

Politics and violence in kenya essay sample

[Law](#), [Crime](#)



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The 2007 Post election violence in Kenya has by far been the most adverse form of ethno-political violence witnessed since the political freedom was wrestled from the hands of our colonial masters . Since the restoration of multiparty politics, with the repealing of section 2A in 1991, ethnic based violence has always been part and parcel of the electioneering period. The violence that erupted after the hotly contested presidential race were a shocker to the Kenyans themselves and the international community at large as it was nothing like the mild inter ethnic squabbles that had been witnessed before. The most immediate trigger to the spontaneous chaos is any person's guess. The revelations of the irregularities led to this tsunami of violence which wiped away 1300 lives never to be seen again. According to Safeworld, a U. K based newspaper r, this was the ultimate end of social tensions that had built up slowly gaining intensity just like a volcano and the tension subsequently reached its snap point. There are many theories that have been postulated to explain what crime is and why people engage in crime. One thing that the various sociologists and schools of thought have disagreed about is explaining what crime is. Positivists argue that crime is as a result of internal and external reasons beyond the control of the individual committing the crime.

Utilitarians , the likes of Cesar beccaria and Jeremy Bentham argue that crime is as a result of rational choices and that man is a hedonistic creature who will weigh the costs incurred visa vis the benefits that accrue from such acts or omissions criminalized by the legal system. In this case I would like to opine that I strongly believe that the best suited theory to explain the post election violence which crippled the economy that had been growing at a

whooping rate of 7% per annum is the Marxist theory of criminology.

Criminology tries to delve into the reasons as to why certain people or classes of people engage in these antisocial activities. Baron de Montesquieu in his treatise is famous to have stated that history has shown that those vested with power have always been apt to abuse it . This was the axiomatic case during the tenures of the first two presidents of the independent Kenya where arbitrary exercise of power was not hidden but expressly executed for all to see.

The Stephen Mwangi Muriithi case , is a crystal clear example of what happened during those dark days. The political elite wielded absolute power, were accountable to no meager citizen and were quick to incumbently cling to power without which they knew they were irrelevant. Sticking to the question, there is this widespread notion that communities from which the elect head of state hails from will receive a special kind of treatment , rationalizing the reason as to why the political climate is extremely volatile and giving an insight as to why people are quick to run to their tribal shrines and cocoons, singing loyalty pledges to the tribal kingpins they look up to, whenever they feel like their ‘ interests’ are ‘ threatened’ or they might be locked out of the next government. Marxists define crime as protecting the interests of the powerful in the society. This is where creation of crime is instigated by pressure from the powerful in the society who fear any kind of threats to their vantage interests from which they recoup huge benefits by virtue of being at the top of the social strata. Marxist criminologists deviate from the biological positivist approach of crime taken by Lombroso.

They attribute deviant behavior to the materialistic nature of the society. The report handed over by the waki task force stated that the post polls chaos weren't just an opportunistic assault among citizens but were systematic attacks on the people based on their political leanings and their ethnicity. Inequalities and economic marginalization viewed with regard to the different geographical regions were very much at play Marxist criminology is not really based on the Marxist principles espoused by Freidrich Engels and Karl Marx but were based on the nature of the society to align itself in classes as far as the relation of an individual to the means of production Marxist criminology uses Marxist lens to consider the criminalization process, inter alia, to explain crime It helps to cover ground on political crime, state crime and state corporate crime. Adrian Bonger explains that during the atavistic stages of life, crime wasn't prevalent as survival required selflessness and altruism . As capitalism emerged , forces of competition resulted in unequal distribution of resources, avarice and individualism, then the poor would indulge in crime out of necessity and ultimately the power wielders would device means by which they punished the poor to protect their interests