

## **The Internally Displaced Persons' Identity Crisis in Kenya**

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**Abstract:** Displacement from one's country of origin or their area of residence is traumatic experience. Yet this is a common phenomenon today due to human conflict, administrative policies and natural calamities. The displaced persons normally with a sense of belonging to their communities and place of origin find themselves detached from these places and people living in places they have never lived in and with new people. They are also dispossessed of their livelihoods and often they have to rely on assistance from their hosts for survival. Such drastic changes in life situations lead to the displaced losing their place in the society and having to make a reassessment of themselves vis-a-vis the non-displaced and thus to a change in their self-identity. This paper investigates the self-identity of the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Kenya following the 2007 general elections. The IDPs experienced violence from their neighbours that resulted in death of their relatives, maiming, loss of property and eviction. They went to live in camps, with their relatives or in rented accommodation. They have indicated that they have not been fairly treated and were reported in the media as holding demonstrations complaining of neglect and demanding resettlement. The paper traces the history and development of inter-ethnic and election-related violence in Kenya and its effects and finally zooms in on the victims of the 2007 post-election violence. The discourse of the IDPs in newspapers, in interviews and other written sources will be examined for their self-identity. The Discourse Historical Approach of Critical Discourse Analysis will provide the theoretical framework for the analysis.

**Keywords:** identity, Internally Displaced Persons, discourse.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

At the end of December 2007, Kenya held general elections to elect the president, members of parliament and local government representatives. These elections had been preceded by aggressive campaigns especially by those gunning for the presidency primarily Orange Democratic Movement's (ODM) Raila Odinga and the Party of National Unity's (PNU) Mwai Kibaki. The PNU presidential candidate was the sitting president.

Opinion polls on the presidential elections and popularity of the parties appeared severally in the print and electronic media in Kenya. Most of the polls released in the last few months to the elections pointed to a Raila win although the gap narrowed towards the end (IFRA *ibid*). The elections were held on 27 December 2007 and were a record breaker in terms of the number of registered voters at 14.2 million, 82% of the total eligible voters and a turn out of 72% according to the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights [1]. It was also the first election in which the incumbent faced a formidable challenge and thus generated a lot of interest [1].

The Kenyan media started announcing the results when the first few polling stations closed and the early presidential polls showed Hon. Raila leading, followed by Hon. Kibaki. However, the situation changed as vote counting approached the end with Hon. Kibaki taking the lead and the final presidential results announced put the incumbent at 47% of the votes cast while Hon. Raila followed closely with 44% of the votes [2].

ODM fervently contested the results with claims of widespread rigging and insisted that Hon. Raila Odinga had won the election and was entitled to the presidency. The PNU side stuck to the announced results advising the ODM to seek legal redress in court and Hon. Kibaki took the oath of office that evening amid the acrimony thus cementing the PNU position. ODM supporters launched protests in the party strongholds such as Kisumu, Eldoret, Mombasa and in some parts of the capital city, Nairobi such as Kibera. Those who were believed on the basis of either tribal or party affiliations to have voted for Mr. Kibaki were subjected to violence by supporters Hon. Raila. According to Dagne [2] the violence was perpetrated mostly by the Kalenjins and Luo on Kikuyu and Kisii communities. This violence involved looting, arson,

assault, raping, maiming and killing. Members of the targeted communities who lived in areas dominated by the hostile communities fled their homes for safety. According to KNCHR [1] there is wide consensus among analysts that apart from the unsatisfactory tallying process, the violence was also caused by underlying issues predating the 2007 elections.

After about two weeks of the violence, the Kikuyu launched attacks in Naivasha and Nakuru where they dominated against members of the communities which had attacked the Kikuyu. The assailants visited similar acts of violence to those that the community had suffered and displacement of people resulted. The KNCHR [1] estimates that in the whole period of violence, at least 1,162 people were killed in both the initial and retaliatory acts of violence. The government of Kenya in partnership with the United Nations High Commission for refugees (UNHCR) estimated that 663,921 people were displaced. About 350,000 of the IDPs went to live in 118 camps, 640 households fled to Uganda while about 331,921 were integrated with their friends and relatives or took up rented accommodation [3].

A number of the IDPs returned to their areas of residence when the violence stopped but others have remained displaced in camps for years after the violence. Some of the camps have been in Eldoret, Mai-mahiu, Rironi and Mawingu Vumilia in Eldoret, Jikaze in Mai-mahiu, Mumbi in Langas, Mawingu in Olkalau, Ebeneza in Gilgil, Kimulea, Jededia, Nauamu in Baruku, Pipeline, Fumilia in Embu, Fumilia in Narok, Maono yetu, Amani Vumilia in Kikopey, Alico and 86, Ngeca Datho in Nakuru, Nyakiambo, Gwa Kungu and GSU Salama.

The IDPs have attracted humanitarian assistance from the government of Kenya, foreign governments, the United Nations (UN), the Red Cross, religious groups and individuals. This assistance has been mainly in form of food and financial means to build decent shelter for those who have since found places to settle. Some remained in the camps or in their relatives' homes for over four years from the time they were displaced but the government made efforts to find land to resettle them. They staged demonstrations complaining of neglect. Where they have been resettled there have been reports of places where the government has bought them land but the host community has turned them away. At times they have alleged that they have been given food that is unfit for human consumption as food rations by the government.

Regarding justice there has been a feeling that the quest for justice for the IDPs has not been pursued seriously enough. By the year 2010 no criminal convictions for the crimes committed had been made.

The International Criminal Court therefore launched investigations into the crimes citing lack of a local judicial process and in January 2012 it confirmed charges of four of the suspected masterminds of the violence. Recently, the government has made efforts to bring criminal charges against those suspected of having committed crimes during the period of violence. Only a few cases have been known to be in court and in June 2012 a court in Nakuru convicted a man of killing his neighbour in the post-election violence and was reported to be the first murder suspect in the election violence to be convicted [4].

### **History of Ethnic and Election-related Violence in Kenya**

Violence between different ethnic communities in Kenya can be traced back to the pre-colonial period. The Akiwumi report [5] says that before colonialism in Kenya, the Rift Valley was occupied mainly by the Kalenjin, the Maasai, the Turkana, the Samburu, the Pokot communities and sections of the Luhya who all held land communally. The report notes that pressure on land was less than we know it today but even so, inter-clan and sometimes inter-tribal conflict was common. Yieke [6], says the violence was however, never of the large-scale type.

The colonial government policies led to some communities being forced to leave their land for white settlers' occupation. The areas affected were mainly in Central Province and Rift Valley which came to be known as white highlands. The white settler phenomena with its demand for cheap labour made members of some ethnic communities to move to some areas that were perceived as belonging to some other communities. This created discontent among the perceived owners and set the stage for possible conflict.

When the settlers relinquished the land after independence, in 1963, there was a feeling that the land did not always revert to the original owners but some was acquired by other communities. The KNCHR [1] report describes the independence government policies as having opened doors to land buyers in Rift Valley without prioritizing those who some communities perceived as indigenous dwellers of the province. It also observes that corruption in the resettlement scheme also saw senior individuals in the immediate post-independence government allocating themselves large tracts of land and this caused persistent complaints. Complaints about this issue, commonly termed historical injustices, endured to the era of the third post-independence president in 2002.

The first politically motivated violence was witnessed soon after the re-introduction of multiparty politics in 1991. Multiparty politics in Kenya had been abolished in 1982 and the Kenya National African

Union (KANU) was the only political party in the country and the ruling party. As the KNCHR [1] and the Akiwumi report [5] note, the re-introduction of multiparty politics was viewed as a threat to the sitting president's political career. His supporters from his home province, the Rift Valley who were keen to see him win the 1992 elections against the opposition therefore revived calls for *majimbo*. *Majimbo* refers to a system of government in which regions within the country have some degree of autonomy in the running of their affairs. The Akiwumi report [5] says the concept of *majimbo* advocated was not federalism in the real sense of the word but it was understood as an arrangement in which each community would be required to return to their ancestral district or land.

Election-related violence in Kenya has taken a heavy toll. The KNHRC (ibid) estimates that the 1991-1992 election related violence left 1500 Kenyans dead and about 300,000 internally displaced by the time it abated in 1994. The violence recurred in smaller dimensions during and after the 1997 elections, this time spreading to the Coast Province. Global IDP data base estimates that in 2002, there were 230,000 IDPs in Kenya. In the 2007-2008 post-election violence, it is estimated that over 1500 people died. Those displaced were 663,921 [3] and according to CIPEV [23] report, 3561 people suffered injuries. There were many cases of rape in which Robert, [7] puts at 3000, affecting women and children and a few affecting men and 117,216 private properties and 491 government properties were destroyed.

The KNCHR (ibid) identifies the crimes committed in the 2007 election-related violence as: dehumanization of a community using negative labels or idioms that distinguish the target group from the rest of society where communities such as the Kikuyu and Kisii resident in the Rift Valley were referred to by some politicians as *madoadoa* (stains) before and during the post-election violence. There were also acts such as murder, deportation or forcible transfer of population and rape and other forms of sexual violence, were committed

The KNHRC (ibid) also lists the following fundamental rights of the displaced as having been violated: the right to life, the right not to be forcibly evicted or displaced from one's home, the right to hold opinions without interference, the right to participate in public affairs and to vote in periodic elections, the right to property, the right to education, the prohibition not to engage in incitement to discrimination, and the right to freedom of movement. According to the KNHRC (ibid) the violence was not random but one backed by a policy since it was perpetrated systematically. The commission notes that at a point when Kenyans required the most protection, the government of Kenya

retrogressed in the fulfilment of its obligations under various human rights conventions.

### **Internally Displaced People in the Global Scene**

Internally displaced persons are people who have been forced to leave their places of residence due to conflict. There are also people who are displaced in many parts of the world as a result of natural disasters. The United Nations has defined a disaster as "a serious disruption of the functioning of a society, causing widespread human, material, or environmental losses which exceed the ability of the affected society to cope using its own resources." They may be caused by fire, flood, earthquake, drought, epidemic, or industrial accident [24]. They are distinguished from refugees in that while refugees cross international borders, IDPs remain within the borders of their country though dislocated from their normal living places. The refugee status has been well understood in the global arena for many years but that of IDPs only begun to receive attention in 1992 when the UN appointed Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on Internally Displaced Persons due to their growing numbers. It is estimated that in 2003 the number of IDPs in the world was more than twice that of refugees [8]. In the year 2010 there were 27.5 million displaced persons. According to Refugees International in 2010, the countries with the highest numbers of IDPs in the world were Sudan with at least 4.5 million, Colombia with at least 3.6 million Iraq with at least 1.3 , the Democratic Republic of Congo with 1.7 and Somalia which had 1.5 million people. In 2011 Africa had the largest number of IDPs in the world with 9.7 million IDPs out of a total of 26.4 million [9].

The United Nations recognizes among other rights of the displaced the right to assistance which includes the provision of food shelter, health and education and the right to protection which entails ensuring asylum, securing basic human rights, provision of travel documents and facilitating durable solutions such as repatriation, resettlement and integration [10].

### **Effects of Displacement on People**

Nyukuri [11] has considered the social, economic, political and environmental effects of the 1992 election related violence and displacement in Kenya. The social effects included rendering the victims homeless and landless making them destitute and inflicting injuries and abuse. It also caused insecurity and a great loss of human and economic resources through acts of destruction especially by burning. There was also illegal transfer of property belonging to the victims to the communities that perpetrated the violence through looting and buying some especially land at throw away prices. Production from land also declined due to insecurity as some

farmers were not stable enough to carry out their economic activities and some crops were burnt.

Suvin [12] makes the comment that exile 'requires detaching oneself from all belonging and love of place, and adopting a mind of winter'. He adds, that 'to be displaced from one's country of origin and upbringing is a wrench perhaps comparable in impact to that of war, longer-term hunger or imprisonment'. A similar view is held by Said, [12] who says that, exile alienates one from all cultural identities. He adds that moving to another country delinks one from the social environment which defined us leading to instability. He says that discourses portray this detachment negatively.

### Construction of Identity

The term identity comes from *identité* a French word and it has its roots in the Latin word *identitas*, - *tatis* which has been derived from the Latin word *idem* meaning 'the same' [13]. Cheney [14] indicates that the origin of the term 'identity' can be traced to Aristotle who coined the word *tautotes* - *identitas* in Latin - to refer to sameness in different individuals. In this sense, siblings born of the same parents are seen as the same but separate individuals. The term has undergone changes in meaning and is today associated with the individual person [15]. It answers the question 'Who am I?' [16]. Verdoolaeg, adds that identity could be broadly described as "an individual's self-concept" [25]. Identity is also about belonging, about what you have in common with some people and what differentiates you from others [17].

In the view of Rummens, [13] the number of identities that are ascribed to or taken by an individual and a group is almost unlimited. A person can bear ethnic, cultural, religious age, sex national regional or racial identities. Identity is not permanent and it changes all the time and a change in one's life situation is bound to change their identity.

According to Edley as cited in Weller [18] identity and the self are constructed through discourse and it is also by discourse that they are evoked. Rummens [13], notes that in addition to discursive means, identity is realized through visual means. He says that for example Blacks are commonly presented as related to racoons which are nocturnal animals with a reputation for being sly thieves. In this portrayal, the Blacks are presented with exaggeratedly white teeth. Cultural identification can also be used where cultural items such as a way of dressing or hairstyle can be used to signify certain people who are associated with the practice.

Lemke in Caldas-Courthad [12] says that we get our identity by natural gifts and weaknesses, membership and affiliation by social positioning,

financial, social and cultural capital, what we have and what we lack, what we desire and what we fear. He notes that identity is in the semiotic domain of the conceptual and not the phenomenological domain of the experiential.

According to Levitt and Nass [19] people are keen to assign identity for this allows placement of the entity within a social category which enables prediction of behaviour and definition of what constitutes legitimate conduct. Castells [26] says that identity is people's source of meaning and experience. This study will focus on the discourse of the IDPs for evidence of their self-identity. The focus of this research is on identities that are socially constructed and are thus bound to change when one's situation such as ability to play roles prescribed by gender.

### Construction of National Identity

The IDPs identity is to be investigated as they define their status as citizens and members of the Kenyan community and in their cultural context. Hall in Thiesmeyer [27] presents discourses of national identity as narratives that constitute cultural power. He says that the discourses must offer, a consciousness of one people, normally in terms of racial origin but also in terms of those who might generally oppose the existing political order. This consciousness necessarily tries to exclude the discourses of others who are not seen to fit into the definition of the unified group. Rummens [13] researched on the studies on identity in Canada. He found those which focused on national identity dwelt on citizenship, civic participation and shared values. The researches considered such issues as social cohesion, social divisions, social stratification, socio-economic integration and the importance of community.

In the Kenyan situation common values and citizenship as well as civic participation, common history and shared borders are usually brought to the fore in expressing a Kenyan identity. Kenyans speak with pride of their successful struggle against colonialism and their past and present heroes. A common theme in Kenya's political circles is the emphasis on the need for Kenyans to view themselves as one people on the basis of their national heritage as opposed to people divided by ethnic diversity. Political parties strive to portray themselves as reflecting national unity and discredit others by portraying them as ethnically based.

Dercon, [20] carried out a research in Kenya on identity asking the respondents whether they preferred identifying with their nation or their ethnic groups. They found that only 10 percent of them preferred the ethnic tag to the Kenyan one.

**Theoretical framework**

The study of the discourse of the displaced persons will be guided by the Discourse Historical Approach (DHA) of Critical Discourse Analysis. The DHA was developed by Wodak, and her colleagues in 1990. It interprets discourse taking into account all the relevant background information. CDA research among others studies discourse to unearth the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are reproduced discourse.

In identity discourse, Rekema, (2009) says that construction of positive self-identity and negative others involve use of five types of strategies. He defines a strategy as a more or less accurate and more or less intentional plan of practices, including discursive practices, adopted to achieve a particular social, political, psychological or linguistic goal.

Firstly, there are *referential strategies* or *nomination strategies*, by which social actors are constructed and represented, for example, through the creation of in-groups and out-groups. Secondly, are *predicational strategies* which involve ascribing positive or negative traits to the entities in question. Thirdly, there are *argumentation strategies* which serve to defend the positive and negative attributions made.

The fourth type of strategies are the *perspectivation, framing* or *discourse representation*. These are used to express the speaker’s involvement in discourse or one’s stand point. Fifthly, there are *intensifying strategies* on the one hand and *mitigation strategies* on the other. These strategies diminish or intensify the force of the claims made.

The researcher is guided by these strategies in analyzing the IDP’s discourse. The researcher will examine how the displaced persons depict themselves and how they depict the other citizens of the country including those who caused their displacement

**Construction of Self-identity among Kenya’s IDPs**

A sample of the displaced persons in Kenya’s 2007 post-election violence were interviewed by the author on who they considered themselves to be in the Kenyan context following the displacement. The sample consisted of respondents from various Kenyan ethnic groups and those who remained displaced in camps, those who were integrated though displaced and those who had been resettled after displacement. Gender balance was also observed. Many of those who remained displaced at the time of the study described themselves as non-Kenyans. Their responses are as shown in table 1.

**Table 1: Displaced Persons’s Expression of National Identity**

Serial Number	Displacement Category	Sex	Age	Ethnic Community	National Identity Expressed	
					Under Displacement	After Displacement
1	Resettled	Male	56	Kisii	Not Kenyan	Kenyan
2	Camp	Female	78	Kikuyu	Not Kenyan	-
3	Camp	Female	26	Turkana	Not Kenyan	-
4	Camp	Female	27	Luo	Not Kenyan	-
5	Resettled	Female	20-30	Tugen	Not Kenyan	Kenyan
6	Camp	Male	49	Luhya	Kenyan	-
7	Camp	Male	29	Kamba	Not Kenyan	-
8	Resettled	Male	18	Kikuyu	Not Kenyan	Kenyan
9	Resettled	Female	18	Kisii	Not Kenyan	Not Kenyan
10	Camp	Female	20	Kikuyu	Kenyan /not proud	-
11	Camp	Male	21	Kisii	Not Kenyan	-
12	Integrated	Male	62	Luo	Not Kenyan	-
13	Camp	Male	22	Kikuyu	Not Kenyan/no belonging	-
14	Integrated	Male	53	Kisii	Not Kenyan	-
15	Integrated	Female	60	Kisii	Not Kenyan	-
16	Integrated	Female	34	Luo	Not Kenyan	-
17	Integrated	Female	47	Kikuyu	Not Kenyan	-
18	Integrated	Male	60	Kikuyu	Not Kenyan	-
19	Integrated	Female	26	Luhya	Not Kenyan	-
20	Integrated	Male	58	Kikuyu	Disadvantaged/Kenyan	-
21	Resettled	Male	57	Kikuyu	Disadvantaged/Kenyan	-
22	Resettled	Female	26	Kipsigis	Not Kenyan	Kenyan
23	Resettled	Female	50	Kisii	Kenyan	Kenyan
24	Resettled	Male	29	Tanzanian and Kikuyu	Kenyan /not recognized	Kenyan

Source: Researcher’s Data

From table 1 we find that of the 24 respondents 18 expressed a non-Kenyan identity and most of those who were resettled expressed a Kenyan identity. The arguments advanced to support their identity are discussed in the following section.

### Bearing the Name IDP

The name IDP was seen to stand in contrast to being a Kenyan. A respondent, TC3 explained that it meant that one was not a Kenyan as we find in the following excerpt

Excerpt 1

R: *Hilo jina lina shida kubwa sana kuitwa IDP/ Sasa kuitwa IDP sisi/ IDP si Wakenya/ watu IDP ni wale tu wakimbizi /saa hatuoni kama tuko Wakenya*

R: There is a very big problem with that name IDP/ now for us being called IDPs/ IDPs are not Kenyans/ the people who are IDPs are only those who are refugees / we do not therefore feel like we are Kenyans TC3P4

The respondent further explained as follows:

Excerpt 2

R: *[...]unajua IDP tulikuwa tunaona sisi ni UDP/ sisi si Wakenya / tunachukua jina IDP ndio kwe?*

R: *[...] you see for us IDPs we used to feel that we are IDPs/ we are not Kenyans / we would take it that the name IDP is our place? TC3P7*

The respondents felt that being called an IDP is not compatible with being a Kenyan. The name IDP implies that one is out of their country as is the case for a refugee. An IDP is usually within the borders of their country whereas a refugee flees outside their country. The displaced person did not feel like they belonged and were therefore like refugees. For TC3 therefore, calling the displaced persons IDPs was a way of discriminating against them by denying them their rightful place in Kenya. The respondent said that when non-IDPs would call her group IDPs, they would respond by calling them Kenyans meaning that they saw the two names to be diametrically opposed to each other.

She criticizes those who discriminate against IDPs saying that the IDPs were once Kenyans and then there came a point at which they were called IDPs. She therefore sees being called an IDP as showing that they lost their status as Kenyans which can also happen to others. She implies that those who call them IDPs use this name to highlight the IDPs' marginalization from the rest of the Kenyan community. She therefore alludes to symbolic violence meted on the IDPs by the non-IDPs who call them IDPs [28].

### Suffering Displacement and Kenyan Identity

Some respondents constructed their Kenyan identity based on their Kenyan citizenship regardless of any other factor. TI18 explained his claim to a Kenyan identity as follows:

Excerpt 3

R: *No uyu Mukenya halisi-ri ucio niagirirwotani tondu nii ndi Mukenya halisi/ tondu gitambulisho giakwa ni gia Kenya Na ndikwona kiria gitumite nduike IDP/ Internally Displaced Person in my own country/ ndikwona gituni*

R: *[...]But the true Kenyan should- like me for I am a true Kenyan / because my identity card is Kenyan/ And I don't see why I have become an IDP/ Internally Displaced Person in my own country (TI18P7-8).*

The respondent argues that he is a true Kenyan because he has a Kenyan identity card meaning that he is a citizen of Kenya by birth. The fact that he is an IDP does not detract from his citizenship. He however sees being an IDP as a violation of his right as a citizen, questioning the grounds for rendering him an IDP yet he is legitimate citizen. The respondent therefore makes claim to a Kenyan identity on the basis of his citizenship but sees being displaced as an attempt to deny him his place in Kenya. He is therefore a Kenyan who has not been accorded the full respect of a Kenyan. Wodak *et al* [21] found citizenship to be a criterion for national membership. The respondent therefore feels that being displaced could not affect his status as a Kenyan but could demonstrate that his rights were infringed upon.

### State Response to the IDPS' Needs as Basis of Identity

The manner in which the government responded to the security needs of the displaced persons at the time of the violence became a reference point in the negotiation of the IDP identity. For some the government responded appropriately and saved their lives. The fact that the government came in very strongly to defend some of the IDPs became an important building block of their Kenyan identity. For such respondents, this act diminished the effects of all the challenges to their Kenyan identity and their suffering under displacement did not shake their belief in their status as Kenyans. TI20 is one such person as he explains;

Excerpt 4

R: *Riuri / rimwe ingicokia meciria makwa na thutha nyone uria thirikari ya tharire / kuma mokoini ma adua aciari / ninjiguaga ndio Kenya/Tondu ni ma korwo gutiakiri thirikari/*

*na ndiari Mukenyari / no ingiagukuiire o handu hariku?*

*I: o hau*

*R: No riu thirikari ni ndikimicokagiria ngatho / niundu wa guthara / na nindiiguaga nindi no ugitiri /otiga tita mundu rume kana Mukenya aria angi tondu ni uramona / makienjoy bururi wao / No riu nii I've nothing to celebrate.*

R: Now /sometimes when I reflect back and see how the government saved me from the hands of those people/ I feel am still in Kenya/Because for sure were it not for the government/ and if I was not a Kenyan/ then I would have died. Where?

I: There

R:but now I thank the government because of rescuing me/ and I feel I have security/but then not as the other man or Kenyan/ because you can see them enjoying life in their country/But as for me I have nothing to celebrate (TI20P4).

The respondent, an elderly man of about sixty years from the Kikuyu community maintains a Kenyan identity which he largely bases on the fact that the government came to his rescue when he came under attack during the post-election violence when no one else would have saved him. He says that sometimes when he reflects back and sees how the government rescued him he feels that he is in Kenya. This appears to be his way of saying that he feels that he is a Kenyan thus constructing a Kenyan identity. He later says 'if I was not a Kenyan/ then I would have died' where he totally rules out the possibility of not being a Kenyan hence affirming his Kenyan identity. Being a Kenyan therefore means being under a government that recognizes him and attends to his needs. He is therefore in his country for he can get protection. The adverb 'sometimes' shows that he has his moments of doubt about his Kenyan identity when he compares himself with the non-IDPs therefore suggesting that some are more of Kenyans than others.

The respondent in his interview narrated how he had found himself and his family surrounded by a huge crowd of people in his home in Bondo, who were baying for his blood. He called the local chief who declined to rescue him saying he was busy but when he called the police, they drove to his home and pushed the violent crowd away and he and his family jumped into the police vehicle and were led to safety.

However, some respondents viewed the role of the government as protecting their lives and property and thus dismantled a Kenyan national identity on the basis of the government's performance on this count. They therefore felt that they were not treated as

Kenyans by the state for it 'allowed' them to be violently attacked in their own country.

Their assailants similarly failed to respect their rights as citizens. The following excerpt illustrates this point

Excerpt 5

*R:Aa/ mimi nilisikia, ni mbaya tu sana/ kwa sababu tunaambiwa hii Kenya tuko huru / lakini tumekuja kurealize/ Kenya iligawanwa tukiwa hatuko/ Kenya ni ya wengine / juu - yaani / sioni vile naweza kuuliwa mahali na tuko na president mmoja/ kiongozi ni mmoja tu si wawili / na ati unaambiwa toka hapa uende mahali ulitoka /na maybe nilizaliwa kwa town /, naa sijui mahali nilizaliwa /na tukahama /nitarudi kwetu wapi? / Unaona ? / Sasa hiyo kitu ilinisumbua sana mawazo / na hata saa hii / huwanga sijawahi amini.*

R: No/I felt very bad because we are told that in this Kenya we are free/ but we have come to realize that Kenya was shared out in our absence/Kenya belongs to others/ because-I mean I don't see how I can be killed where I live and we have one president/The leader is just one not two /and you are told get out of here/ and go to where you came from/ and maybe I was born in town/And I don't know where I was born/ and we moved out /to what home am I going back to? you see? Now that is something that disturbed me a lot in my mind/ and even as at this time I have never believed (TC7P3).

The respondent a young man from the Kamba community who was displaced from Narok says he 'felt very bad' for being evicted showing he found it to be a serious offence. He contrasts his experience with his expectation from the claim that Kenya is a free country and sees the eviction as exposing a lie that Kenyans are free. The 'we' used in 'we are told in this Kenya that we are free' is a metonymic realization of the pronoun [21] and refers to the entire Kenyan people and everyone else including the listener who are told about Kenyans commitment to the rule of law. The second 'we' in 'we have come to realize' refers to the displaced persons who the respondent sees as having believed the lie that Kenyans are free while the deceivers were those who benefited from the deception that is those who displaced the respondent's in-group and the government. The freedom he alludes to is the freedom entrenched in the Kenyan constitution for a Kenyan to live in any part of the country and own property (Constitution of Kenya, CoK 1998 and the Constitution of Kenya CoK 2010:C35-26).

The respondent uses the words ‘Kenya was shared out in our absence.’ By Kenya being shared out, it means certain people took the rights to ownership of property and enjoyment of rights that go with citizenship in Kenya to the exclusion of the other legitimate citizens. He therefore suggests a kind of exclusion from the country, of those who were displaced. That the sharing was done in ‘our absence’ implies that a certain group was not granted these rights which is the speakers in-group who ended up being displaced and the absence also suggests that the sharing was a secret affair and a conspiracy. He further suggests a conspiracy when he says they ‘have come to realize’ thus showing that this was something that was done behind the backs of his in-group and they had therefore lived under the illusion that the country was free. He says that Kenya belongs to others thus identifying his in-group as non-Kenyans.

The attackers were therefore the new owners of the country and the displaced had become aliens. The government is expected to safeguard the rights of every citizen and it therefore failed which ropes it in the conspiracy to deny the displaced persons their rights by appearing to have silently sanctioned the exclusion of the communities that were displaced. The IDPs therefore construct themselves as people who have been betrayed by the communities that displaced them and who have been abandoned by the government and therefore have no reason to feel that they belong to the country.

The fact that a people who were under one government could be allowed to engage in such grave acts of violence against the others as to cause the death of some was taken to show that Kenya was not for all and the victims of the attacks are portrayed as aliens. In a conflict between two groups according to competition-frame analysis the two groups represent two angles while an institution such as the government represents the third angle. The government is expected to be neutral adjudicator who helps to provide a solution [22] but this did not happen and such points are often used to prove acts of discrimination on the part of the authorities [22]. It was therefore not the home country of those who were evicted by the others. The respondent suggests that those who displaced the others were the Kenyans. The use of the words ‘I don’t see how I can be killed where I live and we have one president’ questions the possibility of experiencing such hostility when the people are under one government that serves all equally. He presents this as the reasoning that has led him to the conclusion that Kenya was shared out without the knowledge of his in-group.

The respondent further presents another point to challenge the motive of the attacks when he says ‘and maybe I was born in town’. The use of the modal

‘maybe’ presents a hypothetical condition that challenges the idea of being told to go home referring to his ancestral land. He thus poses the question ‘what home am I going back to?’ Those who were born in town do not have ancestral land that can be called their home and he could even have been born in a town in the same region where he was being evicted from. By use of the words ‘you see’ he invites the listener to share in his reasoning thus giving his conclusion more validity. The hypothetical possibility that he could have been born in town is however without any commitment for he uses the word ‘maybe’ which does not put him in a position where he could be challenged about his place of birth.

Similarly TI9P9 presents the attackers as having felt that they had special rights. He says that those who could have the courage to attack others and cause displacement were the true owners of the country. The following excerpt illustrates the point:

Excerpt 6

*I:Lakini nakuuliza sasa wewe ulikuwa unajiona wewe si Mkenya na yeye huyo alikupiga?*

*R:Sasa yeye ndiye ako kwao basi / yeye ni Mkenya.*

I: But am asking, now that you did not think of yourself as a Kenyan what about the ones who attacked you?

R: They are therefore the one in their land/ therefore they are Kenyan. (TI9P9).

The use of the word ‘therefore’ indicates that the respondent is making an inference from what has been observed in the preceding clause, that the IDPs felt that they were not Kenyans. He says that the fact that some members of the Kenyan community could attack and displace others without the government restraining them shows that they were the owners of the country and by implication those who were displaced were not owners and could not exercise control but were at the mercy of those who appeared to own the land.

A cardinal duty of the state is to ensure the security of its citizens and their property. Section 75 of the Kenyan constitution at the time guaranteed the life to property. According to the constitution and international human rights obligations, the government is required to protect lives and private property. The state usually has the mandate and the machinery to take whatever action it deems fit to save life and protect property. The feelings of the respondent could be seen in the light of this expectation for the violence claimed over a thousand human lives hundreds of thousands

were displaced. The displaced lost their property either through looting or burning by the attackers.

The government which upholds the constitution of the country is portrayed here as the one responsible for the lie. He consequently identifies two out-groups, one being the attackers who have shared out the land of Kenya secretly to the exclusion of the other members and the government as the other out-group for allowing the attackers to sideline the members of the respondent's in-group.

The displaced persons also cited the lack of government support to enable them recover their stolen property after displacement as evidence of being neglected. Regarding this issue, TI18 describes the difference between IDPs and non-IDPs as follows:

Excerpt 7

R: *Ii hena tofauti nene muno/... tondu Mukenya uria utari MuIDPri ena indo ciake/ na nionanagia tari mu -indo ciake ta irangiritwo wega/ nginya ni thirikari/ ni undu itira- itiri mundu ungithukangia/ na ta riu uguo twi gukuri/ ndui riu guku no tuge ti gwitu? ta riu uguo twi gukuri/ niukuona akorokwo ni ng'ombe yaiyorwi, mundu uria -ni- ni irakinyirwo na mundu akanyitwo na agatwarwo igotini na akohwo ni undu wa kuiya ng'ombe/ no riu ithui hindi iria kuria twahurirwori/ ona mukinyiri gutir/i I gutiri /uguo ni kwonania atiriri/ nginya ona thirikari ndarora uguo ndiraruta wira uria kwagiriire/.*

R: Yes there is a very big difference/...because a Kenyan who is not an IDP has their own property/and they appear like someone-like their property is well protected/even by the government/ because there is nobody who can damage it/ and even now as we live in this place/ you see we can say that this is not our home? now as we live here you will find something like a cow if stolen/ the person has been pursued and the culprit is taken to court/ and jailed for stealing a cow/ but for us when we were fought there/there isn't anybody to follow up/yes there isn't / that shows that even the government when you look at it/ it doesn't work as is expected/(TI18P6).

The respondent says the difference between an IDP and a non IDP is very big. He gives the characteristics that distinguish the two as differences in levels of endowments where an IDP has no property of their own as a result of their dispossession of their property while a non-IDP does. He also identifies the government as one of the actors. He further says that the property of a non-IDP appears to be well protected when he says 'there is nobody who can damage it'. The

use of the modal 'can' shows it is not possible for anybody to damage such property alluding to the might of the government in enforcing the law. This means there is very good protection for the non-IDP's property from the government which stands in contrast with that of the IDPs which was looted, burned and the IDPs were dispossessed of some of it but little consequence followed. He therefore ropes in the government as an out-group for it is the one that appears to give better protection to the non-IDPs and even explicitly cites the government as having failed to perform its duty of protecting all.

By the use of the modal 'appear like' in 'appear like their property is well protected' when assessing the differential level of security for IDPs and non-IDPs the respondent avoids sounding committal in his proposition which has a strategic purpose of avoiding to so pointedly blame the government which could antagonise it yet the IDPs expect the government's assistance in resettling them. It is therefore a mild complaint attesting to some linguistic capital Bourdieu [29]. To support his assessment, the respondent supplies evidence citing cases of theft of a cow among the non-IDPs which he says is acted upon by the government with the culprit being brought to book. But for the IDPs who lost much more there is no action being taken. This places his conclusion about preferential treatment of the non-IDPs in a context where it is borne out of the evidence presented. He also uses emphasis by raising his voice as he utters the words about their attack to highlight the contrast between the unfair treatment given to an IDP and the favourable one given to a non-IDP.

### **Identity Based on Treatment of IDPs by the other Kenyans**

There were respondents who based their identity on the treatment they received from the other members of the Kenyan community. The fact that the other Kenyans turned against them and displaced them was not in keeping with their expectations. The expectations were formed from a point of view of social relations and national unity other than the consideration of legal provisions for just treatment. This was evident from T12 a man from the Luo community who was attacked by members of the Kikuyu community. He described his reactions on coming under attack from his fellow Kenyans as follows:

Excerpt8

R:Mm at that point /I felt I -felt I AM not a Kenyan/ It's because I could not imagine in my life , that a Kenyan could come out with a panga or anything to-: to kill his Kenyan brother/TI12

A part from expecting the government to play its protective role, the respondent feels that Kenyans would not have been expected to kill each other. He describes them as 'brothers' implying they share a strong bond that entitles each to brotherliness from the other and would be inconsistent with launching such acts of murderous violence against each other. The respondent implies that the violence was a case of betrayal of trust among one people and therefore felt like he was not in the country he knows to be Kenya where he would expect friendly treatment. He therefore views identity as belonging to a particular social group [30] that is the Kenyan community thus defining himself in terms of the relationship he has and he expects from the other members of the Kenyan community. He expects to be accepted by the community that he belongs to, Kenyans but this did not happen.

He also presents his long stay among members of the community that attacked him, the Kikuyu as a sign of belonging arising from his familiarity with the people of the local community [30] having lived among them from 1971 to 2007. He explains this in the following excerpt:

Excerpt 9

R: I thought I belonged to the Kikuyus/ because all those years from being a boy and then up to my manhood really /all that I have been doing I was doing in Kikuyu land/So really I felt that I belonged to the Kikuyu people (TI12P1).

He also expected the Kikuyu to identify with him and come to his aid during the attack. The expectation that the attacking community, the Kikuyu would defend him saying he is 'one of us' is based on the view of identity as belonging where one defines themselves as a member of that community due to familiarity. Belonging is one the human needs [17]. Having lived among the Kikuyu community for about 36 years he felt that he had become one of them due to their shared experience. Familiarity and shared experience can be a basis of belonging (McIntosh, 2005: 38) and thus he could not be treated as an outsider. To support his point on belonging, he says that even his children do not like living in Kisumu and they do not therefore perceive the place as their home and they live and marry in Kikuyu land thus cementing their relationship with this community. He also explains that the children in fact went back to Limuru soon after the displacement and were still there at the time of the interview. The displacement however negated all these relationships and was therefore a case of betrayal. The respondent therefore constructs Kenyan identity as based on how one is treated by the other Kenyans. When they are embraced, the Kenyan identity is

reinforced but the identity is challenged when the people are rejected.

### The Human Rights Situation and Identity among IDPs

The displaced persons had lived in places where some owned land while others engaged in business for a living all which were within their rights. They presented the act of displacement as a violation of their rights. TI18 explains this as follows:

Excerpt 10

R: *Nindari na mugunda/ na nindari na tittle/na ndinayo nginya umuthi ... /No kundu kuu ndingihota gucoka /tondu gucoka gwakuo nikuronanaia gutiri na security ya kungana*  
R: I had a piece of land and I had a title deed / and I have it to date but.../ I cannot go back to that place because for the going back there/ it is evident that there is not enough security (TI18P1).

The respondent also says he owned land in two different parts of the Rift-valley. He made the point that he has title deeds for these pieces of land a total of five times in the course of the interview to emphasize the point. The excerpts above present two of those instances. After displacement, these two pieces of land were inaccessible to him and he had to live in a relative's home even four years after the 2007 post-election violence. He had been displaced twice from Rift valley; in 1992 from Olenguruone and in 2007 from Molo and at the time of the interview lived in Nyeri without land. The presentation of the IDPs here is one of a victim where he legally owned the two pieces of land and still held their title deeds but was evicted from them without regard to his entitlements. A title deed is a recognized legal document issued by the government as evidence of land ownership which gives the holder the right to use the land for agriculture and other economic activities that are legal yet he cannot enjoy these rights. He says he 'cannot go back there' using the modal 'cannot' to show that he has no power to do so. He thus highlights the extent of his dispossession despite the legal rights he has. The persons who displaced him thus come out as lawless and as having the power to keep a firm grip on his property despite legal documents from the government that challenge their hold of the land.

The Constitution of Kenya even at the time in 1992 and 2007 like the New Constitution promulgated in year 2010 granted every Kenyan the right to live and own property anywhere in the country (Laws of Kenya 1998, CoK 2010). The claim that the land that the IDPs were evicted from even where they had bought such land belonged to some other communities was therefore seen as a violation of this right. As Akiwumi [5] says

the people who consider themselves indigenous in an area have generally 'never accepted that holders of title deeds have a more legitimate right over such farms than they do. This calls for enforcement of the law which is the responsibility of the state. The IDPs therefore come out as victims of oppressive attackers and a government that has failed them. A young man TR8 similarly said that displacement was a sign of oppression and denial of their rights for they were evicted from their land when they had produced their own food and they had to leave it and starve (TR8P3).

The Waki Commission [31] interviewed victims of the 2007 election-related violence. A victim says they witnessed the killings as they were committed by people they knew, but justice could not be achieved because the 'constitution of this country was made for the [ethnic community to which the perpetrators of the crime belonged]. They are able to kill, burn houses... and there is no law to prosecute them'. Mwakimako and Gona ed [32] carried out a research among Kenyan IDPs following the 2007 general elections. They sought the victims' experiences during the violence and the resultant displacement. Some of those interviewed said that they lived like '*chokoras*'p.82 (street children) are 'unwanted', 'treated like outcasts'p.83, they have come to hate themselves (*tunajidharau* p.82 ) and wondered 'who is a Kenyan?'. They say that they are tempted to identify themselves with their ethnic communities as opposed to Kenyans. They however, say that they 'are proud to be a Kenyan'p.80. A young lady whose husband was killed and his killers raped her said that she finds her life worthless after the ordeal. One IDP although identifying their assailants by ethnicity also introduces an economic class element claiming that a rich member of their own ethnic community is among those who ended up taking their land after eviction.

Kiai [33] quotes one old lady who had been raped and moved to Kisumu as an IDP saying 'We are not wanted where we lived and not wanted here in Kisumu where we have come. It is like we are refugees in our own country, unwanted and despised. Better they send us away to another country'p13.

The IDPs refer to their assailants by their ethnic communities such as Kikuyu, Kalenjin and Luo [31, 32]. They also categorize the society into other groups such as the rich and by implication, the poor in Makimako and Gona [32]. The Waki report [31] notes that election related violence has been ethnically directed and has 'vastly eroded any sense of national identity'.

## CONCLUSION

From the foregoing discussion the IDPs have difficulties identifying themselves as Kenyans. They cited the fact that they are called IDPs, displacement as

indicating that one was not a Kenya and the reaction of the state to displacement. The fact that their fellow Kenyans turned against them also showed that they were not members of the same nation. They also claim that the law is biased in favour of those who attack them as the law does not seem to be applied in the quest for justice for the IDPs. They claim to identify themselves with their ethnic communities as opposed to the wider Kenyan community. As noted earlier Kenyans are usually encouraged to view themselves as Kenyans first and any other identity comes second. Kiswahili as the national language is a unifying factor. It is the language expected to be used in public gatherings and in offices to enhance communication between the various ethnic groups and blur any possible differences and avoid exclusion. For the rest of the Kenyans as was noted earlier the national identity took precedence over the ethnic identity.

The IDPs in extreme cases have asked the government to move them to another country if they do not belong in Kenya. However in what might appear to be a contradiction, they insist that they are Kenyans and in the manner of Kenyans official government spokesman say they are proud to be Kenyans. They therefore do not accept attempts to treat them as non-Kenyans and even ask the government to institute measures that identify them as Kenyans. This apparent contradiction can be seen to be presenting on the one hand the identity that others ascribe to them (as non-Kenyans) and on the other hand the identity they believe is legitimate (as Kenyans). This act of protest is in line with Rummens [13] observation that people do not always accept the identity ascribed to them by the others due to the power dynamics that are inherent in identity. Abraham Maslow identified belonging as one of the basic human needs for survival in the social sense [17]. Belonging in one of sense is connected to one's locality and dwelling place [17] which in a wider sense could be their country. For example, they would not have claims to land and protection if they accepted the identity of non-Kenyan for they would appear as illegal immigrants.

In their discourse they see the out-group as the ethnic community that attacked them to which they refer using such labels as Kikuyu, Kalenjin or Luo. This is the use of the referential strategy of ethnification according to Reisgil and Wodak [21] and Khleif [34].

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Steps should be taken to avoid situations that lead to displacement especially arising from conflict. Where displacement occurs, the living conditions of the displacement should be improved. The general public should be sensitized on the need to treat IDPs with care. More counselling services for IDPs should be offered. Resettlement efforts should be intensified. Further

research on IDPs identity could reveal more areas in their lives that need attention.

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