



## The Church and Violence During Multiparty Elections in Kenya from 1992 to 2017

Jared Makori<sup>1</sup>  
Ahaya L. Ochieng<sup>2</sup>  
John Ekwenye<sup>3</sup>  
Ignatius Wafula<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup>makorijared69@gmail.com

<sup>2</sup>lahaya@mmust.ac.ke

<sup>3</sup>jekwenye@mmust.ac.ke

<sup>4</sup>ignatiussikuku@gmail.com

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology, Kenya

Recommended Citation: Makori et al., (2024). Church and Violence During Multiparty Elections in Kenya. *African Quarterly Social Science Review*, 1(4), 53-75. <https://doi.org/10.51867/AQSSR.1.4.5>

### ABSTRACT

*Violence fastened with the passion of religion predominantly continues cloaking the world at an alarming rate because violence does not only belong to everyone but it is also at the heart of the consecrated. It is no surprise therefore that violence in Kenya recurs virtually during every election resulting into polarization and tensions along religious and ethnic affiliations or both. The purpose of this paper was to examine the relationship between the Church and violence during multiparty politics in Kenya. This paper analyzed the role the church played in specific violent events during multiparty politics since 1992 up to 2017 in Kenya. In this regard the study responded to the question; what was the role of the church in the violent events during elections in multiparty politics since 1992 in Kenya? To answer this question the study investigated the role of the church in the specific violence which occurred during elections in 1992, 1997, 2002, 2007, 2013 and 2017 election years in Kenya inferring that their roles influenced the occurrence of violence from time to time. The study was conducted through qualitative research method using historical research designs. The study established that the churches in Kenya played various roles in the violence; some of the churches kept quiet as violence flourished in their areas of jurisdiction because they conceived it as punitive and ungodly and in that way, they were in coordinated efforts; while some other churches condoned and extenuated circumstances that led to violent acts because they had a passive attitude towards the government authority having been part and parcel of it in calling for social changes; whereas some churches were not only complicit but endorsed and exhorted violence particularly by blessing youth warriors before going to fight in ethnic violence, believing that it was their religious duty to extirpate injustices and subdue evil in the sinful world using strategic acts of violence as necessary means of deterring large acts of violence and that they had the divine authority to legitimize violence so as to uproot the political evils bedeviling Kenya. In view of all these, the study concluded that the churches were metaphysically, morally, politically and criminally culpable for the violence during multiparty politics in Kenya. Consequently the study maintains that the church in Kenya, like it is with religion in general, is intrinsically violent in the version of a raging cosmic battle between "order" and "disorder" akin to the cosmic war theory as advanced by Mark Juergensmeyer. Often it is the boundary between 'this world' and the 'other world' that is blurred by church during electioneering period so that the supposedly cosmic battle becomes a real war when people shed real blood and die. The study recommends that it is important to understand the dynamics of the roles played in violence by other religious organization in multi religious nations like Kenya. The degree to which other faiths influence political views in Kenya with regard to election violence is critical. The issue of how the church can mitigate against the cyclic political violence in Kenya kept on evocating in the study. It is important to understand the remedies that the church can put in place to alleviate violence during elections in Kenya.*

**Keywords:** Church, Elections, Political Authority, Violence

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Religion frequently provides the philosophy, thought, creed, beliefs and organizational structures that serve as the stimulants and driving force for violent perpetrators. This is because, at some point in history, every major religious tradition, including Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Buddhism, has functioned as resource for violent actors, resulting in escalating bloodshed between religious activists and government security systems (Juergensmeyer, M., 2003; p xii-xiii &5). Hence religion and violence become intricate relatives.



Racial and religious affiliations act as the motivational force behind the political differences and divisions. This perception is reiterated by Kazin, M., Edwards, R., & Rothman, A. (2011, Eds.) in “Religion and Politics in America since 1945”, when they demonstrate that the political divisions in the American politics generally and between the political parties of the Democrats and the Republicans particularly, is affiliated to the Church along denominational lines of Catholicism and Protestantism. The authors further argue that political activities including voting during elections in America are done on the basis of racial and religious affiliations with the church leadership subjecting American political aspirants to religious questions (Kazin, M., Edwards, R., & Rothman, A. (2011, 445-459). This then points to the mutual interdependence between religion and politics regardless of their constitutional separation henceforth making political states to remain both very secular and very religious.

In human communities, religion and politics are inextricably linked and intertwined. Marsden, L., and Savigny, S., (2009) describe how difficult it is to divorce religion from politics or the church from the state in relation to this issue. They illustrate this opinion using the Vatican as both a political and a religious entity that has at different time exerted political influence on the world politics, foreign policy and diplomacy. It has also exerted religious power and influence by using the Vatican radio. This suggests that it is indeed difficult to separate politicians from the clergy. This to some extent may explain the inability of the clergy to engage and resolve political conflicts.

In modern democratic governments, neither religion nor the state has total authority over the other. This interpretation was articulated through political experimentation in the fourth century, during the reign of Emperor Constantine of the Roman Empire, when civil authority was subordinated to religious authority and Christendom, and there was a rejection of absolute power, whether civil or religious.

Therefore religion, democracy, and state secularity coexisted, but with distinct settlements. This is why, despite the French revolution's attempt to subjugate the Catholic Church to the nation and the United States' attempt to achieve separation of religion and politics, they remained largely bound by religions, whereas in Britain, a compromise between religion and politics resulted in a weakened monarchy and a well-established Church. This explains why, in the twenty-first century, the relationship between religions and the secular states, as well as debates about the role of religion in politics and public life, have resurfaced in a variety of contexts. Hurd, I., (2008; p. 1) confirms this, observing that religion in politics is frequently influenced by a notable secular bias, as well as widespread acceptance of the secularist separation of religion and politics in the public arena.

Freedom in exercising religious worship, beliefs and other practices is a constitutional human right that is upheld by many democratic states. However when religious freedom is unchecked and recklessly practiced, it can easily spill to violent acts in the light of self-determination. Martin, J., (2007) emphasizes this defiance, claiming that democratic states are defined by an open conflict between national elements of the political order of liberty, human rights, peace, and justice and a resurgence of the spirit of hatred and violence, as well as its justification and promotion via ostensibly religious means and justifications. As a result, on a national and global scale, violent religious activity is seen as one of the twenty-first century's mega-problems (Martin, J., 2007).

Even when apart from politics, religion can be brutal. The separation of church and state, according to Casanova, J. (2011) does not always lead to peace. He uses the example of the era from 1914 and 1989 in Europe, which was the most violent and brutal in ages, yet the church and the state were kept separate (Casanova, J., 2011: Pg. 70). When religion is divorced from secularization, it poses a significant menace to the public. This is verified by Mavelli, L. (2012) who claims that when the process of secularization is utilized as a mechanism to stop conflict to the extent that security is implicitly associated with secularization, religion is projected as a threat to internal and foreign security (Mavelli, L., 2012: p. 177-178).

The citizenry suffer when church supports state executed violence. In Uganda when the Anglican Church participated and supported the state violence leading to the overthrowing of Milton Obote in 1971 and welcoming the administration of Idi Amin, state terror was unleashed. Archbishop Janani Luwuna was assassinated in 1977 and thousands of other people were killed and displaced from their homes with many others running to the neighboring countries as refugees (Gitari, D. M.; 1996, p. 91 & 96).

During President Daniel Arap Moi's (1978-2002) presidency, the African Inland Church (AIC) participated in making government policies and initiatives in Kenya. During this time the civil society was repressed, forcing professional organizations, political opposition and some other religious organizations (not affiliated to Moi's government) to act as government's watchdog, criticizing the regime's excesses. For example, the Catholic Church, the Kenyan Anglican church, the East African Presbyterian Church, and the Islamic Party of Kenya (IPK) all rejected the one party-system and desired a more open political arena (Ndzovu, H., 2009, p.2).

The following direct events illustrate the link between the church and violence during Kenya's electioneering period: On January 1, 2008, the post-election violence in Kiambaa, Eldoret, people hiding in Kenya Assemblies church (KAC) were attacked resulting into the deaths of twenty eight people; on Wednesday, January 2, 2008, post-election

violence in the Mathare slum in Nairobi, Kenya, resulted in the death of two hundred and seventy-five people, most of whom were burned alive in a church where they had gone to hide and on Monday, October 5, 2020, violence erupted at the African Independent Pentecostal Church (AIPC) in Kenol, Murang'a County, Kenya, where then deputy president of the Republic of Kenya, Mr. William Ruto, and other political officials had gone to fundraise for the AIPC church. Reportedly two people were killed in the incident, while several more were injured.

Religious and political opposition leaders struggled in the call for multi-party democracy in Kenya with some church clergy engaging not only in public debates but also in violent street demonstrations in an effort to appeal for political liberation and freedom in Kenya. The demand for multi-party democracy in Kenya finally bore fruits on 19<sup>th</sup> of December, 1991, when the National Assembly of Kenya annulled the controversial Section 2 A of the then Constitution. President Daniel Arap Moi's Kenya African National Union (KANU) government bowed to internal and international pressure on multiparty politics at the time hoping that with its re-emergence there would be peace without a series of bloody street demonstrations and picketing that marked the sun set period of 1990s (Brown J. S., & Duguid, P., 2001; Kapinde, S., 2015).

Moi, on the other hand, had cemented his authority through a single party, the Kenya African National Union, prior to the resumption of multi-party politics. With the reintroduction of multi party democracy, Kenyans moved to ethnic politics, perfecting it through corruption, clientelism, and patronage, which served as a predisposing factor for violence in the succeeding electioneering seasons. Kenyan politicians have been renowned for their willingness to use violence when they deem it is required believing the purpose justifies the means (Kapinde, S., 2015). Nevertheless, Kenyans applauded the introduction of multiparty politics in 1991, believing it signaled the start of a new, democratic Kenya, where citizens could govern themselves peacefully according to their democratic constitution.

This new democratic Kenya, however, was now confronted with a number of critical issues that must be handled. The cyclic violence is thus likely to be a disease that threatens to tear apart the civil society, democracy, moral life and possibly the whole of Kenya as a country. Multi-party politics and elections have been marred by violence almost in every democracy. Indeed this history seems to repeat itself when it comes to multiparty politics and elections in Kenya. For instance according to Robert M. P., (1992), in "Tribal clashes in Kenya continue", at least one thousand people were killed while over two hundred thousand people were displaced in the 1992 general elections (Robert M. P., 1993).

According to Leigham, S., (2017) in *Kenya's history of political violence*, there was violence in 1997 general elections in which one hundred and four people were killed while about ten thousand people were internally displaced. In the year 2002 general election violence was unleashed by different dreaded militia groups such as *Mungiki*; a militia associated with Agikuyu ethnic community, who were supporting the Uhuru succession of KANU, the *Taliban*; a militia associated with the Jalu ethnic community and *chinkororo*; a militia associated with the Abagusii ethnic community who were supporting the National Alliance Rainbow coalition (NARC); a multi-ethnic alliance through which former third president of Kenya – Mwai Kibaki contested. In 2007 general elections violence broke out again when the re-election of president Kibaki was contested by Raila Odinga leading to the infamous post-2007'08 election violence (PEV) in which about one thousand and three hundred people were estimated to be killed and over six hundred and fifty thousand people were displaced in the 2007/8 PVE. The violence was experienced chiefly in the rift valley, Nyanza and central Kenya regions (Leigham S., 2017).

In Kenya's multi-party political democracy, the 2010 Constitution established a devolved system of administration. In the devolved system of government there were multi-layered contests (at Counties and National levels) during 2013 general electioneering periods in which pockets of violence were experienced in different counties. The presidential contest between Uhuru Kenyatta and Raila Amolo Odinga at national level set off violence in areas such as Nyanza where the Jalu ethnic group attacked the Agikuyu for supporting Uhuru; in central Kenya where the Agikuyu attacked the Jalu, the Nandi and the Abaluhya ethnic communities for supporting Raila. In the Rift Valley, violence was also experienced between the Kalenjins and the non-kalenjin ethnic groups who live in the region (Leigham S, 2017).

In the 2017 general elections there was further violence. This was as a result of the declaration of Uhuru Kenyatta as the winner of 2017 presidential elections. Nairobi, Coast, Western, Kisumu, Siaya, Migori, and Homabay counties were some of the areas affected by the violence. According to the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC), at least twenty-four individuals were slain and women were raped on the 12<sup>th</sup> of August, 2017.

In these general elections, some of the church leaders identified, campaigned and supported political camps and leaders from their ethnic communities by not only openly giving prophecies of who would win the elections but also anointing their favorite candidates in the churches to signify that they had been chosen by God. This to a large extent motivated the violence which occurred either during or after the elections (<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277852937> accessed on 4/5/2019). In this way the faithful were psychosocially brain washed to believe that the anointed persons were God chosen and must win the elections. In the

event the anointed persons lost in the elections or complained about the election outcome, the faithful (of the church which anointed person/s) perceived it as an evil and stood in solidarity anointed leader demanding for justice through violence.

In the history of the violence which wedges Kenya during every multiparty general electioneering periods from 1992 up to 2017, the spirit of national unity and nationhood (which is anchored in the 2010 Kenyan constitutional value systems) is not only fundamentally undermined but also at stake. This insinuates that Kenyans remain vulnerable not only to insecurity, killings, beatings; rape, and displacements but also losing their properties through destruction among other violations of human rights. So far, there is a concern about the problematic interaction between the church, violence and politics during multiparty electioneering periods in Kenya. The study was well aware that discussing the church in the context of violence would bring up a slew of other dimensions and effects of religion that are often overlooked or dismissed outright; but the contribution that the church can make to violence in Kenya, needs to be surveyed and elucidated by scholars. This study therefore investigates the role played by the local churches in the violence during multiparty general elections in Kenya since 1992 to 2017.

### 1.2 Statement of the problem

In the popular thought, church brings peace and carries colossal aptitude and power for healing, restoration and hope. However credible and renowned scholars have surveyed and elucidated that church is equally capable to stimulate intoxicating acts of violence in human society by supplying the philosophy, the thought, the creed, the beliefs and the organizational structures which act as the stimulus and the driving force for the perpetrators of acts of violence. As a result religiously motivated violence continues to engage the world at alarming rates.

In Kenya for instance, the amorphous relationship between the church and multiparty politics has continued to fuel violence which cloaks the nation during every other electioneering period. This situation demands for an urgent solution or else violence will remain polarizing to the nation of Kenya and most likely split it into irreparable status along lines of ethnicity and economic stratification as ramified by religion. The frequency and severity of violent outbursts in Kenya endanger the country's political stability while also exposing deep social and economic divisions. While Kenya's grievances and tensions are complex and historical in origin, religious-political violence has a detrimental effect on the country's social and economic growth and development, eroding good gains, impeding progress, and causing pain and suffering to its residents.

The main problem of this study was to examine the relationship between the Church and violence during multiparty Politics in Kenya from 1992 to 2017. To this end the study asked, what was the relationship between the local churches and violence during multiparty politics in Kenya from 1992 to 2017?

### 1.3 Study objectives

The study's objective was to investigate the role played by the local churches in the specific violent events during multiparty general elections in Kenya since 1992 to 2017.

### 1.4 Research Question

The study responded to the following research question; what role did the local churches play in the violence during multiparty political general elections in Kenya from 1992 to the 2017?

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by the "Cosmic war" and the 'Just war' theories which were complementary. The contemporary proponent who have developed and applied these theories is Juergensmeyer, M., (2003, Eds.).

Cosmic war theory is an imagined conflict between metaphysical forces of good and evil; right and wrong; order and chaos; that underpins several instances of religious-related violence in the modern world. This transcendental spiritual imagery has been implanted into the social and political landscape, transforming everyday worldly struggle into a divine encounter. Each religious tradition, including Christianity, Islam, and others, incorporates pictures of great conflicts associated with divinity.

Cosmic war theory as advanced by Mark Juergensmeyer holds that violence is intrinsically bound to all religions. The logic that supports this position is the argument that religious language is often about the tension between 'orders' and 'disorders' that easily translates into violence. Thus there exists an intrinsic appeal of war to religious internal self understanding similar to that generally found in the internal logic of warfare. It is this intrinsic appeal of

war that is often exploited by members of the church when they place religious images of divine struggles in the service of world political battles as is the case during the electioneering periods in Kenya

The idea of "just war" is concerned with the justification for war and the manner in which it must be fought in accordance with the moral norms governing individual or collective behavior. Thus, this theory is about a moral reflection on the war's objectives and tactics, beginning with an ethical understanding of human relationships. The "just war" hypothesis is valid only the following given *jus ad bellum* conditions: - must be declared "just" by a legitimate authority responsible for public order, not by some individuals or private groups; those who wage war must have "just" intentions; the war's outcome must be peace and nothing else; all other peaceful means of resolving the conflict must be exhausted (including diplomacy); those who wage war must have reasonable chances of victory. During a conflict, the "jus in bello" regulations of conduct must adhere to the principles of discrimination and proportionality.

Discrimination is the process of segregating fighters from noncombatants such as innocent people, civilians, women, children, and prisoners. The "jus in bello" principle necessitates that warring parties bear responsibility for their actions. They are prohibited from assassinating civilians or fighters who surrender. The idea of proportionality implies that violence's ancillary repercussions and direct impacts on physical property or human life be minimized. The notion is that the conflict must end before it devolves into a slaughter.

In applying cosmic war theory, Juergensmeyer, M., maintains that all religions are intrinsically bound by violence. He claims that the religious language about tension between order and disorder easily translates to religious violence. Religion's inherent lure to conflict is twisted by violent criminals, who always use religious symbols of heavenly struggle to advance worldly political struggles. As a result, acts of religious violence function as blueprints for political agendas and as harbingers of far greater spiritual clashes. Consequently the Christians have developed regressive interpretation of the biblical scriptures drawn from particular sections that support violent actions hence justifying violence.

According to Juergensmeyer, M., (2003: 25–26), just war theory has been used to legitimize abusive political military interventions and brutal persecutions of heterodox and minority populations when proportionality and legitimacy are met. This is what prompted Thomas Aquinas to restate that war is always immoral, even though it is fought for a worthy cause on occasion. However, the just war theory remains the cornerstone of Christian view of the moral use of violence today. Some contemporary Christian theologians have extended the just war theory to liberation theology to the point where the church endorses just revolution by bloodshed.

Juergensmeyer, M., demonstrates the applicability of just war theory to twentieth-century social battles by connecting the concept to what he views as the Christian need to uphold social justice. He analyzes the world through a realism lens and finds that moral persuasion alone is insufficient to confront social injustice, even more so when it is backed up by cooperation and political force. And it is for this reason that he pushes for the renunciation of nonviolence (peace) in favor of a more coercive option. He leans on Augustine's theory of original sin to argue that religious power is occasionally essential to eradicate injustice and control evil in a sinful world. Additionally, he argues that modest planned acts of violence are occasionally required to dissuade larger acts of violence. Regardless of this position and perception, he appeals that it is important to use violence sparingly, swiftly and as skillfully as the knife of a surgeon.

A contemporary assessment of St. Augustine's principal elements in the just war theory has also been offered by John Langan, S.J. (1984). He contends that a component of the just war theory, or an inherent element of the just war tradition, may be used to describe Christian doctrine on the justification for war and its limitations. A unique aspect of just war theory is based on the long and rich history of conflict. Langan argues that a significant portion of the just war tradition is still employed to explain some of the most perplexing issues (such as violence or conflict) that confront human beings and members of a free political society. When seen historically rather than directly, the Christian history contains crusaders and conquistadors, monarchs and knights, rebels and sheriffs. It should be stressed, however, that equating the church's teaching and experience alone with this theory or strategy would be a mistake, especially in the instance of Roman Catholicism, the church with the oldest and most formal association with just war doctrine.

Christians have historically applied both the just war tradition and philosophy to the problem of violence. However, such a claim may not be entirely accurate; on the one hand, there is a long and significant tradition of Christian pacifism, both as a theological position and as a mode of Christian witness in a world filled with the sorrows and crimes associated with war; on the other hand, there have been instances of violence for which a special religious blessing has been sought or granted. It should be acknowledged that there has also been a recurring mingling of religious and military principles in ways that frequently surpass limitations imposed by Just war on the use of violence.

Nonetheless, a just war perspective on the issue of violence is not exclusive to Christians. The just war method has its origins in Cicero's teachings, as well as in natural law and Greek philosophy's legal and moral theory. However the continued use of this theory in the contemporary works of Michael Walzer and Juergensmeyer, M., (2003), does not



only make it relevant but serves as a source of wealth material from which this study heavily borrowed and applied as a resource for reflection.

However, the study selected particular element of the Just war theory which it used. These elements included the use of divine authorization of war to justify the involvement of Christians (also referred to as the Church in this study) in acts of violence. Thus, it is divine sanction that renders violent behavior, whether undertaken or anticipated, commendable rather than indifferent or justifiable. Other aspects of just war theory which the study espoused in explaining the variables were; relating the social-political struggles to the Christian requirement to fulfill social justice especially when moral suasion is not sufficient to combat social injustice particularly when they are bolstered by politics and state power; the Christian advocating for abandonment of non-violence in favor of a more forceful solution; the Christian religious duty to extirpate injustices and subdue evil in the sinful world using strategic acts of violence as necessary means of deterring large acts of violence and the Christian passive attitude to authority and social change.

This study also applied Biblical texts in seeking for sacred justification for violence on the basis of protecting the freedom and the interests of the individuals or the Kenyan community and in this way; the role of the church was justified in relation to violence in multiparty elections in Kenya. Both of these elements were applied in drawing parallels between the preservation of order and peace in Kenya by the church through use or call for violence.

Cosmic war theory was used in examining how the religious language about tension between order and disorder; good and bad; or God and Satan and the transcendental spiritual images; were used in fighting invisible barbarianism through preaching the gospel; prayers; and praise and worship of God with the aim of establishing peace and harmony among Kenyans by calling for the elimination of social-political; religio-political and economic evils in Kenya and how they were implanted onto the social and political scene, magnifying ordinary conflicts translating them into religio-political violent actions.

## 2.2 Empirical Review

Juergensmeyer, M., (2003) in *Terror in the Mind of God; The Global Rise of Religious Violence*, holds that religion is innately rough and violent. The author examines the odd fascination and dark connection between religion and violence and further investigates how recent acts of terrorism and violence emerge from the cultures of religion. The author explains why religion is related and connected to acts of terror and violence virtually everywhere in the context of global social and political changes arguing that despite religion providing the mores and symbols that contribute to bloodsheds, destructive acts of violence and terrorism, religious barbarism can be explained and justified by other means in some cases.

Juergensmeyer, M., (2003) questions why religion is identified and associated with dreadful and vicious demonstrations practically all over contending that religious brutality is used as a symbol of strength by desperate communities and other frantic networks. Juergensmeyer exhibits this view by specifically depicting public demonstrations of savagery which have been roused, defended and coordinated by various religious worldviews. In his depiction he explains the insight views of the individuals who execute and support brutality. He does this with the fundamental aim of understanding why fierce demonstrations are related with religious causes and their ethical legitimization. The author likewise contends that religion significantly supports violence since it provides images of cosmic war and ethical support that allow activists of violence to kill believing that they are waging spiritual war or scenario.

To show this, he gives instances of deadly religious savage episodes, for example, the attack of World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001; the emergence of religious savagery among conservative Christians in the US of America; the furious Muslims and Jews in Middle East; the quarrelling Hindus and Muslims in south Asia; the native religious networks in Africa and Indonesia. He pays attention to the fact that people engaged with these demonstrations of brutality depend on religion in giving political characters and in giving permit to wrathful philosophies. Juergensmeyer predominantly gathers information on religious brutal episodes through interviews with culprits and allies of these demonstrations.

In drawing models from religions like Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, Juergensmeyer mentions an observable fact that every significant religious tradition is brutal and has supplied entertainers of savage actions and philosophies which work as elective perspectives of public order in the worldwide political tricks and in the new severe worldwide economic depressions. To clarify this point, he draws confirmation from local army gatherings of various brutal entertainers like that of Osama bi Laden, the Aum Shinrikyo, and Christians. Anyway he mindfully takes notes that there is no single religion with the monopoly of brutal thoughts and images.

However Juergensmeyer, M., (2003) not only argues that religion is behind a wide range of public violence but also maintains that in some different occasions religious violence happens because of globalization, lack of trust in western style of legislative issues and government officials, for example, as it was found in the ethno patriot battle in



Kashmir and in some assorted places around the world today. However he insists that religious justifications provide the reasons around which religious savagery is coordinated and executed for instance as in Abraham's demonstration of brutality against Isaac. He noted that besides socio-religious savage commitments turning deadly, damaging and lethal, they are carried out in merciless and sensational ways.

In showing the association between different religions and violence, Juergensmeyer describes violent scenes committed by different religious activists in various parts of the world. Under the title 'soldiers for Christ' he talks about violent episodes rising up out of Christianity by analyzing the deadly demonstration of the actors in the bombings of fetus removal centers in Delaware, Maryland, Virginia and regions of Colombia. Juergensmeyer exhibits how Mike Bray and other Christian activists utilized religious legitimization and theological justifications not only in approving their terrorist acts but also in endorsing, bombarding and conducting deadly attacks on fetus removal facilities and murderous assaults on the staff members who worked in the abortion clinics. The other contextual analysis he utilizes is that of the brutality between the Catholics and the Protestants in Belfast in Northern Ireland and the assault of the burial chamber of the patriarchs in Hebron in Israel by Dr. Baruch Goldstein who believed had been authorized by God to do so.

This study adopted and employed Juergensmeyer's approach of identifying various episodes of violence and used them as case studies in examining the relationship between the church and violence in Kenya. The study searched for the moral justification of each violent episode so as to find evidence on how the church relates to each of the violent acts. While Juergensmeyer examines the relationship between religion and violence in light of global social and political changes, this study examined the relationship between church and violence in the context of Kenya's multiparty politics.

One of the modern authoritative commentators on religion and violence; Sacks, J., (2015) in *Not in God's name: Confronting Religious Violence* handles the peculiarity of religious extremism and violence which is committed in the name of God. Sacks contends that when religion becomes a "zero-sum fallacy," people of differing views view their own religion as the sole road to God, while viewing the religions of others as inherently incorrect. Individuals become driven by "altruistic evil" in this manner, and religious violence becomes inescapable. Sacks analyzes and interprets the Bible to demonstrate that religiously inspired violence stems from misunderstanding scripture texts at the heart of each of the three Abrahamic religious traditions.

Sacks, J., cautiously examines Genesis, with its fundamental accounts of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, and offers fundamental scriptural accounts of kin competition between Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, Joseph and his brothers, Rachel and Leah, which portray the holy book as violent. According to him, Islamic violence, like that of Judaism and Christianity, stems from a misreading of sacred texts. Sacks concludes that religious battles are not unique to Islam but also to other Abrahamic religions, and he urges on people of faith and good will from all religious traditions to unite and resist the religious fanaticism that threatens to exterminate us all, as this is the awful reality we face.

This study observed that Sacks' presentation of Scripture is worth of consideration. By delving into the Hebrew Bible and discovering fundamental themes touching both global justice for all peoples and a strong feeling of God's particularizing love for distinct covenant groups, he advocates an inclusive and pacific Abrahamic religion. By demonstrating an ambitious and clever perspective, the author deconstructs the mechanics of religious violence. He says that adherents of all faiths struggle to understand why so many of them persist on using their belief in God to justify violence. Sacks, predictably, rejects the notion that religion is the source of the problem of violence, while he does feel that theology has a role to play in resolving religious conflict.

Sacks, J., makes compelling and essential arguments that it is incorrect to carelessly equate orthodox believers and armchair fundamentalists, because the two approaches to religion are diametrically opposed. This author discusses the connection between religious extremism and the widening divide between the secular West and the religious globe. This author argues that the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) is a microcosm of what will occur for an extended period of time in the future, noting that the solution to religious violence is almost certainly going to be found inside religion itself. While reviewing the work of Sacks, J., (2015) the study pointed out and agreed that no religion is more violent than the other, but deviates by conceding unlike Sacks that religion is inherently violent. According to Sacks it is instead the dual nature of religions that build communities of tribal identities that conflict leading to violence.)

The current study applied Sacks' thoughts and contentions in surveying how the Kenyan local churches and the secular state connect particularly on policy driven issues that heighten to violence during electioneering timeframe. Sacks' dismissal of the idea that religion does not causes the problem of violence, was applied by the current study in searching for elective reasons for the cyclic violence other than religious causes and in clarifying why then the church would be utilized as a post hoc in advocating violence in Kenya. More significantly the study applied Sacks' contentions in considering how religion and violence identify with another overly. Anyway it ought to be noticed that while Jonathan Sacks handles the peculiarity of religious fanaticism and savagery which is committed in the name of God, the current

study veers off from that by researching on how the church relates to the violence in multiparty politics more especially during elections in multi party politics in Kenya.

The position taken by Sacks, J., (2015) that religion and violence are not naturally related is tricky when attention is paid to some religious expressions which are full of warfare language and symbolism. Instances of these may incorporate religious sacrifices and teachings such as “Christian life is war”, “we are the soldiers of God,” “I came not to send peace, but a sword.” All these articulations can be argued to affirm the innate relatedness of religion and violence. There is numerous warfare language and symbolism in religion in general and in Christianity particular. In this manner it is conceivable that the Christians can apply these expressions to engage in the violence during elections in Kenya.

In the “New World translations of the Holy Scripture” version of the Bible there are contradicting verses on the subject matter of “peace and violence”. There are verses and teaching in the Bible which cause the controversy over whether Christianity sanctioned violence from its inception or did not. This issue has dogged the church from its inception. But, certain biblical teachings indicate that Christians were required to emulate Jesus' example of unselfish love, as he stated in Matthew 5: 44, "...however, I say to you: continue to love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (New World translations of the Holy Scripture; Matthew 5: 44).

This doctrine appears to ban Christians from participating in violence, instead encouraging them to embrace peace. However, proof for Christian violence comes from Jesus' contradictory acts and teachings, such as when he whips businessmen out of the temple and when he says in Matthew 10:34, "Do not think that I have come to send peace on earth; I have come to send a sword." And in Luke 12: 51-52, Jesus asks, "Do you believe that I have come to bring peace on earth?" No, I say; rather division; because from now on, there will be five in one home split, three against two, and two against three" (New World translations of the Holy Scripture; Matthew 10: 34 and Luke 12: 51-52).

The current study was informed by some biblical teachings that the Bible can be a source of cognitive priming of the faithful who easily indulge in violence when they read the Bible literally and applied incautiously. It is from such biblical doctrines that some Christian faithful find divine justification for engaging in violence. This was relevant to the study in examining the biblical teaching and theological interpretations in justifying the indulgence of the church in violence during elections in Kenya.

The study investigated how the Christians use these teachings on violence in the Bible to justify their engagement or application of violence during multiparty politics in the context of Kenya. However it is important to note that the violence talked of in the Bible is different from the violence the study is focusing on in terms of context and circumstances surrounding them. Whereas New World translations of the Holy Scripture version of the bible focuses in violence in the Sacred scripture, the current study focuses on how the church relates with violence during elections in Kenya.

Kazin Michael, Rebecca Edwards and Adam Rothman (2011,) in “Religion and Politics of America since 1945”, postulate that religious freedom in America was used to sharpen the face-off between American democratic capitalism and communism during the cold war in America, with Christian leaders such as Fred Schwartz leading Christian organizations in the 1950s to advocate for anti- communist policies during the cold war. Judaism was used as a sense of pride, identity and unity in gathering American Jews to lobby on behalf of Israel in the six day war between Israel and Arab neighbors in 1967. The Jewish lobby presented their views to the American congress and sent their financial contributions to Israel besides prompting the American government to act in a way that was more beneficial to the Israelites.

According to these authors, when religion and politics were confronted by the issues of moral and social injustice such as abortion in America, Catholics were the first anti-abortion activists who not only lobbied for legal restrictions or constitutional amendments and picketed abortion clinics to persuade pregnant women to carry their babies to full terms but also provided material and psychological support to women and their babies. The authors demonstrate how the evangelical Protestants joined the Catholics and acted side by side through an organization known as “Randall Terry’s operation Rescue Effort” in the 1980s which worked across denominational lines and got its members arrested as a way of bringing attention to the issue of abortion. Christian activists such as Michael Griffin, Paul Hill and Shelley Shannon assassinated abortion providers firmly believing that God authorized them to do so (Kazin, M., *et al*; 2011, 456).

The work of Kazin, M., *et a l* critically resonated with this study especially in reference to; its ideas on how religion and religious ideologies can be exploited in fuelling violence against unwarranted political policies; how American Christians engaged in violence to root out social injustice believing that they had been authorized by God and how when religion becomes partisan in politics easily fuels political violence. These arguments were relevant to the current study in examining violence in religious phenomenon, assessing how the interaction between church and politics





can fuel political violence and in investigating how the church engages in political violence to root out the historical injustices in Kenya believing it's their God given prophetic duty to do so.

The study also found the arguments of Kazin, M., *et al.*; (2011) instrumental in establishing how church has been used in formulating and supporting bad, unpopular and oppressive political ideologies which cause violence in Kenya. Least but not last this piece of work discusses on how various religious identities in America responded to both internal and external political conflicts. These highlights were of great relevance to this study especially when discussing on how Christianity responded to the violent episodes related to crimes against humanity during elections in the Kenyan politics. The current study investigated the church in relation to violence during elections in Kenya thereby deviating from the work of Kazin, M., Edwards R., and Rothman, A.; in "Religion and Politics in America since 1945" which discusses religion and political violence in relation to social injustices in the American context.

Johan, S., and Joram, T., (2017) explore how religion contributes to violence via the lens of several ideas in *The Role of Religion in Violence and Peace-building*. In a restricted sense, the writers define violence as physical injury to people or property; in a larger sense, they contend that violence is the systematic violation of people's rights and dignity, or any interference that restricts people's potential. According to the writers, violence can be direct or indirect, structural or cultural.

The authors' discussion on religious involvement on violence using different theories was relevant to the current study which applied it in understanding how the church relates to violence in various ways during elections in Kenya. Johan and Joram's explanation on the meaning of the concept of violence was used by the current study in examining the concept of violence as a religious phenomenon in general. However Johan, S., and Joram, T., (2017) delved in the *Role of Religion in Violence and Peace-building* in general and therefore differed from the current study which investigated how the church relates to violence during elections in the specific context of multiparty politics in Kenya.

Shore, M., (2009) in *Religion and conflict resolution: Christianity and South Africa's Truth and reconciliation*, maintains that Church leadership and language can play a positive role in contemporary conflicts in South Africa in as much as the news media presents only the dark and violent side of religious involvement. The author also posits that the church, more specifically the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC), whose faithful were dominated by ruling Afrikaners, significantly contributed to the theory of apartheid in South Africa. Nevertheless Shore also argues that in as much as the "Black Churches" raised their voices of protest against colonization and the unofficial separation between the church and the state, these same "Black Churches" were largely based on the philosophy of "Black Consciousness" which led to a polarized church based on racial differences. In this way the local churches in South Africa failed to evolve and sustain a unified voice against evils in South Africa.

Shore's piece of work resonated with the current study in illustrating that politics can use church in promoting unfavorable political ideologies or policies which contribute to the sufferings of citizens and which when resisted culminates to full brown violence. This was insightful to the study in investigating the role of the church in the political policies which culminate to violence during elections in Kenya. However whereas Shore looks at Christianity from the perspective of providing resolutions to conflicts in South Africa, the current study examined violence as a religious phenomenon in general and how the church is engrossed in violence during elections in Kenya.

Huber, W., (2011) examines the relationship between religion and violence in today's globalized world in "Violence in Democratic South Africa," saying that violent religious extremism is one of the century's mega problems, one of the greatest difficulties nations face internationally. Huber argues in his argument that South Africa is confronted with an issue of violence that must be addressed. He begins by stating that an atmosphere of hatred and violence endangers the spirit of democracy, which is supported and fostered by religious considerations. While he emphasizes how monotheistic faiths contribute more to violent inclinations, he also believes that the connection between religion and violence is not automatic and that there is no inescapable and essential connection between monotheism and the justification of violence.

In this regard, Huber makes three propositions about the relationship between religion and violence: first, he believes that violence is not an inherent quality of religion but rather an ascribed or acquired quality; second, he observes that religions frequently accept violence as an inevitable part of reality and even justify its use on religious grounds; and third, he believes that violence in religion is contingent on certain situations, making violence inevitable. According to Huber, the argument that religion is intrinsically violent is corroborated by the fact that religions often embrace violence as an essential aspect of reality and even condone its use on theological grounds, to the extent that religions do give a powerful drive that fuels violence.

Huber emphasizes in the same reasoning that the connection between monotheistic and violence is conditional, and hence neither inevitable nor unthinkable. This is the reason why religious violence, which prevails in the behavior of the faithful (especially in monotheism religious traditions), is related to contingent factors. Huber argues that the contextual relationship between religion and violence necessitates the employment of barbarianism in some

circumstances. Additionally, Huber believes that violence is not an inherent, but rather an acquired or even attributed aspect of religion, arguing against the concept that religion, more precisely monotheistic, inevitably results in bloodshed. He makes the case that religions should abstain from condoning violence and instead take a posture of nonviolence. Huber's arguments were used by the current study in investigating the contingent factors and the situations that prompt the church to be involved in the violence during elections in Kenya. Huber examined "Violence in Democratic South Africa" while the current study explored how the church is embroiled in the violence during elections in Kenya.

In a statement issued by Wabukala Eliud and Karanja Peter (2008) in "Hope for Kenya" on thirteenth of February 2008, on behalf of NCKK, the duo called upon Kenyans to embark upon the difficult task of peace building, national healing and reconciliation after the grievous post- 2007 election chaos, in which over thousand people were killed and over three hundred thousand internally displaced people (IDPs). The NCKK leadership apologized and acknowledged on behalf of other church leaders that the church had not only been partisan in the political process but also lacked in offering necessary leadership to the faithful and Kenyan politicians by omitting performing its prophetic role of providing the required spiritual and social guidance to her faithful. Thus the NCKK leadership admitted that the church did provide the necessary motivation and space that allowed the post-election violence of 2007-2008 to occur.

The study paid significant attention to the fact that the National Council Churches of Kenya (NCKK), publicly apologized to the nation for lack of spiritual leadership before and after the elections. This informed the study in examining how the church related to violence during elections in Kenya. Wabukala Eliud and Karanja Peter concentrated in calling Kenyans to embark upon the difficult task of peace building, national healing and reconciliation; this study was concerned with investigating how the same churches under the umbrella of NCKK related to the violence acts before, during and after elections in Kenya.

The study concurred with the perspectives of the various researchers and construed that religion and violence relate differently depending on the discernment and point from where they have been seen. However the study maintained that if religion is inherently violent, then Christianity like other religions is inherently violent too. Therefore these being the case then the local churches were assumed to be intrinsically connected with the violence in the years of 1992, 1997, 2002, 2007, 2013 and 2017 during elections in Kenya. This position called for an investigation so as to place the local churches in their rightful position in regard to how they related to violence during elections in multiparty democracy in Kenya.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Study Area

This study was carried out in Kenya. Kenya is located in the eastern region of the African continent. Kenya is bordered on the south by Tanzania, Uganda on the west, Sudan and Ethiopia on the north, and Somalia on the east. Kenya is multi-religious country with forth-four ethnic communities. Kenya being a multi-party democracy whose 2010 constitution provides for freedom in the practice of ones religious convictions and political choices, experience political violence based on negative ethnicity, bad politics and misinformed religious convictions. The one-third rule according to the 2010 constitution of Kenya was considered while composing the FGDs. Special attention was similarly paid to gender, age, sex and disabilities.

#### 3.2 Research Design

The study was a qualitative research and therefore narrative and descriptive in nature. The study applied historical research design in carrying out investigations. The historical design was used in inquiring and uncovering the lived experiences of the victims of violence. Through this design, the study focused on the victims' past memories on violence which assisted in articulating and amplifying their experiences of loss and suffering. This method of inquiry elicited data by conducting investigation of how violent events occurred in the electioneering years of 1992, 1997, 2002, 2007, 2012, and 2017.

A historical design was also employed to investigate, explain, and comprehend the causes, trends, involvement, and link between church and violence. This enabled the study to comprehend the multifaceted interactions between religion and violence generally and interactions between church and violence in particular. To examine how the church and violence relate with each other, it was imperative to read secondary sources which generating the secondary data through critical analysis and interpretation with particular reference to chronology. The information gathered was used objectively in examining church in relation to violence as a phenomenon and in assessing the interaction between the church and politics in relation to violence in Kenya from a historical perspective respectively.

To collect secondary data, the study critically assessed secondary sources. The researcher visited the libraries at Masinde Muliro University of Science and technology, Maseno University, Moi University, Egerton University, University of Nairobi, government national libraries in Kakamega and Kisii Counties and church archives in various

churches such as Christ the King Cathedral library in Nakuru town and Presbyterian Church of East Africa in Nakuru town and Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) in Kisumu town and Chadwick library in Butere ACK. In these libraries, most of the relevant secondary study materials such as text books and copies of the pastoral letters of the respective churches to the government were found. Major archives in this respect were; articles on church and politics, elections and violence in the daily Nation, Standard newspapers and the pastoral letters from Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB) and Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) in response to elections and violence in Kenya. Primary research in this study entailed collecting information from one hundred and twenty leaders of the various umbrella bodies or organizations of churches in Kenya (see included as part of table 3.5.1). Each umbrella body groups consisting of six leaders were interviewed on matters to do with how the churches under their leadership responded and related to violence. This information was interpreted and applied in addressing the roles the church played in the repeated violence which occurred in every election year between 1992 and 2017.

Historical design was similarly used in investigating the attributes of the church that led to violence during multiparty politics in Kenya. The data was used in analyzing the nature of the violence during multiparty politics from 1992 up to 2017 in Kenya and the roles the church played in the violence. The primary data was correspondingly collected by interviewing forty eight internally displaced persons (IDPs-who happened to be the victims of violence) living in formal and informal settlements camps while some had returned back to their homes following “Operation Rudi Nyumbani” by the Kibaki Government. The IDPs were divided into four cohorts consisted of twelve members each. The interviews were held in Kiambaa Eldoret, Rongai IDP Camp, Molo and Mai Mahui in Naivasha. In addition to the forty eight IDPs interviewed in Kiambaa, thirty community elders (who were composed of four elders from the kalenjin community, four elders from the Kikuyu community and two youths for those of Kiambaa and Molo while that of Chebirate four elders were drawn from the Abagusii, four from Kalenjins and two youths) were interviewed. The community elders were subdivided into three cohorts that were interviewed in Kiambaa, Molo and Chebirate locations. The information acquired from IDPs groups of people revealed their experiences of loss and suffering in violence.

Finally discussions were held with twelve members of the clergy for special clarification on matters that needed more explanations and interpretations. A discussion was held with six of these members in Nakuru at Christ the King Cathedral Catholic Church. The other six members of the clergy were interviewed in Kisumu. Among the twelve clergy were one Archbishop of ACK Kisumu and one catholic Bishop in Homa-Bay Catholic Church. In the discussion clarifications on unclear data that was sought. The data gathered was then interpreted in the light of the principles of “Just war” and “cosmic war” theories.

More information on politics, church and violence was amassed from five politicians who were drawn from the communities that are mostly affected by the violence directly. These communities were the Kikuyu, the Kalenjins, the Luos, the Luhyas and the Kisii. One politician was purposively picked from each of these communities. Flexibility of these designs allowed for collection of original data for the purpose of describing how the churches were engrossed with violence during multi-party politics in Kenya which were not possible to observe directly.

### 3.3 Target population

This study was conducted in a population that was very large and widely scattered such that a sample would not logically be drawn from the whole population. In this regard the researcher had one option of going for accessible population which was hardly determined by numbers but was described after the research (for details see Oso W. Y., & Onen, D., 2005, pg. 33). Thus the accessible population consisted of; secretariat of five umbrella organizations of the churches in Kenya which included: the secretariat of Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB); the secretariat of the Kenya Roman chapters; the secretariat of NCKK at national and in the local chapters in Kakamega, Nakuru, Eldoret and Kisumu; the secretariat of EAK at national and in the local chapters in Kakamega, Nakuru, Eldoret and Kisumu; the secretariat of SDA conferences in Kakamega, Nakuru, Eldoret, Kisumu and South Nyanza; the secretariat and leaders of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the IDPS and victims of violence in the formal IDP Camps at Rongai and Maai Mahui In Nakuru county and those found in Chebirate along Nyamira- Sotik boarder. The study also included politicians, government officials and community members (elders, youths and disabled) who were members of the communities that were constantly affected by violence and the clergy of various churches as its target population.

### 3.4 Sample Size

The sample size of the study as established post-priori was two hundred and fifty one respondents. The following table 3.4.1 shows the distribution of the respondents.

**Table 1**

Name of the group of the respondents	Name of umbrella organization	Number of members in each group	Number of cohorts
Leaders of Church Umbrella Organizations (LCUB)	KCCB	6	1
	KRCP&J	24	4
	NCKK	30	5
	EAK	30	5
	SDA	30	5
GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS (GOKO)	GOK	36	3
INTERNALLY DISPLACED PEOPLE AND VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE (IDPs)	-	48	4
COMMUNITY MEMBERS (CE)	-	30	3
CLERGY (CL)	-	12	2
POLITICIANS (PL)	-	5	1
TOTAL RESPONDENTS	-	251	33

**A table showing how respondents were sampled (source: field data)**

According to Table 1, the respondents were selected from six groups which consisted of: the leaders of church umbrella organizations (LCUB), the government officials (GOKO), the internally displaced people and victims of violence (IDPS), the community members (CM), the clergy (CL) and the politicians (PL). Members of each of the six groups were purposively chosen because the researcher believed that they possess the information that was necessary for this study. The leaders of church umbrella organizations (LCUB) were selected from five church umbrella organizations namely; the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB), Kenya Roman Catholic Peace and Justice (KRCP&J), National council of churches of Kenya (NCKK), Evangelical Anglican Churches of Kenya (EAK) and Seventy Day Adventist (SDA).

The leaders of church Umbrella organizations were one hundred and twenty members. The members of each cohort were composed of the chairman, vice-chairman, general secretary, organizing secretary, treasurer and the priest/pastor representative who together formed six members of the secretariat that were interviewed. The Bishops from the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB) formed one cohort of six members in total.

The Kenya Roman Catholic Peace and Justice (KRCP&J) was represented by twenty four members drawn from local chapters as follows: - six members of the secretariat each from Kakamega, Nakuru, Eldoret and Kisumu chapters. NCKK was composed of thirty members who were selected as follows: - six members of the secretariat from their national office in Nairobi and twenty four other members from the local chapters of Kakamega, Nakuru, Eldoret and Kisumu (each made up of six respondents). The EAK umbrella body had thirty members who were selected from the national office in Nairobi and the local chapters in Kakamega, Nakuru, Eldoret and Kisumu (Six respondents were selected from each of these local chapters). The SDA secretariat had thirty members who were selected from their Conference offices in Kakamega, Nakuru, Eldoret, Kisumu and South Nyanza (Six respondents were selected from each this regions). The local chapters of the church umbrella organizations were chosen from the areas in which violence always occurred in the years of election of 1992, 1997, 2002, 2007, 2012 and 2017.

The government officials consisted of thirty six respondents. They were in three cohorts each of which was having twelve members who were selected and interviewed in Burnt Forest, Molo and Chebirate where erratic violent incidents were commonly experienced. The government officials included one chief, four sub chiefs, six village elders and chairman of community policing.

The internally displaced persons (IDPs) and victims consisted of forty eight members. They were interviewed in Maai Mahui IDP Camp, Rongai IDP Camp, in Kiambaa village and in Molo Township. They were in four cohorts. Each cohort was consisted of the following members; the chair person of the IDPs, the secretary of IDPs, four men victims of violence, four women victims of violence and two youths.

The community members were thirty in number. They were in three cohorts. Each group was consisted of ten members who were sampled as follows: - six elderly people (three elderly men, three elderly women), two youths (male and female) and two disabled persons (male and female). These groups were interviewed in Burnt Forest, Molo and Chebirate Nyamira-Sotik boarder.

The twelve members of the clergy formed two cohorts for FGDS. Each group was consisted of six clergies selected from different churches (one catholic priest, one pastor of SDA, one priest PCEA, one pastor from PAG, one fro AIC, one pastor from holy ghost church and one member of KRCP&J). One FGD was held in Christ the King

Cathedral in Nakuru town and the second group discussion was held in Nairobi city which are common centers of violence. The purpose of the FGM was to clarify any unclear issues arising from the interviews previously held with other respondents. This was after the research had reached saturation point after realizing that there was no new data trickling in.

The five politicians were selected from the five communities which were mostly victims or perpetrators of violence. The politicians were from the communities of; the Kikuyu, the Luos, the Kalenjins, the Kisii and the Luhya. All these added to a total of two hundred and fifty one respondents in this study.

### 3.5 Data analysis Techniques

The collected data, both primary and secondary, were critically analyzed through descriptions. A critical content analysis of secondary data from text books and journals in libraries, Newspapers, internet sources, video clips from YouTube archives on issues regarding; violence during multiparty politics, violence in relation to religious phenomenon, interactions between the church and politics in Kenya and the debates around them was undertaken. This information was used in addressing the first three objectives of the study which examined church in relation to the phenomenon of violence; assessed the historical interaction between the church and politics in relation to violence in Kenya and analyzed the nature of violence during multiparty electioneering periods in Kenya.

The study identified incidents of violence which occurred during multiparty politics in Kenya in the election years of 1992, 1997, 2002, 2007/08, 2012 and 2017 giving a detailed description of each of the incidents. Each violent incident was then analyzed diagnostically in connection to the role the church played in them. The study applied the knowledge and understanding acquired from renowned scholars like Karl Jasper and Mark Juergensmeyer in ascribing culpability of violence to the church and in demonstrating that the church in Kenya had played a role in the violence experienced during multiparty politics in Kenya. The investigations carried out included an examination on the role of the church in the attendant violence; political liberations; struggle for multiparty democracy in 1991 that finally birthed multiparty politics in 1991; political violence before and after in the general elections of 1992; 1997; 2002; 2007; 2013 and 2017 through which the study demonstrated how the church related to the violence which occurred during multiparty politics in Kenya. Data was collected from each of the respondent group by the researcher and was analyzed thematically by describing the findings of study objective. Much of data was collected through interviews. These data were described, interpreted and analyzed qualitatively through descriptions. Then the data were objectively collaborated with secondary views of the experts in the same field and concluded by the study interpretations. Finally logical conclusions were drawn either deductively or inductively as was dictated by the premises of the preceding arguments through the lens of “Just war” and “cosmic war” theories.

## IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Role of Church in Violence in 1992 General Elections

There was violence in the 1992 general elections though the Moi administration denied that there was no violence at all. While the violence escalated, the three main denominations of the local church; the Church Province of Kenya (CPK), the Catholic Church, and the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA), made statements holding the government responsible claiming it was their God given responsibility to uproot such social evils. Bishops David Okullu and Alexander Muge of the CPK as well as Reverend Elijah Yego of the Eldoret Diocese and Reverend Sospeter Abuto of the CPK's Maseno South Diocese and several other local CPK clergy, continued to press the Moi government to pay attention to the violent collisions. Both the opposition and government were accused by the CPK clergy of encouraging the confrontations for their own personal gains (Weekly Review, 20 March 1992, p. 5).

Cleric respondents indicated that the Catholic Church, led by Nakuru Diocese's Justice and Peace Commission, warned the public about the violence in the Rift Valley, particularly in Molo. The government officials rejected the bishops' call towards the end of 1991, accusing them of stirring up instability in a tranquil society. In response, the CPK issued a pastoral letter to the press in April 1992, portraying the conflicts as political persecution that began with the attempted coup in 1982, the manipulation of the 1988 general election, and the prolonged detention of political prisoners.

The pastoral letter was signed by Archbishop Kuria Manassas, Bishops Gitari and Okullu, and it accused the government for failing to prevent the confrontations. They said that the Rift Valley Province authorities were to blame for the riots and should be arrested and convicted for their crimes. If the government continued to act in ways that were forbidden in the light of the Bible, the Bishops exhorted their adherents to engage in civil disobedience (CPK Pastoral Letter, 26 April, 1992).

In the Weekly Review, of 1<sup>st</sup> May 1992, p. 12, it was pointed out that ‘if the government worked against justice on a systematic and deliberate basis, then the Christian was no longer compelled to acquiesce to such injustices’. The



CPK, the Roman Catholics, the PCEA and the NCKK collectively released and officially gave President Moi an official report in May 1992, in which serious allegations were leveled against the Moi administration. The report's key point was that the violence was politically coordinated and managed by powerful people with the government's silent knowledge and support (Weekly Review, 15 May, 1992). The Catholic Bishops went even further, describing the ethnic clashes as a "real war initiated and encouraged by top government officials," accusing Mr. Wilson Leitich, the then Nakuru District KANU chairman, of encouraging Kalenjins to "freely keep arrows and even use other people's property" (The Standard, 7 August 1992; downloaded from 41.89.195.2 on Thu, 28 Nov 2019 11:15:47 UTC All use subject to <https://about.jstor.org/terms>).

In the Standard Newspaper of 7<sup>th</sup> August, 1992, the then Vice President George Saitoti, former Cabinet Minister Nicholas Biwott, Local Government Minister William Ole Ntimama, and KANU official Shariff Nassir were particularly named as knowing and supporting the clashes. Furthermore, the Church openly accused the government for creating instability in order to stifle the political and social changes by killing innocent wananchi (citizens) to sabotage the multi-party process. The Most Rev. Okoth, the then Chairman of the Kenya Episcopal Conference and the then Catholic Archbishop of Kisumu, the Rev. John Njue of Embu and the Most Rev. J. Njenga of Mombasa read the Catholics' accusing statement at the Catholic Holy Family Minor Basilica in Nairobi (The Standard, 7 August 1992; downloaded from 41.89.195.2 on Thu, 28 Nov 2019 11:15:47; <https://about.jstor.org/terms>).

The government of Moi appointed Reverend George Wanjau, a former moderator of the PCEA and chairman of the NCKK at that time, to chair a task team. This was in response to mounting pressure on the ruling KANU party and Moi's dictatorship over the country's rising violence in some areas. The task force's main mission was to, "investigate the causes of land/ethnic clashes and the most effective measures to address them" (CPK/ARCH. Synod Committee Report, April, 1992). President Moi received the task force's findings, which were similar to those in the NCKK's prior report. Despite this, the government established a third fact-finding body, this time a Parliamentary Committee overseen by a judge, to "expose the truth" (The Standard, 7 August 1992). When this report agreed with the NCKK and Wanjau reports, President Moi made a 180-degree reversal and accused the Parliamentary Committee of being swayed by the opposition and the church (Abuom, A., 1992; p. 28).

The cleric respondents argued that because of believing in the Christian requirement of fulfilling social justice by combating social injustice which was bolstered by politics and state power, the church continued to raise her voice about the horror in Rift valley despite the Moi government's restrictions on the churches. For example, the church was forbidden from providing aid to the victims of violence and from entering strife-torn communities in Rift Valley. However, the Catholic Church in Nakuru town continued to provide sanctuary for ethnic conflict victims as well as legal assistance in the restitution of their lands. For instance, it was revealed by a respondent that when the kiosks of the victims of violence were dismantled by city council authorities of Nakuru town, the Catholic Church allowed victims of violence who were traders to erect new kiosks in the Church yard. Abuom, A., (1992) argued that around that time, the Moi government accused the Church of practicing tribalism and expressing anti-unity sentiments, as well as serving foreign masters. Several bishops were instructed outright to leave the pulpit and join resistance parties (Abuom, A., 1992; p. 28).

The clerics further indicated that according to President Moi, the church leaders were to blame for the unrest. However according to the Daily Nation of 3<sup>rd</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> January, 1992 the churches, on the other hand, accused the government of fomenting ethnic violence in order to back up Moi's allegations that the country was not ready for multi-party democracy (Daily Nation, 3 and 8 January, 1992 and Daily Nation, 12 March 1992). This plainly suggested that the ethnic skirmishes and the narratives surrounding them were a political struggle over the multi-party elections and the church's and opposition demands for political changes in the country. The church and the state had disagreements over the ethnic conflicts.

The politician respondents argued out that the debate about the character of Kenya's political system was founded on the fight between the church and government. As a result of believing that religious force was sometimes necessary in eliminating injustices and subduing the evils in this world, the church pressed the state to create an environment favorable to social-political change by speeding up the ongoing political transformation processes. Political liberalization, according to Nicolas Van de Walle et al (1993) can only occur when existing processes are accelerated (Nicolas Van de Walle, 'Political Liberalization and Economic Policy reform in Africa', 1993; pp. 34, downloaded from 41.89.195.2 on Thu, 28 Nov 2019 11:15:47 UTC All use subject to <https://about.jstor.org/terms>).

The politicians claimed that in the general elections of 1992 and 1997, the majority of churches and their members voted against Moi. Ben (2009; 13-14) furthered this observation by positing that ninety-eight percent of the Agikuyu in central Kenya voted against Moi in the presidential elections in 1992 and 1997, making it not only a religious but a tribal affair. This was especially aggravating in 1992, when the churches had played a key role in introducing multiparty democracy to the country. Through maneuverings of government and political authorities, Moi was

proclaimed the winner despite not receiving the required twenty five percent in at least five of the eight provinces, as required by the constitution. The politicians argued that regardless of these frustrating deeds, Archdeacon of Kabare presented a bland sermon in kikuyu language on the Sunday following the elections, considering the highly sensitive political climate and the strict injection that everyone should chill down. In 1997 presidential elections, the identical responses were communicated.

The clerics argued that, “The church’s God given role of being the conscience of the government had little impact on the Kenyan political setting”. He said ...evidently when the majority of the church clergy failed in their primary goal of cooling down their flocks when they become enraged in order to prevent possible disruption and violence. Churches were the coolant for politics’ sweltering rage. Thus, the Agikuyu expected the church to play a similar role in calming down their political opponents mainly the Jalu and the Nandi after 2007 general elections, but the opposed happened, leading to a different reaction, which resulted in the deadly post-election violence of 2007/08

The church had a passive attitude to the political authority having been part of it in calling for social change. The church failed to use holy texts in calling for peace among her faithful and by extension in combating social injustice which were bolstered by politics and state power especially when moral suasion would have worked better.

#### 4.2 Role of Church in Violence in 1997 Elections

The violence that erupted in 1992 Election after the introduction of multi-party democracy was repeated in 1997. The clergy argued that a series of clashes between the clergy and the government culminated in a show down between bishop Gitari and president Moi. Furthering this notion is Knighton (2009) who posited that following ethnic violence over land in the Rift valley and coast province in 1992 and 1997 general elections in which no change in government, ruling party or presidency occurred, Bishop Gitari of Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK), along with NCKK and the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Nairobi, Raphael Ndingi Mwana’a Nzeki, called for a constitutional review and a limit on presidential terms that had become unstoppable. The NCKK initiated a meeting in Ufungamano house which called for constitutional reforms (Knighton, B., 2009; 31-33).

Accordingly the clergy pointed out that in the incident of violence which occurred on 7<sup>th</sup> of July 1997, Gitari responded by informing the global Anglican family and community; who together with their respective governments expressed displeasure to the republic of Kenya in general and the government of Moi in particular. On the Sunday that followed the violent incident, Gitari conducted a service to cleanse the Cathedral by removing the faint of the men of violence. In that sermon Gitari said:

Moi permitted the desecration of the All Saints' Cathedral when his police entered it to disperse pro-democracy demonstrations. As the writing appeared on the wall when king Belsassar defiled the sacred artifacts in Daniel's book, this alone is sufficient to bring divine wrath down on him... I am not a prophet, but I believe Moi's days are numbered and that his kingdom would crumble if he refuses to repent and accept constitutional reforms (Anglican Communion News Service, 21 July 1997, "Kenya primate says Moi's kingdom will crumble").

The clergy used biblical texts to declare the state structured violence illegitimate calling for repentance of sins and acceptance of social change. Two days later Bishop David Gitari, five members of NCKK, five Roman Catholic Archbishops and two Muslims met with President Moi. Knighton, B., (2009) revealed that while in the meeting the clergy put a lot of pressure on the president Moi asking him to call for constitutional reforms without which there would be chaos and a lot of trouble. A day later after the meeting, Moi announced that all licenses for public political rallies would be issued automatically. He also agreed to meet with the opposition leaders to discuss on democratic reforms in which he consented that that was his last term in office. “It took the readings of Prophet Daniel to remove President Daniel Arap Moi from office”, claimed Gitari (Knighton, B., 2009; 34).

Further discussions revealed that the clergy used their God given authority and confronted the politicians directly on issues that were antisocial and evil. The clergy respondents unveiled that on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1997 there was a face to face confrontation between President Moi and Gitari, other bishops and NCKK Secretary General in Kitale stadium. It was reported that that confrontation almost brought the church-state relationship into rapture. This is because Mutava Musyimi, the secretary general of NCKK called for the need of dialogue between the state and the government of Moi. To which Moi was peeved and replied;

You cannot impose your will on us when it comes to politics and discourse. I was in politics before you were born, fighting for Kenya’s independence. You cannot teach us history about dialogue. This is Sunday, a holy day and I don’t want to engage in politics (Knighton, B., 2009; 34).

The president acknowledged that God is holy and that secular issues should not be mixed with politics. President Moi, who was very vexed, seemed not to be happy with the church leadership because they were giving his government direction on how to develop a cohesive society that included all citizens. He was speaking in Kitale during the enthronement of Bishop Stephen Kewasis by Archbishop Gitari on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1997. In this particular incident the

necessity of religious force in eliminating political injustices and subduing the evils was demonstrated. In requesting for dialogue, the church leadership strategically applied moral suasion in calling for the abolition of the unnecessary acts of political violence that were experienced in the Moi regime.

### 4.3 Role of Church in Violence in 2007–08

In 2002 Mwai Kibaki, a Roman Catholic took up government of Kenya as President elect. President Mwai Kibaki had declared during an annual meeting of NCKC, in 1971 (while he was a minister for education) in Limuru that:

Because other groups in society must be careful, a modern church is expected to be forthright. We need at least an organization that stands up for the right of the people regardless of the consequences...an active organization that addresses the issues face now. I cannot think of a better organization other than the church to fulfill this function (Okullu, H., 1974 & Knighton B., 2009; 34).

The church has the legitimate authority from God to stand for the moral and rights of the people in society by articulating and calling for the elimination of the moral evils in society. Thus the church should keep the government checked to do what is right. In 1984, Kibaki who was by then the vice president of the republic of Kenya repeated this stance while addressing member churches of NCKC, by saying:

Church leaders should desist from praising politicians; who already have enough people praise them. The church's role is to rebuke the politicians when they make mistakes and to remind them of God's justice, as well as to pray for them (Gitari, D. M., 1986b: 125, Knighton, B., 2009: 34-35).

The church should avoid having passive attitude toward the political and government authority. The roles of the church in government are to warn it from engaging in moral evils but not to be compromised by condoning the wrong political ideals.

However according to Knighton, B., (2009) the church lost what Gitari calls its "critical distance" during Mwai Kibaki's era as soon as he was elected President of the republic of Kenya. The church was co-opted by the government by appointing the church leaders into senior government positions and luring them to join politics. For instance the Kibaki government appointed Mutava Musyimi (general secretary NCKC) to a high level government position of chairing the National Ethics and Anti-corruption campaign steering committee (EACC). Mutava later joined the ruling party of PNU (Party of National Unity) and contested for a parliamentary seat in Gachoka constituency which he won (Knighton, B., 2009; 35). This is how NCKC had become politically partial. This explained why Kofi Annan, the UN secretary, would not find any senior churchmen of integrity and courage to negotiate for peace in Kenya during Post-Election violence of 2007/2008 because the current church leaders were not only compromised but were silent about the violence.

It was revealed in an argument that while the then Catholic Archbishop John Njue of Nyeri sided with Mwai Kibaki who was a catholic faithful. In opposed view, his contemporary counterpart Archbishop Zachaeus Okoth of Kisumu blamed Njue for supporting Kibaki. This indicated that the Catholic Church was divided along tribal lines as the 2007 elections were drawing nearer (Munene, Mugumu, "Church split as poll draws nearer" Nation 16<sup>th</sup> December 2007). On the other hand, Bishop Abiero of Anglican Church Kisumu, anointed Raila Amolo Odinga for presidency (Otieno, Daniel and Kiragu, "Clerics anointed Raila for the top seat", Nation 29<sup>th</sup> July 2007). When Raila entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Muslims, the Evangelical Alliance of Kenya opposed it while some four Luo bishops supported it. This showed how divided the church was on the basis of ethnicity and her passive attitude to the political authority and social change.

It was indicated that some clerics not only joined politics, but supported political leaders, and contested for political positions leaving the government to go unchecked of its excesses. The clergy from the neo-Pentecostal churches stood and contested for various political seats. For example Bishop Margaret Wanjiru contested for a parliamentary seat and won in Starehe constituency as she drummed support for Raila while Bishop Pius Muiru of Maximum Miracle Centre contested for presidency in 2007 general elections (see details refer to Barasa, Lucas, Thuku, "Keep off politics" Gitari tells clergy, Nation 19<sup>th</sup> July 2007). In this way the church was coopted into government. By becoming part of the government the church failed in carrying out their Christian requirement of fulfilling social justice by combating social injustices which were bolstered by politics and state power. The church did not only fail to critic but also kept silent as evils committed by government escalated. Gitari put it;

You are the nation's conscience. Please say a prayer for the country. Maintain vigilance over the government... you must be brave to criticize it ...the Christians should appeal for peace of God and avoid leading the country into violence and instability (Mwangi, Alex, "Keep an eye on government, Gitari tells church", Nation 4<sup>th</sup> December 2006).





The function of the church is to use God's legitimate authority and courage to monitor the government actions and in appealing for peace so as to establish a stable society. Focused group discussion held with clergy yielded data revealing that the biblical teachings influenced decisions of the faithful. Knighton, B., (2009) persuasively shows how at one time while delivering a sermon, Gitari expounded on Exodus 18 where Jethro advises Moses on the four qualities to check before choosing of good leaders; Capable; God-fearing; trustworthy and incorruptible. He was advising the voters on whom to elect as a leader from the pulpit but was quick to point out that as much as it is wrong to advice people on who to vote for from the pulpit they can advice the qualities to look for while electing political leaders.

Knighton, B., (200) also claims that Gitari, D. M., shared with him that before 1997 general elections a reformist political party had offered to donate millions of money to the church if Gitari would endorse that party. Kenyans were convinced that in 2007 a number of churches had taken such bribes in the name of fundraising presided over by candidates vying for political positions. In this way the church i.e. the people of God benefited from the national proceeds of corruption and became interactive in government activities. Hence the church was corrupted and coopted as it watched violence beckoning.

The culpability of the church in the PEV of 2007/08 was recognized when the clergymen owned up to have been partisan in the political elections and even advocated for violence as reported in the Nation of 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2008 thus: "Clergyman blessed warriors to engage in violence and invited politicians to disseminate hate messages inciting one community against members of other communities (Knighton: 2009, 39; Nation 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2008). On the contrary, views of the community members and IDPS identified lack of independence as the major obstacle facing African Instituted Churches and hence were easily sucked into crises of violence, poverty and morality. In March in 2008 shortly after the violence, Mr. James Bett, the chairman of EMO Foundation, an international Christian organization whose aim was to promote the Kalenjin unity, while in African Inland Church read from the book of Ezekiel 47:21-23 thus

You are to distribute this territory among Israel's tribes. You are to divide it up as an inheritance between yourself and any aliens who have settled in your community and have offspring. You are to regard them as native-born Israelites; they are to share an inheritance with you among the tribes of Israel. Wherever the foreigner settles, you are responsible for distributing his legacy (Ezekiel 47:21-23).

In this case, Bett used Biblical text to counter "majimbo" rhetoric which was used in agitating for violence and justifying the expulsion of Agikuyu community who are considered as foreigners or alien in Rift Valley. The Kalenjins were in this case referred to as the Israelites. Bett was reinforcing the Agikuyu right of inheritance of land in the Rift Valley Province. However drawing from the book of Numbers 15:13-16, he read

For future generations, if a foreigner or anyone else who lives among you makes a fire offering as an aroma pleasing to the LORD, he must do exactly what you do. The community's regulations must be the same for you and the alien who lives with you (Numbers 15:13-16).

Bett applied biblical texts further in calling for the Agikuyu people to impress the same values; such as the same political preference as those of the Kalenjins when they are living among them. He urged the Agikuyu to integrate with the Kalenjins and live as one community by agitating for and promoting the same political agenda for the sake harmony and peace.

It was revealed by the community members that prior to the general elections in 2002, Archbishop Gitari asserted in a sermon that those who do wrong have to be challenged regardless of their position (whether your brother or tribesman). He went ahead to question why there should always be political violence in the Rift Valley? He concluded saying that a government in power has the prerogative to protect its people otherwise it had no reason to be in power and warned that those who ascend to power through shedding blood of the voters are sinners. Klopp, J. M., said

As a moral issue, the campaign against ethnic conflict always invokes religion and religious commitment. At its most fundamental level, the deepening politics of violence makes a mockery of religious principles of love and tolerance, which are frequently preached in churches and mosques and publicly professed by politicians who are intimately involved in funding, organizing, and encouraging violence in their mother tongues. Additionally, a sizable portion of the church's flock has become victims of the violence and supplicants for help. Others have participated. Some, like the marginalized early members of Mungiki in the early 1990s, were both victims and perpetrators. They abandoned Christianity entirely, developing their own religious understanding of their painful reality and reconstructing their kikuyu identities in new ways that provide a measure of coherence (Klopp, J. M., 2009; 141).

The church is urged to fulfill her social duties by struggling against ethnic violence using Christian principles of love and patience and by calling upon her church members to desist in participating and engaging in violence either as perpetrators or as victims. On the same line of argument Wamue, G. N., (2001a) and Kagwanja, P. M., (2003) noted that the Mungiki were manipulated by PNU side to attack innocent people in the name of revenge which perpetrates



politics of violence. Politics of tribal dominance and manipulation of ethnicity for political gains over religious principles of love and tolerance was utilized in the 2007/08 post-election violence.

In 2007 election many of the opposition leaders utilized anti-kikuyu strategy and made the PNU side of the political camp look like kikuyu solidarity, chauvinists and ant-nationalists that were determined to hold onto political power. Hence the supporters of the opposition were meant to believe that that the kikuyu want to dominate them. This suspicion led to tremendous degree of polarization which was made worse by religious organizations like EMO Foundation, the African Inland churches, the NCKK and the Roman Catholic who played partisan politics thereby weakening the religious network against violence. This eroded the religious civil society damaging the image of churches as places of sanctuary as signaled by the burning of the Kenya Assemblies of God church in Kiambaa in Eldoret in which over thirty five women and children who had gone to seek refuge died.

During post-election violence of 2007/08, more other churches were set on fire elsewhere. Examples included Redeemed Gospel Church and the Miracle assemblies of God church in Mathare slums-Nairobi and the Kenya Assemblies of God church in Kiambaa in Eldoret. The NCKK leadership led by Rt. Reverend Eliud Wabukala and Reverend Canon Peter Karanja responded to this unbecoming behavior condemning it as lack of respect and fear before God.

This happened not only because politics was morally corrosive and characterized with mass impunity but also because the civil society including many churches played partisan politics. Therefore the public including their own church members no longer viewed the church leadership as neutral arbiters and negotiators for peace. The exodus of a record of twenty three clergy into politics, who were vying for various posts ranging from parliamentary seats to presidency, reinforced this perception of mistrust (Klopp J. M., 2009; 140-141).

During an interview with some of the victims of the 2007/2008 Post- Election Violence which was held on 20<sup>th</sup> of February 2021 in Kiambaa in Eldoret, they confessed that they were attacked by their neighbors some of whom they went to the same church with. One of respondents among those interviewed identified herself as Jane Muthoni said

We saw them. They were singing songs of war as they ran towards the church compound where we had gone to hide from the violence. I picked my children and ran inside the Kenya Assemblies of God Pentecostal church thinking we would be safe inside. The few kikuyu men who were with us tried to defend us by fighting with the Kalenjin warriors but they were easily overpowered by the huge number of Kalenjin youths who were armed with bows, arrows and machetes who then turned against us, women and children. We were on our knees praying as they started breaking into the church by cutting the door with machetes. We despaired knowing that was our end (Jane Muthoni; on 20/02/2021 in Eldoret).

When asked if they knew those who attacked them; Muthoni said, "They were from around here, our neighbors. We know them and they also know us by our names." Another victim who identified himself as Francis Mwangi described the attack which took place in the Kenya Assemblies of God Pentecostal church as follows;

The kalenjin attackers sprayed paraffin on the church building and poured some petrol into the church building through the windows. They then threw fire into the church building. As the fire consumed the wooden building, the women who were inside the church tried to get out of the burning church with their children by jumping through windows. Nevertheless the charged Kalenjin youths who were waiting outside were cutting them like wild animals as they emerged (Francis Mwangi on 20/02/2021 in Eldoret).

"They snatched my daughter from me and threw her back into the fire," said Wangaci Janniffer, as she broke into tears wailing terribly as if it had just occurred. She confessed having pushed her two elder children out of the window, and as she climbed out holding her three-year-old daughter, Miriam, in her arms, the attackers grabbed her from her hands and threw her back into the burning church. Another woman, who identified herself as Margaret Wangari, forty eight years old, said that her niece, known by the name of Karen Ngendo was also killed in the church. She confessed, "I was carrying her out of the church, but she fell," Wangari continued to say. "I had my six children with me and we had to run for safety. I could not go back for Karen." When Wangari went back to that same church a few days later she found policemen guarding the place as Red Cross workers were removing the death bodies. She saw several corpses lying side by side and all of them were children. She was prompted to think that one of them was probably Karen. She once again broke down into tears while narrating this ugly incident.

During another separate interview which was held with five elderly members of the kalenjin community, it was revealed that in 2007 general elections, hundreds of angry youths and men from community of the Kalenjin felt that they had been cheated in the dubious election results in which President Mwai Kibaki was declared as the winner over the chief opposition leader Raila Odinga. They were revenging against the Agikuyu ethnic group to which Kibaki belongs. Asked if they knew about the Kenya Assemblies of God Pentecostal church massacre most of the attendants said yes. "We do," said one man who identified himself as Koeh Peter. He continued to say, "There was a message that the Kikuyus were hiding in the church compound and warriors moved there." Another man carried on to confirm:



"The men and women had babies and small children, but they carried weapons to defend themselves. Is not someone with a weapon prepared to attack? It is not Kalenjin custom to kill women and children but they attacked them after they refused to come out of the church by burning them inside." This narration confirms how disproportionate and indiscriminate violence was.

When the researcher enquired why they attacked the people who were seeking refuge in the church which is God's Holy sanctuary, one of the youths among the community elders, who was in the meeting replied, "They were not worshipping in the church. They went there to hide after cheating in the elections. That made the church a cave and den of thieves not God's Holy sanctuary. They wanted Kibaki to come and rescue his people because they had voted for him. They were to go back to their homes in central province or die." Several more men confirmed that the youths and men who carried out the violence were Christians by faith.

Xan Rice, a British reporter for *The Guardian*, who was among the people who arrived in Eldoret, in western Kenya, where mostly women and children were killed during the 2007/08 post-election violence, made the following observation:

Fear and hostility spread across a large portion of the Rift Valley region. In Baraton, a young Kikuyu student speaking on a cell phone from the University of Baraton East Africa stated that she has been unable to leave her room since Election Day. Kalenjin youngsters, including some of her classmates, had begun threatening all the Kikuyu and Kisii on campus, accusing them of supporting Kibaki. According to the Kikuyu student, the Kalenjins had lit bonfires outside the main entrance and were demanding identity cards from everybody passing through. "We urgently require police protection," the student stated (Xan Rice, Wed 2 Jan 2008, 19.26 GMT, [www.theguardian.com/world/2008/jan/02/kenya](http://www.theguardian.com/world/2008/jan/02/kenya), accessed 1/3/2021).

Among those who were accessed and interviewed were Moses Maina who is fifty four years of age and a Kikuyu by ethnic origin. He said that before the violence broke out, he had already sent his wife and children by air to Nairobi after suspecting that things would not be good. He said, "I was born in Eldoret. My father came here in 1950. This is my home, and now I am was running away from it. Where was I supposed to go?"

In the years running from 2002 up to 2017, some churches were ethnically politicized and divided. The Roman Catholic was perceived as pro-kikuyu while African Inland church was perceived to be pro-Kalenjins. One reason why Roman Catholic and NCK were perceived to be pro-kikuyu was because some of the key leaders of these churches were appointed to serve in senior government positions such as chairing the Resettlement Task Force and the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commissions (EACC). The Roman Catholic Church was also blasted as partisan after making a statement in opposition of federal system of government. Leaders of NCK leadership acknowledged their failure to be neutral in politics thus

We regret that, as church leaders, we were unable to address these concerns effectively due to our partisanship. Our efforts to avert the current situation were unsuccessful because we, the NCK leadership, did not speak in unison. We were divided on how we viewed election administration; we associated with our people based on ethnicity; and we were divided on how to deal with the issue following the elections (Klopp: 2009; 141).

Klopp, J. M., (2009; 143) argues that political violence in Kenya is rarely based on religious analogy or text but on redressing hoarding of power, economic injustice and ethnic divisions. In this regard violence has been used as a means of redressing; abuse of power by those in leadership (i.e. the Agikuyu or Kalenjins), marginalization and abuse of human rights and use of police violence. It is on this basis that religious worldview and language have been used in challenging violent political actions as illegitimate. Contrary to 2007, in the 1990s NCK was thrust into the central role and core function of fighting against political violence by not only criticizing the government but by providing relief to the victims of violence. The NCK also promoted peace and reconciliation between the victims and the host communities.

Throughout the 1990s NCK was the first religious organization to document the politically motivated violence; its nature, dynamics and consequences both in urban and rural areas. NCK disseminated information exposing those who were displaced and countered the government propaganda about the clashes as tribal warfare to the press. By this means NCK leadership used first hand evidence to courageously criticize and resist the government's involvement in ethnic clashes through prayers. For instance on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1992 NCK called for a country wide prayer day in which the national attention was drawn to the violence. NCK demanded in press statement for the government to withdraw from the unnecessary spilling of innocent people's blood and the wanton destruction of property (Klopp, J. M., 2009; 143).

Similarly the Roman Catholic bishops; Zacchaeus Okoth of Kisumu diocese, the late Ndingi Mwana'a Nzeki of Nakuru diocese and the late Cornelius Korir of Eldoret diocese demanded that the government support victims of violence that were internally. In a pastoral letter released in March 1992, the Roman Catholic bishops condemned the government for failing to protect her citizens and asked for reconciliation and assistance for the victims of the violence



claiming that it was only the churches and nongovernmental organization that had been involved in caring for the victims of violence while the government was not committed.

Klopp, J. M., (2009; 143-144) observed that the Roman Catholic Church marshaled resource from local and international communities which it used in feeding and settling the victims of violence. It was noted that the number of deaths from wounds, malnutrition and diseases of victims of violence staying in the makeshift camps would have been much greater if NCKK and the Roman Catholic had not intervened. In 1993, NCKK was spending sixteen million Kenya shillings monthly in feeding those who were internally displaced by the violence.

#### **4.4 Role of Church In Violence in 2017 General Elections**

There was violence once again in the 2017 general elections. In a pastoral letter issued on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2017, at Waumini House in Nairobi, the Kenya Catholic Bishops petitioned to the country's political leaders and aspirants to conduct themselves peacefully and to ensure that whatever they do was in the interest of Kenyans and promotes peace and unity. They urged political leaders and aspirants to foster a unified nation by refraining from drumming up tribal and ethnic sentiments. The Bishops urged politicians to desist from inflammatory and irresponsible utterances which stir up revulsion towards specific candidates. The Bishops called for Kenyan politicians to conduct themselves with utmost sobriety to ensure that the 2017 General Elections are free, fair, peaceful and credible. The Bishops called on Kenyans to resist and reject any form of incitement that would lead to violence.

On September 26, 2017, the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB) urged the ruling Jubilee party and the opposition National Super Alliance (NASA) to accept the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) invitation to dialogue in order to chart the a path forward in the re-run Presidential election set for October 26, 2017. The conversation would avert imminent war and violence that was being fanned and orchestrated by both Jubilee and NASA politicians. On the Tuesday of September 26, 2017, the Catholic Bishops while in a press conference that was held at Donum Dei in Karen, Nairobi, called upon relevant agencies like Director of Criminal Investigation (DCI), Director Public Prosecution (DPP), EACC, the Police Service and the NCIC to take up their responsibilities and ensure that the independence and accountability of institutions and the rule of Law, justice, and fairness was upheld.

After reviewing the country's political climate, the Catholic Bishops concluded that unless the country engaged in conversation to agree on common national initiatives towards stability and good governance, the country risks devolving into full-fledged violence. The Bishops called on the country's political rivals to stay away from violence at all cost. The prelates praised the IEBC for making necessary reforms to ensure that the re-run election would be free, fair, peaceful and credible:

On the IEBC, there have been demands from both sides of the political divide, which the IEBC is attempting to meet. We, the Catholic Bishops, believe that the proposed dialogue meeting will provide an opportunity to discuss current issues related to the elections, (they said in the pastoral letter).

President Uhuru Kenyatta was being urged by the Bishops to emerge as a symbol of national unity and to provide the needed leadership at this time. The Bishops also urged all Kenyans and people of good will to refrain from violent rallies, name-calling, hate speech and threats which would only add to the heightened tensions surrounding the re-run election. Kenya's Presidential election was re-run after the country's Supreme Court overturned the initial results (CISA in Nairobi).

The Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB) urged all Kenyans to obey and respect the Supreme Court's decision to annul the presidential election results, as well as to follow the court's directions. On September 6, 2017, KCCB Chairman and the Bishop of Homabay, Philip Anyolo spoke to the media at Waumini House in Nairobi, saying that Kenyans should defend the Supreme Court 's independence, dignity, and integrity, even if they disagree with their decisions. He stated

While any individual has the right to criticize any institution with which he or she disagrees, attacks against the judiciary and any other public institution should cease. We demand an end to open intimidation of the judiciary and the Supreme Court (interview responses by KCCB Leader, held on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2017).

The KCCB Bishops thanked Kenyans for voting in record numbers on 8 August 2017 and urged them to do so again on 17 October 2017 to elect their favorite presidential candidate. He urged the public to engage in only peaceful and respectful activities that support national values and contribute to the election's credibility, fairness, and peaceful conduct. On November 26, 2017, Archbishop Anthony Muheria of the Nyeri Archdiocese urged young people in Kenya to reject prejudice and tribalism and instead respond to Christ's compassion. Archbishop Muheria presided over the National Catholic Youth Convention held at Machakos Stadium. Bishops John Oballa of Ngong Diocese and David Kamau, Auxiliary of the Archdiocese of Nairobi, served as concelebrants.

Archbishop Muheria, who served as the Apostolic Administrator of Machakos, exhorted young people to be positive in the face of several obstacles in life. "We must reject hate messages; we must not succumb to the crocodile of hatred. Today, my young ones, we are being told to open our hearts, not to harden them. Your hands are intended for blessings, not for violence," Archbishop Muheria stated.

Bishop Cornelius Korir, the late Bishop of Eldoret and Chairman of the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops-Catholic Justice and Peace (KCCB-CJPC), urged religious leaders and the news media to work together to unite Kenyans as general elections approach. "Religious groups should treat their adherents with dignity and without division. Simultaneously, the media must manage the voting process effectively and without causing havoc. At times, we are unaware that we are wreaking havoc. We do not want to see this country divided again along ethnic lines," he stated. The Bishop, addressing at a religious leaders and media engagement at Nairobi's Sarova Stanley Hotel, expressed sadness that certain segments of the media and religious groups were instrumental in inciting animosity during the 2008 General Elections. He underlined the importance of never repeating past errors. He stated the following:

In 2008, several media organizations were actively inciting hostility... Certain Bishops were not recognized in certain locations due to their views. The Bishop continued, "We would like to express our gratitude to all Kenyans, regardless of ethnic origin." In Kenya, we have 44 communities. How do we connect these 44? We must recognize each group's ethnic origins. We must recognize God's gift to each group.

Fr. Lucas Ong'esa, the KCCB's Deputy Secretary General, urged the Kenyan media to do a better job of guaranteeing peaceful elections. "The media's involvement is critical during (the) electioneering period...it is for this reason that we request that the media and one of Kenya's institutions participate in the process that can ensure free, fair, credible, and peaceful elections," he said. The religious gathering brought together representatives from the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB); the Seventh-Day Adventists; the National Muslim Leaders Forum (NAMLEF); the Evangelical Alliance of Kenya (EAK); the Hindu Council of Kenya; the Interreligious Council of Kenya; the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM); and the Organization of African Instituted Churches (NCKK). Bishop Cornelius Korir was well-known in Kenya for his involvement in bringing peace to northern Kenya's feuding pastoralist groups (CISA in Nairobi).

The Bishops of the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK) spoke out against planned amendments to the election laws, stating that the action will "...mutilate the constitution and erode the independence of government institutions." In a statement read on 27th September 2017 at All Saints Cathedral in Nairobi by Archbishop Jackson ole Sapit, the church's thirty-five bishops urged politicians to respect the Supreme Court's and Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission's independence (IEBC). "We take notice with grave concern of the plan to modify the constitution in response to independent decisions made by several independent government organizations," the bishops stated.

The proposed bill, which was introduced by the Jubilee Party's majority leader in the National Assembly, sought to amend election regulations through the Election Laws (Amendment) Bill 2017, which they claimed would settle uncertainties before to the repeat presidential election on 26 October 2017. On the other side, members of parliament from the National Super Alliance (NASA) characterized the move as suspicious, malicious, and unneeded. Additionally, the Anglican Bishops appealed for the expulsion of electoral authorities responsible for the 8 August elections, which resulted in the Supreme Court nullifying the Presidential election results. According to Ole Sapit

To avert another botched election, the IEBC must cleanse itself and take corrective measures, including the exclusion of individuals who failed in their duties during the last elections.

The Bishops urged the IEBC to reclaim public trust by being transparent and communicating with the public on a continuous basis. They also urged the IEBC to listen to and address any legitimate concerns expressed by presidential candidates. Archbishop Sapit also urged Uhuru Kenyatta and Raila Odinga to engage in talks in order to resolve the impasse over the rerun presidential elections scheduled for 26 October. He stated

The Anglican Church is willing to lead these initiatives alongside other religious leaders. As a result, we urge Jubilee and NASA presidential aspirants to embrace dialogue in order to avert approaching calamity, he added. (In Nairobi, CISA)

In September 26, 2017, the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB) head Philip Anyolo and other bishops conducted a media briefing. In October 25, 2017, the KCCB urged for peace and discussion in connection with the upcoming presidential election recount. Additionally, the bishops urged President Uhuru Kenyatta and Mr. Raila Odinga to engage in discussion to resolve the impasse. President Kenyatta stated that the election must proceed as planned, but Mr. Odinga stated that no election would be held without reforms.

As Kenyans prepared for a new presidential election on Thursday, 26/9/2017, Catholic bishops pleaded for peace. On that Wednesday, the priests also decried the police's use of excessive force to disperse protesters. President Uhuru Kenyatta and opposition leader Mr. Raila Odinga have been tasked by the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops (KCCB) with advocating for peace among their followers. "As religious leaders, we are urging the government and



residents of Kenya to ensure that the right to life is respected in accordance with the Constitution," KCCB chairman Philip Anyolo read in the statement. The bishops urged leaders to exhibit prudence and restraint in exercising their influence, cautioning that they would be held accountable for their acts.

## V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusions

In reference to the discussions held in this paper, the study established that the churches in Kenya played various roles in the violence; some of the churches kept quiet as violence flourished in their areas of jurisdiction because they conceived it as punitive and ungodly and in that way, they were in coordinated efforts; while some other churches condoned and extenuated circumstances that led to violent acts because they had a passive attitude towards the government authority having been part and parcel of it in calling for social changes; whereas some churches were not only complicit but endorsed and exhorted violence particularly by blessing youth warriors before going to fight in ethnic violence, believing that it was their religious duty to extirpate injustices and subdue evil in the sinful world using strategic acts of violence as necessary means of deterring large acts of violence and that they had the divine authority to legitimize violence so as to uproot the political evils bedeviling Kenya.

### 5.2 Recommendations

This study has raised the issue of role of Islam and other non-Christian organizations in the political violence during multiparty general elections in Kenya. It is important to understand the dynamics of the roles played in violence by other religious organization in multi religious nations like Kenya. The degree to which Muslim faithful influence political views in Kenya with regard to election violence is critical. It is my hope that researchers with interest in Islam, violence and politics in Kenya will pursue this area further.

The issue of how the church can mitigate against the cyclic political violence in Kenya kept on evocating in the study. It is important to understand the remedies that the church can put in place to alleviate violence during elections in Kenya. It is my expectation therefore that scholars interested in this area will engage in it.

## REFERENCES

- Abuom, A. (2005). The Missionary Position: NGOS and Development In Africa. *International Affairs*.
- Brown, J. S., & Duguid, P. (2001). Knowledge and organization: A social-practice perspective. *Organization science*, 12(2), 198-213.
- Casanova, J. (2011) The secular, secularizations, secularisms. Oxford University Press. <https://about.jstor.org/terms>  
<https://www.researchgate.net/publication/277852937> accessed on 4/5/2019  
*Ecclesia* 32(2), Art. #581, 8 pages. <http://dx.doi.org/10.4102.ve32i2.581>
- Gitari, D. M. (1996), "International Experiences of Democracy from a Christian perspective: An African perspective" in Christianity and Democracy in South Africa; Christian responsibility for political reflection and services; institute for reformation studies; Potchefstroom *World Development*, 22(4), 483-500.
- Huber, W., (2011), 'Religion and violence in a globalized world', *Verbum et*
- Hurd, I. (2008). *After anarchy: legitimacy and power in the United Nations Security Council*. London, Princeton University Press.
- Juergensmeyer, M., (2003) *Terror in the Mind of God: The Global Rise of Religious Violence* Berkeley: University of California Press
- Juergensmeyer, M., (ed. 1992), *Violence and the Sacred in the Modern World* London: Frank Cass.
- Kagwanja, P. M. (2003). Facing Mount Kenya or facing Mecca? The Mungiki, ethnic violence and the politics of the Moi succession in Kenya, 1987–2002. *African Affairs*, 102(406), 25-49.
- Kapinde, S. (2015). Prophetic Church Leadership in Kenya" s Democratic Process between 1986 and 2002: A case of the Most Rev. Archbishop David Gitari. *Unpublished Master Thesis Dissertation of Pwani University, Kenya*.
- Kazin, M., Edwards, R., & Rothman, A. (Eds.). (2011). *The concise Princeton encyclopedia of American political history*. Princeton University Press.
- Klopp, J. M. (2009). Kenya's unfinished agendas. *Journal of International Affairs*, 62(2), 143-158.
- Knighton, B. (2009). Mungiki Madness. In *Religion and Politics in Kenya: Essays in Honor of a Meddlesome Priest* (pp. 223-250). New York: Palgrave Macmillan US.
- Kunhiyop, S. W. (2008). *African Christian Ethics*. Nairobi WorldAlive publishers
- Martin, J., (2007), *The meaning of the 21st century*, Riverhead Penguin, New York,



- Mavelli, L. (2012). Security and secularization in International Relations. *European Journal of International Relations*, 18(1), 177-199.
- Ndzovu, H. (2009). Muslims and party politics and electoral campaigns in Kenya *Institute for the Study of Islamic Thought in Africa*
- Nicolas Van de Walle, 'Political Liberalization and Economic Policy reform in Africa', Paper presented at the USAID workshop, Washington DC, 1993; pp. 34, downloaded from 41.89.195.2 on Thu, 28 Nov 2019 11:15:47 UTC All use subject to <https://about.jstor.org/terms>
- Oso, W. Y., & Onen, D., (2005), A general guide to writing research proposal and report, Kisumu, options printers and publishers
- Robert, M. P., (1992). May. Infectious diseases of humans: dynamics and control, Nairobi, government press
- Sacks, J., (2015) *Not in God's Name: Confronting religious violence*, Hodder and
- Savigny, H., & Marsden, L. (2012). The importance of being theoretical: Analysing contemporary politics. *Teaching politics and international relations*, 123-131.  
Stroughton publishers, London
- The Standard, 7 August 1992; downloaded from 41.89.195.2 on Thu, 28 Nov 2019 11:15:47; <https://about.jstor.org/terms>
- Van de Walle, N. (1993). Political liberation and economic policy reform in Africa. *World Development*, 22(4), 483-500.
- Wamue, G. N. (2001). Revisiting our indigenous shrines through Mungiki. *African Affairs*, 100(400), 453-467.