buy his CD. The students especially the F. 4s were so angry with her and the principal had to intervene.”*²⁵⁷

Equally, student participants highlighted the sexual misconduct as a deviant behaviour²⁵⁸ that is at the root of some of the violent conflicts in their schools and neighbouring schools. One of the boys confirmed this when he said that they act violently because their male teachers are “*snatching our manzi.*”²⁵⁹ He further explains: “*You see, because they [the teachers] know that they can buy them [the girls] expensive things and give them good marks in examinations which we can’t.*”²⁶⁰ The issue of teachers sexually abusing female students is supported by the narrative below.

²⁵⁵ Semi-structured interview KYM#17RV (Religious leader and an educationist), February 2010

²⁵⁶ Recorded from the same interview as above (footnote 255)

²⁵⁷ Focus group discussion, S3F#6RV, February 2010.

²⁵⁸ This was mentioned by some students in all the schools surveyed and by key informants especially from the Rift Valley province.

²⁵⁹ This is Sheng for girlfriend. The word “*snatching*” as used in this context is similar to how it is commonly used – stealing or taking by force.

²⁶⁰ Focus group discussion, S8M#6RV, March 2010

“This does not happen in our school but I know a school (mixed school) where the headmaster is molesting beautiful girls that he sees e.g. touching, making advances, threatening, failing them in examinations for not giving him what he wants. The boys then are not happy and this is what causes the riots.”²⁶¹

In addition, from some of the other analysed narratives, there is evidence that female teachers are also involved in the sexual abuse of students especially the male students. As the youth narrative below demonstrates:

“You see some female teachers befriend some boys. Sometimes they pretend that they are checking our work so that they can go behind the boy they like and start rubbing themselves onto them. They think we are not seeing them. But we are just pretending that we are not seeing them. We keep quiet because we are afraid of reporting them in case we are suspended.”²⁶²

From the above students’ narrative and other key informants’ narratives especially captured in chapter four, the sexual abuse transcends the stereotyping that only the male teachers engage in this form of abuse. Also, there is often an assumption that girls and women are the primary targets of sexual violence. Therefore, this sexual abuse of male students by female teachers is clearly a counter-intuitive outcome. Clearly the male student narratives on sexual abuse and some of the narratives of the girls raise some serious questions which were not addressed due to the scope of the thesis. For instance, how widespread this form of sexual and gender-based violence²⁶³ needs further exploration (chapter seven: section 7.3 on further research). Considering the serious nature of such abuse, this is an area that will need serious and urgent attention.

²⁶¹ Survey questionnaire, S3F#91RV, February 2010

²⁶² Focus group discussion, S1M#8N, March 2010

²⁶³ While recognising that this term is mostly used to refer to sexual violence against girls and women, here it also includes boys and men who have experienced sexual violence, (Rumbold, V., February, 2008). Sexual and gender based violence in Africa at <http://www.svri.org/sgbvreview.pdf>

Importantly, the focus groups interviews especially in two schools (one in the Rift Valley province and the other in Nairobi province) highlights this theme that shows the deviance in social and cultural structures. From the captured narratives, the students strongly believe that those who mastermind the militia activities are adults between mid thirties to early fifties years of age. They point out that most of these are politicians and “tycoons” who have lots of money to give out to the youth. Further they assert that the “big fish”²⁶⁴ are not caught only the “small ones” like themselves. So they are very clear that if the militia activities have to stop the police and the government should not be following them, but these “big shots.”²⁶⁵ Hence, they contend that *“leaders should teach by example. They should be good role models instead of using violence and bad language.”*²⁶⁶

Similarly, as pointed out by this student respondent, *“the youth will not care about violence because those who are expected to uphold law and those to live it out are acting violently against their opponent.”*²⁶⁷ Society’s expectations are that adults should set a good example to be emulated by the young generation. Furthermore, values such as respect for each person as a unique human being are assumed. Contravening this assumed code of conduct therefore could lead to lack of respect for the particular staff and may lead to retaliation. Interestingly, in some cases the students retaliate and sometimes violently. These views are supported by one of the key informants, an educationist and policy maker, when he points out that:

“If a parent or admired role model has loyalty to a set of values, a section of the community, and this role model behaves in a manner that shows approval for the use of violence in seeking answers to conflicts, the youth will adopt the same practice. This was demonstrated in the 2008 post election violence. After the early March conflict ended, in

²⁶⁴ Refers to the influential people in Kenya for instance the politicians

²⁶⁵ Focus group discussion, S14M#7N, March 2010

²⁶⁶ Focus group discussion, S10M#6RV, March 2010

²⁶⁷ Focus group discussion, S14M#5N, March 2010

May-July of same year, there were very many cases of school violence where same tactics were used to destabilise and destroy schools.”²⁶⁸

Hence, in all these forms of violent conflicts and observation of deviant behaviours among the significant adults, governance structure and the school setting, the students find themselves negotiating their spaces on a daily basis. How they go about this is captured in the next emerging theme (section 6.5 below).

6.5 THEME 5: WAYS OF COPING (“deciding to lie low”, compensatory behaviour, ganging for support, reaffirming solidarity and “exploding” - violence as a means of communication)

Interestingly, from the students narratives, their main way of coping with the different forms of abuse mentioned above irrespective of whether they are physical, psychological or both, and also different forms of rigidity, initially is “decide to lie low”. They can also expend their energies in clubs and societies, gang for support, or reaffirm their solidarity with their peers. They seek moral support or numbers to retaliate. Alternatively, in extreme cases, they can decide to “explode” (use violence as a means of communication).

Deciding to lie low

As the findings show, many “decide to lie low” mainly due to fear of suspension, expulsion or being labelled. “*Deciding to lie low*” provides an opportunity to remain in school irrespective of whether they are happy or not. As noted by this student: “*Even though we do not have strikes in our school this does not mean that we are happy.*”²⁶⁹ However, the survival tactic they have adopted in order to deal with the conflicts in the school setting only acts as a temporary measure of resolving these conflicts. For instance in one of the focus groups in Nairobi, one student indicated that “*if one is suspended they might attack the teacher later by*

²⁶⁸ Semi-structured interview KYM#29 (Educationist and policy maker), March 2010

²⁶⁹ Focus group discussion, S3F#4RV, February 2010

*organising a gang to beat him up.*²⁷⁰ Hence, nursing these negative feelings forms a base that only awaits a trigger for it to explode.

Since the students cannot fight back against those in leadership positions in the school (for instance, the school authority, teachers, support staff, prefects and to some extent parents and the Ministry of Education (MOE), they “*decide to lie low*” as a form of retaliation. For instance, as shown earlier in this chapter, the students might decide to have a “*war of silence*” against a teacher during the lessons.

Besides, the youth can also decide to retaliate as noted in the student narrative below.

*“Youth can also engage in conflicts because they want to revenge especially on adults that abuse them e.g. teachers and their parents. You see like teachers think that when you are in school you are a child and therefore cannot do anything to them. Then we use the peer power and we will revenge one day.”*²⁷¹

“Deciding to lie low” in this context also means wearing a façade to avoid getting into trouble with the school authority or their parents. In addition, ways of coping with the violent conflicts such as caning is by “*acting gentlemanly*”²⁷² as one of them has expressed it. This involves masquerading happiness to protect the public image of their school while in fact they are hurting inside. Furthermore, by so doing, the paradox is that they are unconsciously entrenching the status quo which is at the centre of their anger, frustration, and dissatisfaction.

Furthermore, “*deciding to lie low*” becomes the motivating factor for the youth’s actions. For instance in the classroom setting they can decide to keep quiet. Also, as seen earlier in this chapter, they can decide to gang with others and retaliate by waylaying the teacher with whom they are aggrieved. Hence “*deciding to lie low*” is a non-verbal communication of their dissatisfaction.

²⁷⁰ Focus group discussion, S1M#5N, March 2010

²⁷¹ Focus group discussion, S5F#3N, March 2010

²⁷² Focus group discussion, S14M#5N, March 2010

Additionally, as shown in the narratives of the student participants, “deciding to lie low” can take the form of compensatory behaviour. Instead of reacting or keeping quiet and harbouring bad feelings towards the leadership and those involved, sometimes the students can expend their energies in the clubs and societies or other forms of leisure activities such as Sports.

Compensatory behaviour (participation in clubs and societies).

In clubs and societies, the students have the opportunity to relate with each other, develop their potential and to practise their leadership roles as discussed initially in chapter five of this study. Some of the leadership roles are chairman, secretary or treasurer of the club or society. Equally, as active members of these groups, they share their talents with others and have the opportunity to interact with the wider society as well. Through these clubs and societies the students experience equality in form of membership, participation and opportunities for leadership. The teachers play a minimal role for instance as mentors and also accompany the students during organised clubs and societies’ rallies and trips.

According to the student respondents, these clubs and societies act as a way of the students showcasing their talents of play acting or play writing and their musical prowess. They are educated about the environment and learn values and good morals especially from societies such as the Christian Union (CU), Young Christians Society (YCS), Muslim Society (MS) and from Law club and Red Cross club among others. These positive experiences are summed up in some of the Students’ narratives as shown in Table 6.9 below.

Table 6.9 Students' narratives on activities they are involved in

STUDENT RESPONDENTS' CODE NO¹	NARRATIVES ON THEIR INVOLVEMENT IN CLUBS, SOCIETIES AND OTHER LEISURE ACTIVITIES
S7MRVintv#2	<i>We have clubs such as the Red Cross. In this the leader encourages the others on how to lead.</i>
S11MRVintv#4	<i>The clubs and societies such as YCS [Young Christian Society] and journalism contribute to the students' welfare. The Journalism club helps us to improve our communication. We meet each week and gather information about what is happening in our school and around us.</i>
S11MRVintv#5	<i>In the activities such as football I feel free and my friends too feel free. This too helps the school as we are able to share and release our steam.</i>
S1MNfg#6	<i>Drama festival is a powerful tool of communication, gives a lot of information. The audience is mainly students and teachers. My suggestion is that such festivals be designed in such a way that there is bigger audience especially of parents as some of the issues handled target parents.</i>
S13MRVQn#472	<i>Participating in drama has made our school to be recognised.</i>
S9FRVQn#326	<i>Clubs motivate girls to enable them achieve their dreams and for self identity.</i>
S8MRVQn#262	<i>Clubs make our school high as we get connected with most community members. It helps to bring together communities when we give them mass aid e.g. food.</i>
S5FNQn#166	<i>It helps in such a way that we feel that we are at the same level/class no matter what background you have come from and how you really are; and it also gives young people information especially on sexuality which our parents are not able to talk to us freely.</i>

¹S+numeral= school code, F= Female and M=Male, N=Nairobi and RV= Rift Valley, Intv=semi-structured interviews, Qn=survey questionnaire, FG=Focus group, numeral after#= Student respondents' identification number in the specific method of data collection

However, the student respondents have the perception that these activities which help in their personal growth and enhance the love and admiration they have for their schools are not appreciated. They also show that their efforts to earn trophies for their schools during the Music and Drama festivals, to excel in National

examinations and to advertise their schools through their school magazine are often ignored or treated with suspicion. Hence, their perception is that the teachers and School authorities are not happy when they see them engaging in other activities apart from classwork. As observed in this narrative from one of the boys,

*“Our teachers do not like to see us happy; in fact they are malicious. When they see us enjoying ourselves during entertainment or raves and bashes they get angry and tell us that we are in school to learn. It is like they are very happy to see us miserable.”*²⁷³

Curiously, the student respondents also sleep as a way of compensatory behaviour. This they claim is not only in order to relax their bodies and minds but as pointed out by this student respondent, it is a way of avoiding conflicts with the adults: *“At least when we sleep then the parents and other adults cannot find fault and stress us.”*²⁷⁴ Interestingly, this view is corroborated by one of the youth counsellors. In his observation, he shares that a number of parents find this behaviour of youth spending too much time sleeping a worrying trend today. Additionally, one of the key informants, a member of Board of Governors who was interviewed in her own home expressed this same concern. During the interview, her daughter was asleep though it was still early in the evening. The mother pointed out that she had been sleeping since morning. She associated this behaviour with laziness and disobedience. She shares:

²⁷³ Focus group discussion, S12F#2RV, February2010

²⁷⁴ Focus group discussion, S3F#2RV, February2010

“Watoto wa siku hizi sijui vile wako. [I don’t understand today’s children]. They can cause you real stress. They come from school and just want to eat and sleep. If they are in boarding, you do not know when they will be sent home for something bad they have done. You know these days they join bad groups like this one we have in Mt Elgon. You know your son can be in it and you do not know. The only time you will know is when they go and do not come back. Then you now know they are in SLDF [Sabao Land Defence Force] group which has now gone into hiding among the people for fear of the government. They are among us. They are our children.”²⁷⁵

Apart from “*deciding to lie low*” and compensatory behaviour, students might gang up for support either to bond or retaliate as will now be explored.

Ganging for support (Bonding and for strength in numbers)

As seen in the narratives so far, the student respondents’ views of militia groups and gangs aim is initially for bonding especially when they drop out of school or are not coping with their parents or significant adults, they can identify with them, and find both moral and financial support. Furthermore, it is apparent that the violence and criminal activities are not the initial reason why the youth join militia groups and gangs or engage in violence. Equally, these activities do not necessarily become part of the youth activities but could be adopted by a group. This is captured in the excerpt (6.10 below) of an interview with one of the outlawed sect/militia group, the *Mungiki*.

²⁷⁵ Semi-structured interview, KYM#10RV (member of Parents Teachers Association), February 2010

Table 6.10 Youth’s narratives: reasons for forming/joining special groups

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE	EXCERPT OF AN INTERVIEW WITH A GROUP IDENTIFYING ITSELF AS <i>MUNGIKI</i> ¹
<i>What does Mungiki mean</i>	A crowd
<i>Are there any benefits in being a member?</i>	Yes
<i>Please explain:</i>	<p>Response 1: <i>We are fighting for historical injustices</i></p> <p>Response 2: <i>Those who fought for independence are not the beneficiaries</i></p> <p>Response 3: <i>We want the leaders to explain the historical injustices that have caused poverty and jobs for many of us whose fathers and grandparents fought for independence.</i></p>
<i>What is your reason for staying in this group?</i>	<p>Response 1: <i>I am staying because of financial gain</i></p> <p>Response 2: <i>lack of employment for some of us</i></p> <p>Response 3: <i>peer support</i></p>
<i>Can anybody join Mungiki?</i>	<p>Response 1: <i>No, you have to be recruited to be a member</i></p> <p>Response 2: <i>But when there is a threat to us we recruit by force</i></p> <p>Response 3: <i>We are complaining that we have no husbands because the police have killed them. This is the reason why we are recruiting members so that we can find someone to marry us.</i></p>

This group identifying itself as *Mungiki* - from which the above narratives were obtained - was quick to point out that there are different types of *Mungiki* groups and their group is not the militia *Mungiki*.

“Our group is mainly made of Kikuyu. The community knows we do not drink or take drugs. We only sniff ‘mbaki’ [Kikuyu for tobacco] what our elders used to sniff before which is not a drug. But the other group of Mungiki is mixed of many tribes.”

From this group it is clear that they have a common goal, and have a purpose for remaining in the group. It is interesting to note that the group has two levels of recruitment, the initial one and at another level - one that they carry out when there is a threat. This indicates that the initial recruitment is for those who have compatible interest while the later one is for survival.

The youth (members of this group) that participated in the focus group, claim that they join these groups because they find support which they do not experience in the wider society. Throughout the interview, they do not define themselves as an outlawed militia group. They define themselves as a group of youth that have come together with common purposes. One of their purposes as shown in their narratives above is to “fight for historical injustices”. Therefore, their aim in joining the group is to realise their dreams but in the process this can lead them to engage in violent activities as shown in these student narratives (Table 6.11 below).

Table 6.11 Students' narratives on why youth join militia groups and gangs

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES STUDENT RESPONDENTS' CODE NO¹	NARRATIVES ON WHY YOUTH JOIN MILITIA GROUPS AND GANGS
S2MRV#53	<i>There is a reason why youth drop out of school and some join gangs and behave badly e.g. abuse drugs and alcohol, join groups such as mungiki. Therefore one should not just tell the individual to stop but go to the grassroot level and find out what is happening e.g. the youth seem to make lots of money while in militia groups because they lack employment. That is why many youth say 'kazi kwa vijana²⁷⁶ na pesa kwa wazee'. [This means the youth do the work (jobs) and the elderly people earn the money of the youth labour].</i>
S14MN#479	<i>The education system is not practical. In fact some see education as wastage and there is no avenue in school to express grievances. They join these gangs for support and to earn money.</i>
S14MN#488	<i>Unemployment and the gang culture that the government is afraid to address can create a cycle of conflicts. You see if one finishes or drops out of school and is idle then it is very easy to join a gang as one feels accepted and loved there.</i>
S5FN#156	<i>You know for a girl when the teacher says your face is ugly and you have no money to beautify your face, then you will look for it in every way to make your face look nice. Other students might laugh at you and you drop out of school and join a gang where you feel loved and accepted.</i>

²⁷⁶ This is an initiative of the government to address unemployment among youth. The youth point out that they are given the tasks for instance cleaning the Nairobi River or casual jobs during the constructions of roads but there is delay of payments or they are not paid at all. Their perception is that this money goes to the corrupt officers hence the rejoinder “Pesa kwa wazee” which was coined by the youth.

¹S+numeral=school code, M=male and F=female, N=Nairobi and RV= Rift Valley, numeral after #= Student respondent's identification number

In addition, from the student respondents/participants, the arguments centred on the fact that an education that only equips one academically but fails to provide job opportunities after completion of studies acts as a fertile ground for violent conflicts. One student participant articulates his view captured in the narrative below.

“To my view, staying in school for many years then not getting a job later makes one hate school. Why stay in school working so hard with a lot of stress and later stay at home. I see so many friends and relatives finish school and then I see them ‘tarmacking.’²⁷⁷ What is the point!”²⁷⁸

Sometimes, the students cannot deal with the tension and brutality anymore and so they “explode”. In the next section we will expound on this.

“We explode” (violence as a means of communication)

As noted in one of the students' narratives in a focus group in Nairobi, *“When all these problems accumulate we are stressed, we explode and go to the provincial education office and then throw stones.”²⁷⁹* They defend their violent behaviour saying that violence is the only language that adults know as sometimes adults use violence to resolve conflicts. The excerpt from a focus group discussion captured in Table 6.12 below highlights the student participants' narratives on reasons why they “explode”.

²⁷⁷ Popular term used in Kenya for those people who are going out looking for employment. Most of these walk from office to office looking for jobs especially in towns and the city of Nairobi which has tarmac roads thus the term “tarmacking”.

²⁷⁸ Focus group discussion, S10M#2RV, March 2010

²⁷⁹ Focus group discussion, S1M#4N, March 2010

Table 6.12 Students' experience and/or observation of physical violence

FOCUS GROUP STUDENTS' CODE NO ¹	NARRATIVES ON THEIR EXPERIENCE/OBSERVATION OF PHYSICAL ACTS OF VIOLENCE
S1MN#5	<i>Z²⁸⁰ is right. I think pressure is the only language the adults understand. Did you not see when Kofi Annan came? That is when the post-election violence stopped.</i>
S12MRV#2	<i>In my opinion, some students use violence because their grievances are not heard.</i>
S2MN#5	<i>We, the youth are not listened to by our teachers, parents, administration so we do bad things e.g. rioting so that we can be heard.</i>
S1MN#6	<i>I can influence the way conflicts are dealt with by not showing respect to teachers when they are cruel.</i>
S1MN#7	<i>Yes. The only way is through this saying, "Where there is oppression, there is rebellion."</i>
S2MN#4	<i>By stopping the conflicts "ama kuchochea" [Swahili phrase that means "or to incite"] and participating in it.</i>
S3FRV#11	<i>The administration is too strict and so we feel threatened, we keep quiet and then when it is too much we explode.</i>

¹S+ numeral = the school code, M= male, F=female), N=Nairobi and RV= Rift Valley, Numeral after # = Student respondents' identification number.

The above youth narratives on "exploding" as a means of communication are corroborated by the key informants' narratives as shown in (Table 6.13 below).

²⁸⁰ This is not an initial of any particular participant but used for purpose of anonymity.

Table 6.13 Key informants: why youth engage in violence

KEY INFORMANTS' CODE NO ¹	KEY INFORMANTS' VIEWS ON YOUTH/STUDENTS ENGAGEMENT IN VIOLENCE
KYF#10RV, member, Parent Teachers' Association (PTA)	<i>One student burnt the dormitory because of anger since others were not accepting him as he had transferred from another school.</i>
KYM#64N (Former youth leader)	<i>When teachers favour some students by giving them marks, no one can speak out for fear of victimisation by the teacher or being sent home. When chance also comes for revenge then the students will begin with the favoured student and if it is a perfect this will be worse.</i>
KYF#15RV (Education Officer)	<i>Students burn schools especially the administration block, kitchen, dining hall, classroom and dormitories. This is an expression of deep held anger that has accumulated for a long time; inadequate representation in decision making so the students use violence to communicate.</i>
KYM#28RV (Teacher)	<i>They think that conflict is a way of communicating. This has been seen or facilitated through the burning of schools, students going on strike.</i>

¹ KYinf = code for the key informant, #+numeral=identification code for key informant, F= Female and M=Male, N=Nairobi and RV= Rift Valley provinces.

Hence with the rigidity experienced during their interactions both inside and outside the classroom, curtailed freedom of speech, the rigid rules and regulations, the social/cultural structures they find themselves in, these coupled with the anger, frustration and general malaise experienced in the school setting become a fertile ground for violence.

CONCLUSION

This chapter analysed the major emerging themes from the field research, regarding youth violence in both the school and wider society and how they are handled. These themes carry with them attitudes and reactions, either violent or peaceful from the youth.

Notably, the five coded themes, outlined earlier in this chapter give a clear picture of the kind of violence which occurs in the school environment and the coping mechanisms that the youth use to deal with the violence. The first theme highlights the brutality that the youth experience and/or observe. While some of the violence happens among the students themselves, the extent to which the violence is perpetuated by those in leadership positions - such as teachers, school administrators and the police – was revealing. This violence ranges from brutality, experienced through physical abuse such as caning and the pulling of students' ears, to labelling - that is, use of insults and derogatory remarks in reference to a students' physique, academic prowess or family background.

Another level of violence can be seen in different forms of rigidity (theme two), for instance excluding students from the decision-making process, about issues that affect them. Also student leaders (prefects) are rigid in the way they deal with their peers, using violence, for example, caning and other excessive forms of punishment. This has led to some students attacking, and even killing, some of the prefects as discussed in chapter two. Rigidity is also experienced in the way the government shares resources among the different types of schools, and in the way students are selected to attend these schools. Sometimes schools in certain regions are favoured more than others, thereby creating discrimination among students and and sometimes leading to inter-school conflicts.

The third theme is an analysis of the conflict(s) that arises due to *coercion by peers*, for instance, to participate in school unrest or join militia groups and gangs. This is mainly observed in the narratives on bullying and the post-election violence analysed especially in chapters four and five.

Observing deviance in social and cultural structures was the fourth theme which emerged, highlighting the young people's expectation of provision of

exemplary role models. The findings show that young people are dissatisfied with the behaviour of their leaders, in both schools and wider society. They highlight mainly the politicians, school principals and deputy principals, teachers and support staff.

The students also decry what seems to be the adults' failure to adequately and constructively engage them in dialogue and decision making in both the school and wider society. They argue that the current engagement is cosmetic and for showcasing. They also observe that their issues are normally handled using "quick-fix" solutions. This dissatisfaction in the way youth issues and conflicts are dealt with is captured as *Ways of coping* (theme five). From the youth narratives we observe that sometimes youth can act in different ways: opt "to lie low"; engage in compensatory behaviour - constructively expending their energies in clubs and societies; join a gang or militia group for support and acceptance both emotionally and financially.

The study findings so far indicate that students' conflicts seem to generate from various issues in and out of school such as noise making, food, leisure activities, rivalry in friendly sports and involvement in militia groups and gangs. On reflection, using one example gathered from the findings of the study, the researcher notes that what for example starts as a normal conflict such as a soccer match, degenerates into stone throwing and fights with opponents which then extends further to the teachers of the opponent schools. Sometimes it can also flow over to whoever those students relate to for instance their "*mansi*" (girl friends in another school) as shown in some of their narratives. This reality is compounded by the fact that the youth perceive adults as significant people in their lives yet "deliberately" out there to make them unhappy and miserable. This could act as a catalyst for further violent conflicts in both the school and wider society.

From the analysis so far, what emerges is that the phenomenon of youth conflicts is complex. Also that the current approaches are not adequately addressing the violence. Hence, could school violent experiences if not adequately addressed spread to the local and national level? Curiously, is the school nurturing “an animal that could eventually be too wild to tame”?

The following chapter (seven) below will draw together the findings, reflections, conclusions and recommendations of this research which aims at responding to the research questions highlighted throughout the thesis.

CHAPTER SEVEN

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, REFLECTIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH: IMPLICATIONS FOR RECONCEPTUALISING PEACEBUILDING

INTRODUCTION

As analysed in the chapters above, at the core of this research is to understand the continued participation of youth in violent conflict in Kenyan secondary schools. From the literature review and empirical data analysis in the chapters above, there is evidence that despite responses, aimed at stopping the violence, this conflict has persisted and is even now increasing, in terms of its profile and intensity and number of youth militia. These political and militia issues are occurring in a situation of unemployment, poverty, an education system not tailored to the job market, and large numbers of internally displaced people mainly young people and children.

The thesis argument is that the largely unsuccessful responses in both the school and wider society have been constructed unilaterally – largely ignoring the concerns and views of the youth who participate in, and/or observe, the violence. More importantly, as noted throughout the thesis, youth continue to experience frustration and anger at having their voices, concerns and expectations ignored. Also they are unfairly isolated and labelled by the authorities in and outside the school setting – in sum, being marginalised. Notably, as evidenced throughout the thesis, the peacebuilders have a tendency of employing generic and short term solutions when dealing with violence in this case – the youth violence.

Also the gaps between the Kenyan educational system and the narratives of youth on the conflicts they participate in/and or observe - highlighted in the literature

review and research informed chapters - have served as a basis of developing criteria for assessing the relevance and effectiveness of peacebuilding responses in both schools and wider society. In addition, the research reflected on its implications for wider debates concerning theories and practices relating to peacebuilding, education and youth. Bearing this in mind, peacebuilding approaches have to be considered in light of the unique and complex social, cultural, economic and political contexts.

This study was guided by the following research questions:

- a) *What narratives are used by the youth to describe, explain, and justify their participation in and/or observation of violent conflict in Kenyan secondary schools and wider society?*
- b) *In what ways can approaches to peacebuilding and the Kenyan education systems respond to youth violence?*

The chapter is divided into four sections, the first being a synopsis of the thesis, the second is the reflections and contributions of the research which is divided into three: reflections on theoretical contributions, methodological contributions and contributions for policymaking. Third are reflections on key areas for further research.

7.1 SYNOPSIS OF THE THESIS

This thesis employed a peacebuilding framework as an appropriate theoretical lens through which to engage with the problem of youth violence and discover how the young people themselves describe, explain and justify the violence. The aim was to explore how peacebuilding in the Kenyan context could contribute to solving the problem of youth violence, in the school and wider society in general.

Chapter one critically engaged with the theories of peace and approaches of peacebuilding. The findings show that though literature on youth and peacebuilding recognises that youth are excluded - with the focus mainly on youth as

troublemakers as opposed to peacebuilders - not enough has been done to include youth voices at different levels of peacebuilding. The thesis therefore supports the literature on peacebuilding which emphasises the crucial role of youth in peacebuilding (Mc Evoy-Levy, 2001). From onset the key argument of this thesis is that stress should be placed on the role of youth as peacebuilders as opposed to problems. Since youth are key perpetrators of violence they must be part of the solutions to the problems.

In order to investigate and understand youth violence in Kenya's secondary school system, and by extension wider society, it has been theoretically and methodologically important to include – at the core of the research – the perspectives and narratives of young people. This serves not only to re-focus the analytical lens onto the Kenyan secondary school student experience – in order to fully understand the violence - but equally importantly, to engage the voices of youth, to highlight the epistemological, political and pedagogical gaps in the current responses to youth violence.

Chapter two introduced and analysed Kenya's political, socio-cultural and economic history paying particular attention to the history of youth violence in Kenya. The analysis of Kenya (chapter two of the thesis) shows a context that is politically and culturally complex and unique. The literature reveals a situation of unabated, systematic and deepening youth violence in Kenya's secondary school system, delineated by inadequate and ineffective responses. The argument raised from the analysis of this chapter is that Kenyan youth violence must be understood in its wider social, political and economic context to ensure effective and sustainable peacebuilding.

Chapter three gave the rationale for the choice and methods used in this research. The research was based on a Constructivist Grounded Theory approach

(CGT) as both method of comparative ongoing analysis and as theory grounded in empirical research (Charmaz, 2001). Fourteen schools participated in the actual study. 512 student respondents in total were selected from these schools to participate in the research that was carried out following the ethical issues as approved by the University of Bradford. Key was the ethical issues of informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, privacy and the *do no harm principle* among others.

The data was collected through triangulation (questionnaires, focus group interviews, semi-structured in-depth interviews and review of secondary sources). The research methodology and field data (chapter three) builds an argument for educational and political interventions that would include youth-centered contextualised ontologies, epistemologies and situated *bottom-up* narratives of peace. Hence, this research argues for peacebuilding responses that capture subjective, inter-generational and culturally transmitted meanings of peace, which are contained in the pertinent views, attitudes and beliefs.

Chapter four sought to find out the youth's experience of violence in schools (participation and/or observation) and their coping mechanisms. It was, therefore, essential to engage with the narratives of young people in the school setting, particularly their accounts of participation or observation of violence. The chapter also engaged with the youth narratives on the areas of satisfaction and expectations and their views on militia groups and gangs. Also their experience of the post-2007 election violence was also explored, in order to discover their perceptions of, involvement and/or observation of the violence. The findings demonstrate that *top-down*, generic approaches and "quick-fix" solutions are applied to deal with the youth violence and this tends to leave intact the underlying causes of the violence.

Chapter four also captured the key informants' views on the youth violence and the responses.

Building on chapter four, chapter five sought to find out the mechanisms used to deal with youth conflicts. This chapter also initiated the responses/arguments to address the second research question (b) *In what ways can approaches to peacebuilding and the Kenyan education systems respond to youth violence?* Key argument of this chapter is that peacebuilding approaches/activities should incorporate the youth narratives and need to be tailored to reflect youth realities which are both complex and dynamic.

Chapter six, on the other hand, incorporated the analysis of chapter four and five and these were coded into five themes arrived at using the Constructivist Grounded Theory methodology (CGT). These five themes encapsulate the youth narratives which show evidence of different forms of violence - overt, structural, cultural – occurring among young people in Kenya. Four of them captured the violence by showing how young people describe, explain and justify the violence they participate in and/or observe and are coded as (1) experiencing brutality (2) experiencing rigidity (3) experiencing coercion (4) observing deviance in social and cultural structures. The fifth theme (5) highlighted the coping mechanisms that the youth adopt in order to deal with the violence. Chapter six addressed further the second research question (b) as captured above.

Chapter seven, which is the concluding chapter of the thesis, provides a succinct summary of the key arguments of the thesis. The chapter also elucidates the reasons and viability for this research. The research findings, conclusions, reflections and areas for further research are discussed in light of the literature review in the initial chapters of the thesis and analysis of the collected field data – in two identified field research locations (the Rift Valley and Nairobi provinces,

Kenya) – This data mainly captures the youth narratives and their experiences on the violence they participate in and/or observe, their coping mechanisms and the responses to the violence - part (a) of the key research question. Equally, addresses part (b) of the research question which sought to find out in what ways approaches to peacebuilding and the Kenyan education systems can respond to youth violence. The key informants' narratives are also captured. The thesis argues for a reconceptualisation of peacebuilding in education contexts and wider society that includes the narratives and understandings of the youth. Finally, it proffers three key dimensions that can be incorporated to ensure effective and sustainable peace - experiences, worldviews and attitudes of the actors.

7.2 REFLECTIONS AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

Theoretical reflections and contribution

The literature and empirical data show a noticeable gap in the role of youth in peacebuilding. While there is a growing body of literature on youth active role in violent conflicts, there is a dearth in the peacebuilding role that youth participate in and can play. This research has also identified challenges particularly those relating to the peacebuilding approaches utilised to deal with the youth violence. As evidenced in the findings, youth and their issues have been marginalised leading to dissatisfaction and frustration and in extreme cases violence. Further, as the findings show, in the Kenyan context youth violence is unabated and on the increase despite the interventions.

Although scholars, policy makers and practitioners have made efforts to address the youth violence and recognise the long-term nature of sustainable peacebuilding, the empirical evidence indicates that this shift has not materialised. The findings show that the approaches/mechanisms are mainly informed by the normative liberal peacebuilding paradigm - which tends to be generic and *top-down*,

employing “quick-fix solutions” to the violence. This raises questions as to the effectiveness, sustainability and relevancy of such peacebuilding approaches. The reason is that such interventions end up dealing with the triggers to the violence and leaving intact the underlying causes. The assumption of this thesis is that effective and sustainable peacebuilding is attained when the approaches are specific to a given context and aims at long term solutions to the problem(s). Since the setting (school and/or wider society) in which the violence occurs is unique, complex and multi-dimensional, employing generic or quick-fix solutions to youth violence is counter-productive. The premise in this thesis is that no matter how successful or sublime interventions to youth conflicts, this should not be used as a template to deal with conflicts in another context, or even in the same context when different actors are involved. The thesis therefore argues for unique, inclusive, multi-dimensional, long-term peacebuilding approaches to counter the short-sighted approaches that tend to address the triggers of the violence and also exclude the youth in the peacebuilding process.

As discussed in chapter one, most theories on youth mainly focus on youth as troublemakers and have not given much attention to the youth as peacemakers (Schwartz 2010, Honwana and De Boeck, 2005 and McEvoy-Levy, 2001). This is confirmed by the empirical study which shows a context where the youth and their voices are excluded. Consequently, the key argument of this thesis is that to effectively address the violence, policymakers and implementers of these programmes need to acknowledge the critical peacebuilding role that the youth play both in theory and practice. More importantly, as evidenced in the empirical data youth have solutions to some of the conflicts that they observe and/or engage in.

Notably, as expressed in their narratives in chapter four, young people need to feel that they are accepted and that their opinions matter. Only then can they

engage in peaceful activities and contribute to sustainable peace, in both schools and wider society. The literature review and empirical data shows that Kenya experiences both structural and cultural violence. The youth bear the greatest brunt of these forms of violence as actors, victims and indeed both. These types of conflicts are contextual, deep rooted and complex. This being the case the interventions have to be long term and tailored in accordance with the specific context. This means that policy makers and implementers must actively engage the youth who are both part of the problems as well as the solutions. (Mc Evoy-Levy, 2001). One way they can do this is by seeking for creative and constructive ways of addressing the youth violence bearing in mind the changing Kenyan reality. Therefore, incorporating them and their voices at all the levels of the peacebuilding process – from design to implementation - can assist in resolving some of these conflicts. The lesson in terms of peacebuilding is that by providing a platform for youth voices as an integral part of the peace processes will act as a motivator for them to trust, own and drive the peace process. Equally, this will give them an opportunity to actualise their potential.

The findings also show that youth value involvement in decision-making, transparency and understanding of their expectations and concerns as key to ensuring peace in their schools and wider society. From the shared narratives throughout the thesis it is evident that where and when they were involved there was a sense of trust, belonging and co-operation. This testifies the importance of engaging in activities/programmes that will not only incorporate their narratives/voices at all levels of decision making but also recognise their role as a key component to peacebuilding. This means that the peacebuilding approaches must go beyond the theories and translate into practice. Only then can creating and developing a culture of peace become meaningful to the youth.

As documented through the field research, the realities of systematic violence experienced in Kenyan schools and wider society settings calls for approaches that will challenge the authorities and adult's perceptions and attitudes towards the youth and their issues. While applauding the peacebuilding approaches/initiatives that are in place in Kenya to address youth violence as captured in chapter two of this thesis, the argument raised is that today's peacebuilding efforts have to be relevant, in touch with the youth realities and incorporate their voices at all levels.

Another key argument of this thesis is that unless peacebuilding or violence-reduction initiatives stem from the subjective narratives and experience of those involved - in this case the youth - they will likely prove unsustainable. Since the role of youth in peacebuilding is crucial, it can be counterproductive if youth are excluded from the peacebuilding process. Therefore the educational and socio-political peacebuilding efforts need to be constructed around an approach that is sensitive to, and rooted in, the socio-cultural concepts and context of the key actors – the youth.

Importantly, central to this thesis is the argument that young people can play a major role in developing core values, such as trust, co-operation, and acceptance of difference, and the unity advocated by the peacebuilding programmes/approaches such as the peace education. The point this thesis makes is that the way youth are engaged and afforded responsibility in the peacebuilding process will no doubt contribute towards durable peace in and out of the school setting. This poses challenges in a context such as Kenya where as noted in chapter two, the leadership structures at all levels - both in school and wider society -are top-down.

Notably, by engaging the narratives of the youth in this research, the aim was to capture the underlying reasons for the violence. From the research findings, reflections and conclusions, it is evident that underlying the youth violence are value

differences, diverse identities and other cognitive attitudes. Consequently, for any form of intervention to be effective, these factors must be well understood. This means that any response to youth violence has to recognise the location in which the conflict(s) takes place and engage with the actors - in whose narratives the root causes and solutions can be found. Since locations and actors are unique to each conflict context, peacebuilding responses have to be specific, articulated and tailored appropriately, and not advocate a *one-size-fits-all* approach - transported as a package which can be utilised in any context. Notably, imposed generic packages cannot guarantee the required environment for peacebuilding that can bring about positive change. As noted in chapter one of this thesis, unless people are involved in finding solutions that best answer/respond to their conflicts, there is the danger that the solutions will be superficial and fail to address the root causes. Therefore, by engaging the narratives of the youth in this research, some of the reasons why the youth engage in violence were revealed.

The next section will highlight the researcher's reflections on the methodological contribution of this thesis.

Reflections: methodological contribution

A major component of this thesis was the field research carried out in Kenya (chapter three). Through the Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) approach, that guided this research, the researcher engaged young people to discover how they describe, explain and justify the violent conflict they participate in and/or observe. As argued earlier in chapter one, conflict is not initially and essentially, as generally thought, objective but rather subjective. Therefore, CGT can be used to assess the contribution made by culture, the subject and the environment, in shaping young people's attitudes and behaviour. Grounded theory methodology can be useful in

enabling the design of interventions, which are grounded in, and stem, from the subjective narratives and experiences of young people.

Interestingly, the findings show that the youth interviewed found this research a platform from which they could express their views without intimidation, fear or coercion. Sharing of these narratives in themselves, seem to be an indication of the dissatisfaction of the youth. The challenge now, beyond this thesis, is the creation of peacebuilding approaches/interventions/responses in both the school and wider society that can incorporate these narratives and respond to these expectations. The recognition of this thesis is that as a researcher one does not have the power that the participants of a given research, assume and expect. Notwithstanding, the shared expectations and concerns can act as a platform to begin conversations in aim of addressing these concerns and expectations towards building sustainable peace in both the schools and wider society.

Also by using the triangulation method (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008) it became evident that young people were communicating in a variety of ways, apart from the surveys, interviews (including verbal and non-verbal communication) and focus groups utilised by this research. It is also evident from the findings that the fourteen schools in this study (sampled from two provinces in Kenya – Nairobi and Rift Valley), are unique and complex in terms of the population, the milieu and narratives. In terms of the theory and practice of peacebuilding pointed out in chapter one, this demonstrates the importance of tailoring interventions/responses to the context and the actors in it. Therefore, the peacebuilding programmes should be designed and implemented in such a way that they reflect this uniqueness and complexity.

More importantly, effective peacebuilding is founded on the narratives of those concerned. It is, therefore, contextual and bottom-up approach- and not

generic, quick-fix or a one-size-fits all - which is needed. A key methodological tenet of peacebuilding within the educational system should dictate that conflict is defined and narrated by young people – who should also be involved in negotiating and implementing the peacebuilding programmes in their schools and wider society. First, there is need to engage the knowledge and skills that the youth already have in problem-solving. As evidenced in the youth narratives, the youth have solved some conflicts among them and express their need to be given the opportunity to actualise their potential especially on issues that concern them. By not recognising their crucial role as peacebuilders this will act as a barrier towards effective and sustainable peacebuilding. Second, this calls for altering of controls – shift in focus – so that other than concentrating on maintaining discipline, children and youth are challenged through word and example on how to resolve conflicts without resulting to violence. Therefore, there should be use of non-disciplinary approaches that actively engage their views on issues that pertain to them versus the current disciplinary and blaming approaches that typify students as ‘indisciplined’ or “rebellious”.

This chapter also reflected on how the findings can influence policy.

Reflection: Contribution for policymaking

This section aims at the implications of policy making for peacebuilding and education in Kenya. The research highlights the need to address the conflicts in the cultural, socio-economic and political context. While engaging all stakeholders, both local and international - in order to determine the root causes, special understanding of the local worldviews and perceptions is paramount. However, the expertise and experiences of these different stakeholders should not be overlooked. Importantly, the youth population (in and out of school), as well as those labelled “militia” and “gangs” should be considered as vital constituencies in peacebuilding efforts.

Importantly, the peacebuilding approaches/programmes aimed at addressing youth violence must be situated within the larger Kenyan political context (manipulation by political parties, use of militias) and economic context (student unemployment, lack of opportunities to participate in Kenya's development - personally, professionally and as citizens) and despair over their future and continued marginalization. The findings of this thesis show a tendency for the peacebuilding approaches to de-contextualise youth related violence - especially school based youth violence - from the wider society. Yet, schools should be seen as a reflection of society and young people are part of this wider society. Therefore, influenced by the wider society, youth and their issues cannot be separated in this way. The thesis therefore raises the argument that decontextualising young people and their issues from the wider society is unrealistic. Furthermore, the evidence in this thesis shows that the youth look up to the significant adults in both the school and wider society to provide exemplary peacebuilding role models. Hence, the key argument here is that the peacebuilding approaches to address youth violence whether in a school setting or wider society should be inter-generational, participatory and holistic. It is therefore vital that all the stakeholders – youth included – be involved and committed at the different levels in seeking constructive ways of addressing the youth violence.

The way the youth are engaged in the peacebuilding process will no doubt shape their understanding of peace and role in peacebuilding. This highlights the need to identify and harness peacebuilding approaches that will address the underlying issues. One of the ways is to co-ordinate and implement the suggestions of research findings that have been carried out in schools and out of school settings in the past. Yet, as evidenced in chapter two, findings from research carried out by the government and its working partners - aimed at establishing the causes of youth

violence in Kenya - have either been partially addressed or “left in the shelves to collect dust”. The thesis argues that in order for such findings to effectively address youth violence, the possible causes should translate from theory to practice – hence, move from “empty-talks” or sometimes from what is perceived by the youth as “actions meant for show-casing” to actions that will effectively address the youth’s issues.

More importantly, the necessary supportive structures have to be in place otherwise peace remains superficial and illusive. Hence, the key argument of this thesis is that no matter how noble, organised or well-intended the peacebuilding programmes/interventions to address the youth violence, they will yield little or no fruits if the context - such as Kenyan context - in which the peace is to be built is characterised by systematic violence. This leads us to the next section: reflections on key areas for further research.

7.3 REFLECTIONS: KEY AREAS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The grounded theory approach - adopted by this research - assisted by identifying the potential theoretical explanations and predictors, and generated valuable data and interpretation. It was also possible to determine areas where further research is needed.

This thesis indicates a number of significant dynamics that might impact on violence and group conflict such as the youth violence in Kenya. Therefore, it would be interesting for future research to consider the issues of class, gender, identity, and culture and the larger social dynamics of ethnic conflict and economic change, which might inform peacebuilding approaches especially among youth. These issues were mentioned but not dealt with in detail in this thesis due to the scope of the study and time limit.

There is also scope for systematic, subjective research into the link between ethnic militia and school-based youth violence in Kenya. From the narratives of both the students and other key informants, the focus on the initiation ceremonies - a rite of passage - especially for boys in some Kenyan ethnic communities raises questions about how this may contribute to violence and an increase in youth ethnic militia. Hence, of importance for further research would be to find out how these ceremonies create a sense of group identity and affinity? What role do they play in conflict? How does this conflict play out in schools? What benefits do young people gain from participation in a militia group? Are there alternatives to these practices? Finding answers to these questions could assist in providing an understanding of the increase in militia activities in wider Kenyan society, and schools in particular.

Teacher bullying, and its impact on youth violence in secondary schools, would also benefit from further research. Although the findings of this research indicate this is a serious, widespread matter, due to the scope of this thesis it was not possible to pursue this investigation. A future study of this abuse could expand the study by Ndeti (2009) already cited, whose main interest was bullying among students in secondary schools in Kenya. Also it could support the work of Davies (2004) mentioned in chapter five, reflection on education and conflict and the challenges of addressing violence in the school setting. This thesis is able to pose some questions about bullying, which could initiate such future research. For example, is there a particular silence around the issue? What sort of training and/or responses and structures are currently in place to combat all forms of bullying especially in Kenyan schools?

The other area of interest that was identified for further research is youth conflict, particularly that which occurs due to inequality in resource allocation, and opportunity which is dependent on geography, class, and ethnic group membership.

These factors were captured in the student and key informant narratives, highlighting mainly teacher discrimination of students from poor or rich backgrounds, unequal distribution of resources in schools, lack of proper infrastructure and inadequate facilities for sports and leisure activities in schools.

Other findings of this research captured in the youth narratives and key informants interviews reveal that some violent conflicts originate from a response to the unethical sexual behaviour - both physical and psychological (use of derogatory remarks) – which is perpetrated by both male and female teachers. Again, due to the scope of this thesis and the limitations mentioned in chapter three, it was not possible to examine this issue in more detail. Yet, due to the seriousness of this type of abuse, systematic future research that will pay particular attention to the dynamics and consequences of this kind of abuse is recommended. As a point of departure, the following questions regarding sexual and gender based violence could guide this future research on the relationship between sexual and gender based violence and the youth engagement in violence in and out of schools:

- To what extent is violence in schools a response to sexual and gender violence?
- What peacebuilding approaches are in place to deal with sexual and gender based violence in schools?
- To what extent are the cultural stereotypical attitudes of gender affecting peacebuilding responses that target girls in both the schools and wider society.

From the recorded youth narratives in this thesis, it is evident that the youth use some co-curricular activities as coping mechanisms to the violence they experience or observe. Therefore as regards future research, there is scope for examination of the potential role that co-curricular activities such as clubs and

societies, Art, Drama, Music and Sports can play as alternative peacebuilding avenues in both the schools and wider society.

Throughout, the thesis has raised the challenges posed in the potential of peacebuilding approaches, tools and pedagogies for engaging Kenyan youth in reducing school-based and wider social violence. More specifically, the thesis argues for the strengthening of peacebuilding approaches and responses that will incorporate bottom-up peacebuilding methodology. As noted in chapter one (Figure 1.4) this research proffers three key dimensions that can be incorporated in any peacebuilding approach that is: experience, worldviews and attitudes of the actors. Therefore, the argument of this thesis is that adopting such a framework which emphasises youth-defined empowerment, peacebuilding skills and potential acts as a key step in recognising the essential role that youth play as peacebuilders as opposed to problems.

In sum, the youth narratives in this thesis have acted as an eye opener and can provide further insight for scholars, policy makers and practitioners on the dynamic and positive role that youth play and can play in ensuring durable peace. More importantly, incorporating the youth narratives in the peacebuilding interventions can aid in the creation of better policies and practices towards addressing the youth violence. As evidenced in the literature and empirical data, the youth are open and seek opportunities to engage actively in peacebuilding in their schools and societies. Therefore, recognising and actively engaging the youth will not only help nurture and harness their potential but also act as a preventive measure to further violence.

APPENDIX 1 DETAILED LIST OF CATEGORIES OF KEY INFORMANTS

Category of Key informants	Location		No of semi-structured interviews in each category	No of focus group(s)	Total no.of participants in both methods = semi structured and focus groups each discussions
	Nairobi	Rift Valley			
			Total	Total	
Youth leaders	2	4	6	1 focus group discussion in Rift Valley (6 participants)	12
Militia groups/gangs	0	2	2	1 focus group discussion in Rift Valley (8 participants)	10
Former gang member(s)	4	0	4	1 focus group discussion in Nairobi (7 participants)	11
Parents in IDP camp	0	1	1	1 focus group discussion in Rift Valley 7 participants	08
Teachers	2	7	9	0	09
Support staff	2	5	7	0	07
School administration	2	5	7	0	07
Board of Governors	1	1	2	0	02
Parents' Teachers Association	1	1	2	0	02
Government officers	8	6	14	0	14
International non-governmental organisation	5	0	05	0	05
Local nongovernmental organisation	4	0	04	0	04
Faith based organisation	1	8	09	0	9
Total	32	40	72	31	99

APPENDIX 2 SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRES FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

INTRODUCTION

The researcher is a PhD student at the University of Bradford.

The research study: exploring violence in Kenyan secondary schools and wider society and the peacebuilding role in addressing this violence. Seeking the youth's attitudes/perceptions, justification of the conflicts (violent) that they are engaged in and/or observe and the responses to these conflicts.

Informed consent: The researcher will seek informed consent (verbal or written) from the respondents. In the case of schools, the school administrators (principals or authorised persons) will also give the consent.

Confidentiality: The recorded data from the respondents will be treated with anonymity and confidentiality and will only be known to the researcher's supervisor(s) and the research assistant(s) if the researcher is not the interviewer, as required by the University of Bradford (United Kingdom). Should there be transcriber(s), he/she will be under strict instruction not to disclose the respondent's identity or any data.

Anonymity: The researcher will ensure that the identity of the respondent is protected through coding. No details whatsoever that would in any way help to identify the respondent will be disclosed through oral or written versions. *Reason:* To protect the respondent and also this is a requirement by the University of Bradford research regulations.

Control: The respondent is free to give her/his views, decline to give views, qualify any of the questions and give explanation to any questions. She/he is also free to withdraw without giving any reasons for doing so. There will be no victimisation of any respondent who decides to withdraw from the interview. The raw data will be available and will be in safe keeping at the University of Bradford and later erased in accordance with the University of Bradford research regulations.

*Section 1: Bio-data and general demography

Date.....Time:.....Duration:.....
Institution/Type of school e.g. National Provincial District Private
Boys Girls Mixed.....
Location.....Religion.....Ethnic community.....
Educational level Form: One ...Two Three..... Four.....
Gender Age
Responsibility (ies) e.g. prefect, leader of a club, society etc.....
No. of siblings: brothers sisters
Parents background e.g. age bracket, profession: Father.....
Mother..... Guardian/sponsor

A. Perception of conflict/peace

*In your opinion, conflicts are: **(Please tick those that apply from the list below)**

violent events disputes that can be violent or non-violent disagreements
fights among families and friends inter-personal and group fights

What is the word in your vernacular that you would use for conflict?

What is the meaning of the word?

*Have you ever had (violent) conflict(s) in your school?

When did this conflict take place?

In your opinion, what do you think led to the conflict(s)?

*Were you involved in the conflict(s)?

*Who dealt with this conflict(s)? **(Please tick those that apply from the list below)**

prefects teacher on duty class teacher boarding mistress/master

deputy principal principal school board of governors police

students themselves Other

*Were you satisfied with the way the conflict(s) was dealt with? Yes:No:

How would you have expected the conflict(s) to be dealt with?

How frequent is this kind of conflict(s) in your school?.....

How are students issues generally dealt with in your school?

*Can you influence the way conflicts and disputes in your school are dealt with?.....

How?.....

*Which things in your school are you happy about? **(Please tick those that apply from the list below)**

School diet The prefects' body The school timetable

The school facilities Clubs and societies Other.....

*Which things in your school would you like to see done differently? **(Please tick those that apply from the list below)**

The school rules The relationship between teachers and students.....

School entertainment..... School visiting days School dietOther.....

If given a choice, which things would, you recommend to be introduced in your school?.....

*Do you think your recommendation will be taken seriously?

Please give reasons for your answer.....

*Have you ever gone to your school leaders (prefects/teacher/school administration etc.) to deal with a conflict in the past one or two years?.....

*If yes, were you satisfied in the way it was dealt with? Yes No

Please give reasons for your answer.....

*In your opinion, peace is **(tick those that apply from the list below)**

Harmony Being in good health Agreement Friendship No fight between countries

Sharing in community The school facilities Clubs and societies

Other.....

What is the word in your vernacular that you would use for peace?
What is the meaning of the word?

B. Student level of involvement in the school

In your school, how often have you met with the school authority to discuss issues that affect you in the last one or two years?.....

What kind of issues did you discuss?

*Do you think your views were taken seriously?

Please give reasons for your answers

If you did not meet with the school authority what was the reason for this?.....

*Does the school administration involve students in the running of the school?
Yes.....No... If Yes in which way are the students involved?

*Are you happy with the level of student involvement in your school?

Yes.....No.....

Please give reasons for your answers

*Which conflicts do you think students can solve for themselves? **(Please tick those that apply from the list below)**

misunderstanding among students bullying stealing noisemaking in class
gossiping other

Which should be handled by the school administration/teachers/parents etc.? **(Please tick those that apply from the list below)**

poor diet stealing fighting among students poor student- teachers' relationship
indiscipline among teachers lack of teaching materials

Other.....

*Are there any clubs/societies in your school? YesNo

Please could you name those that you are interested in/participating in

How are these clubs organised?

What contribution do you think they are making to your school?

Do you have anything more to say about these clubs/societies?

What youth workshops/training are there for students e.g. peer counselling, leadership etc.
does your school offer?

Who attends these workshops/training sessions?

Who facilitates (runs) the training/workshops?

*Have you participated in any of them?

In your opinion, how have these workshops/training sessions contributed to your school
community?.....

C. Activities that the student is involved in while out of school

What activities are you involved in when you are out of school (holidays, evening after
attending class or during the weekends)

*If you had a problem after school (holidays, evening after attending class or during the
weekends) would you feel free to share with your parents?.....

Give reason for your answer
*Whom do you prefer to go to when you have problems
Why

D. Conflicts that take place in neighbouring school(s).

*Do you know of any violent conflict(s) in secondary schools near your school?
.....
When did this conflict(s) take place?

In your opinion, what do you think led to the conflict(s)? **(Please tick those that apply from the list below)**

poor diet insufficient food poor boarding facilities lack of learning materials holiday tuition stress from academic work lack of understanding from the administration lack of commitment from teachers poor teaching Other

*Who dealt with this conflict(s)? **(Please tick those that apply from the list below)**

prefects teacher on duty class teacher boarding mistress/master deputy principal principal school Board of Governor police Other

*Were the students of that school satisfied with the way the conflict(s) were dealt with?
Yes:..... No:.....
Please explain

E. Youth and involvement in militia activities whether in/out of school

*How would you describe a typical member of a militia group and gang
Age.....GenderEducation.....Language
.....
Likes and dislikes.....
What are militias about?
What do you think militias do?
What reasons do they give for their involvement in these activities?

*In your opinion, why do the youth join these kinds of groups? **(Please tick those that apply from the list below)**

because they think they can change things by joining money and power peer group pressure political involvement lack of other opportunities being intimidated lack of employment fighting for their rights protecting the community religious beliefs cultural beliefs

How are these groups viewed by the community? **(Tick those that apply from the list below)**

people who provide security a threat to the community the voice of the community
indisciplined youth A tool that politicians use during elections period law breakers
criminal Other

***How does the authority deal with these groups? (Please tick those that apply from the list below)**

dialogue with them threat and arrest bring them to courts treat them like criminal
offer them jobs Other

Why do you think the youth engage in the violent activities despite the measures that the government has put in place?

F. The post election violence and youth involvement

***Was your school/area/home affected by the post election violence?**

Describe what happened?.....

Why do you think this conflict(s) happened?

In your opinion, why do you think the youth participated in this conflict(s)?

What happened to the youth that took part in the post election violence?

***Are you happy with the way the situation was dealt with?**

Give reasons for your answer.....

If you were given the opportunity to give your suggestions/views about the way the situation was dealt with, what would be your advice?

***Do you think your opinion would be taken seriously?**

Please give reasons for your answers.....

***In your opinion, have the issues that led to the post election violence been adequately dealt with?**

Please give reasons for answer

***Are you happy with the way youth and their issues are dealt with in Kenya?**

.....

Give reasons your

What would be your advice to your leaders about how youth and their issues could be dealt with

***Do you think your advice will be taken seriously?**

Give reasons for your answer

Thank you for giving me your time and your valuable contribution to this research. This research would not have been rich without your contribution.

**Asterick: Shows the questions that were coded to be analysed quantitatively using a statistical package - the Predictive Analytics Soft ware (PASW). Asterick was not in the original questionnaire given to the students but used later during the data analysis stage (46 questions were coded for the quantitative data analysis).*

APPENDIX 3 STUDENTS' FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

SCHOOL CODE.....LOCATION..... VENUEDATE.....

TIME..... NO. OF PARTICIPANTSGENDER (Female Male)

EDUCATION LEVELS: Form one Form two.... Form three.... Form four

Preliminaries

Welcome the participants

Introduction

Researcher and research assistant introduce themselves

Researcher explains aim of research and the ethical issues (such as informed consent and confidentiality).

Participants introduce themselves (in whichever way they feel comfortable (use Sheng, English, Swahili)

Researcher gives the participants' time to seek clarification on general issues on research, setting ground rules e.g. confidentiality, respect for each other, allow people to share their views without interruption, time (punctuality), and any other that the participants find helpful.

QUESTIONS TO GUIDE THE DISCUSSION: *(However, the participants are free to suggest other areas they would like to discuss about within the research topic after the topics to be discussed are communicated to them).*

What in your opinion is conflict? peace?

What are some of the conflicts that students engage in school and out of school? *(If they do not include militia or gangs the the researcher will probe)*

Who addresses these conflicts when they occur?

How are these conflicts addressed?

What in your opinion leads youth to engage in conflicts?

What things would you like to see done differently (a) in schools (b) in Kenya? *(Suggestions on concrete things that the participants consider important if their views were to be taken into consideration by the authorities (in school and wider society)*

Conclusion: Check with the group whether what is recorded is a true reflection of the discussion. Also to give time for the group to share their feedback of the session. (Their expectations, challenges etc.)

Express gratitude: Thank the participants for their valuable time and contribution and remind them that all that was shared remains within the group and is for purpose of research only.

Adjournment

APPENDIX 4 INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE KEY INFORMANTS

Key informants e.g. teachers, administrators, government officers and other key informants with special focus on those involved with youth in various roles

No		Participants' responses
General information	Date:.....Time:.....	
	Location:.....	
	Name/Code:.....	
Section 1: Bio-data	Age:..... Gender:.....	
	Ethnicity:	
	Religion:	
	Educational Qualification:	
	Profession Status:	
Specific questions to inform the research		
a.	What is your understanding of conflict?	
b.	What is your understanding of peace	
c.	What do you think is the attitude/perception of the youth about the conflict(s) they participate in?	
Types of conflicts youth are engaged in		
a.	What kind of conflict(s) is your institution/organisation addressing among the youth?	
b.	Which of these conflict(s) is the most frequent?	
Views on how these conflict(s) are dealt with in general		
a.	In your opinion, how are these conflict(s) addressed in the school/communities /Kenya?	
b.	Do you think the current youth programmes are adequately addressing these conflicts? Give reasons for your answer.	
c.	What do you think needs to be done to adequately address these youth conflict(s)?	
Efforts by the institutions/organisations		
a.	How does your organisation/institution address the youth conflict(s)?	
b.	What is the greatest challenge that your organisation is facing as regards the youth conflict(s)?	
c.	What gaps have you identified in the way your organisation addresses the youth conflict(s)?	
d.	What measures are you putting in place?	
Other information on youth conflicts	In your opinion, have the youth conflicts increased/decreased/the same for the last five years?	
Other information of interest to participants	Is there anything else you would like to share?	

APPENDIX 5 INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR OUT OF SCHOOL YOUTH

Focus group discussion guide/semi-structured interview for youth out of school mainly those in militia groups and gangs

No		Participants' responses
General information	Date:.....Time:.....	
	Location:.....	
	Name of group/individual member(s).....	
Section 1: Bio-data	Age:..... Gender:.....	
	Ethnicity:	
	Religion:	
	Educational Qualification:	
	Profession Status:	
Specific questions to inform the research		
1.	What is the name of your group?	
2.	What does it stand for?	
3.	How many are in your group?	
4.	Can anybody join your group?	
5.	If yes give examples of the requirements	
6.	If no, what are the reasons?	
7.	What are the reasons for joining this group?	
	Fighting for your rights	
	Protecting the community	
	Lack of employment	
	Security	
	Religious beliefs	
	Cultural beliefs	
	Political ideologies	
	Ethnic (tribal) identity	
	Fight for social and economic needs	
	Peer pressure	
	Because of intimidation	
	Other reasons:	
8.	Are there benefits in being a member?	
	What is your reason for staying in the group?	
9.	How do you identify each other?	
10.	How are you viewed by the community?	
	People who provide security	
	Threat to the community	
	The voice of the community	
	A tool for politicians	
	Other	
	How do you view the government authorities e.g. the police etc	
	Friendly	
	An enemy	

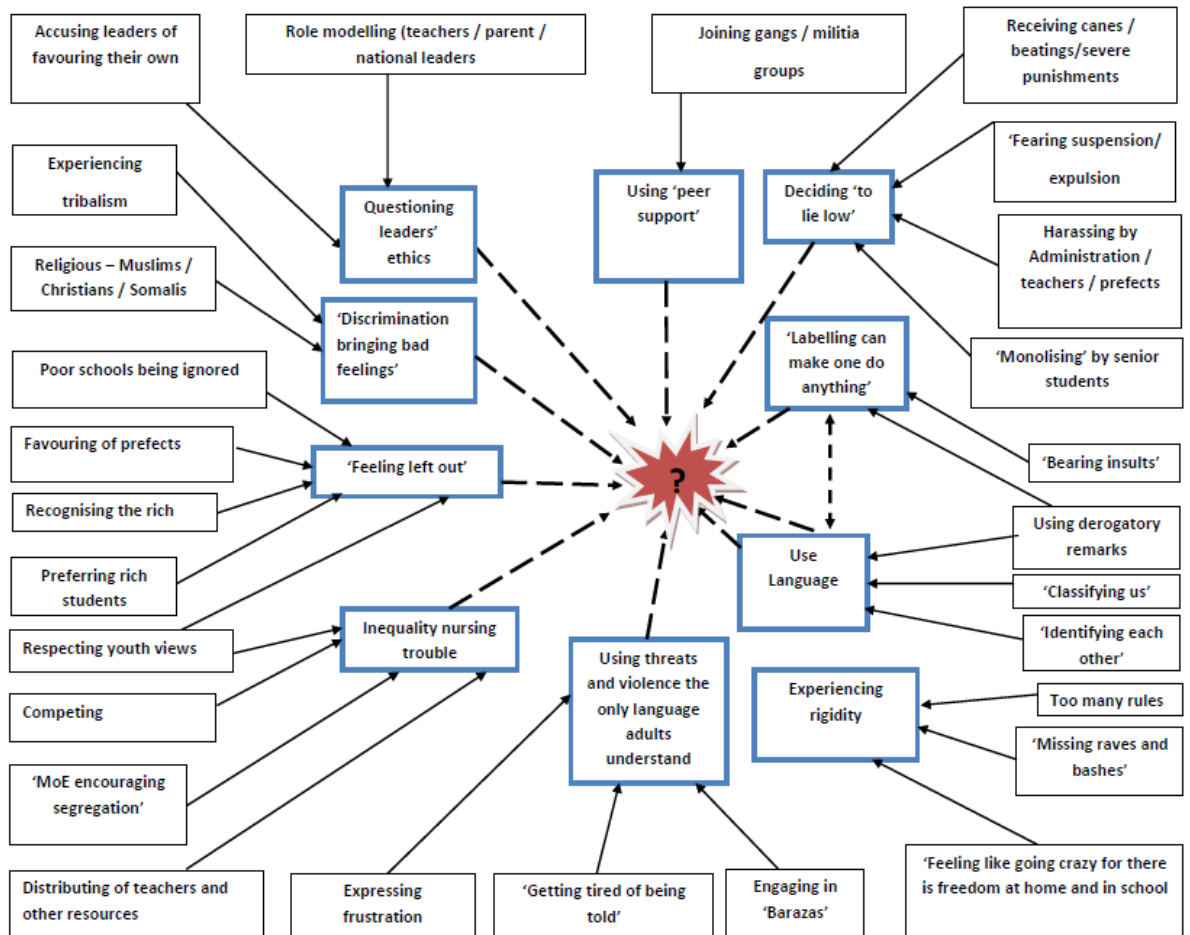
	Aggressive	
	Discriminatory	
	Co-operative	
	Other	
	How does the government authority view you?	
	A threat to security	
	Idlers	
	Indisciplined youth	
	Troubleshooters	
	Lawbreakers	
	Criminals	
	Other	
	How would you like the community to view you?	
	How would you like the government authorities to view you?	
	Others	
	If you were to get an opportunity of meeting the leaders of this country, what message would you like to communicate?	
	Is there anything else you would like to say?	

*The focus group discussion with the “militia” group was conducted in one of the districts in the Rift Valley by a research assistant who was familiar with this group. The research assistant and the group used Kikuyu.

*The researcher conducted the focus group and semi-structured interviews with a reformed gang group in Nairobi and also with two former “militia” members in the Rift Valley, currently working as youth leaders (former member Sabaot Land Defence Force and former member of “Jeshi la Mzee” (The old man’s army, in this case referring to the retired president Daniel Toroitich arap Moi).

APPENDIX 6 INITIAL THEMATIC CODING OF COLLECTED DATA

Initial thematic coding of collected data guided by the principles of Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) by Charmaz (2006).



In black (on the outside) are the initial codes generated through line-by-line, segment-by-segment and incident-by-incident coding. In blue (on the inside) are the focused codes. The ? in the middle shows that the data is still being analysed to identify categories/themes.

6.10 Safety against Child Abuse

Incidents of child abuse are in the increase in the country. In many instances children suffer abuse at the hands of their fellow learners, parents, guardians and teachers. The implications of child abuse are many. Children subjected to physical violence may grow up believing that brute force, violence or aggressive behaviour are acceptable part of normal life, hence many abused children become abusers in their adulthood. More importantly, abused children find it difficult to cope with the learning process.

Child abuse?

Definitions of child abuse are many and vary. However, it can be simply defined as subjecting children to suffering through physical, sexual, emotional or neglectful behaviour. The abuse takes place in families, school and in the community. Abused children are often psychologically traumatised and are unable to concentrate in learning. Teachers play a key role in protecting children from abuse. For this reason, when teachers become the abusers, the implications of their actions are very serious.

The various forms of child abuse and their respective indicators are:

Physical Abuse

This is perhaps the most common and blatant type of child abuse. It mainly involves non accidental injuries resulting from hitting/beating, shaking, throwing, pinching, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning or suffocating the child. The symptoms of this form of abuse include:

- ✓ Unexplained injury or injuries where there are conflicting explanations.
- ✓ A repeated pattern of injuries, which seem unlikely to have been caused accidentally, e.g. bruises at different stages of healing.
- ✓ Scalds and burns with clear outlines.
- ✓ Bite marks.
- ✓ Bruising to the face, bruising to the buttocks and torso.
- ✓ Fingertip bruising, hand marks, grasp marks and marks of implements.
- ✓ Untreated internal injuries or broken bones.

- ✓ Concealment or reluctance to discuss injuries by the child.
- ✓ Withdrawn or aggressive behaviour, loss of confidence, social problems or lack of achievement in school.

In addition, some evidence of child abuse may be detected from the behaviour of parents or guardians. The adults may tend to:

- ✓ be evasive and contradictory in explaining the child's injuries.
- ✓ be antagonistic, suspicious and fearful of other people.
- ✓ have inappropriate or unattainable expectations of their child.

Emotional Abuse

This form of abuse occurs when the child is denied basic needs like love, security, positive regard, warmth, praise, etc.

Emotional abuse can be recognised by:

- ✓ Chronic lack of self-esteem and low self-confidence.
- ✓ Immature emotional responses, regression and neurotic behaviour.
- ✓ Demanding behaviour, attention seeking, in appropriate behaviour towards non-parental adults.
- ✓ Withdrawn behaviour, failure to make friends or sustain friendships.
- ✓ Fear of new tasks, not wanting to experiment or join in.
- ✓ Developmental and learning delays.
- ✓ Outburst of anger or distress.
- ✓ Indifferent or negative relationships with parents.
- ✓ Over-compliant behaviour, excessive desire to please.

Sexual Abuse

Sexual abuse takes the form of forcing or enticing a child into sexual activities. The abuser (more often an adult) has carnal knowledge of the child with or without the child's consent or the child is used for sexual stimulation. Other forms of this abuse include touching the child's private parts, sexual threats and intimidation. The use of pornographic materials to stimulate the child also constitutes sexual abuse. The indicators of this form of abuse include:

APPENDIX 8 EXCERPTS FROM THE CHILDREN'S ACT, 2001 KENYA

Protection from abuse, etc.	<p>13. (1) A child shall be entitled to protection from physical and psychological abuse, neglect and any other form of exploitation including sale, trafficking or abduction by any person.</p> <p>(2). Any child who becomes the victim of abuse, in the terms of subsection (1), shall be accorded appropriate treatment and rehabilitation in accordance with such regulations as the Minister may make.</p>
Protection from harmful cultural rites, etc.	<p>14. No person shall subject a child to female circumcision, early marriage or other cultural rites, customs or traditional practices that are likely to negatively affect the child's life, health, social welfare, dignity or physical or psychological development.</p>

Children Act No 8 of 2001		15
<p>15. A child shall be protected from sexual exploitation and use in prostitution, inducement or coercion to engage in any sexual activity, and exposure to obscene materials.</p>	Protection from sexual exploitation.	
<p>16. Every child shall be entitled to protection from the use of hallucinogens, narcotics, alcohol, tobacco products or psychotropic drugs and any other drugs that may be declared harmful by the Minister responsible for health and from being involved in their production trafficking or distribution.</p>	Protection from drugs.	
<p>17. A child shall be entitled to leisure, play and participation in cultural and artistic activities.</p>	Leisure and recreation.	
<p>18. (1) No child shall be subjected to torture, cruel treatment or punishment, unlawful arrest or, deprivation of liberty.</p>	Torture and deprivation of liberty.	
<p>(2) Notwithstanding the provisions of any other law, no child shall be subjected to capital punishment or to life imprisonment.</p>		
<p>(3) A child offender shall be separated from adults in custody.</p>		
<p>(4) A child who is arrested and detained shall be accorded legal and other assistance by the Government as well as contact with his family.</p>		
<p>19. Every child shall have the right to privacy subject to parental guidance.</p>	Right to privacy.	
<p>20. Notwithstanding penalties contained in any other law, where any person wilfully or as a consequence of culpable negligence infringes any of the rights of a child as specified in sections 5 to 19 such person shall be liable upon summary conviction to a term of imprisonment not exceeding twelve months, or to a fine not exceeding fifty thousand shillings or to both such imprisonment and fine.</p>	Penalties.	

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