Posttraumatic Growth: The Lived Experience of Recurrent and Multiple Trauma Survivors of Kenya’s Skirmishes, 2007 Post-election Violence, and 2009 National Level Oil Tanker Fire Explosion

Jane C. Lang’at
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POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH: THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF RECURRENT AND MULTIPLE TRAUMA SURVIVORS OF KENYA’S SKIRMISHES, 2007 POST-ELECTION VIOLENCE, AND 2009 NATIONAL LEVEL OIL TANKER FIRE EXPLOSION

A Dissertation
Submitted to the School of Education

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By
Jane Cherotich Lang’at

August 2018
DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Department of Counseling, Psychology and Special Education

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Presented by:

Jane Cherotich Lang’at, M.A

May 24, 2018

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ABSTRACT

POSTTRAUMATIC GROWTH: THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF RECURRENT AND MULTIPLE TRAUMA SURVIVORS OF KENYA’S SKIRMISHES, 2007 POST-ELECTION VIOLENCE, AND 2009 NATIONAL LEVEL OIL TANKER FIRE EXPLOSION

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Jane Cherotich Lang’at
August 2018

Dissertation supervised by Prof. Lisa Lopez Levers, Ph.D.

Current research has associated the benefits of posttraumatic growth (PTG) with high levels of stress and trauma that challenge the victim’s assumptive world. The literature reveals that extensive research on PTG has been done on the American, European, and Asian continents but not on the African continent. Yet, how trauma survivors make meaning out of their lived experiences may not be the same globally. This universal phenomenon may also have varied interpretations based on the frequency, intensity, and scope of the traumata, along with the survivors’ socio-economic status (SES) and other benefits and risk factors. In addition, anticipation for high-risk factors may facilitate growth. Thus, even though political and electoral violence has posed a serious challenge to the mental health and social wellbeing of the populace in many African countries, information on how trauma survivors make meaning out of their traumatic experiences and knowledge of growth promotion strategies and their implementation is
largely inadequate. Though research on posttraumatic growth and social transformation, vicarious traumas, and gender and social environment has been carried out on the African continent, information is lacking on the lived experience of trauma survivors who have experienced recurrent and multiple traumas during post-election violence.

Van Manen’s (1990) construct of lived existentials was used to frame the study conceptually. In-depth interviews—both focus group and individual—demographic data, written journals, video/audio tape, observation strategies, and secondary data/unobtrusive resources were used for data collection. The collected narratives were informed by the demographic data to guide the development of culturally appropriate semi-structured, open-ended questions. This model and Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological model (2006) were used in directed content analysis of the collected narratives. Themes and concepts derived from the participants’ scripts, based on activity, action, and meaning, were inductively analyzed and appropriately interpreted. The findings of this investigation have begun to fill the global research knowledge-gap on the experience of PTG among recurrent and multiple trauma survivors and as influenced by their SES. Moreover, the study has scrutinized the presence of PTG and created awareness concerning the influence of PTG on the survivors’ SES. The inquiry has provided resources for establishing growth promotion strategies and their implementation in an African context.

**Keywords:** Posttraumatic growth; trauma; posttraumatic stress disorder; 2007 post-election violence in Kenya; survivors of recurrent, multiple traumatic events; socio-economic status in Kenya; trauma in an African context.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to two groups of people whom I dearly carry in my heart.

To a great woman in my life, my dear mum and friend, Mrs. Elizabeth Kilel: Mum, though you left us as I finished my research, clear memory of your love, tender care, eternal smiles, great advice, and your whole being will live on forever in us. I am so grateful that you saw a great potential in me as an African girl child to have a better future than I would have lived otherwise and that you broke the cultural ethos by secretly advising me on the right steps to take. I wish you were here to celebrate with us my success in life!

And

To my tenacious research participants, the 2007 post-election violence and the 2009 oil tanker fire explosion trauma survivors in Kenya, who struggled with the recurrent and multiple tragedies and amidst their harrowing pain and sorrow, sensed that life must continue and discovered a newfound zeal to live and uphold the banner of forgiveness and work for peace and reconciliation. You are so special to me, our country, and the world!
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

So many people have contributed to the success of the rigorous journey of this dissertation by assisting me in my academic and research endeavors. These include my advisor, dissertation committee, professors, research facilitators and assistants, participants, sponsors, various governmental and non-governmental organizations in Kenya, professional colleagues, classmates, friends, and family. To these many heroes along the way I owe a great debt of gratitude.

My dissertation chair and mentor, Professor Lisa Lopez Levers, with her passion for Africa, showed great interest in this unusual research based on participants living in Kenya. Prof. Levers, this work would not have been accomplished without your immense guidance, great encouragement, and unfailing support. You sharpened my teaching and research skills and fine-tuned my scholarly writing. I will not forget how you gently guided me on how to use the Smart Board for my class lectures nor your purple marking pen correcting my “split infinitives” in my papers. I am forever grateful! My dissertation committee members gave unfailing input and critique that fine-tuned the research process and the final outcome. Special thanks to Dr. Debra Hyatt-Burkhart for her supportive spirit in both my research process and the counselor education and supervision and internship classes. Dr. Deb, the numerous supervision skills and techniques you imparted to us and, even more, your role in modeling a professional counselor supervisor and caring mentor have a lasting impact in my life. Your presentation on posttraumatic growth in Prof. Levers’ class reinforced my desire for this study on trauma. Dr. Zeleke, I appreciated your insights and your challenging me to delve further into the African perspective on trauma. This dissertation would not have been comprehensive without your contribution.
I will not forget two unique members of the administration whose language of communication, warm attitude, tireless support, and immediate attention to the students—specifically the international students with their immigration documents—was always welcoming. Their timely services in my course registration and immigration documents kept me going, especially during my frequent international travels for research. Michele Janosko and Beverly Sughrue, you rock!

I am grateful for the facilitative support of many people during the research period: the Kenya National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI); the Kenya Commissioner for Refugees; the Kenya County Commissioners, the Kenya County Education Officers, and various Kenya Government Chiefs in the Rift Valley; and community leaders who provided the necessary licenses and permissions to research sensitive human subjects in Kenya. The Kenya Chapter of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), who gave permission to access contacts at their various field sites, immensely contributed to this research. I am particularly thankful to the late Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Eldoret, Dr. Cornelius Kipngeno Korir—The Man of Peace—and other church leaders who provided useful contacts during the research period. My team of research assistants, counselors, and administrative assistants played a major role during the data collection.

It is hard to imagine the completion of this work without support for both course work as well as research funds from the Chancellor of Kabarak University, His Excellency the Second President of Kenya, Hon. Daniel T. Arap Moi. Mzee, words cannot fully express my gratitude to you! I deeply appreciate Rev. Dr. Jones Kaleli for making that connection possible. This support was augmented at the tail end of the research with a generous grant from William M. and Phyllis Johnson of the Faith Ventures Foundation. Bill and Phyllis, I am so grateful! Along this
line, I am appreciative to Mt. Lebanon United Methodist Church under the leadership of the then pastor, Rev. Oden Warman, for the enormous support accorded to me and my family. MaryAlice Donaldson, Jim and Nancy Lutz, Louanne Bayle, the late Rev. Dr. Patt Albright and his dear wife BettyLou, Bishop Bashore, Rev. Gillian, Dr. Sharon Slator—my statistics tutor—and her supportive husband Noel, Norma Berman, the late Jensy Street, Patty Siegert, Michael and Carol Drabick, Ann Dello, Mary Garber, Barbara Watson, Betsy Harkin, Don Langston, Kathy Michael, the ladies’ bible study group, the Network and the Home Builders Sunday School classes, and Kids for Today Program teachers among other members at Mt. Lebanon UMC. Thanks for your holistic approach to the ministry as exemplified in your support of my graduate academic journey cum spiritual and social wellbeing of my family. Though we were miles away from home, we felt at home being with you. Words cannot fully express our heartfelt gratitude to you. May God reward your services of love to us!

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My special appreciation to the NU Cohort. You sharpened by research skills in major ways. The rich information on trauma and positive change which I gleaned from our class presentations and frequent class chats on the recursive and iterative nature of qualitative study
remained fresh throughout my research and analysis process of this research. I cherished our time together. Your support and friendship kept me through this journey.

I am eternally grateful to those that can never be thanked enough: my family, for the love, support, and understanding throughout the grueling moments of my studies. My husband, Rev. Dr. Robert K. Langat—“Daddy”—despite heavy responsibilities as the Bishop of the Africa Gospel Church in Kenya, your great commitment to our family and tireless support for my studies was immeasurable. We sensed your love and care for us as a family. Though there were complications, you untiringly raised funds for my studies and unwaveringly supported my research work. We shared my study-related anxieties and social and life challenges together and celebrated my successes together. Without your support, I would not have made it alone. You are so special to me! My dear son Ebenezer was my computer expert and supporter. My class assignments and especially my dissertation would not have stayed safe and available when I needed without his help. Ebe, I am forever grateful for your patience and willingness to wake up even past midnight to help me retrieve or save my class projects. Of course, in Daddy’s absence, your presence as a man gave us a sense of security while sojourning in the United States. Thank you for your motivating beautiful smiles, my good girl Sharon. My sweet girl Salome and my little son Enock, several times you needed me, maybe to play with you; but I was stuck in books. To listen and see you narrate a funny story, but my face was on the computer and my mind busy with assignments. Through all that, I appreciated your patience with me. My children, your understanding and acceptance of living in a foreign country and supporting each other as a team during my duration of study in the USA is unforgettable. A special mention to Ronald Langat—I am thankful for your being there with Dad on our behalf. Your services, love, and smiles for our dear daddy are hard to compensate. My extended Sigilai-Kilel family, special thanks for
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<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>ACE</td>
<td>American Counseling Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ART</td>
<td>African Retail Traders</td>
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<td>ARVS</td>
<td>Antiretroviral Drugs</td>
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<td>ASD</td>
<td>Acute Stress Disorder</td>
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<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community Based Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIPEV</td>
<td>The Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNS</td>
<td>Central Nervous System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COR</td>
<td>Conservation of Resources Theory</td>
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<tr>
<td>DC</td>
<td>District Commissioner</td>
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<tr>
<td>DESNOS</td>
<td>Disorders of Extreme Stress Not Otherwise Specified</td>
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<td>DSTS</td>
<td>Drug Stress Trauma Syndrome</td>
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<td>GSU</td>
<td>General Service Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>HPA</td>
<td>Hypothalamic-Pituitary-Adrenocortical</td>
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<td>ICC</td>
<td>International Criminal Court</td>
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<td>IDPS</td>
<td>Internally Displaced Persons</td>
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<td>IOM</td>
<td>International Organization for Migration</td>
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<td>IPA</td>
<td>Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis</td>
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<td>IRB</td>
<td>Institutional Review Board</td>
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<tr>
<td>KACICA</td>
<td>Kabarak Crisis Intervention Counselors Association</td>
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<td>KCPA</td>
<td>Kenya Counselors and Psychologists Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>LRA</td>
<td>Lord’s Resistance Army</td>
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<td>MDD</td>
<td>Major Depression Disorder</td>
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<td>MSPSC</td>
<td>Ministry of State for Public Service Counselors</td>
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<td>NGF</td>
<td>Neurobiology of Growth Factors</td>
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<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Government Organization</td>
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<td>NOVA</td>
<td>National Organization for Victim Assistance</td>
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<td>PD</td>
<td>Primary Documents</td>
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<td>PEV</td>
<td>Post-Election Violence</td>
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<td>PMV</td>
<td>Politically Motivated Violence</td>
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<td>PTG</td>
<td>Post Traumatic Growth</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTGI</td>
<td>Posttraumatic Growth Inventory</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<td>PTSD</td>
<td>Post Traumatic Stress Disorder</td>
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<td>SES</td>
<td>Socio-Economic Status</td>
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<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commission for Refugees</td>
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<td>UNPF</td>
<td>United Nations Population Fund</td>
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<td>UNRG</td>
<td>United Nations Refugee Agency</td>
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<td>VPTG</td>
<td>Vicarious Posttraumatic Growth</td>
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CHAPTER I: The Problem

“If there is a meaning in life at all, then there must be a meaning in suffering.”

~Victor Frankl, 1959~

Historical Background

The general understanding that suffering and distress can yield either negative and positive changes is thousands of years old, as portrayed by ancient historic and religious ideas, writings, and teachings (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995). Greek historians described ancient Greek cases of combat-related dysfunctions that are highly comparable to modern warfare posttraumatic symptomatology, though such was ignored by Hippocratic physicians (Ustinova & Cardena, 2014). The ancient biblical narratives also reveal how people grappled with high levels of crisis and significant losses from slavery, plagues, and genocide (Birnbaum, 2008).

Early psychiatrists finally came to understand that psychological trauma, often collectively experienced, is an ultimate source of much psychopathology often collectively experienced (van der Kolk, 1987; Lindemann, 1944). Jean-Martin Charcot, the father of neurology and a mentor of Freud, formally recognized psychological trauma as a phenomenon in his ingenious works along with many of its aspects, including theoretical assumptions, clinical diagnosis, and therapeutic interventions. Sigmund Freud, scholar, Austrian psychiatrist, and the father of psychoanalysis; Joseph Breuer, a Viennese clinical consultant; and his innovative mentee Ferenczi, Hungarian analyst and father of active humanistic therapies carried this work further (Dupont, 1985; Freud, 1917; Herman, 1992; Peter, 1989; van der Kolk, 1987). It was early work on hysteria, a mental illness assumed to be the product of repressed psychical trauma, as well as its treatment with hypnotherapy by Charcot, Breuer, Freud, and Ferenczi (among other clinicians), that paved the way for psychotraumatology (Dupont, 1985; Peter, 1989). Freud and Breuer postulated that hysterics suffer from reminiscences of psychic repression (Dayan &
Olliac, 2010). In 1895, Freud and Breuer published an article on one of the foundational cases in psychoanalysis, the trauma-induced case of “Anna O” (Peter, 1989). Studies advanced from there to sexual trauma, physical abuse, mental abuse and neglect, and combat neurosis (Bacciagaluppi, 2011); and clinical intervention measures were developed, culminating in the current diagnosis and treatment of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

In 1980, the introduction of PTSD into the third edition of the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III)* provided scientists and clinicians with a powerful diagnostic tool with which to conceptualize human negative responses to catastrophic events (Micale & Lerner, 2001; Wilson & Tang, 2007). The horrible psychological damage attendant on the Vietnam War was a major contributor to the establishment of PTSD as a recognizable disorder. More than 58,000 American servicemen died in the war, and as many as a million of the survivors experienced war-related trauma syndrome symptoms (Micale & Lerner, 2001). Adjustments to the PTSD diagnosis have manifested a general recognition that traumatic exposure can cause a chronic condition characterized by symptoms of involuntary intrusions of the past, avoidance behavior, and general hyper-arousal, and it must be viewed as a mental disorder (Neuner et al., 2004). Research has shown that anxious responses can persist for a long period after the life-threatening incident (Herman, 1992; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). In 1984, the U.S. Congress mandated a National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder which triggered an enormous provision of governmental resources for research on posttraumatic conditions; subsequently, scientific literature on the subject has burgeoned, and the response to this anomaly from the Veterans Administration medical system has increased (Micale & Lerner, 2001).

However, it has not been until fairly recently, in the mid-1990s, that extensive research has examined the experience of posttraumatic growth (PTG) as a positive psychological impact
of trauma (Almedom, 2005; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). Posttraumatic growth “occurs in the context of suffering and significant psychological struggle” (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004) in the face of trauma, crisis, and highly stressful events. According to Tedeschi and Calhoun, traumatic events have to be challenging enough to a person’s assumptive world to set in motion the cognitive processing necessary for growth. Frankl (1959) and Nietzsche (n.d.), for example, wrote about finding meaning in their suffering in concentration camps. Following his tormenting experience in several Nazi concentration camps, Frankl (1959) asserted, “If there is a meaning in life at all, then there must be a meaning in suffering” (p. 65).

Pursuit of both the positive and negative psychological impacts of trauma has been concurrent with advanced scientific study of the biological response to such traumatic events (Herman, 1992). In their studies on the neurobiology of growth factors (NGF), medical researchers have discovered the existence of protective and regenerative strategies in the central nervous system (CNS) that develop and aid in recovery following injury or trauma (Bella, Lin, Hickling, Morash, & Lue, 2009). These biological protective and regenerative strategies may correspond to the psychological experience of the PTG process and resilience.

In fact, some scientific neurobiological evidence supports the idea that social support seems to moderate genetic and environmental vulnerabilities for a pathological response to stress in the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenocortical (HPA) pathway in the brain, possibly by conferring resilience and fostering effective coping strategies (Ozbay et al., 2007). An experimental study was carried out on trauma response in animals raised with early social deprivation and then subjected to inescapable stress, shedding light on the biological concomitants of psychological symptoms (van der Kolk, 1987). A variety of factors in different domains interacts with, influences, and is influenced by posttraumatic growth (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). Extensive
research is being carried out in industrialized countries on this concept of posttraumatic growth as influenced by socioeconomic status, including social support. There is overwhelming research evidence that individuals facing a wide variety of very difficult circumstances experience significant changes in their lives that they view as highly positive (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004); the degree to which they regard it as positive, however, is influenced by socioeconomic status, including received social support (He, Xu, & Wu, 2013; Rimé, Páez, Basabe, & Martínez, 2010; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004).

**Psychological Trauma**

To frame this study well, the focus on posttraumatic growth was conceptually construed in relation to its foundation, which is trauma. The medical aspect of traumatology aside, trauma was officially recognized in 1980 under its category in psychological medicine as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) by the American Psychiatric Association (Micale & Lerner, 2001). The idea was then proposed that direct exposure to traumatic events involve responses of intense fear, helplessness, or horror triggers PTSD (*DSM-IV-TR*). This formal recognition of PTSD as a psychological phenomenon opened the door to intensive study of the impact of traumatic events, such as political violence (wars, post-election, and community violence), upon its survivors, including war veterans, rape and sexual assault survivors, and civilians (van der Kolk, Roth, Pelcovits, & Mandel, 1993).

In relation to research on trauma, Miller, Kulkarni, and Kushner (2006) identified psychiatric epidemiology and traumatology as the two main paradigms. Of these, the former plays a critical role in documenting the mental health problems and associated risk and protective factors within a population. Protective factors are characteristics and conditions that buffer exposure to risk (Jensen & Fraser, 2011). The latter is used for exploring the effects of political
violence on the mental health of survivors. According to Norris and Slone (2013), the former pattern encompasses three interrelated concepts: the prevalence of exposure to potentially traumatic events; conditional risk, which may be identified as the prevalence of PTSD given exposure; and the total prevalence of PTSD in the population. Progressively, numerous researchers have used trauma extensively to signify the process of coping with adversity and the resulting outcome of coping with disaster, and to conceptualize the effects of violence (Pat-Horenczyk & Brom, 2007). However, much of the research interest in electoral violence in Africa has focused more on defining the phenomenon of violence, mainly analyzing its causes, scope, patterns, and consequences (Orji, 2013), and less on its psychological impact, particularly its potential for the positive growth of the survivors in the aftermath of traumatic experiences.

The integration and interpretation or appraisal of trauma vary from individual to individual, and from culture to culture based on the nature of the traumatic event, predisposing personality, age of the victim, and the influence of community response or cultural value orientation (Boundless Psychology Boundless, 2016; Burri & Maercker, 2014; Perren-Klingler, 2000; van der Kolk, 1987). People appraise or respond to similar trauma differently: some rise above the sufferings of the moment, and others lose faith in the future and are doomed. All the same, not all people who experience a potentially traumatic event will experience psychological trauma (Frankl, 1984; Lazarus, 1991; Storr, Ialongo, Anthony, & Breslau, 2007). Assuming an unapologetically social constructivist position, Alexander, Eyerman, Giesen, Smelser, and Sztopmka (2004) assert that trauma is a socially mediated attribution to either real or imagined phenomena, that events are not inherently traumatic, and that it is the meanings that provide a sense of shock and fear, not the events in themselves. As compared to other survivors of trauma globally, little is known of the responses of victims of extraordinary stressful frequent
adversities, including war, election and community violence, and crimes faced in developing
countries such as in Africa (North et al., 2005). Yet, many individuals and communities in these
post-conflict, low-income developing countries have survived prolonged and often multiple
traumas stemming from these atrocities (Bracken, Giller, & Summerfield, 1995; De Jong et al.,
2001). Furthermore, knowledge is sparse concerning the populace’s experience of positive
changes in the aftermath of traumatic political and electoral violence in Africa, specifically the
recurrent and multiple traumas of Kenya’s 2007 post-election violence (PEV).

The recurrence, frequency, intensity, and duration of such events have all been identified
as influential on how much impact psychological trauma can have. The level of exposure has a
significant effect on the survivors’ experience of the traumata. According to Basoglu et al.
(2000), prior immunization to traumatic stress, to unpredictability, and to the uncontrollability of
stressors have a great effect on survivors’ experience of trauma. These authors’ conclusions are
based on outcomes from their research on survivors’ psychological preparedness for trauma.
They compared torture survivors who had no history of political activity, commitment to a
political cause or group, or expectations of arrest with political activists who had been tortured.
Though the outcome of these authors’ research may reflect the impact of recurrent political
violence traumatization, it may not be generalizable to the participants of this study.

Categories of trauma. Political violence, terrorism, wild fires, and other cataclysms
have been assigned to three categories of disasters: natural, man-made, and hybrid (see Figure 1;
Shaluf, 2007). Natural catastrophes include earthquakes, wild fires, motor accidents, floods,
hurricanes, severe storms, and epidemics, including ebola, whereas man-made disasters consist
of events like shootings, beatings or tortures, armed attack (terrorist or otherwise), being tied up,
being the non-aggressor in a war, battles, killings, massacres, political oppressions, economic
recessions, rapes and other forms of sexual violence, and the torching of occupied homes and public facilities, which often cause death, injury, and property damage (Blattman, 2008; Fayomi, 2009; Norris, Sherrieb, & Pfefferbaum, 2011; Shaluf, 2007; USATODAY.com). The World Report on Violence and Health (2002) categorized such man-made catastrophes according to the number of perpetrators and their aims but not their causes. This report defined political violence as the instrumental use of violence by people who identify themselves as members of a group against another group, or set of individuals, in order to achieve political, economic, or social objectives. Another category of trauma includes hybrid and subsequent disasters that result from a combination of natural forces and human error, including epidemics and psychopathology (Shaluf, 2007). The use of common psychiatric drugs found to be toxic and sometimes chronically traumatic to patients may fall into this category. Whitfield (2010) discovered that these drugs can act as traumatizing agents and make patients worse, an experience he termed “drug stress trauma syndrome” (DSTS). The author based his claim on the fact that these drugs’ effects can be highly disruptive and detrimental to the patients’ quality of life. This type of psychological trauma may also result from a medical procedure. Other typical causes associated with psychological trauma include employment discrimination, embarrassment, harassment, sexual abuse, police brutality, bullying in school or workplace, domestic violence, being the victim of an alcoholic parent or the threat of either, or the witnessing of either—particularly in childhood—indoctrination, life-threatening medical conditions, and medication-induced trauma (Caffaro-Rouget, Lang, & Van Santen, 1988; Lev-Wiesel & Amir, 2005; Nielsen, Tangen, Idsoe, Matthiesen, & Magerøy, 2015; Whitfield, 2010). All these traumatic events have a psychopathological impact on the victims.
Figure 1: Disaster Tree (Shaluf, 2007)

- Disaster
  - Natural disasters
    - Natural phenomena beneath the earth’s surface
      - Earthquakes
      - Tsunamis
    - Natural phenomena at the earth’s surface
      - Landslides
      - Avalanches
  - Metrological/hydrological Phenomena
    - Windstorms (cyclones, typhoons, hurricanes)
    - Tornadoes
    - Hailstorms and snowstorms
    - Sea surge
    - Floods
    - Draughts
  - Biological Phenomena
    - Infestations
      - Locust swarms
      - Mealy bugs
    - Epidemics
      - Cholera
      - Dengue
      - Ebola
      - Malaria
      - Measles
      - Meningitis
      - Malaria
      - Yellow fever
      - AIDS
      - SARS
      - Avian Flu

(continued)
Warfare
  └── International conflict
      ├── Conventional war
      │    │ War between countries
      │    │ Siege
      │    │ Blockade
      │    └── Non-Conventional war
      │         └── Nuclear
      │         └── Chemical
      │         └── Biological
      └── National conflict
          ├── Civil war
          │    └── Civil strikes
          │    └── Civil disorder
          │    └── Bomb treats
          │    └── Terrorist attack
          └── Hybrid disaster
              └── Floods ravage community built in flood plain
              └── Clearing of extensive jungles causing land slides
              └── Locating of residential, factories etc. in avalanches area

Man-made disasters
  └── Socio-technical disaster
      └── Technological disasters
          ├── Fire
          │    └── Leakage
          │    └── Toxic release
          │    └── Structure collapse
          │    └── Physical assets
          │    └── Explosions
          │         └── Ammunitions
          │         └── Chemical
          │         └── Nuclear
          │         └── Mine
          │         └── Pollutions
          │             └── Acid rain
          │             └── Chemical pollution
          │             └── Atmospheric Pollution
      └── Transportation disasters
          ├── Air disaster
          │    └── Sea disaster
          │    └── Land disaster
      └── Stadia, or other public places failures
          ├── Fire
          │    └── Structure collapse
          │    └── Crowed crushing
      └── Production failure
          └── Computer system breakdown
          └── Distribution of defective products
As found in psychotraumatology and trauma research, such tragic traumatic events bring harm, loss, pain, fear, and horror to whole communities or whole societies, which means that people can collectively experience individual types of traumatic stress, such as PTSD (Norris et al., 2011). Exposure to intentional traumatic events is identified with an increase in the prevalence of PTSD (Santiago et al., 2013). Violence by human beings against each other casts a shadow of incomprehension, rage, insecurity, and distrust across a community, as it shakes everyone's personal sense of trust and safety in day-to-day society (Khein & Schermer, 2000). However, people from different cultural backgrounds may have varied perceptions of trauma and its appropriate treatment (Young, 1998). The nature of the traumatic event, predisposing personality, age of the victim, and community response also influence the individual’s adaptation to the event (van der Kolk, 1987).

The negative effects of traumatic experiences. The most common effect of trauma is what we have already seen diagnosed in modern times as posttraumatic stress syndrome (PTSD). Clinical researchers have noted that patients with PTSD often exhibit comorbid major depressive disorders, anxiety disorders, and substance use disorders (e.g., use of alcohol, tobacco, and other substances; APA, 2006). Furthermore, clinicians are cautioned in terms of diagnosing Acute Stress Disorder (ASD), or PTSD, which is often missed for lack of a detailed evaluation of individuals presenting with other clinical needs in the aftermath of a trauma event (APA, 2006).

Findings from a study among West Nile refugees showed a clear dose-effect relationship between traumatic exposure and PTSD, a probable indication that individuals may experience PTSD once a trauma load threshold is reached (Neuner et al., 2004). However, even though many people experience traumatic events, only a small percentage will develop PTSD (Frankl, 1984; Lazarus, 1991). PTSD affects approximately 3.5% of U.S. adults, and lifetime risk for
PTSD is estimated at 8.7%. A lifetime PTSD prevalence of 2.3% was found in South Africa (Atwoli et al., 2013).

According to Bryant (2006), the evidence for ASD acts as a predictor of subsequent PTSD. Though as the author expressed, whereas people with ASD are at high risk for PTSD, the majority of those who develop PTSD do not initially display ASD. The major difficulty centers on the fact that the current ASD construct emphasizes dissociation, an anomaly which not many high-risk people report in the aftermath of trauma. Herman (1992) emphasized the existence of a more complex PTSD syndrome, which she called Disorders of Extreme Stress Not Otherwise Specified (DESNOS) and which is found only in captive survivors of prolonged and repeated trauma.

**The positive effects of traumatic experiences.** Tedeschi and Calhoun (1995) scientifically acknowledged the other facet of PTSD, posttraumatic growth as a positive effect of trauma. As highlighted by these proponents of growth in their theoretical approach, it is worth noting that persons who experience extraordinary trauma report more positive change than others (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996, 2004). The realization helps in promoting growth among trauma survivors. The key benefits identified include greater appreciation of life, a changed sense of priorities, warmer and more intimate relationships, a greater sense of personal strength, and recognition of new possibilities or paths for life and spiritual development (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). However, adaptation to traumatic experience is largely influenced by the nature of the traumatic event, age of the victim, predisposing personality, and community response (van der Kolk, 1987). Linke (2013) found that those who personally experienced Kenya’s 2007-2008 electoral violence were less likely to express certain forms of inter-personal and institutional trust than the individuals who did not. Linke’s findings about social and political attitudes, given
that they do not entirely agree with some findings from other studies, raise questions about the respondents’ experience of trauma benefits, especially in terms of “warmer and more intimate relationships,” as noted above. More work needs to be done on how the survivors made meaning out of their experience of political and election violence in Africa.

**The Background of Posttraumatic Growth**

As foundational researchers in studies on PTG, Tedeschi and Calhoun (1995) coined the term *posttraumatic growth*, created the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI, 1996), and discovered five growth outcomes of trauma (Tedeschi, Park, & Calhoun, 1998), as explained in the posttraumatic growth and related concepts section. These researchers laid the cornerstone for a positive stance toward trauma effects and various research perspectives on growth, such as its relation to gender and social environment (Yablon, Itzhaky & Pagorek-eshel, 2011), social transformation (Bloom, 1998), loss (Hobfoll, Tracy & Galea, 2006), coping (Bussell & Naus, 2010; He, Xu & Wu, 2013; Pat-Horenczyk & Brom, 2007), and currently, the recurrent and multiple political violence traumas identified for this study.

**Statement of the Problem**

As already noted, PTG has recently been identified in the research literature as a positive psychological outcome of traumatic experiences (Park & Helgeson, 2006). Furthermore, extensive research has been done on PTG in combination with a number of other aspects, such as resilience (Almedom, 2005; Li, Cooling & Miller, 2013), posttraumatic stress (Lowe, Manove, & Rhodes, 2013), cultural aspects and competence (Taku, 2012; Kilic, 2010), religion, positive psychology, or medical conditions (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996, 2004), and dispositional optimism (Bossick, 2008; Bostock, Sheikh, & Barton, 2009; Knaevelsrud, Liedl, & Maercker, 2010; Prati & Pietrantoni, 2009; Zoellner, Rabe & Maercker, 2010). A bevy of psychologists
and psychiatrists have globally paid concentrated attention to PTG and such politically instigated violence as war, community violence, and violent crimes (Forstmeier, Kuwert, Spitzer, Freyberger, & Maercker, 2009; Heath, Hall, Canetti, & Hobfoll, 2013; Konvisser, 2013; Kunst, 2012; Powell, Rosner, Butollo, Tedeschi, & Calhoun, 2003; Sousa, 2013; Tedeschi, 1999). Only a few studies have focused on this positive psychological experience in the aftermath of political violence in an African context (Peltzer, 2000; Williamson, 2014). Yet owing to the prevalence of political violence, wars, man-made and natural disasters, and other forms of tragedies in developing countries, many individuals and communities suffer prolonged and often multiple traumas (Bracken, Giller, & Summerfield (1995). There is very little literature that precisely addresses the Kenyan PEV (Hamer, 2013).

Moreover, most of the above-cited studies on political violence have focused on the PTG experience among African refugees (Borwick, 2013; Gilpin-Jackson, 2012; Gregory & Prana, 2013; Kroo & Nagy, 2011; Ssenyonga, Owens, & Olema, 2013). Yet, there is a noteworthy difference in social and political attitudes between populations who relocate as a result of political violence and those who do not (Linke, 2013). Borwick, Schweitzer, Brough, Vromans, and Shakespeare-Finch (2013) found that refugees experience a high sense of strength during times of hardship. Some of these studies were conducted on a single traumatic event (like Type I trauma, which is the result of one sudden blow; Terr, 1991) or are quantitatively researched. Hamer (2013) argues against experimental research in this field, expressing a concern that by controlling for extraneous variables, the approach may strip human beings of all socio-economic, political, historical, and cultural context in its efforts to deduce universal explanatory principles. Understanding the impact of traumatic events is a complex and sensitive endeavor because the trauma affects multiple levels, such as the individuals’ psycho-socio-cultural and spiritual or
existential wellbeing (Levers, 2012). How the civilian populace of Kenya made meaning out of their lived experiences in the wake of the recurrent and multiple traumas of the skirmishes, the 2008 PEV and the sequential national level fire outbreaks of 2009 (e.g. the Sachangwan among others) ought to be known.

**Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experience of the survivors of multiple and recurrent traumas, of the skirmishes, the 2007 PEV, and the 2009 multiple national level fire explosions in Kenya. Specifically, this research intended to examine how the survivors have made meaning out of the trauma. In addition, this research examined the influence of survivors’ risk and protective factors on their interpretation of the trauma and their personal characteristics’ positive influence on their perception of life at the time of recurrent and multiple traumas and at the present in anticipation of regular imminent traumas.

**Research Questions**

The research questions that drove this study were defined after an extensive review of the literature related to the political violence. The aim of this study was to seek an answer to the following guiding question: What are the lived experiences of the survivors of the multiple traumas of the skirmishes, the 2007 post-election violence, and the multiple national-level fire explosions in Kenya in 2009?

Below are four subsidiary questions that were addressed:

1) How do the trauma survivors describe their lived existentials (body, space, time, and relationships) in the aftermath of the 2007 PEV and 2009 fire explosions in Kenya?

2) In what ways have the trauma survivors made meaning out of their experiences of the multiple and recurrent traumas?
3) What do the trauma survivors consider to have been the risk and protective factors in their experiences of the 2007 PEV and 2009 fire explosions in Kenya?

4) How have the trauma survivors’ personal characteristics positively influenced their perception of life in spite of their exposure to recurrent and multiple traumas?

In-depth interviews were used to generate relevant data on how survivors make meaning out of their lived experience of recurrent, multiple, and imminent traumas. A semi-structured protocol was used to gather phenomenological data to identify prior traumatic experiences. Based on a review examination to rule out any cultural bias in the concept of posttraumatic growth, its related processes, its outcome, and its incorporation into psychometric tools, Splevins, Cohen, Bowley, and Joseph (2010) concluded that posttraumatic growth may be cross-culturally valid conceptually; yet operationally its concepts may serve to impose the assumptions of a Western individualistic society. In agreement with these conclusions, Taku’s (2013) findings depict a difference in scores between American and Japanese men’s PTGI items and the domains considered to be most indicative of growth. These findings suggest an existing difference in cross-cultural perceptions and interpretations.

**Conceptual Framework**

Based on evidence that supports a social-ecological model, researchers have stressed the need to consider ecological models in conceptualizing and studying the lived experiences of survivors of political violence (Boxer et al., 2013; Cummings et al., 2010; Cummings, Goeke-Morey, Schermerhorn, Merrilees, & Cairns, 2009; Dubow, Huesmann, & Boxer, 2009). This approach is based on the fact that the aftermath of a traumatic event is associated with a web of complex interactions and interrelatedness between people, places, and things, including social institutions, times, and cultural systems (Levers, 2012). Furthermore, the concept of finding
benefits in the wake of trauma is rooted in the histories of diverse cultures (Splevins, Cohen, Bowley, & Joseph, 2010). To frame this research analysis properly, certain tested and validated models from key experts were used. Among these, some of the five environmental systems from Bronfenbrenner’s (1995) bioecological model of human development helped to focus this study and guided the entire research process. The model’s macrosystem comprises the cultural context that entails the subculture or the culture as a whole along with any belief systems and ideology in which individuals live, including socio-economic status, poverty, and ethnicity (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Kail & Cavanaugh, 2010). Cultural contexts include developing and industrialized countries, socio-economic status, poverty, and ethnicity; thus all of these aspects were addressed in this study.

The chronosystem was also used, which is the patterning of environmental events and transitions over the life course, as well as socio-historical circumstances (Santrock, 2007). Recurrent traumas are example of such transitions, and an example of socio-historical circumstances in this model is the increase in opportunities for women to pursue a career during the last 30 years. As such, the model may reflect women trauma survivors’ change in gender roles after the loss of their husbands and economic statuses as shown in this study. Because of Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) groundbreaking work in “human ecology,” the environments of family, economic, and political structures have come to be viewed as part of the life course. Therefore, this model seemed appropriate for framing trauma survivors’ lived experiences in the aftermath of recurrent, multiple, and imminent traumas in the African context.
Significance of the Study

In terms of traumatic events, after the main psychological distress has been addressed at a pivotal time, PTG promotion strategies should be used (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1998; Rosenbach & Renneberg, 2008). Wadsworth (2010) stressed the urgent development of theory-driven models and strategies that are focused on mass violence prevention, violence preparedness, and intervention in the aftermath of violence. This research’s findings inform therefore, the inventors of strategies geared toward these prevention, preparedness, and intervention schemes.

In response to Kenya’s 2008 PEV crisis, the Kenya Red Cross Society and the Ministry of State for Public Service in collaboration with other stakeholders had an urgent need to recruit and train crisis interveners (e.g. Ministry of State for Public Service Counselors; MSPSC) who, though ill-prepared as compared to the National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA), offered psychosocial intervention services to support victims of the 2008 PEV, especially Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), in coping with the trauma. Even with that, most of the literature on trauma, training manuals, and intervention strategies used were based on the theoretical, philosophical, and psychological paradigms drawn from a Western context. In brief, PTSD implicitly confirms a Western ontology and value system (Bracken, Giller, & Summerfield, 1995). In their synthesis of the current conceptual and empirical findings, and review of interventions stemming from an ecological framework, Stanciu and Rodgers (2011) found out that most studies focus on the psychological effects of political violence on survivors but as understood within the Western framework of mental health. Yet, people with different cultural backgrounds may have varied perceptions of trauma and its appropriate treatment (Young, 1998).
Additionally, the number of studies, theoretical strategies, and clinical practices that propagate and promote PTG awareness is minimal in the African continent. Weiss and Berger’s (2012) work has the latest advances in the theoretical, empirical, and clinical aspects of PTG, but the African context is underrepresented internationally in terms of clinical practice information and research literature on PTG. The outcomes from this study provide information for establishing theoretical strategies and clinical practice skills, thereby contributing to the PTG knowledge already existing among the international group of experts identified by Weiss and Berger. Hence, the authors’ purported comprehensive illumination of the nature, meaning, and clinical implications of PTG across a wide range of sociocultural contexts may be realized globally.

Gaps in the strategies and practices discussed above may have caused the lack of an established ecological framework upon which PTG promotion skills and strategies can be based and disseminated with counseling fraternities and with trauma response institutions that include the Red Cross Society, United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) Agency, government, churches, and families. The findings from the study here may be used to educate psychologists, psychiatrists, and the scientific researchers on clients’ potential to experience growth using PTG skills and strategies in the African context. Further, it may contribute to creating awareness of PTG experiences among the clients themselves, facilitate PTG promotion strategies, and enhance mainstreaming of PTG awareness, theoretical strategies, and intervention skills in communities and violence-torn regions. Hence, the outcomes from this study’s interpretative phenomenological analysis may fill a major research gap in the contemporary literature on positive experiences in the aftermath of PEV in the African context.
Definition of Terms

The key terms used in this research are defined conceptually here, with operational definitions to follow in the methodology chapter.

Posttraumatic growth. This term refers to positive psychological change that may be experienced as the result of a struggle with highly challenging life circumstances in the context of suffering and significant psychological struggle (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1999, 2004). Other terms are used interchangeably in the research literature to refer to the same concept, including thriving (Abraido-Lanza, Guier, & Colón, 1998; O'Leary & Ickovics, 1995), benefit finding (Affleck & Tennen, 1996), stress-related growth (Park, Cohen, & Murch, 1996), self-renewal (Jaffe, 1985), adversarial growth (Linley & Joseph, 2005), and posttraumatic growth (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995).

Political Violence. This has been conceptualized categorically as the local and international use of violent means (e.g., in war, suppression of riots, shootings, public executions, public and/or private torturing of witnesses, forcible detention of criminals and suspects, bombings, breaking into citizens’ personal files, and other ways of disregarding basic human rights) by individuals or groups of people against the prevailing government or official power, or by the state against civilians, whether legal and illegal, to achieve certain political goals (Hill, 1997). International organizations (e.g., the United Nations) usually characterize political violence as a violation of basic human rights. The World Report on Violence and Health (2002) defined it as collective violence, the instrumental use of violence by people who identify themselves as members of a group against another group, or set of individuals, in order to achieve political, economic, or social objectives. It can take a variety of forms: armed conflict within or between states; state-perpetrated violence, such as genocide, repression and other
abuses of human rights; terrorism; or organized violent crime. Definitions also may include the nature of such violent acts—that is, physical, sexual, or psychological, including deprivation or neglect—and may consider the relevance of the setting, such as the relationship between the perpetrator and the victim, as well as identifying the possible motives for violence.

**Trauma.** This term is widely used in medical and psychological fields. According to Merriam Webster’s Medical Dictionary (2011), *trauma* derives its meaning from the Greek word *traumat* meaning “wound.” The term is considered to have emerged into the neurological and psychiatric lingos in the 1860s and 1870s. Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004) have used the expressions “trauma,” “crisis,” and “highly stressful event” interchangeably to describe sets of circumstances that embody significant challenges to individuals’ adaptive resources. The aforementioned dictionary also has defined *trauma* as “a disordered psychic or behavioral state resulting from severe mental or emotional stress or injury.”

The DSM-IV-TR (APA, 2000) defined trauma as follows:

Direct personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury, or other threat to one’s physical integrity; or witnessing an event that involves death, injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of another person; or learning about unexpected or violent death, serious harm, or threat of death or injury experienced by a family member or other close associate (Criterion A1). The person’s response to the event must involve intense fear, helplessness, or horror (or in children, the response must involve disorganized or agitated behavior) (Criterion A2, p. 463).

Even if an event is not life threatening as per the DSM-IV’s definition, it “is traumatic if it is extremely upsetting and at least temporarily overwhelms the individual’s internal resources.”
(Carlson, 2005, p. 125). However, according to the *DSM-V* (APA 2013) trauma –and stressor-related disorders comprise disorders in which exposure to traumatic or stressful event is listed explicitly as a diagnostic criterion (e.g., posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), acute stress disorder, etc.) as discussed further in chapter II under ‘Controversies on PTSD diagnoses.’ As such, based on the current use of DSM-IV (2000) in various parts of the world, and largely in the continent where this research was conducted, in this dissertation, I elected to rely primarily on DSM-IV-TR in all the analysis and interpretations of the participants’ reactions to their trauma. Of course, where DSM-V was applicable those descriptions were also used.

**War.** Dictionary.com (2014) defines war as a conflict carried on by force of arms between nations or between parties within a nation; a state or period of armed hostility or active military operations. The Merriam-Webster definition is similar, defining it as a state or period of fighting between countries or groups; a situation in which people or groups compete with or fight against each other.

**Socio-economic status.** Socio-economic status (SES) is commonly conceptualized as the social standing or class of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of education, income, and occupation. Examinations of SES often reveal inequities in access to resources, plus issues related to privilege, power, and control (American Psychological Association, 2009).

According to Gini (1936), SES is an economic and sociological combined total measure of a person's work experience and of an individual's or family’s economic and social position relative to others, based on income, education, and occupation. When a family’s SES is analyzed, the household income, earners' education, and occupation are examined, as well, and the combined incomes are assessed. The family and individuals may fall into three categories
of SES: high, middle, or low. Any or all of the three variables (income, education, and occupation) can be assessed. Higher levels of education are associated with better economic and psychological outcomes (i.e., more income, more control, and greater social support and networking (Gini, 1936, par. 1-3).

**Culture.** The arts, beliefs, customs, institutions, and other products of human work and thought considered as a unit constitute culture, especially with regard to a particular time or social group (American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, 2014). Culture also includes the customary beliefs, social forms, and material traits of a racial, religious, or social group, as well as the characteristic features of everyday existence (as diversions or a way of life) shared by people in a place or time (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2014).

Marsella and Christopher (2004) have further defined culture in relation to the need for cultural competency as a part of disaster policy, training, evaluation, and clinical activities. According to these authors, culture supersedes ethnicity and ancestry; it refers to how human beings construct their realities, meanings, and identities. Culture is the template that is placed over reality to influence and give it order and to define morality, health, illness, and an acceptable way of life. Moreover, in his ecological definition of culture, Chemtob (1998) elucidated the importance of considering the cultural context, essentially Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) macrosystem, within which PTSD occurs as a negative effect of trauma. This suggests a need to reveal, in the African context, how trauma survivors internalize and make meaning out of their experience, as traumatized individuals or ethnic communities view and judge their own negative and positive responses based on their cultural context.

**Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).** Internally displaced persons (IDPs) “are people or groups of individuals who have been forced to leave their homes or places of habitual
residence, in particular as a result of, or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalized violence, violations of human rights or natural-or human-made disasters, and who have not crossed an international border” (World Bank Indicator, 2008). For the purposes of UNHCR's statistics, this population includes only conflict-generated IDPs to whom the Office extends protection and/or assistance (World Bank Indicator, 2008).

**Themes.** As defined by Ryan and Bernard (2010), themes are sometimes abstract, often fuzzy, constructs which investigators identify before, during, and after data collection. They come from reviewing the literature, and from the characteristics of the phenomena being studied. They come from already-agreed-upon professional definitions, from local common-sense constructs, and from researchers’ values, theoretical orientation, and personal experience with the subject matter (Bulmer, 1979; Maxwell, 1996; Strauss, 1987).

**Summary**

Research has associated PTG benefits to high levels of stress and trauma. However, information is inadequate on the lived experience of trauma survivors who experience recurrent, multiple, and imminent traumas in consideration of their cultural interpretation and socio-economic status, specifically in the African context. This study’s examination of the experience of posttraumatic growth among Kenyan survivors of multiple traumas may be greatly beneficial to the scholarly world in helping to establish posttraumatic growth promotion strategies, research, and clinical practice.

**Organization of the Study**

The remainder of this dissertation is organized into four additional chapters, a reference section, and appendices. Chapter 2 presents a literature review of the research on trauma and responses to it, including PTG. Chapter 3 describes the research design and the methodology of
the study. This chapter identifies the sample selection strategies, data collection procedures, and data analysis procedures and instruments used. The data generated from the semi-structured interviews, focus groups, video/audiotapes, reflective journal/notes taking, observations, and unobtrusive data are analyzed in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 concludes the research study with a discussion and interpretation of the findings, as well as the generation of hypotheses from Chapter 4; the summary, recommendations, and conclusions of the research are thus presented.
CHAPTER II: Review of the Literature

“The neurosis incidental to the Great War made the world neurosis-minded...and the literature is encyclopedic. Explanations of this neurosis on a functional basis came largely from the influence of psychoanalysis.”

~Abraham Kardiner, 1941~

It is essential to unearth the history and impact of psychological trauma in order to understand how post-election violence (PEV) trauma survivors have made meaning out of their traumatic experiences. The formal consideration of psychological trauma, its course, impact, and advanced development all trace back to the hysteria of trauma survivors in the late 19th century in La Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris, France. The anomaly evoked a psychiatric and psychological response, in which the thinking about hysteria developed into conversion disorder, dissociative disorder, and PTSD, culminating in the emergence of current neurobiological studies, among others. Interest in trauma and its related clinical practice and scientific research then gained momentum with the advent of psychoanalysis, developing progressively as it was viewed through the lens of war, intertwined with natural disasters and particular social movements (Hyatt-Burkhart & Levers, 2012). With this heightened attention to trauma—specifically combat neurosis in the Second World War—it was recognized for the first time that any combat soldier could break down under fire, and it was discovered that the number of psychiatric casualties was predictable because it was directly proportional to combat exposure (Herman, 1992). Regarding clinical presentation, the most recent advances in psychological trauma are best characterized by “neurobiology” (Bacciagaluppi, 2011; Brockman, 2002). This development traces back to Kardiner’s preliminary description of PTSD, which demonstrates the close interdependence of the psychological and physiological reactions to traumatic event (van der Kolk, 1987).

A significant body of research has confirmed that political violence trauma survivors
develop severe and chronic posttraumatic stress reactions (Goenjian et al., 2000; Greenbaum, Veerman, & Bacon-Shnoor, 2006; Thabet et al., 2004; Thabet & Vostanis, 1999). Subsequently, in the late 20th century, new developments that focus on trauma survivors’ experience of positive change in the aftermath of trauma arose through the works of Tedeschi and Calhoun (1995). In this advancement, the frightening and confusing aftermath of trauma, with its severely challenged assumptions, was found to be fertile ground for the experience of posttraumatic growth (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). Thus, this systematic review of the literature was intended to demonstrate the gaps in the literature from this positive perspective among political violence trauma survivors. The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experience of the survivors of multiple and recurrent traumas, of the skirmishes, the 2007 PEV, and the 2009 multiple national level fire explosions in Kenya. Specifically, this research intended to examine how the survivors have made meaning out of the trauma. In addition, this research examined the influence of survivors’ risk and protective factors on their interpretation of the trauma and their personal characteristics’ positive influence on their perception of life at the time of recurrent and multiple traumas and at the present in anticipation of regular imminent traumas.

To develop this research topic on posttraumatic growth, I specified the language, refined the focus of interest, and selected the academic vantage point. I selected the pertinent literature, conducted a literature search, and eventually refined the topic, procedures appropriate for gaining a thorough understanding of the subject matter (Machi & McEvoy, 2012). Initially, I identified the relevant literature dating from the formal recognition of posttraumatic growth in 1995 to 2014 through major database searches, specifically ProQuest, PsycINFO, ERIC, and Google Scholar. Next, to avoid selection bias which might threaten the credibility of the findings overall (Lipsey & Wilson, 2001), I did a library search for hard copies and electronic theses and
dissertations and contacted the leading authors in the trauma and posttraumatic growth fields for unpublished studies and more insights. The data I gathered while completing the search for literature affected my knowledge of the topic. The literature selected qualified and refined the thesis statement, as I narrowed it down and made it more concrete. Finally, I scanned the literature on posttraumatic growth conducted globally, in Africa, and then specifically in Kenya. In this step, I skimmed potential work for content and mapped the suitable work for inclusion in the study. The key descriptors for my search included “posttraumatic growth,” “post-traumatic growth,” “post traumatic growth,” “trauma,” “multiple trauma,” “benefit finding,” “adversarial growth,” “thriving,” “political violence,” “post-election violence,” and “post-election violence.” ‘Post-traumatic growth’ and ‘post traumatic’ growth were included in the key descriptors list as it was noted that a few researchers used these terms although majority of the researchers used the expression ‘posttraumatic growth.’ The online OneNote, EndNote, and OneDrive made an efficient process out of skimming and selecting suitable material for this study.

This chapter provides a detailed review of the related literature on the discovery and development of the concept trauma, description of the negative and positive impacts of traumatic exposure, and a discussion on the theoretical framework of this study. First, this overview particularly emphasizes the historical background of psychological trauma. This discussion begins with ancient and medieval narratives, looks at the discovery of trauma through hysteria, and then examines developments in thinking about trauma that have arisen from modern warfare as well as political violence and social unrest. Second, various current views are presented and discussed, including cross-cultural views of psychological trauma, the DSM-IV TR diagnosis of PTSD and its related controversies, and contemporary perceptions of psychological trauma. Third, posttraumatic growth and its related concepts are introduced, and its theoretical
foundations presented and thoroughly discussed, as well as the need to promote a positive perspective on psychotraumatology in African continent and the socio-economic challenges faced by the trauma survivors in Kenya. Key themes and trends identified in the review are discussed, thereby demonstrating the research gap in the literature that this study have filled. These themes include posttraumatic growth as a positive effect of trauma, collective posttraumatic growth experience, multiple trauma and the impact on growth, resilience, risk and protective factors, and posttraumatic growth as a lived experience. Finally, the conceptual framework of the methodology is presented and discussed. The chapter concludes with a summary of the comprehensive review of literature.

Historical Background of Psychological Trauma

Trauma in the Ancient and Medieval World

Trauma is both an ancient phenomenon which predates modern discourse and a modern concept that reflects the past. The ancient biblical narratives portray individual and communal experiences of natural disasters, which are often termed “acts of God” (Steinberg, 2000), and man-made catastrophes. The book of Genesis depicts humankind’s immediate physical and spiritual struggle with the consequences of the fall, including the expulsion from the Garden of Eden and the Flood. Exodus and Numbers show the early Israelites suffering from recurrent and multiple trauma and other life events. These books show their posttraumatic reaction to the significant collective trauma that resulted from slavery, plagues, genocide, and natural calamities, as well as preventive strategies for the epidemics and intervention measures for the stress reactions to trauma (Birnbaum, 2008). The accounts in Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, and Isaiah portray a people agonizing in pain but always with God’s assurance of His presence and the promise of a hope and a future (Jeremiah 29:11). Jeremiah sees violence in every sphere
The prophet provides an articulation of disaster; facilitates identification of survivors, and characterizes God as suffering over the trauma of his people (O’Connor, 2011). In all these excruciating experiences, the victims constructed meaning out of them differently. The historical destruction of the temple of Jerusalem was constructed as an immensely devastating trauma, an event whose posttraumatic reaction marks its remembrance in the cultural history of the Jewish people (Becker, Dochhorn, & Holt, 2014).

New research has discovered evidence of psychological trauma in earlier accounts of post combat sufferings from ancient Mesopotamia (present day Iraq) during the Assyrian dynasty, which lasted from 1300 to 609 BC (Abdul-Hamid & Hughes, 2014; Gallagher, 2015). According to Abdul-Hamid and Hughes, the symptoms (i.e., grappling with the spirits of the “ghosts they faced in battle,” fears, flashbacks, sleep disturbance, and low mood) the warriors exhibited in their struggle with afflictions from the spirits of the enemies whom they had killed during the battle mimicked those of contemporary PTSD. According to this research, the unearthed records of traumatic experiences of combatants during the Assyrian dynasty precede those usually cited as the first documented account of PTSD in the historical literature, which is Herodotus’ account of the Athenian spear carrier, Epizelus, who suffered from psychogenic mutism following the Marathon Wars.

As Tick (2001) reports, ancient historical experience of psychological trauma dates back to the fourth century BC; it is evident in the practice of sacred pilgrimages in Greece wherein pilgrims went for “temple sleep” or “incubation” in healing sanctuaries, such as the temple of Asklepios, the gentle Greek God of healing, and where clients presented themselves before the healing priest, the therapeutes—the first “therapists.” C. A. Meier, Jung’s disciple, incorporated
this ancient practice of incubation with modern psychotherapy by applying Askleopian principles to the practice of psychotherapy. As a psychologist, Meier believed that divine healing dreams created space for the autonomous healing factor in the psyche.

The Discovery of Trauma through Hysteria in the Mid-19th Century

The formal recognition of psychological trauma and its related illnesses, generation of theoretical assumptions, clinical diagnosis, and therapeutic interventions for their treatment began in the mid-19th century in the work of Jean-Martin Charcot, Sigmund Freud, Joseph Breuer, and Ferenczi. These doctors regarded hysteria as a mental illness assumed to be the product of psychical trauma which had been forgotten by the patient. Assigned in 1870 to La Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris, France, Charcot took care of hysterical and epileptic young women struggling with psychological reactions to sexual assault, poverty, and violence. The main symptoms exhibited by the patients included psychological neuroses, psychophysiological disorders, behavioral and habit disorders, and maladaptive patterns of relationships, including anxiety, phobic, conversion, and dissociative symptoms (Bogousslavky, 2014).

This trauma-induced hysteria had been treated for a number of years through hypnosis (Peter, 1989). The treatment involved cathartic induction for the patient into a hypnotic state so that he or she could recall the forgotten trauma along with appropriate emotions. Charcot’s student Freud had a growing interest in the theoretical and therapeutic aspects of mental healing, which he embraced, making a historical impact with his new skills. In 1895, Freud and Breuer published Studies on Hysteria, which was focused on the traumatic experience of a patient (from 1880 to 1882) called Anna O. This woman thus became the founding patient of psychoanalysis (Breuer & Freud, 1957). Freud eventually made changes in the procedure and theory of
hysteria treatment, holding onto his assertion of sexual trauma as the etiology of hysteria; but he parted ways with Breuer and his physiological approaches, naming the hysteria treatment psychoanalysis (Peter, 1989). Between 1898 and 1976, then, little work was done to explore the psychological and biological effects of traumatic life events which were occurring on a near-global scale, owing to World War I, World War II, the Vietnam War, and such civil wars as the Chinese Civil War of 1927-1949 (van der Kolk, 1987). Almost the only contribution consisted of writings from Ferenczi, the father of active and humanistic approach therapies, explaining his research on war neuroses during and after World War II; there were also some studies of concentration camp survivors.

According to critics, victims of extreme trauma suffered when Freud abandoned sex theory for fantasies on ego psychology and Oedipus complex (Peter, 1966) and switched to sex-centrism (Guasto, 2014), neglecting the organic-hysterical basis of the analysis (Dupont, 1985). In addition, external psychological trauma lost its credence in psychoanalytic persuasion when Freud discarded his belief in psychiatric problems as the manifestations of early childhood traumas and embraced childhood fantasies and misinterpretation of childhood events instead as the cause of hysteria neuroses (van der Kolk, 1987). Nevertheless, his correspondence depicts his struggle with the radical social implications of his hypothesis (Herman, 1992).

Psychoanalysis later was identified as having a double-edged, distinct, powerful global impact during colonial era. As some scholars have expressed in analyzing the clinical role of psychoanalysis in colonial and post-colonial contexts (Boschma & Vandenberg, 2013; Sadowsky, 2012), psychoanalysis—as one of the most influential and dominant psychiatric and psychological theories in the 1920s and 1930s—served to legitimize the imperialist colonial project. Its key constructs portrayed the human subject as existing of an ego (desire), super-ego
(self-reflection), and unconscious id (judgment laced morality). The theory portrayed the human subjects and culture of the colonized world as more primitive while influencing European and North American ideas about the colonial world and the native cultures. Though psychoanalysis has proven surprisingly useful for theorizing about anti-colonialism and postcolonial trauma (Anderson, Jenson, & Keller, 2011), researchers should be mindful of its Western roots in terms of taking cultural differences into account in examining societies’ responses to trauma.

It was Ferenczi who later countered Freud’s position and rediscovered trauma (Dupont, 1985). At the end of the 19th century, psychiatric interest in trauma as dissociation and somatic experiencing of old psychological injuries became widespread from the level of hysteria to varied spectrums and across different categories of disorders (Sulz, 2010; van der Kolk, 2000). The section on hysteria as originating from “dissociation disorders” does not refer to trauma in the DSM-IV TR (APA, 2000; Dayan & Olliac, 2010). The emphasis in psychiatry then shifted to intrapsychic and later to biomedical models, emphasizing genetic predisposition and the biological determinants of major mental illnesses (van der Kolk, 1987). However, the hysteria neurosis has resurfaced (Bogousslavsky, 2014) in a new definition that is based on its diverse symptoms and changing clinical presentation—its expression as non-pathological but physiological and expressional, as identified earlier by Breuer. As such, Kardiner’s (1941) idea still stands that the key explanations of the neuroses incidental to World War I trauma on a functional basis came largely from the influence of psychoanalysis, a development which has since made the world neurosis-minded.

**Controversial views on hysteria.** Two controversial views, the mental and the organic, were held with regard to the hysteria syndrome, leading to the current discussions on the diagnosis of PTSD and neurobiology. The former view, held by Charcot (Peter,
1989), emphasizes the concept of mental factors in hysteria and underscores the presence of a “dynamic” lesion which explains the lack of neuropathological findings in the patients (Bogousslavsky, 2014). Ferenczi and other supporters of the organic view, by way of contrast, claim that hysteria is a direct effect of widely disseminated organic lesions, the phenomenon of neurosis (Kardiner, 1941). Ferenczi’s (1873-1933) statement from a dialogue with Freud—“A certain strength in my psychological makeup seems to persist, so that instead of falling ill psychically, I can only destroy – or be destroyed – in my organic depths” (Dupont, 1985, p. x)—demonstrates his concept of the organic aspect of neurosis. Yet, a substantial body of scientists questioned this view because of the large number of neuroses found with no indication of concussion but still with the same symptoms as might be seen in an organic injury. Among these, Kardiner considered that the concussion might cause the organic lesion in the process of individual adaptation to the traumatic event. Furthermore, Kardiner’s preliminary description of traumatic neurosis established a foundation for PTSD, as it demonstrated the close interdependence of psychological and physiological reactions to a traumatic event (van der Kolk, 1987). Charcot’s impression of a dynamic lesion in the wake of a traumatic event has also recently been confirmed in findings from functional studies through magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI; Bogousslavsky, 2014). These new developments of neuroscience have not, of course, completely reduced the gap between the internal representation of the human psyche, the “mind,” and the external objective visualization of the brain, the “soma” (Dayan & Olliac, 2010).

The Development of Trauma in Modern Wars

The discovery of trauma through hysteria laid a foundation for psychotraumatology, though the psychologists, psychiatrists, and their neurotic patients are historically bound to the
social, political, economic, and cultural transformation of the Western world. The nature of the traumatic event, cultural perception or orientation, and individual and community response all influence the treatment and adaptation to the traumatic event (Burri & Maercker, 2014; van der Kolk, 1987; Young, 1998). Still, the reaction to psychological trauma is universal (Chemtob, 1996; van der Kolk, 1987). Moreover, symptoms of the reactions to trauma come in a predictable series, and many features can be found in almost all cases, regardless of the nature, cause, and severity of the trauma (Kardiner, 1941).

**Traumatic diagnoses of the World Wars.** Psychological responses to war trauma ranged from traumatic neuroses (Kardiner, 1941) to epileptic psychoses, (Ellis, 1908) and acute grief (Lindemann, 1944), among other syndromes. A reasonable number of psychiatrists have been identified who treated the war neuroses that appeared in the military and civilian populations. The civilian, combat, and combat-support officers exposed to series of external hardships, bombardment shocks, or frights associated with war experienced autonomic disturbances referred to in civil wars variously as “Soldier’s Heart,” “War neurasthenia,” or “effort syndrome,” usually described as “Graves’ disease” (Kardiner, 1941). The syndrome was known in the Napoleonic wars as “nostalgia” (as coined by Swiss physician Johannes Hofer in 1678). In World War I, it was also termed “traumatic neurosis” (Kardiner, 1941) or “shell shock” (Myers, 1940); in World War II, “combat exhaustion/fatigue” and in the Vietnam War, “stress response syndrome.” The “shell shock” of World War I, so coined by Charles Myers (1940) and being a newly discovered psycho-neurosis with a unique presentation, posted a major challenge to psychiatrists and physicians when over 3,580 combat troops suffered its significant impact especially during offensives when physical casualties escalated (Bailey, 1918; Herman, 1992; Jones, Thomas & Ironside, 2007). Nonetheless, to Kardiner (1941), traumatic neurosis,
the commonest neurotic disturbance of war, did not differ essentially from the traumatic neurosis of peacetime and natural catastrophes, such as earthquakes and fires. It differs only in pace, intensity, and concussion syndrome. Abdul-Hamid and Hughes (2014) found that the symptoms exhibited by ancient Mesopotamian warriors in their struggle with afflictions from the battle during the Assyrian dynasty between 1600 and 609 BC resembled those of contemporary PTSD. Likewise, the literature from World War II demonstrates no difference in the proportion of soldiers’ experience of trauma syndrome symptomatology from the previous war (Kardiner, 1941; Miller, 1940). Moreover, the pathognomonic signs of “shell shock” or those of “war neuroses” were almost identical to those of hysteria except with the former, the trauma was systematically recent and largely undisputable (Dayan & Olliac, 2010). The signs identified with the former include stupor, staring eyes, confusion, mutism, unexplained loss of sight, hearing, or paralysis, spasmodic convulsions or trembling of the limbs, anesthesia, blue cold extremities, and terrifying, repetitive nightmares (Dayan & Olliac, 2010; Hitchcock, 1937), while for the latter the cases consisted of extensive amnesia, fugue, and other dissociative disorders, the hallmark of the war neuroses explicated after the Great War.

**Traumatic neurosis.** After an intensive study on the observed psychic disturbances during the war, Kardiner (1941) named the war syndrome “traumatic neurosis” and rigorously worked on establishing its psychopathological issues including symptomatology, criteria for differential diagnosis, operational concepts, and a rationale for the therapy. Kardiner first described trauma as it is currently understood (Herman, 1992; van der Kolk, 1987) and called the human reactions to war trauma a “physioneurosis” (van der Kolk, 1987). The Berlin physician Groeningen considers the railways of Britain the birthplace of psychic trauma (Micale & Lerner, 2001); nonetheless, the advanced discussion on psychological trauma is traced back to Freud’s
efforts with his psychoanalytic theory of psychical (sexual) trauma based on Charcot’s male traumatic hysterical patients’ cases, and through his “deferred reaction” principle focused on the major role of trauma in arousing suppressed psychopathological images. PTSD derived its focus of discussion, initial identity, and diagnostic criteria through Charcot’s neurological expertise as well as the pioneer works of Freud and Kardiner (Libbrecht & Quackelbeen, 1994; Peter, 1989). The “shell shock,” “lightning neurosis,” and “railway spine” neuroses were identified according to the provoking agent or situation. Interestingly, psychiatrists and other medical historians reconsidered the medical condition “railway spine” in the late 20th century (Harrington, 2003). “Graves’ disease” and other neuroses derived their names from the specialists to whom the cases were assigned while neurocirculatory aesthenia and autonomic imbalance were named according to the nature of the presenting problem. Kardiner (1941) denounced this form of naming the syndrome based on its provoking agent and the character assigned to it but held onto reaction generated naming preferring the term “traumatic” in reference to all forms of syndromes, including “shell shock.”

**Epileptic psychoses.** Traumatic neuroses also often assumed an epileptoid character as evidenced in high incidents of postwar epilepsy (Kardiner, 1987) and frequently overwhelmed patients with acute grief (Lindemann, 1944). At the Central Psychiatric Hospital on the Russian side in the Japanese war, Red Cross Medical Officer Awtokratow found out that 1,347 men (one officer for every four privates) were received in 15 months (Ellis, 1908). Epileptic psychoses was the patients’ main presenting problem with the syndrome being the first among private patients while general paralysis and neurasthenic insanity came second, after alcoholism, among the officers.
**Acute grief.** Lindemann (1944) researched the psychological effects of the war and of the Cocoanut Grove Fire (1942) casualties. These events demonstrated an experience of recurrent traumas as a tragic fire at a night club in Boston, Massachusetts, came nearly a year after the bombing of the United States naval base Pearl Harbor in World War II (1941). The patients’ presenting problems included somatic distress, preoccupation with images of the deceased, guilt, hostile reaction, loss of patterns of conduct, and the appearance of the traits of the deceased in the behaviors of the bereaved, all symptoms characteristic of acute grief. The author found acute grief among psychoneurotic patients who had lost relatives in the course of treatment, relatives of patients who had died in the hospital, the bereaved disaster victims of Cocoanut Grove Fire (1942) and their relatives, and the relatives of members of the armed forces members.

**The Mau Mau Rebellion Trauma in Kenya**

The zeitgeist of the World Wars was present in the harsh rule the imperial British imposed on their then-colony of Kenya. The Mau Rebellion, which broke out between 1952 and 1960, traumatized civilians, bridging the World War and the Vietnamese War terrors as experienced by the combatants. Recently, some key media reporters, leading historical researchers from Oxford and Harvard and human rights activists (e.g., Anderson, 2005; Elkins, 2005; Keller, 2014; Leigh Day & Co Solicitors, 2009) have vividly documented and extensively described the Mau war survivors’ considerable testimonial recollection of socio-economic restraints and the psychological and physical trauma they experienced in the colony. Specifically, these writers gathered evidence of widespread and systematic torture of Kenyans by British colonial officials during the Kenya Emergency in the 1950s and early 1960s when few appropriate psychological evaluation and intervention measures were available to the war
victims in the continent. Among these agonies was the Lari double-massacre associated with the land dispute fought between Mau fighters on one side and British Colonial authorities and their African loyalists on the other, as well as the fighters avenging the loyalists and their families. These researchers identified civilian victims’ traumatic experience through arbitrary killings, castrations, sexual abuses, and the systematic use of extreme violence in response to their resistance to colonial authorities. Similar incidents are found in other parts of the world where rapes and other forms of sexual violence are identified as weapons of war used to humiliate, punish, control, inflict fear, and displace women and their communities (Fayomi, 2009; Prakash, 1996). In Bosnia, from 20,000 to 50,000 women were identified to be the victims of mass rape (Prakash, 1996). Fayomi (2009) discovered that rape and sexual violence was exerted at an alarming rate in the Sudanese genocide in Darfur also. Additionally, in the Kenya uprising, thousands of captives, overcrowded in some 150 transit or detention camps (the largest being located in Nakuru, Gilgil, and Thompson’s Fall, Nyahururu), suffered from tortures, malnutrition, starvation, and diseases. Yet, little attention has been given to how these survivors made meaning out of their experience of the war trauma.

In summary, traumatic neurosis was not without controversy during its evolution. Initially, railway spine, a medical condition, first described by John Erichsen (Erichsen & Friedberg, 1867) and commonly known as Erichsen’s disease, focused on spinal concussion and was differentiated from hysteria (Micale & Lerner, 2001). However, the description was contrary to Charcot’s association of “railway brain” with hysteria based on almost identical symptom presentations (Peter, 1989). Almost 20 years later, in a Franco-German contest on the pathology of the disorder, Erichsen’s work on spinal concussion was challenged, resulting in a change of focus from a spinal to a cerebral explanation of the symptoms, which was advanced to
include other widely different wound-related phenomena and was called “traumatic neurosis” (Clevenger, 1889). Kardiner (1941) confirmed the idea of traumatic neurosis after intensive study on the observed psychic disturbances of war and established a foundation for the clinical diagnosis of the medical condition and other related psychopathological issues. Finally, two lines of study—one on physical and mental abuse and neglect, on natural and man-made catastrophes, and the other on combat neurosis—converged in the definition of PTSD and its incorporation into the DSM-III in 1980 (Bacciagaluppi, 2011). Furthermore, psychologists and psychiatrists found diversity in the victims’ reactions to traumatic events, the impact of intensity and duration of traumatic exposure and clinical presentation of trauma induced disorders including PTSD, acute stress disorder, and dissociation among others.

21st Century Political Violence as Trauma Catalyst in Africa

Given the comparatively high rate of political violence on the African continent and the scope of its myriads of socio-economic and other problems, as in other poor and highly indebted parts of the world, violent phenomena and their short- and long-term psychosocial effects on individuals, communities, or specific ethnic groups are understudied (Pedersen, 2002; Veit, Barolsky, & Pillay, 2011). Political science research analysts have found that in sub-Saharan Africa during the second half of the 20th century a notable inverse switch in political violence, from major forms of large-scale organized war between states to within-state electoral violence and community conflicts (Bellows & Miguel, 2009; Pedersen, 2002; Straus, 2012). Over two-thirds of sub-Saharan African countries have experienced a civil conflict episode since 1980 (Bellows & Miguel, 2009). While there are significant efforts to curb the electoral violence in the continent, this form of violence will continue to pose serious challenges to democracy, stability, peace, and sanity until the lingering socio-economic and land reforms for the settlement
schemes, as well as the purchase program, political tensions, and lack of credibility in the electoral process in many African countries, are addressed (Kanyinga, 2009; Orji, 2013).

A number of epidemiological studies have documented the high prevalence of mental disorders among children, adolescents, and adults exposed to such political violence and other war-like circumstances. Besides, a considerable number of these studies has identified the psychological effects of exposure to political violence on mental health including PTSD, depression, anxiety, panic disorder, and other health-related challenges to quality of life (Eisenman, Gelberg, & Shapiro, 2003; Elbedour, Onwuegbuzie, Ghannam, Whitcome, & Hein, 2007; Harder, Mutiso, Khasakhala, Burke, & Ndetei, 2012; Kohrt et al., 2012).

**The 2007 PEV trauma in Kenya.** Upon a dispute over the 2007 presidential electoral votes in Kenya, unprecedented levels of violence broke out across the country, adding to the history of political, electoral, and ethnic/clan violence in Africa. The violence occurred primarily in Nairobi, the Rift Valley, Nyanza, and the Central Provinces of Kenya. Harder et al. (2012) and Hamer (2013) are two of a small number of researchers who have found evidence of PTSD among the multiple trauma survivors from the PEV in Kenya.

Based on information from research scholars, media, and anecdote gathering, the PEV of 2007 in Kenya can be traced to some key issues. Among these are the socio-economic conditions, the settlement schemes, and the purchase program land reforms in the former white highlands, especially in the Rift Valley region, which have been addressed throughout the post-colonial period; ethnicity and the invocation of irrelevant cultural stereotypes to discredit certain ethnic communities; and irregularities in counted votes (Hamer, 2013; Kanyinga, 2009; Oucho, 2010; Rice, 2008). The core land and labor issues trace back to the colonial era and are linked to the Mau War associated with the Lari and Tigoni land disputes in Central Province; the
Olenguruone squatters militancy; and squatter resettlement in different regions, mainly in the Rift Valley and Western Provinces (Anderson, 2005; Elkins, 2005; Kanyinga, 2009; Keller, 2014). Other issues identified as important include political tensions; political power sharing; lack of equitable regional development and resource allocation including mental health care, infrastructure, parliamentary posts, and job opportunities; and lack of credibility in the electoral process in the country (Kanyinga, 2009; Orji, 2013; Oucho, 2010).

**Terrorism-induced trauma.** According to Baun and Dougall (2002), Curran (1998), and Torabi and Seo (2004, as cited in Vázquez, Pérez-Sales, & Hervás, 2012) terrorism is potentially more devastating than other natural and man-made disasters and types of violence. This argument is based on the fact that terrorism involves a deliberate intent to harm, targets populous areas rather than a specific target, often lacks a clear end point because the threats are always enduring, and tends to instill fear because no one is sure whether the worst is over or is yet to come. As highlighted by van der Kolk (1987), the factors which determine the duration and severity of the trauma response are the severity and specific features of the trauma itself, genetic predisposition, developmental phase, a person’s social support system, prior traumatization, and preexisting personality.

**Cross-cultural Views of Psychological Trauma**

The discovery of trauma as an etiological factor in mental illnesses is more than a century old (van der Kolk, 2000). As portrayed in the literature, some variations exist in the psychiatric and biological implications, as well as some divergent views on the cross-cultural interpretations of trauma and its concepts. However, as expressed by Colvin (2007), the increasing global languages of trauma complicate the comprehension of the effects of trauma events such as political violence. Understanding the impact of trauma requires an intrinsic knowledge of the
survivors’ cultural interpretation and perceptions of traumatic event(s). According to Thao (2010) and Lee (1996), karma is a common belief throughout Asia, which conceives of life as souls’ coming back to earth time after time, making individuals struggle with the effects of emotional traumas and experience mental illnesses such as depression, insomnia, and aggressiveness. In this concept, facing the effects of traumatic events is often regarded as payment for sins from the past or as a curse from God. In cultures ingrained with Buddhist philosophy, human suffering is viewed from an existential perspective (Jayatunge, 2013). The trauma survivors’ recovery process is accelerated through incorporation of traditional cultural beliefs and values, through which they achieve greater personal growth. As in the earlier debate on hysteria, conventional social institutions fail to recognize most rapes and sexual assault as violations and construe them as consensual sexual relations for which the victims are held responsible for the violence against them (Herman, 1992).

Research done in Uganda and Vietnam found that children are considered orphaned whether they lose one parent or two (Mattoon, 2011), which has major implications for the psychological impact of political violence on children and in the community in those countries. Similarly, the African context contains its own various and unique perceptions of trauma. Though in the African tradition, rape and sexual violence victims are not viewed as iniquitous as in the above-mentioned views, social stigma, shame, and devaluation may be attributed to the victims and the perpetrators as the cultural mores prevent reporting such an atrocious act which is often covered up and kept secret, leaving the perpetrators protected (Delano, 1998; Fayomi, 2009; Reavey & Warner, 2003). In Darfurian society, which is greatly afflicted by war, rape makes the victims ineligible for marriage and ostracized by both the family and community members, hence causing serious psychosocial and economic consequences (Fayomi, 2009). As
serious problems that transcend racial, economic, social, and regional lines, sexual abuse and violence greatly affect females and youth, predominantly those with low economic and social status, and especially in sub-Saharan countries.

Among Somali refugees in Ethiopia, war-related distress is assimilated into the framework of Somali politics in which individual injuries are not considered as traumatic events but rather as injuries to a lineage, and the dominant emotions are not expressed as sadness or fear but as anger (Zarowsky, 2000). Nonetheless, reaction to psychological traumas is universal (Chemtob, 1996; van der Kolk, 1987), though the perception and interpretation of such trauma varies from culture to culture. Thus, culture is among the powerful tools in promoting or hindering psychological recovery, based on varied cultural views and interpretations of trauma (Jayatunge, 2013).

**DSM-IV TR Diagnosis of the Categories of Trauma**

Research scholars have found that not everyone who experiences a potentially traumatic event will experience psychological trauma (Frankl, 1984; Lazarus, 1991; Storr, Ialongo, Anthony, & Breslau, 2007). However, it has also been clinically established that the person who has experienced, witnessed, or been confronted with an event or events that involve actual or threatened death or serious injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of self or others, will experience PTSD (APA, 2000).

**Diagnostic Criteria of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.**

As highlighted in the *DSM-IV-TR*, (APA, 2000) a case meets the diagnostic criteria for PTSD (a) if the person’s response involved intense fear, helplessness, or horror; (b) if the traumatic event is persistently re-experienced in one (or more) of the following symptoms: recurrent, intrusive recollections of the event, especially if they are distressing, including images,
thoughts, perceptions or dreams; feelings that the traumatic event is recurring (e.g., a sense of reliving the experience or illusions, hallucinations, and dissociative flashback episodes); intense psychological distress or physiological reactivity in the presence of cues, either internal or external, that symbolize or resemble an aspect of the traumatic event; (c) if the client persistently avoids stimuli associated with the trauma accompanied by numbing of general responsiveness (not present prior to the trauma), as indicated by three (or more) of the following: efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings, or conversations associated with the trauma event; efforts to avoid activities, places, or people that arouse recollections of the trauma; loss of memory or inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma; markedly diminished interest or participation in significant activities; feeling of detachment or estrangement from others; restricted range of affect (e.g., unable to have loving feelings), and sense of a foreshortened future (e.g., does not expect to have a career, marriage, children, or a normal lifespan); (d) if the person exhibits persistent symptoms of increased arousal (not present before the trauma), as indicated by two (or more) of the symptoms, ranging from difficulty falling or staying asleep, irritability or outbursts of anger, difficulty concentrating, or hypervigilance, to exaggerated startle response. According to these diagnostic criteria, the duration of the disturbance (i.e., the symptoms listed) is more than 1 month. Additionally, the disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning. The diagnosis is considered to be “acute” if the duration of symptoms is less than 3 months, “chronic” if symptoms last 3 months or more, or “with delayed onset” if the onset of symptoms is at least 6 months after the stressor (APA, 2000, pp 467-8).

However, fuzzy boundaries and interconnections have complicated the diagnosis of PTSD as symptoms cluster neatly into syndromes, creating a “zone of rarity” (Rosen, 2004).
Also, long latency in the appearance of PTSD symptoms obscures identification of when the traumatic experience has been resolved, as was evidenced in the case of an unexpected high incident of delayed stress reactions in Vietnam War veterans (van der Kolk, 1987). Davidson and Foa (1991) consider PTSD as a *sui generis* condition owing to the difficulty of delineating the disorder from its other comorbid disorders and the lack of a consistent pattern emerging from the data. Such considerations have continually caused divergent reactions to PTSD diagnosis and treatment.

**Controversies on PTSD Diagnoses**

Long before the development of modern psychiatry, psychology, and research interests, clinicians have had sharply divergent views about the nature, etiology, diagnosis, and treatment of trauma-related sequelae and disorders (Levers, 2012; van der Kolk, 1987). Specifically, PTSD uniquely claims an etiological agent, the “traumatic stressor” (Herman, 1992). With its definitions, assumptions, and theoretical underpinnings, the disorder has faced strong clinical and scientific criticisms for lack of empirical support. For more than 25 years of research and clinical experience, the diagnosis went through key challenges (Rosen, 2004; Weathers & Keane, 2007), culminating with an expressed need for a PTSD diagnosis adjustment, including the criteria in the *DSM-IV*. According to Breslau, Chase, and Anthony (2002) and Herman (1992), the official definition of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in the *DSM-III* and subsequent DSM editions was based on a conceptual model that brackets traumatic or catastrophic events from less severe stressors and links them with a specific syndrome. Specifically, the controversy surrounds broadening the definition, dose-response model, distortion in trauma recollections, “phony combat vets,” the politics of trauma (McNally, 2003), stressor criterion, and the assumption that a unique class of events results in PTSD, derived primarily from observations of
survivors of relatively circumscribed traumatic events (Herman, 1992; Rosen, 2004). As a result, PTSD has been removed from its previous classification as an anxiety disorder in DSM-IV-TR (APA, 2000), and has been placed in the chapter on “Trauma- and Stressor-Related Disorders in DSM-V, which precedes and come after closely related sets of diagnoses (APA, 2013); relationship which requires a clinician to take extra caution in order to make accurate diagnosis (Tehrani & Levers, 2016). According to the DSM-V (APA, 2013):

The essential feature of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder is the development of characteristic symptoms following exposure to one or more traumatic events. Emotional reactions to the traumatic event (e.g., fear, helplessness, horror) are no longer a part of Criterion A. The clinical presentation of PTSD varies. In some individuals, fear-based re-experiencing, emotional, and behavioral symptoms may predominate. In others, anhedonic or dysphoric mood states and negative cognitions may be most distressing. In some other individuals, arousal and reactive-externalizing symptoms are prominent, while in others, dissociative symptoms predominate. Finally, some individuals exhibit combinations of these symptom patterns.

Most relevant to the current research is that the original diagnosis of PTSD was based on relatively limited traumatic experiences, thus leaving out prolonged, repeated excruciating trauma. Herman (1992) recognized the need to categorize the impact of the trauma based on the levels of severity. Herman argued for the existence of a more complex PTSD syndrome, namely the disorders of extreme stress not otherwise specified (DESNOS), found only in the captive survivors of prolonged, repeated trauma. Though Herman (1992) clearly recognized the failure in the diagnostic formulation of PTSD to capture the aftermath effects of prolonged, repeated
trauma the victims may experience in a state of captivity under the control of the perpetrator, the lived experiences of non-captives or rather ‘psychological captive’ civilian survivors of recurrent and multiple skirmishes and political violence trauma have not been clearly explicated.

**Posttraumatic Growth and its Related Concepts**

**Posttraumatic Growth**

PTG been identified by Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004) as an on-going process, not a static outcome. It involves undergoing a significant “life-changing” psychological shift in thinking and relating to the world as it contributes to a personal process of change that is deeply meaningful. Tedeschi and Calhoun recognized that traumatic events are not simply the precursors of growth; rather, they are profoundly disturbing, but the same psychological processes help in managing both the disturbances and the experience of growth. Unlike resilience, coherence, optimism, and hardiness, PTG qualitatively transforms the survivors’ level of functioning (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995).

In the process of self-reflection and reevaluation, in a struggle to resume a state of equilibrium after the trauma, survivors experience PTG, which propels them to a higher level of functioning than before the adversarial experience (Cadell & Cheryl, 2010; Linley & Joseph, 2004). Furthermore, the frightening and confusing aftermath of trauma, with its severe challenges to one’s assumptions, has been found to be fertile ground for experiencing PTG (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). As part of the Kabarak Crisis Intervention Counselors Association (KACICA) team, I observed how victims of serial national level traumas struggle and survive multiple trauma in various parts of the country. The ways in which the survivors’ protective and risk factors influenced their relocation, standards of living, and reaction to recurrent traumatization captured my attention, and that experience became an inspiration for this study.
Spirituality, social support, and life stressors among other characteristics/factors were identified to contribute to the experience of growth (Cadell, Regehr, & Hemsworth, 2003).

**Domains of posttraumatic growth.** Posttraumatic growth is defined by positive changes in one or more of the five domains including: New possibilities, relating to others, personal strength, spiritual change, and appreciation of life (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1999).

**Controversies over posttraumatic growth.** Certain controversial issues in this concept range from the interpretation of “growth” to cognitive processing, individual self-disclosure, and assumptions of supporters' reactions to crisis incidents, issues which have emanated from the utility of the PTGI instrument. Wortman (2005) highlighted that what is called “growth” in many studies may not be growth at all, questioning the prevalence of growth, what constitutes significant growth, and the idea that cognitive processing and self-disclosure facilitate one’s experience of PTG. She argued that cognitive processing does not seem to be involved in growth as those who do best following adversity frequently show little evidence of processing, maintaining as well as that too much optimism has been displayed in assuming that others will respond to disclosure with empathy and concern (Wortman, 2005). Likewise, Ransom, Sheldon, and Jacobsen (2008) identified as problematic the validation of PTG reports that reflect actual, measurable change largely because of the difficulty in obtaining pre-stressor data from informants who subsequently survive a traumatic event. In relation to the universality of PTG concepts, Splevins, Cohen, Bowley, and Joseph (2010) argued that conceptually posttraumatic growth may be cross-culturally valid, yet operationally its concepts may serve to impose the assumptions of a Western individualistic society.

**Measurement of posttraumatic growth.** Tedeschi and Calhoun’s (1996) Posttraumatic Growth Inventory (PTGI) is a 21-item scale that serves as an instrument for assessing positive
outcomes reported by persons who have experienced traumatic events. The factors measured include new possibilities, relating to others, personal strength, spiritual change, and appreciation of life. The scale seems to be suitable for determining how successful individuals are in reconstructing their perceptions of self, others, and the meaning of life events as they cope with the aftermath of trauma (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996).

**Estimate of PTGI’s reliability.** Tedeschi and Calhoun (1996) reported excellent internal consistency for the resulting 21-item PTGI as $p = .90$ with the $p$ values for the five-factor subscales as follows: New Possibilities ($p = .84$), Relating to Others ($p = .85$), Personal Strength ($p = .72$), Spiritual Change ($p = .85$), and Appreciation of Life ($p = .67$). This internal consistency was confirmed by other researchers and reviewers of the test. In terms of the total PTGI scores, the test-retest reliability estimate (over 2 months in a subsample $n = 28$ of the original sample) was reported to be $.71$. Test-retest reliability estimates for the scores on the components ranged from $.65$ to $.74$, with the exception of Personal Strength ($r = .37$) and Appreciation of Life ($r = .47$), which were below that range (Alia & Sylvia, 2005).

**Evidence for validity.** Once the set of 21 items for PTGI was established, social desirability was ruled out by use of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (Marlowe & Crowne, 1960, as cited in Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). Further, issues associated with personality characteristics, such as optimism, (Scheier, Weintraub, & Carver, 1986) resilience, (Bonanno, 2004), and hardiness, (Kobasa, 1979) were explored.

**Administration time/period assessed.** Even though it is not clear how long it took for the test to be administered, the time frame after the tragedy was highly emphasized. At least 6 months ought to elapse after the traumatic event before self-administration of the test, as matters related to growth are best addressed after the individual has had sufficient time to adapt to the
aftermath of the trauma (Tillier & Alberta, 2012). It is worth knowing that it may take time to experience change in the areas addressed by the exercise: relating to others and appreciation of life, among others. People often show growth in some areas but not in others and rarely show growth in all areas at a given time (Tillier & Alberta, 2012).

**What the test measures.** The PTGI (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996) consists of 21 self-report items that assess perceptions of growth with respect to five aspects. Five subscales constitute the scale: relating to others (7 items; e.g., "Putting efforts into my relationships"), new possibilities (5 items; e.g., "I developed new interests"), personal strength (4 items; e.g., "Knowing I can handle difficulties"), spiritual change (2 items; e.g., "I have a stronger religious faith"), and appreciation of life (3 items; e.g., "My priorities about what is important in life" (Alia & Sylvia, 2005; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996). The test is based on the authors’ clinical and empirical work with patients who have experienced and overcome adversity across the lifespan.

**Purpose/predictor of.** As explained by Tedeschi and Calhoun, (1996), the PTGI measures the extent to which survivors of traumatic events perceive personal benefits, including changes in perceptions of self, relationships with others, and philosophy of life, accruing from their attempts to cope with trauma and its aftermath. The test can alert researchers to the possibility of positive outcomes, as well as a comparison among persons confronted with different traumatic events in varying contexts. As such, the test developers created items that reflect the kind of above-mentioned benefits. The PTGI is modestly related to optimism and extraversion. The scale appears to have utility in determining how successful individuals are, when coping with the aftermath of trauma, in reconstructing or strengthening their perceptions of self, others, and the meaning of events. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2012 APA).

**Intended test population.** The test was designed for people of all ages, including
children, adolescents, young adults, and adults who have experienced severely traumatic events. PTGI has been used internationally with a number of different traumatized populations, including those who have survived sexual assault, military combat, bereavement, natural disasters, and serious injury (Linley & Joseph, 2004).

**Resilience**

Resilience refer to the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats, or other significant sources of stress—such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors. It means “bouncing back” from difficult experiences (APA, 2014). Bonanno (2004) expressed that in spite of being exposed to loss or potentially traumatic events at some point in life, many people continue to have positive emotional experiences and show only minor and temporary disruptions in their ability to function. The author challenged the loss and trauma theorists’ view of resilience as rare and pathological and categorized it as more common than is often believed, as the offshoot of the process of recovery that presents itself in several and often unanticipated manners. Carver (1998) suggested the use of the term *resilience* to be reserved to denote a homeostatic return to a prior condition, as commonly understood to imply. Whereas Konvisser (2013) expressed that narratives of resilience reflect survivors’ attitudes of moving on with their lives “as normal,” those demonstrating PTG express their visions for the future as having a focus on moving forward with action and finding meaning and self-fulfillment through self-transcendence or altruism.

**Components of adult resilience.**

*Hardiness.* As Kobasa (1979) first introduced the term, psychological hardiness, alternatively referred to as personality or cognitive hardiness in the literature, is a personality
style. The author associated high stress and low illness with more hardiness – having a stronger commitment to self, an attitude of vigorousness toward the environment, a sense of meaningfulness, and an internal locus of control. Also, Thomassen, Hystad, Johnsen, Johnsen, Laberg, and Eid, (2015) found that both cohesion and hardiness contribute to increased stress resiliency. Dispositional Optimism. Optimism, psychologically referred to as ‘dispositional optimism’ is a stable personality trait characterized by general positive expectations that influence motivated action and leads a person to cope more adaptively with stress (Zagorski, 2013; Scheier & Carver, 1992). The optimists anticipate positive outcomes from their actions. That optimism is implicated in the propensity to attribute the cause of negative events as external and unstable and hence influences future expectations and behavior. Lynch (2006) discovered that the higher the level of optimism, the more active the coping strategies the individuals with chronic mental illness employed. Sense of Coherence. The 'sense of coherence,' or way of making sense of the world, is a key factor in determining how well a person manages stress and stays healthy (Antonovsky, 1987). Locus of Control. "[A] Individuals[’] locus of control, according to Julian Rotter, provides a reason for their basic motivational orientation and their perception of control" (Nugent, 2013). Self-efficacy. According to Bandura (1982), Self-Efficacy Mechanism (SEM) principles influence thought patterns, actions, and emotional arousal in a manner that the higher the level of induced self-efficacy, the higher the performance accomplishments and the lower the emotional arousal. Roddenberry and Renk (2010) suggested that higher levels of external locus of control combined with lower levels self-efficacy are related to higher illness-related psychological distress.
Theoretical Foundations of Posttraumatic Growth

Scholarly focus on the theoretical foundations of posttraumatic growth has increased concurrently with the research discoveries that have associated the phenomenon with benefits after high levels of stress and trauma that challenge the victim’s assumptive world. It appears that there are various approaches to studies on the theoretical foundation of PTG. Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004) believed that PTG is an ongoing process, not a static outcome. They posited that significant cognitive processing— involving cognitive reconstruction, individual characteristics, support, and disclosure—greatly contribute to the process. It involves the survivors’ experience of extreme holistic change in life processes and implies that the trauma has interfered with their already established schemas (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). Furthermore, the trauma initiates certain kinds of rumination, which appear to lead to a revision of fundamental schemas about the self, others, and the future (Tedeschi, 1999). This reaction leads to a construction of positive adaptive schemas or the establishment of dysfunctional negative ones, which result in positive meaning (PTG) or in anomalies such as PTSD symptoms, respectively (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). Such developments often result in changes in identity, philosophy, and goals (Tedeschi, 1999). Unlike resilience, coherence, optimism, and hardiness, PTG qualitatively transforms the survivors’ level of functioning (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1995). It interacts with life wisdom and the advancement of life narratives (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004), and it was into these concepts that this study intended to tap in order to identify how the survivors have made meaning out of their traumatic experience. PTG is a trauma-instigated positive process of self-redefinition and integration of the transformed sense of self into the identity-defining life story (McAdams & Pals, 2004).
Affleck and Tennen (1996) also situated PTG or benefit-finding within stress and coping theories, as an adaptive function for psychological adjustment to threat. Coping theorists posit that PTG is a coping mechanism whereby survivors cognitively adapt to a life-threatening event in search of the meaning of the experience, an attempt to regain mastery over the event, and a struggle to restore self-esteem through self-enhancing evaluations (Taylor, 1983). Affleck and Tennen emphasized the need to appreciate the means by which major adversities threaten our most treasured assumptions about ourselves and the world in order to understand the adaptive value of PTG. Janoff-Bulman (1992, as cited in Affleck & Tennen, 1996) discussed survivors’ emphasis on benevolence over malevolence, meaningfulness over randomness, and self-worth over self-abasement in the process of intense interpretation and evaluation of benefits and lessons learned from the event.

**Promoting a Positive Perspective on Psychotraumatology on the African Continent**

As practiced in other parts of the world, especially in the West, promotion of the experience of PTG among survivors of multiple traumas sorely needed on the African continent. Trauma is a frequent occurrence in Africa, from natural catastrophes to man-made disasters, which are experienced in different ways among individuals, families, soldiers, and civilians alike. Natural catastrophes, such as earthquakes, wildfires, motor accidents, and floods have devastated various regions of the continent. The man-made acts often witnessed or perpetrated include gunfire, beatings or, armed attack, being tied up, being attacked in a war, battles, killings, massacres, sexual assault and rape, and the torching of occupied homes or business premises (Blattman, 2008; Lindemann, 1944; Prakash, 1996; *USA Today*, 2008). The historic cultural and religious values forbidding harm to children, physically challenged individuals, women (especially pregnant mothers), and non-soldiers/non-warriors has long been eroded with the
civilians being subjected to political violence and its associated brutalities. Survivors of such natural and man-made anomalies often receive help for their physical, financial, and social needs, but less to fulfill their psychological needs from emergency relief sources in many developing countries. This study has generated ideas and information to contribute to the establishment and propagation of PTG promotion strategies and concepts to facilitate in mitigating the psychological impact of political violence trauma on the civilians and combatants in developing countries. Access to mental health professionals, as conceptualized in Western models, is far from being a realistic option in some communities that lack access to fulfilling basic needs in these regions (Miller & Rasco, 2004).

According to Wadsworth (2010) and North et al. (2005), not much research has been done on African disaster-affected populations, especially on victims of violence and other vulnerable people. Yet, guidelines on psychosocial interventions in post-conflict areas emphasize that crisis intervention should be based on local needs and built on culture-specific expertise (Jong & Reis, 2013). Further, there is great need for interventions aimed at increasing optimism, social support, and specific coping strategies to promote the survivors’ experience of positive changes in the aftermath of trauma (Prati & Pietrantoni, 2009). It is essential that counsellors working with survivors of political violence consider both individual psychological factors as well as ecological ones in their interventions (Staciuc & Rogers, 2011). An integrated policy and strategy, ranging from systematic educational interventions to equip health care service providers with required knowledge and skills, organized public education to raise awareness of the importance of mental health and the prominence of mental disorders, to clear organisational reforms to enable interventions to be mainstreamed in the health system and regular health care is essential to establish significant and enduring improvements in mental
health services (Jenkins, McCulloch, Friedli, & Parker, 2002; World Health Organisation: The world health report 2001, as cited by Kiima & Jenkins, 2010). There is also a great need for research attention to displaced and disenfranchised, low status, vulnerable families in Africa (Wadsworth, 2010). Much work needs to be done by way of bringing to the continent such concepts as improved meaning making in the form of relationships with others, appreciation of life, new possibilities/purpose, spiritual change, and personal strength (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 1996) among the survivors of the various traumas that mar the developing continent.

**Socio-economic Conditions in Kenya**

As Tedeschi and Calhoun (1996) discussed, individuals’ socioeconomic status plays a role in the experience of posttraumatic growth after the trauma. The socio-economic challenges in Africa are confirmation of the great need to explore the PTG experience of recurrent and multiple trauma survivors of political, electoral, and ethnic/clan violence in the continent with the aim of identifying appropriate intervention measures. Sub-Saharan Africa is marked by pervasive poverty, famine, drought, epidemic Ebola, high HIV/AIDS prevalence, limited educational opportunities, weak social controls, widespread political and ethnic/clan conflicts, and other natural and man-made disasters that undermine human security and protection (Bellows & Miguel, 2009; Forest & Giroux, 2011; Kabiru, Izugbara, & Beguy, 2013; Webersik, 2004; WHO Ebola Response Team, 2014). As a key risk factor in the experience of growth, the level of poverty was identified to be increasing in Africa, especially considering the improvement in modern technology. As shown in the World Bank development report (2007), the number of people living in poverty situation in the continent in the early 21st century nearly doubled to 314 million, despite some African countries having achieved economic growth averaging 5.1% in recent years.
After the PEV, many of the trauma survivors from the upper economic classes independently relocated to rental housing in safer environments where some may have finally searched for either employment transfer or new socio-economic networks. Some of the middle-class trauma survivors temporarily lived with their relatives or friends who were less affected and in less dangerous zones. However, people in a lower socio-economic bracket, who seemed to be the majority of the trauma survivors, temporarily relocated to public recreational centers and IDP camps. According to Dercon and Gutiérrez-Romero’s (2012) pre- and post-electoral surveys outcome, 3% of the 1206 interviewed victims of electoral violence relocated to another towns (or part of towns) in Kenya, 3% relocated to other rural areas in Kenya, 2% moved to camps for displaced people, 4% moved in with relatives or others in the same area, and 1% relocated outside Kenya. The lived experience of the 1%, a minority, who relocated out of the country is reflected in extensive research on refugees (Copping, Shakespeare-Finch, & Paton, 2010; Gilpin-Jackson, 2012, Powell & Rosner, et al., 2003). However, the experiences of the majority, the civilian populace who relocated within the country, need to be addressed.

Despite relocation, some again became either primary or secondary victims of trauma owing to the 2009 Sachangwan oil tanker fire explosion. However, the scope, frequency, and intensity of the traumata determine the amount of psychosocio-economic support the family and social community provide to the trauma survivors and hence may influence their experience of PTSD and PT. How processes of posttraumatic growth, resilience, and vulnerability play out in families, in particular when they live amidst collective, compound, and imminent trauma (Wadsworth, 2010) in the non-western world, calls for more research.

Reports of PTG have been found among survivors of various traumatic experiences such as grief (Buchi et al. 2007); loss of property, possession, or a job (Hobfoll, Tracy, & Galea,
2006); HIV infections and other medical conditions; fire explosions; accidents; and natural and man-made disasters (Linley & Joseph, 2004; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004; Thompson, 1985). In all these studies, the nature of the trauma experienced by the participants, considering their SES status and how they made meaning out of those experiences, may not be the same as that of trauma survivors in Africa, specifically in Kenya. Thus, there is very little literature specific to the Kenyan PEV (Hamer, 2013) and especially to trauma survivors’ lived experience in the aftermath of the violence.

Regarding studies on the survivors’ development in SES in the aftermath of traumatic experience, Carpenter, Brockopp, and Andrykowski (1999) discovered that breast cancer survivors who reported PTG had significantly higher income than their counterparts without cancer. Their research was focused mostly on self-transformation as a positive effect of traumata, but the aspect of recurrence, multiplicity, and imminence of traumas was not considered. Leung (2010) found out that greater PTG was related to lower family income, which is indicative of low socioeconomic status (SES). However, Linley and Joseph’s (2004) review revealed inconsistent associations between adversarial growth and socio-demographic variables (gender, age, education, and income). Other factors, such as the environment and cultural context, which may have played a role in the survivors’ experience and which might have made a difference in the experience of growth, are not clearly addressed.

**Posttraumatic Growth, the Positive Effect of Trauma**

In light of the man-made and natural catastrophes and cataclysms which have frequently marred the 21st-century world, trauma and its concepts are a key focus in research and practice. Psychological trauma was officially recognized in 1980 under its category in psychological medicine as Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) by the American Psychiatric Association
It was not until the mid-1990s when the other facet of PTSD, posttraumatic growth as a positive aftermath of trauma, was scientifically acknowledged through the resourceful work of Tedeschi and Calhoun (1995). Quite a few studies on PTG have been conducted in the American, European, and Asian continents, but fewer in developing countries, which are frequently marred with political violence. Some of the research on political violence from other contexts include a study on the positive impact of trauma and culturally competent practice, done in the Middle East among Palestinians (Punamaki, 2010), in Western Asia among Israeli Jews (Laufer & Solomon, 2010), and in Europe among the Turkish population (Kilic, 2010). Laufer and Solomon (2006) conducted studies on PTG among Israeli youth exposed to terrorist incidents. According to Baun and Dougall (2002), Curran (1998), and Torabi and Seo (2004, as cited in Vázquez, Pérez-Sales, and Hervás, 2012), terrorism intimidates and instills fear in society as a whole because the threats are always enduring, and nobody can be sure whether the worst is over or is yet to come. The cultural environment, the time, the duration, and the nature and scope of exposure to trauma in these studies are varied.

From a social perspective, Blooms (1998) looked at social transformation in South Africa as a positive effect of trauma. Splevins, Cohen, Joseph, Murray, and Bowley (2010) carried out qualitative research among eight interpreters for trauma survivors in refugee camps in northwestern England and found them to have experienced vicarious posttraumatic growth (VPTG). Some of the interpreters and the trauma survivors were Africans, with the former speaking either Kirundi, Swahili, or Lingala African community languages (Splevins et al. 2010). Kryger and Lindgren (2011) examined the potential for PTG experience among 12 youths formerly associated with the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in Northern Uganda.
Through an IPA lens, these authors analyzed the participants’ life narratives and generated growth-related themes, including social support, participation, self-perception, and faith in God. Though the authors employed IPA in their research scrutiny, as was the case with this study, the research participants were youth formerly subjected to forced service as perpetrators of war, not adult civilians.

Bellows and Miguel (2009) also studied the aspect of posttraumatic growth among the Sierra Leone civilian population subsequent to the brutal experiences of the 1991–2002 Sierra Leone Civil War. In this study, one characteristic of posttraumatic growth exhibited by the victims of Sierra Leone civil war was that the war victims made higher contributions to some local public goods, which the authors attributed to changes in individual preferences and values. The authors further found out individuals whose households directly experienced war violence were much more active political and civic participants than non-victims. The war victims were positively and significantly responsive to casting their votes and were more likely to register to vote (by 2.6 percentage points), attend community meetings (by 6.5 percentage points), participate in local political and community groups, and contribute to the local public good, such as serving on a local primary school committee. Bellows and Miguel’s study focused on the civilian populace, making it distinct from the majority of studies on posttraumatic growth conducted among African refugees in other continents (e.g., African war survivors in Canada, United States, and England [Gilpin-Jackson, 2012]; Sudanese-Australians in Australia [Copping, Shakespeare-Finch, & Paton, 2010] and other African countries—e.g., Cote d'Ivoire refugees in Liberia [Gregory & Prana, 2013]; Congolese refugees in Nakivale Camp in Uganda [Ssenyonga, Owens, & Olema, 2013], and youths formerly associated with the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in Northern Uganda [Kryger & Lindgren, 2011]). However, Bellows and Miguel’s
approach was political and economic rather than psychological. The authors also employed an experimental research strategy and focused only on providing evidence on the impact of localized conflict rather than overall national effects. Furthermore, as acknowledged by the authors, all of the evidence on victimization is self-reported, raising concerns about systematic response bias, including possible over-reporting of victimization. Nonetheless, Bellows and Miguel (2009) expressed a need for more research to be done on the legacies of civil wars in Africa and implied the positive outcomes of trauma by underscoring the fact that the legacies of these civil wars need not be all catastrophic, even though their humanitarian costs are horrific.

Gregory and Prana (2013) trained 49 Côte d’Ivoire refugees in a remote location in Liberia (29 women and 20 men; N = 49), aged 18 to 56 years (M = 37.4 years), using the 10 modules taught in the companion recovery (CR) model. Though the researchers seemed to have used a very small sample size for quantitative research, the aim was to identify growth promotion strategies among Ivorian Refugees. The outcomes showed that “New Possibilities” and “Personal Strength” had the greatest increase in men (M = 6.8 and 7, respectively) but was low in women (M = 2.1 and 5.0, respectively). Although the results suggested the use of the CR model as an instrument to increase PTG in the participants, the training on spirituality seemed ineffective, as reflected in the outcome. The “Spiritual Change” domain had the lowest increase for both men and women (M = 1.2 and 0.6 change, respectively), a situation the authors attributed to the strong traditional beliefs practiced regularly in the Ivorian culture. The religious and spiritual African culture may indeed have contributed to the lack of “spiritual change” in the findings, as other studies have shown spirituality—such as faith in God (Kryger & Lindgren, 2011) and greater reliance on religious support (North & Pfefferbaum, 2005)—to be a protective factor consequent to trauma. The study focused on facilitating but not on generating information.
on the experience of growth among participants. In addition, subjecting the participants to training structured with the 10 modules taught and 5 theories used in the CR model, regardless of the 36 hours of training, may not effectively generate information on the lived experiences of individuals from the narrative-oriented African context.

**Collective posttraumatic growth experience.** Violence by one or more human beings against others casts a shadow of incomprehension, rage, insecurity, and distrust across a community, as it shakes everyone's personal sense of trust and safety in day-to-day society (Khein & Schermer, 2000). Tuval-Mashiach and Dekel’s (2013) findings suggest that in collective events such as PEV, especially in communities, meaning-making processes take place at both individual and collective levels. In an individualistic culture, however, there is more emphasis on autonomy, a sense of personal freedom, whereas in collectivist cultures, such as in Africa, there is more emphasis on socially constructive behavior. Hence, the aspect of PTG that manifests as enhanced relationships with more appreciation of family and friends, the feeling of an increased sense of compassion for others, and a longing for more intimate relationships may need more examination (Splevins et al., 2010).

Embodied in every culture is a group’s shared wisdom about responding to threats to survival (Chemtob, 1996). PTG interacts with this life wisdom and advances the life narrative (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). The Jopadhola women living in post-war eastern Uganda individually and collectively made meaning out of their traumatic experiences of loss of lives and possessions, even as their family structures permanently changed, and they still harbor constant fear of a new outbreak of war (Abel & Richters, 2009). Abel and Richters (2009) noted that the Jopadhola women individually perceived and expressed their suffering with attitudes much shaped by collective modes of experience, visible patterns showing how to deal with
troubles. These are often taught and learned, either openly or indirectly. Though Abel and Richters conducted an ethnographic study that was focused mostly on sociological aspects with civil society, conflict and reconstruction and gender and diversity being the key issues, the themes generated from the research outcomes implicitly reflect the participants’ experience of growth and resilience. This is mirrored in the themes “forgive but not forget” (i.e., in relation to others) and “reliance on revenge by the tipo” (spirit of the dead; i.e., the spirituality and life philosophy aspects of PTG).

Likewise, the 1994 Rwandan women genocide survivors endured extreme levels of violence including witnessing the murder of family members (Schaal & Elbert, 2006; Williamson, 2014). Williamson discursively analyzed 18 female genocide survivors’ testimonies taken from the online archive and demonstrated that the survivors collectively experienced growth. Together, they reacted to the genocide trauma along two lines: as agents, with the goal of existing as individual organisms (autonomy) and as part of a communion, having a sense of belonging (relatedness) to the rest of the support groups, families, and community. As the most positive and socially constructive response to trauma, the pursuit of agency and communion by the survivors is a sign of their positive change and posttraumatic growth experience at the collective level. However, the archival data analyzed were from individual volunteers likely to represent a minority of the trauma survivors, given the sensitive and traumatic nature of the topic. Moreover, in the context of their group identity, only three participants responded to both motivations (agency and communion) to growth and the study was limited to one gender.

**Multiple traumata and the impact on growth.** The key research literature portrays the intensity and the number of traumatic experiences as strongly associated with PTSD outcomes (Harder et al., 2012; Jackson, & Moomal, 2007; Ssenyonga, Owens, & Olema, 2013; Williams et
al., 2006). In a study of multiple traumatic experiences among South Africans that focuses on psychological distress, Williams et al. (2007) found that individuals with the most traumas (6+) have a five-fold greater risk of high distress. Tedeschi and Calhoun (2004) found such circumstances—the frightening and confusing aftermath of trauma, which is accompanied by severely challenged assumptions—to be fertile ground for experiencing PTG. This is because the same psychological processes that help in managing disturbances also aid in the experience of growth (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004).

Harder et al. (2012) researched the impact of multiple traumas and PEV on impoverished Kenyan youth in Nairobi, focusing only on posttraumatic stress as the negative aftermath of trauma and finding evidence of PTSD but without looking at PTG as the positive. Hamer’s (2013) research on Kenya’s PEV, wherein evidence of PTSD emerged, focused on the city, using a historical and psychological viewpoint that emphasized the political in his analysis and interpretation of the outcomes. These few studies on PTSD represent most of the literature on Kenyan PEV (Hamer, 2013), but the rural regions and smaller cities, in particular, remain practically untouched by academic scrutiny (Veit, Barolsky, & Pillay, 2011).

**Resilience.** Several studies have found the PTG and resilience experience to coexist subsequent to political violence trauma (Konvisser, 2013; Ssenyonga, Owens, & Olema, 2013) though to varying degrees. Konvisser (2013) expressed that narratives of resilience reflect survivors’ attitudes of moving on with their lives “as normal”; while those demonstrating PTG tend to focus on moving forward with action and finding meaning and self-fulfillment through self-transcendence or altruism. Using in-depth interviews in a study with 19 Israeli civilian survivors of politically motivated violence (PMV), the author found distinguishing characteristics between PTG and resilience in a heightened sense of new possibilities and a high
degree of personal strength for those demonstrating PTG (new possibilities, M = 4.1; personal strength, M = 4.4) for those demonstrating resilience (new possibilities, M = 2.4; personal strength, M = 3.7). The four meaningful patterns of change which emerged, reflecting various ways to experience PMV-instigated trauma, include little to no growth, living the attack, resilience, and posttraumatic growth (Konvisser, 2013).

Despite differences in research participants’ cultural contexts, socioeconomic environments, and the nature and intensity of the PMV, the literature has proved that such conditions have a great influence on survivors’ perceptions and interpretations of trauma (Chemtob, 1996; North & Pfefferbaum, 2005). In another part of the world, Ssenyonga, Owens, and Olema, (2013) conducted a cross-sectional survey study to examine posttraumatic growth, resilience, and PTSD among a random sample of 426 Congolese. The study was quantitative and focused on refugees at the Nakivale resettlement camp rather than on the civilians who stay in that place and who often represent a high percentage of the traumatized populace. Using the Posttraumatic Growth Inventory, Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale, and Posttraumatic Diagnostic Survey, the authors conducted interviews and found that resilience, posttraumatic growth, number of displacements, and trauma load were significant predictors, accounting for 6.1% of the variance in PTSD symptom severity. The Congolese refugees who experienced resilience and posttraumatic growth found them to be protective factors against PTSD. In addition, the trauma load, the individual’s socioeconomic status, and gender—more specifically a low education level and being female—significantly influenced the participants’ experience of PTSD. The outcome showed that 58.6% of females reported PTSD for a total prevalence rate of PTSD at 61.7%. After training with the CR model, Gregory and Prana (2013) also found Ivorian refugees to have an increase in PTG and resilience.
**Risk and protective factors.** *Cultural influence.* Though most of the available scholarship on PTG has been done in the American, European, and Asian continents, some studies show evidence of PTG as a universal phenomenon, though it manifests some cultural variations (Berger & Weiss, 2006; Mattoon, 2010). In response to preliminary findings which suggest the existence of certain elements of the PTG experience as unique to some socio-cultural context, Tedeschi and Calhoun (2014) expressed the need for more cross-cultural or cross-national studies. Because reaction to psychological trauma is universal (Chemtob, 1996; van der Kolk, 1987), what varies across cultures is perceptions of threat, interpretations of the threat’s meaning, the nature of responses to the threat, and the cultural context of the responses of traumatized people (Chemtob, 1996). In a study that examined variations in the experience and perception of posttraumatic growth of American and Japanese men, Taku (2013) found that the former scored higher on both the total PTGI and the five domains of PTG than the latter. Upon comparing Kenyan survivors of the 1998 bombing of the American Embassy in Nairobi with American survivors of the 1995 bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma City, North et al. (2005) found similar reactions to the traumata but different coping responses to it. The findings showed many similarities in the prevalence rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and major depression disorder (MDD) in the two cultures. However, the post-disaster perceptions, interpretations, coping responses, and treatment were quite different. Cultural orientation, identity, and general lifestyle shape how we identify the threats of traumatic events, interpret them, and manifest our distress at them (Chemtob, 1996; North & Pfefferbaum, 2005).

In the 20th century, a lack of personal familiarity with death in Western culture fostered an era in which death became sequestered, privatized, and invisible (Murray, Toth, & Clinkinbeard, 2000). This attitude implies that there is a difference in the concept of death
between Western and African cultures. Identifying this difference, Wadsworth (2010) stated that there is “much yet to learn about how…psychological, social, and contextual elements combine to produce resilience, effective coping, or growth” (p. 552).

**Social and economic factors.** In addition to cultural variations, a constellation of risk and protective factors in the form of economic conditions; emergency services; and infrastructure, including educational, gender, social support and safety networks, is known for its great influence in survivors’ experience of growth. In their meta-analysis of 103 studies, Prati and Pietrantoni (2009) found that optimism, social support, and coping strategies have a significant effect on the experience of PTG. However, risk and protective factors may vary from one continent to another. The sub-Saharan Africa is marked by pervasive poverty, limited educational opportunities, high HIV/AIDS prevalence, widespread political conflict, and weak social controls (Bellows & Miguel, 2009; Kabiru, Izugbara, & Beguy, 2013). Regarding the economic standards, Bloom and Sachs (1998) argued that since the industrial revolution, sub-Saharan Africa has been the world's poorest region, as well as that experiencing the slowest growth. Their research demonstrated that Africa's economic growth was 4.9 percentage points slower than that of East and Southeast Asia, 2.3 percentage points slower than that of Latin America, and 3.7 percentage points slower than that of the rest of the world overall. In tandem with Bloom and Sachs’s (1998) research outcome is the Waki Report, which confirmed that Kenya’s socioeconomic challenges include a large population of unemployed youth, which may be associated with the 2007 PEV as a cause (The Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence [CIPEV], 2008). A higher socio-economic class was shown to be something of a protective factor, as Kenya’s trauma survivors from upper and middle socio-economic brackets appeared to fare better, relocating earlier and settling faster than those from lower classes who
struggle with poverty and other risk factors that may create negative trajectories about life. It is what Bronfenbrenner (1994) has referred to as conditions or attributes (skills, strengths, resources, supports or coping strategies) in individuals, families, communities or the larger society that helped people deal more effectively with stressful events and mitigated or eliminated risk in families and communities. What cannot be generalized with existing research evidence is trauma survivors’ experience of growth, especially with recurrent, multiple, and imminent traumas, in a low SES in Africa.

Available resources play a key role in survivors’ adaptation to traumatic experiences (Yablon et al., 2011). Prati and Pietrantoni (2009) also found that optimism, social support, and coping strategies have a significant effect on the experience of posttraumatic growth. Most of Kenya’s 2008 PEV vulnerable lower-class members were relocated through government organized emergency support systems to public sports and recreational centers, police stations, administrative posts, churches, and trading centers, and later to makeshift Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) camps. The camps were concentrated in Western, Nyanza, Rift Valley, Central, Nairobi and Coast Province (Poster, 2009). In both private and government relocation, the number of internally displaced persons in Kenya was reported at 404,000 in 2008 (Trading Economics, 2008). As of July 2009, an estimated 61,000 IDPs remained in camps, transit sites, and relocation sites (Poster, 2009). Linke (2013) found noteworthy differences that emerged between populations that relocated as a result of post-election conflict and those who didn’t. The differences suggest that internal migration and IDPs relocation in the wake of tragedy influenced the Kenyan social landscape and the survivors’ psychosocial well-being.

Clinical and crisis intervention measures. Appointed by the government, as Poster (2009) highlighted, the Kenya Red Cross Society in collaboration with other stakeholders
organized psychosocial interventions to support victims of the 2008 post-election violence, especially IDPs, in coping with the trauma. The stakeholders included the United Nations Population Fund (UNPF), United Nation Refugee Agency (UNRG), the government of Kenya, Liverpool (a Kenyan HIV care and treatment NGO), International Organization for Migration (IOM), UNICEF, Ministry of Health’s Department of Mental Health, Ministry of State for Public Services, (MSPS) and Nairobi Women’s Hospital, among others. The psychosocial interventions offered included direct counseling, capacity-building in psychosocial support and trauma counseling, training sessions, AIDS prevention and HIV care and treatment, and the establishment of counseling and recreation centers in the camps. According to the World Bank Indicators (2011) the disaster risk reduction progress score in Kenya was measured at 4 in 2011 (1-5 scale; 5 = best; Trading Economics, 2008).

In spite of such recent progress in Kenya, the economic, clinical, and crisis intervention measures found in the African continent may not be comparable to those offered in the West European and Asian continents, where extensive research on PTG has been done. Founded in 1975 in the United States, the National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA) is the oldest and most recognized national organization for victims’ assistance of its type (NOVA, 2014). NOVA “conceptualized and put into practice in the 1980s the community crisis response team (CCRT) process” (Young, 1998 as cited in Dembert & Simmer, 2000). The zeitgeist of political violence, conflicts, and organized violence typified and influenced crisis intervention measures and research studies around this time. Miller et al. (2006) noted that during this time period, Southeast Asian refugees fled their homeland in the wake of the Vietnam War and the Cambodian genocide; the ‘dirty wars’ occurred in Chile, Argentina, Guatemala, and El Salvador; civil wars broke out in Lebanon, Sri Lanka, and the Sudan, along with ethnic cleansing and
genocide in Bosnia and Rwanda; and the Israeli occupation and Palestinian intifadas occurred in Gaza and the West Bank. While NOVA’s sphere of influence and expertise has been primarily in North America, it also has international relationships that provide opportunities for multinational consultation and collaboration. However, Egypt is the only nation it serves in Africa, and the other nations and organizations are in the Asian and European continents (NOVA, 2014). NOVA is advanced and highly equipped with professional staff and equipment compared to crisis response organizations in Africa such as the above-mentioned crisis response teams in Kenya.

Religion/spirituality. Various research literature on posttraumatic growth has identified religious coping and spiritual variables as protective factors that greatly influence individuals’ experience of growth subsequent to political violence or significant interpersonal transgressions (Bryant-Davis, & Wong, 2013; Mattoon, 2011; Prati and Pietrantoni, 2009; Schultz, Tallman, & Altmaier, 2010) and in the context of a natural disaster (Chan & Rhodes, 2013). In a meta-analysis of 103 studies, Prati and Pietrantoni (2009) found religious coping and positive reappraisal coping to have the largest effect on growth. Based on findings from a study on the impact of the political violence trauma of May 18, 1980, in South Korea, Yun (2011) argued that purgative contemplation and solidarity with the suffering Christ are invaluable religious resources that heighten survivors’ experience of PTG. Endorsement of beliefs, engagement in religious behaviors, and access to support from faith communities are additional religious coping mechanisms, types of spirituality, and faith-based approaches that enhance trauma recovery and growth (Bryant-Davis & Wong, 2013).

In his qualitative study on posttraumatic growth and spiritual transformation among 11 adult survivors of war trauma in Uganda (6) and Vietnam (5), Mattoon (2011) found that PTG
was experienced in America, Asia, and Africa. The research outcome depicted a reciprocal influence/alteration between religious beliefs and PTG. Furthermore, the author’s finding confirmed Tedeschi and Calhoun’s (2004) principle that posttraumatic stress disorder and PTG can and do often coexist after traumatic events (Tedeschi et al., 2004). PTSD symptoms—that is, flashbacks, nightmares, somatic reactions to trauma memories, fear, and being upset by trauma reminders—were acknowledged as present by at least half of the participants from each group. Concomitantly, ten indicators confirming the participants’ experience of strengthened religious beliefs after trauma appeared in at least half of each group. Individual, semi-structured interviews were employed in addition to the exploratory/narrative approaches of Life Story and Artistic Inquiry. This study involved a comparative analysis of growth experiences among civilian and refugee war survivors of trauma from different cultural contexts as opposed to solely an adult civilian population.

**Posttraumatic Growth, the Lived Experience**

Five themes emerged from the body of research literature that has investigated the conditions in which trauma survivors experience PTG in the aftermath of political violence. First, Kryger and Lindgren (2011), Bellows and Miguel, (2009), and Gregory and Prana (2013) all found that the trauma survivors they studied in an African context had experienced PTG. Kryger and Lindgren (2011) employed IPA to examine the life narratives of 12 youths formerly associated with the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA). Three studies have been done on the civilian population: Williamson (2014) focused on the collective PTG experience through a study of Rwandese women genocide survivors. Mattoon (2010) studied PTG with a specific focus on religion among Ugandan war trauma survivors, and Bellows and Miguel (2009) studied PTG and violence among the Sierra Leonean civilian population from a political and economic
perspective. Second, Williamson (2014) and Abel and Richter (2009) demonstrated that participants experienced collective growth as a result of the collective experience of political violence. Williamson (2014) discursively analyzed 18 female genocide survivors’ testimonies taken from an online archive, whereas Abel and Richter (2009) conducted an ethnographic study. Third, Williams et al. (2007) Harder et al., (2012) and Hamer (2013) all found that individuals with the most trauma are at greater risk for a high level of distress, which is also an indicator for PTG, as such circumstances provide fertile ground for it (Tedeschi and Calhoun, 2004). Fourth, Ssenyonga, Owens, and Olema (2013) used a cross-sectional survey approach to demonstrate that resilience, posttraumatic growth, number of displacements, and trauma load were significant predictors of PTSD among Congolese refugees. Fifth and final, Mattoon (2011) and North et al. (2005) found that culture, religion/spirituality, and other risk and protective factors have a major influence on the experience of growth. Gregory and Prana (2013) found Côte d’Ivoire refugees experienced growth when the individuals were subjected to training in a CR model aimed at identifying growth promotion strategies.

Most studies dealing with the lived experience of growth in an African context have been done with African participants on other continents. For example, in a study with the former refugees and displaced people exposed to prolonged war in Sarajevo, Powell et al. (2003) found that the former reported more significant growth than those who endured the violence in the city. Linke (2013) also found noteworthy differences emerging in social and political attitude between populations who relocated as a result of post-election conflict and those who didn’t. According to this author, those who do not take refuge in other countries experience a sense of communal identity and ownership as opposed to those who do.
Most of the studies on PTG and PTSD among civilian survivors of multiple traumas from political violence in the African context are quantitative. Both Bellows and Miguel (2009) and Ssenyonga, Owens, and Olema, (2013) used a quantitative approach to research growth among civilian civil war trauma survivors and refugees, respectively. However, with its focus on the growth themes present in narrative accounts of the traumatic events themselves, a qualitative analysis may complement the quantitative approach and constitute the most valid way of assessing posttraumatic growth (Pals & McAdams, 2004). As a couple of instances, to investigate the collective experience of PTG, Williamson (2014) discursively analyzed the genocide survivors’ testimonies taken from online archive, and Abel and Richter (2009) conducted an ethnographic study.

**Conceptual Framework**

To properly frame my research analysis and interpretation, key experts’ tested and validated models such as in the ecology of human development and phenomenology was appropriate to draw my research concepts. This is based on their conceptual similarities with my cultural understandings of interdependence among each other and the environment. Among these, Bronfenbrenner’s (1995) bioecological model of human development with some of its five environmental systems and van Manen’s (1997) phenomenological model of lived body (corporeality), lived time (temporality), lived space (spatiality), and lived relation (relationality) focused this study.

**Existing Theoretical Concepts**

The macrosystem from Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological model describes the cultural contexts in which individuals live, including socio-economic status, poverty, and ethnicity (Kail & Cavanaugh, 2010). Kail and Cavanaugh note that cultural contexts include developing and
industrialized countries, socio-economic status, poverty, and ethnicity. Cummings et al. (2009) categorized political violence, societal, and government functioning under the cultural beliefs and values level in the macrosystem. Such contexts can be applied to an examination of how individuals and families have faced such circumstances as living in IDP camps, staying with relatives, or accepting settlement schemes. The chronosystem also applies as the patterning of environmental events and transitions over the life course. One’s socio-historical circumstances constitute one transition in this system (Santrock, 2007); thus, recurrent traumas with their subsequent forced relocations are one such example of these transitions.

**Bio-ecological Models**

In the bioecological model, development is defined as the phenomenon of continuity and change in the biopsychological characteristics of human beings, both as individuals and as groups. The phenomenon extends over the life course, across successive generations, and through historical time, both past and future (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Also, the Conservation of Resources Theory (COR) postulates that individuals are motivated to gain resources and the motivation drives them to establish their psychosocial and economic needs based on their goals and the direction of their investments (Hobfoll, 1989). Some participants may have concurrently established personal businesses and other developments as well as relocating to a more secure environment in preparation for future election periods. In the current study, the research participants’ lived experiences before relocation, either in IDP camps or staying with relatives or friends, and after resettlement in new zones or demolished previous homes, may contribute to such transitions and anticipations as identified in Bronfenbrenner’s model. Additionally, the transitions identified in the bioecological model can apply to how political and administrative issues played a role in the government relocation of some but not all
and provision of financial support for microfinance projects, among other supports. One example of the socio-historical circumstances in this model is the increase in opportunities for women to pursue a career during the last thirty years. As such, the model may be used to reflect the trauma survivors’ changes in economic statuses and gender roles and responsibilities, an area beyond the scope of this study. Therefore, this model seems appropriate to frame the trauma survivor’s lived experiences in the aftermath of recurrent, multiple, and imminent traumas in the African context.

According to Levers (2012) an ecological-transactional perspective as derived from the bioecological model allows us to situate the lived experiences of traumatized people within the time and space of the relevant ecology in order to understand trauma and personal meaning making. In addition, Psychiatry.Health.com (2005) highlighted the suggestion from ecological theory that process models of development have no universality; rather, they must be framed within the limits of a cultural and historical context. Ecological theory is not a theory in the formal sense; instead, it is a structured framework for identifying influences at numerous levels. As depicted in Figure 2, I think that the concepts of my research fitted into this structured framework from my cultural context without needing to interpret informants’ lived experiences from another cultural context.
Figure 2. Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) Bioecological Model of Human Development

Based on the critique from the model, my understanding of the framework, and the complex and multi-level nature of political violence among other issues, I think Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) bioecological model was appropriate to use in my research on the posttraumatic growth experience from African context. Specifically, the microsystem, mesosystem, and macrosystem seem to explain more of the structures of which feed my research focus. Also, based on the initial research outcomes, it was not necessary for the model to be modified.

Phenomenological Conception of Human Experiences

According to van Manen (2011), phenomenological human experiences are “possible” human experiences that are not presumed to be universal or shared by all humans regardless of time, culture, gender, or other circumstance. In a broad sense, phenomenology is a theory of the unique, which in its essence deals with the irreplaceable. In phenomenology, the source of
personal experience is a description or account of the lived experience that produced it; thus, one ought to describe the experience from the inside as it were, almost like a state of mind: the feelings, the mood, and the emotions (van Manen).

**Contextual factors in relation to the individual’s wellbeing.** As Maxwell (2013) expressed, key culturally contextual questions should be asked, such as the following: Is it well with you and the family (which includes relatives)? In African culture, the family includes the extended family members, whereas in the Western culture, the family is in most cases the nuclear family. In addition, in the former context, there is a communal sense of belonging, collective social responsibility, and interdependence on each other, whereas in the latter context there is more individualism, a different understanding of privacy, and independent ownership. In such an individualistic culture there is more emphasis on autonomy and a sense of personal freedom, whereas in collectivist cultures there is more emphasis on socially constructed behavior. People from a more individualistic and private society view themselves (in relation to van Manen’s [1990] lived body) as an entity, independent and distinct from others, and uniquely in possession of individual internal attributes, abilities, goals, desires, and personality traits that guide their behavior and lifestyle (Splevins, Cohen, Bowley, & Joseph, 2010). In contrast, individuals from a more collectivistic or interdependent society, as in Africa, define the self (I am) in relational terms and consider themselves inseparable from (because we are) the social context (Splevins et al., 2010). The African cultural saying goes, “I am because we are, and because I am, we are.” It is the perceived thoughts, feelings, and goals of others that drive the individual’s behavior in such a society, with the goal of upholding a social equilibrium (Splevins et al., 2010). Furthermore, Tuval-Mashiach and Dekel’s (2013) findings suggest that in collective events, such as PEV and especially in communities, meaning-making processes take
place at both the individual and collective levels. Heidegger (1927) asserted that people live in the midst of “being” which necessitates that one cannot be without “being-in-the-world.” This is typified in African culture as evidenced in this common “I am” expression. Nonetheless, this sense of belonging is often challenged by tribal and politically instigated war, as well as political and post-election violence. This study’s intended research subjects’ communal sense of ownership, loss, and traumatic experience, such as political violence and conflicts, may be differently interpreted and internalized than they would be in the Western individualistic culture.

Chapter Summary

An extensive review of the literature was done to provide a background for the research gap to be filled by this study on posttraumatic growth as identified in Chapter 1. The roots of the modern concept of psychological trauma were identified in the hysteria studied in the 19th century, and the development of the modern concept was described. The political violence of the 21st century, terrorism, and ethnic conflicts trauma were discussed as the catalyst for emotional disturbance in Africa. Psychological trauma is now most commonly diagnosed as PTSD; thus, the symptoms of PTSD were identified and the controversies surrounding this diagnosis in modern times discussed. Out of this progression of events came the discovery, in the mid-1990s, of a positive experience that has been identified as posttraumatic growth (PTG). Numerous research findings have shown both the negative and positive experiences associated with traumatic experiences, and this chapter has included a thorough review of the research on PTG, its relationship to resilience, and identification of the areas in which it has been carried out. Thus, the literature review has revealed that scant research has scrutinized the PTG in the aftermath of political violence in African context. Therefore, this study examined how civilian survivors have made meaning from their recurrent, multiple, and imminent traumata in the
aftermath of the 2007 PEV and the multiple 2009 fire explosions in Kenya. Chapter 2 has also presented the theoretical and conceptual framework that was used to underpin this phenomenological study. Chapter 3 presents a discussion of the methods used to carry out the study.
CHAPTER III: Methodology

“I have learned so much from this experience with stroke, that I actually feel fortunate to have taken this journey. Thanks to this trauma, I have had a chance to witness firsthand a few things about my brain that otherwise I would never have imagined it is true.”

~Jill Bolte Taylor, 2006~

A substantial amount of research on posttraumatic growth has been conducted in the American, European, and Asian continents, but less has been done in developing countries that are frequently marred with political violence. Though research on the positive experience of trauma is limited in scope in the African continent, the few studies that have been carried out recognize the experience of growth exhibited in change of political values and improved economic, spiritual, and social transformation (Abel & Richter, 2009; Bellows & Miguel, 2009; Bloom, 1989; Mattoon, 2011; Williamson, 2014). However, only scant empirical research has been conducted on the experience of PTG among trauma survivors of political violence in the African context (Abel & Richter, 2009; Mattoon, 2011; Williamson, 2014). Furthermore, little has been written about the qualitative experience associated with it (Konvisser, 2013). This research is intended to contribute to the few studies on PTG through a phenomenological examination of the lived experience of the civilian survivors of the recurrent and multiple traumas of Kenya’s 2007 post-election violence (PEV) and subsequent national level fire explosion trauma in 2009. This chapter presents the hermeneutic phenomenological research method used in this study. A discussion of terms and concepts central to hermeneutic design follows; next is the rationale for the choice of design, followed by a description of the study setting, sampling criteria, sample type, and data collection, analysis, and interpretation process, and protection of human subjects. The credibility of the research process, which contributes to the validity of the finding, is also discussed.
Several factors contribute to the key motivation for an inquiry into the impact of political violence on the trauma survivors in Africa and their ability to transcend their suffering so that their experiences have a positive result. First, political violence is dominant on the African continent, with an increase specifically in PEV and an insurgence of recurrent terrorist attacks in Kenya and some other parts of the continent, yet the civilian trauma survivors have not been heard. Second, the researcher was involved in crisis intervention activities in response to the September 11th, 2001 terrorist tragedy in New York, and subsequent research findings demonstrated that the survivors experienced growth (Ai, Cascio, Santangelo, & Evans-Campbell, 2005; Park, Aldwin, Fenster, & Snyder, 2008). Third, the researcher was also engaged in crisis intervention in response to Kenya’s 2007 PEV, the 2009 recurrent national level fire tragedies in the country, and other local and domestic crisis incidents. Fourth, research has shown that psychosocial support improves trauma survivors’ experience of gains and benefits (Bryant-Davis & Wong, 2013; Prati & Pietrantoni, 2009; van der Kolk, 1987). Finally, access to mental health professionals, as conceptualized in Western models, is far from being a realistic option in many developing countries as well as in some communities that lack access to basic necessities (Miller & Rasco, 2004).

Interpretative phenomenological analysis was used to collect the data; analyze, interpret, and describe the outcomes; and generate hypotheses for the existential implications for crisis/trauma counseling research, education, and clinical practice. This chapter provides a systematic description of the research methodology and procedures, qualitative design and its rationale, sampling strategy, purposive sampling type, participant selection, sampling criteria, sample size, data collection and recording, ethical considerations, procedures for the protection
of human subjects, reliability and validity, data processing and analysis, determining the central theme, and delimitations.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experience of the survivors of multiple and recurrent traumas, of the skirmishes, the 2007 PEV, and the 2009 multiple national level fire explosions in Kenya. Specifically, this research intended to examine how the survivors have made meaning out of the trauma. In addition, this research examined the influence of survivors’ risk and protective factors on their interpretation of the trauma and their personal characteristics’ positive influence on their perception of life at the time of recurrent and multiple traumas and at the present in anticipation of regular imminent traumas. To achieve this goal, data were collected based on the following guiding questions:

- How do the trauma survivors describe their lived existentials (body, space, time, and relationships) in the aftermath of the 2007 PEV and 2009 fire explosions in Kenya?
- In what ways have the trauma survivors made meaning out of their experiences of the multiple and recurrent traumas?
- What do the trauma survivors consider to have been the risk and protective factors in their experiences of the 2007 PEV and 2009 fire explosions in Kenya?
- How have the trauma survivors’ personal characteristics positively influenced their perception of life in spite of their exposure to recurrent and multiple traumas?

**Description of the Hermeneutic Phenomenological Research and Procedures**

This hermeneutic or interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is guided by van Manen’s (1990) lifeworld existentials (lived body, lived time, lived space, lived relation), which ties in with Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) bioecological model. The guiding principles found in this
framework were used to collect, examine, and interpret the data for this inquiry. As the purpose of the study points to the research question, which informed the choice of method used, the qualitative phenomenological method was appropriate for the data collection in this study. Phenomenology involves an attempt to suspend pre-conceptions or hypothetical speculations; it concerns the study of the subjective life-world of the other, a realm of original self-evidence, perceived and experienced in the immediate presence or in memory (Husserl, 1970; Brazier, 1992). An individual’s life-world includes everything from emotions, motivations, and symbols and their meanings, to empathy with other subjective aspects related to the naturally evolving lives of individuals and groups (Berg & Lune, 2012). According to Husserl (1970), every objective scientific step is characterized as a priori by an *epoche*, a withholding of natural naïve validities, not mere abstraction from them through imaginary transformation. It involves cognitively assuming an epoche holistically during all scientific participation, any critical position-taking, all objective theoretical interests, and all aims, and activities associated with objective scientists desiring knowledge. Van Manen (1990) noted that phenomenological research begins in the lifeworld and that its subject matter is always the structures of meaning of the lived human world, not the conceptualized world. Specifically, phenomenology defines how an individual is oriented to lived experience, whereas hermeneutics describes how one interprets the “texts” of life. This study focused on how the recurrent and multiple trauma survivors have made meaning in the aftermath of the 2007 PEV and the 2009 fire explosions in Kenya.

In phenomenology, the source of personal experience is a description or account of the individual’s lived experience. To produce such an account, one ought to describe the experience from the inside, as it were—including the feelings, moods, and emotions, as if one were in that state of mind (van Manen, 2011). Van Manen (1990) addressed a method for phenomenological
study that includes six practical approaches to hermeneutic phenomenological human science research: a) focusing on a phenomenon of great interest which engages one in the world, b) investigating the lived as opposed to the conceptualized experiences, c) reflecting on the essential themes characterizing the phenomenon, d) describing it through the art of writing as well as rewriting or working the text by making the research process inseparable from the writing process, e) maintaining a strong and oriented relation to it, and f) balancing the research context by considering the evolving part-whole relationship. These qualitative study methods served to guide the collection of data, analysis, interpretation/synthesis, and drawing of existential implications for crisis/trauma counseling research, education, and clinical practice.

**Qualitative Design and its Rationale**

A qualitative research design is appropriate for this study of the subjects’ experiences of PTG for the following reasons. First, this approach does not impose the researcher's operational definitions of variables on the participants, but rather lets the meaning emerge from the participants (Saint-Germain, 2001). In experimental research, the researcher attempts to strip human beings of their nested context—all socio-economic, political, historical, and cultural—by controlling for extraneous variables in an effort to deduce universal explanatory principles or statistical significance (Hamer, 2013; Miles, Huberman, & Saldana 2014). Similarly, an interpretative approach, also referred to as the constructivist paradigm, maintains that human beings construe their worlds in varied ways, none of which is right over another; hence, there is a need for such realities to be seen and analyzed as a whole rather than in divided discrete variables (Glesne, 2011). Qualitative design allows the researcher to understand the participants’ perceptions, attitudes, and processes and to interpret how they construct the world around their social setting (Glesne, 2006; Glesne, 2011). It creates room for participants’ detailed and
uniquely interpreted information, which would not be exhaustively generated by the use of
PTGI, an instrument established from a Western cultural setup. The line facilitates response to
the study’s explorative questions on how the subjects have made meaning out of their recurrent,
multiple, and imminent traumatic experiences. Secondly, the qualitative method uses a
naturalistic paradigm that fits well with the human as instrument (Denzin & Lincoln, 1985, as
cited in Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). The interpretative and naturalistic approach of the intended
design to the subject matter allows for research in a natural setting and for analysis and
interpretation of the phenomena in terms of the meaning that people make (Jones, 1995). I
embrace this natural methodological aspect of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA)
because the research subjects may not have been exposed to any research study before or even
have had any awareness of such. The participants may have a history of political manipulation,
ethnic violence, and psychosocial uncertainties in almost every national election. Thus, a
naturalistic inquiry conducted in a real-world setting with no attempt made to manipulate the
environment (Roberts, 2010) may then minimize any form of uneasiness and suspicion.
Moreover, a qualitative design uses approaches that are idiographic and emic, assuming every
case as uniquely experienced and shaped by the individual and studying the challenging
experiences from within in an attempt to capture their meanings (Denzin, 2001; Straus & Corbin,
1990).

**Study Sample**

**Sampling Strategy**

The goal of sampling research subjects is to make inferences for a larger population from
a small, representative sample (Berg & Lune, 2012; Jones & Kottler, 2006). However, according
to Berg and Lune (2012) and Glesne (2011), the investigator does not base the sample selection
on probability theory or test the hypotheses in social science research that uses nonprobability sampling, as is the case of the interpretivist paradigm assumed in this study. Instead, the researcher creates quasi-random sampling and use an exploratory, open mindset to the various perspectives and issues with the aim of formulating a clear idea of the larger group that the sample may reflect in the final descriptive output.

**Purposive Sampling**

As one of the four nonprobability sampling methods, purposive sampling—also called *judgmental sampling*—requires that the researcher should have prior knowledge or expertise on the characteristics of the selected group (Berg & Lune, 2012; Jones & Kottler, 2006). The researcher for this study has the necessary cultural background and experience in prior intervention in crises associated with PEV. Moreover, a purposive sampling approach provides information-rich subjects from which one can study in depth and learn a great deal about issues that are specific to the purpose of the inquiry (Patton, 2002). Thus, purposive sampling was used for this research, which aimed at examining the lived experience of recurrent trauma survivors of multiple traumatic events in Kenya.

**Participant Selection**

First, multiple sources were used to recruit the research participant survivors of the recurrent and multiple traumas of the skirmishes and the 2007 PEV who also endured the 2009 Sachangwan oil tanker fire explosion tragedies. These sources included records from the Kenya Red Cross Society and the community chiefs’ records of survivors who may have previously been interviewed by the media on trauma-related issues or who were willing to be interviewed for the first time. The other source was participant self-selection as they responded to on-site recruitment at churches, community meetings, and schools in the Rift Valley region of Kenya.
To ensure an adequate mix of participants, only a few names were sought from each list of those who met the research participants’ selection criteria.

Second, the names were randomly selected from the nomination list, and the persons were invited to focus group and individual interviews. As some participants declined to sign the consent form and be recorded for fear of any political consequences due to the then-pending ICC case with some politicians, the number of those who were willing to participate was reduced to 16 participants. Trusted local residents, community chiefs, and other leaders helped extend the invitation to participants for focus group interviews and later the individual interviews, as assigned in the participants’ list. The participants were from five ethnic communities that were highly hit by the skirmishes, the PEV, and the fire explosion: namely, the Luo, Luhya, Kikuyu, Kalenjin, and Kisii.

The research for this study was conducted in four counties along the Trans Saharan Highway: the Nakuru, Kericho, Baringo, and Uasin Gishu counties in the Rift Valley region of Kenya, all of which were highly hit by the 2007-08 PEV. The violence endured by the participants included a) political beatings or torture; b) witnessing any or all of the following: murders; armed attack; confiscation or torching of home, church, and property; and tribal persecution; c) escaping to Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps; d) being orphaned or losing a family member; and 3) almost dying due to Antiretroviral Drugs (ARV) uptake interference.

**Sampling Criteria**

Sampling involves decisions based on comprehensive information about the people to observe and/ or interview, the settings, events, and social processes (Miles & Huberman et al., 2014). This research employed a purposive sampling type wherein male and female informants
aged 30 years and older who are married, single, and widowed and who have shared similar traumatic experiences were interviewed. I chose the age group of 30 years and above, first, because the age range for those most involved in the 2007 PEV was 23 to 53. Second, in the aftermath of severe trauma, such as political violence, adults are known to be at high risk for developing severe and chronic posttraumatic stress reactions, which often coexist with PTG and are associated with chronic anxiety and depressive reactions (Goenjian et al., 2000; Mattoon, 2011; Tedeschi et al., 2004). Finally, this age group is also the most psycho-socio-economically productive with well-established personal characteristics.

The subjects with traumatic experience extending over 8 years were interviewed based on their self-identification as PEV survivors who had also previously experienced one or more political violence instigated traumas or, later, the 2009 fire explosion tragedies. I chose a period of 8 years for clarity regarding the participants’ experience of growth as the concept of time in the African context may be different from that in other continents. Research indicates a direct relationship between the occurrence of a high degree of actual growth and the amount of time that has elapsed, though there may be an indirect relationship between a report of coping strategy and the time since the trauma occurred (Helgeson, Reynolds, & Tomich, 2006).

**Sample Size**

The research included a total of 16 participants. Because of the circumstance of being interviewed orally using semi-structured open-ended questions, along with audiotape and videotape, as well as the nature of the experiences, some research participants might have decided to withdraw either prior to or during the interview. Therefore, it seemed reasonable to target 16 participants with prior anticipation that the final number of research participants could be fewer; however, all 16 participants remained in the study. Two focus groups were formed
that ranged from seven to nine participants. Moreover, all 16 participants in the two focus groups were interviewed in the individual interviews, too. According to Krueger and Casey (2009), a focus group of between five and eight participants is an ideal size for complex situations such as the investigation intended for this research. A relatively small size for the focus group effectively elicits a breadth of responses from the participants (Berg & Lune, 2012).

Data Collection and Recording

As Berg and Lune (2012) and Glesne (2011) have noted, the more sources contributing to the collection of data, the easier it is for the researcher to obtain a more substantive, consistent, and objective picture of reality; the richer the data; and the more complex the findings. The data were collected through a triangulation method by means of semi-structured, in-depth interviews, focus groups, informant observation, field notes, videotape recording, and secondary sources (e.g. visual media). The focus group is useful for obtaining in-depth understandings of perceptions, opinions, and attitudes of the participants otherwise not possibly engendered through other investigations (Levers, 2006). Data collection and analysis were conducted concurrently until saturation was achieved.

The informants in this study participated in audiotaped and videotaped individual and focus group interviews which used a semi-structured interview protocol. They were informed of the importance of recording the entire process, from demographic data collection to focus group sessions, as they are all a part of the data collection process. Prior to the interview, the participants were asked to complete the personal demographic data sheet on socioeconomic status (including education level, income, family size, and other areas of life), nature of the trauma/loss, frequency, and intensity. Those who were not able to read or write were questioned orally, and responses to the demographic questions were appropriately filled in. The interviews,
demographic questions, and all other detailed information written in plain English were read in either English or Kiswahili, based on the need and the participants’ level of language comprehension. Translators for both languages were available throughout the data collection process.

**Focus Groups**

The focus group interview was chosen as one of the data collection tools for this research proposal as it has proved useful for triangulation methods (Berg & Lune, 2012). It is an innovative and evolving strategy that facilitates clarification of issues, further probing for more information, and access to otherwise difficult-to-obtain data (Berg & Lune, 2012; Levers, 2006). The focus group interviews were conducted first in order to provide an opportunity for choosing persons best suited for individual interviews. Two homogeneous focus groups with seven to nine participants and 16 individual interviews of the participants were conducted in six consecutive weeks for 1.5 to 2 hours each. This amount of time allowed for sufficient personal reflection and participation from each focus group cum individual participant. In-depth interviews or insights require time so that the informants can wrestle with the questions (Krueger & Casey, 2009). The amount of time assigned to every question depended on its weight.

As the facilitator, I introduced the topic and format, sought participants’ informed consent signature, emphasized confidentiality by informing the members of the level of confidentiality in any group setting, and encouraged discussion. Participant induction was carried out communally in the focus group process and individually for the individual interviews. I helped the group to set up ground rules at the beginning of the interviews and asked questions which motivated member interaction as per the protocol format. Berg and Lune (2012) have expressed that a properly administered focus group interview facilitates extremely dynamic...
interactions and stimulates productive discussion among and between the group members. It permits an economic gathering of extensive, rich information from potentially large groups of informants within a relatively short time frame. Should the two planned interview sessions not have been possible, one focus group interview is considered adequate for situation where a one-shot collection is necessary (Berg & Lune, 2012). The researcher followed the focus group protocol established and approved for the interviews.

**Individual Interviews**

Individual interviews served to explore and gather experiential narrative material that is a wonderful resource for gaining a richer and deeper understanding of the human phenomenon (van Manen, 1990). Particularly when participants are from a narrative, storytelling, and interview-oriented society, interviews generate useful information about lived experiences and their meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Interviews were used in this study as a vehicle to build a conversational rapport with the informants (van Manen, 1990). The listening, communication, and interviewing skills which I had built over time as a professional counselor/supervisor and a crisis intervener were helpful in the interview process. I attempted to anticipate what the situation might call for, and researched what I needed to know prior to meeting every informant, what I needed to say, and how to say it in a manner that presented both my project and myself coherently (Glesne, 2011).

Furthermore, my strong orientation to the research protocol as the researcher was efficacious in collecting data from the participants through the focus group and individual interviews. The researcher needed to focus on the experience of the phenomenon as lived, making the interview concrete by probing the participants to recall the specific situation, person, instance, or event and further exploring the details of the whole experience (van Manen, 1990).
To gather sufficient and significant data, I questioned the participants with the intent to redirect the discourse from the general to the level of concrete experience. A certain naïveté should characterize the researcher’s role as a special learner (Glesne, 2011). I, therefore, assumed a learner’s role by putting aside my mindset as an expert who has a lot of knowledge about the topic at hand; rather, I used an in-depth-probe technique to seek comprehensive knowledge of what the informants implicitly and explicitly communicate, being ready to say “Tell me more” (Glesne, 2011).

**Interview protocol questions.** In both the individual and focus group interviews, the interview questions were human subject reviewed and approved protocol questions developed in order to elicit the answer to the key research question: What are the lived experiences of the survivors of the multiple traumas of both the 2007 post-election violence and the multiple national-level fire explosions in Kenya in 2009? As emphasized by Krueger and Casey (2009), the purpose drove the study. The semi-structured focus group protocol questions used are as follows:

- How do the trauma survivors describe the impact of their experience from the 2007 PEV and 2009 fire explosions in Kenya?
- What do they consider to have helped them to go through and survive their experiences of the 2007 PEV and 2009 fire explosions in Kenya? What hindered or worked against their struggle to overcome the traumas?
- In what ways have the trauma survivors made meaning, if any, out of their suffering from the multiple and recurrent traumas of PEV and fire explosions?
- How have the trauma survivors made sense of their exposure to recurrent and multiple traumas?
How have the trauma survivors’ personal characteristics positively influenced their perception of life in spite of their exposure to recurrent and multiple traumas?

The Focus Group Interview Protocol (Appendix B) and Individual Interview Questions Protocol (Appendix C) were used.

**Video/Audiotapes**

To obtain high fidelity during data collection, I used video recording, with the consent of the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), along with note pads and reflective journaling for field notes. Video recording facilitates gathering data of great density and permanence better than human observation or audio recording does because videos may be played repeatedly and analyzed frame by frame (Glesne, 2011). Video recording provided visual information, which augments the distinction between the voices of the informants and aids in the verbatim, and therefore accurate, transcription for verbal and nonverbal communication.

**Field Notes/Reflective Journal**

As part of the triangulation methodology, field notes were taken throughout the interview process while reflective journaling was done after every focus group session and individual interview. These notes are used to collect the informants’ implicit communications through their physical gestures and emotional behaviors, attitudes, facial expressions, interaction and reaction to other informants, and any other noticeable items of interest.

For accuracy and detail, all notes were reflectively reviewed and expanded later in the evening as entries in a reflective journal while the experience was fresh, and the recall was best. Reflections became the preliminary stages of theory construction and shaped the direction for more observations and questions (Glesne, 2011). Phenomenological reflection helps researchers to grasp the essential meaning from the narratives of PEV trauma survivors (van Manen, 1990).
The researcher wrote both the descriptive and analytic field notes and the reflective journal with a nonjudgmental attitude, taking note of frequently used or unique terms in order to create lasting and accurate visual moments, persons, settings, and days (Glesne, 2011).

The video recording, field notes, and reflective journal complemented each other as ways to gather observational data for the later identification of themes.

**Unobtrusive Data and Knowledge Framework**

The key knowledge sources from which I drew included previous personal observations and the visual media with their many pictures of PEV survivors living in IDP camps after the violence, showing their lifestyle in the new environment to which they had been relocated. However, the phenomenological methodology focused the study mostly on an examination of the lived experiences of the participants. It guided the investigation and description of the phenomena that the trauma survivors consciously experienced, without subjection to theoretical objectives, and directed their causal explanation as much as possible without recourse to unexamined preconceptions and presuppositions (Spiegelberg, 1970, p. 810). Observable behaviors from both individuals and families, as well as the development of such, may be gained through individuals’ reports and in focus group sessions.

**Researcher as Instrument/Instrumentation**

In qualitative inquiry, the human instrument is the primary tool for collecting data on phenomenological experiences (Levers, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Ochieng, 2009; van Manen, 1990). The data are thus mediated through the researcher, rather than through inventories, questionnaires, or machines (Ochieng, 2009). The human researcher is the only available tool that can capably grasp the world of phenomena and their surrounding contexts as “all of a piece” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Despite the mechanical or electronic devices used to
augment qualitative data collection, it is not until the human intelligence of the researcher becomes involved in the interpretation process that the data take on significance (Hatch, 2002). The researcher thus becomes the key research instrument who must assume trustworthiness in order to obtain validity for the findings. Thus, I conducted my research as an inquirer into the world of which I am also a part, and, as per the IPA approach, I adopted an inquiring stance.

While this insider status was instrumental during my analysis for this inquiry, it posed personal issues, which, if left unaddressed, could have harmed the research output. Therefore, it was critically important for me to address them here for the benefit of the reader. The following overview of my personal experiences will depict “I being Me” as a researcher, my interest in the study, and my qualifications and preparedness to conduct the study using triangulation methodology.

I have worked in the mental health field for over 15 years. As a trained counselor, counselor supervisor, and crisis intervener, my clinical practice includes counseling young adults, adults, and families, and offering crisis intervention services to clients from the same categories. Serving in the same profession, I have been employed in Pennsylvania and New Jersey in the United States and in Nakuru, Kenya. My work settings have included a drug and alcohol rehabilitation center, a mental health rehabilitation center where I worked as a counselor, and a university setting where I served as a counselor to university students. Likewise, I have offered volunteer counseling and crisis intervention services in New York, New Jersey, and Mississippi in the United States and in several regions in Kenya, including my home counties of Nakuru, Kericho, and Bomet. My involvement in crisis intervention services, both in response to the 9/11 terrorist tragedy in New York, and the 2007 PEV and 2009 fire explosions in Kenya, have brought me face to face with the horror of trauma. These experiences created my
awareness of the prevalence of traumatic exposure and have greatly contributed to my interest in this research on trauma. I was conscious of the psychological impact the stories and the cries of my clients had on my psychosocial and emotional life. The faces, tales, and cries of clients who shared with me their experiences of tragic loss; armed attack; sexual assault and rape, killings, burnings; and emergency body recovery processes are still clear in my memory. The sharing of these experiences with my colleagues in crisis demobilization sessions and with my supervisors in supervision sessions helped, but the smell and visual recall of the objects associated with such tragedies persisted in my memory for a while. These experiences reinforced my self-opinion as a counselor and a crisis intervener, and my appreciation for the counseling profession as my lifelong process.

I started my doctoral studies with a great passion for gaining more knowledge on the impact of trauma on survivors, and in my initial consultation with my first research class professor, I learned about and was instantly attracted to the concept of PTG. Since then, both in a group and alone, I have done research and presented on PTG in class and in external seminars. Each time I gave such presentations, I discovered more and new ideas and gained more information, which further built my interest in researching PTG. I wrote my doctoral candidacy examination research project with a focus on the PTG experience of political violence trauma survivors. I wished to complete my dissertation research on the same topic, go back to Africa, and move on with counseling, crisis intervention, research, education, and supervision services, which will be richly supported by my knowledge of trauma and my research findings.

At several stages of my life, I have either experienced or witnessed traumatic experiences, some of which I will mention briefly. Though I was not cognizant of anything as a one-year-old child, I felt and experienced the trauma of almost being torched in our house by my
father because I unknowingly sneezed in a positive response to a “wrong” traditional reincarnation name at birth. I learned about the ordeal later, when as children we kept picking up burnt coins from a specific place where the burnt house had been in our agricultural farm. By then my father had already shown me love and had become my good friend. In my adolescent stage, my teenage sister and I successfully but fearfully rescued our immediate neighbors’ baby from a burning house. A few years later, I became a Christian, but as a result, I was thoroughly beaten and rejected for refusing to go through the non-Christian traditional circumcision practice in preparation for my marriage. One year after our wedding, our first child was born with spina bifida, and he succumbed to it after fighting it for five weeks. The incident left us with a lot of emotional pain and grief to bear, considerable self-esteem to protect from traditional beliefs, and many questions to ask God. Each one of my traumatic experiences severely shook my psychosocial and emotional well-being, my safety net. Even so, in most of these crisis incidents, I still remember every individual, whether deceased or still alive, who came to my rescue or provided appropriate support after the fact. My spiritual life, love, care, and support from my mother, my siblings, and later my husband and friends among other people, contributed greatly to my physical and emotional recovery and forgiving spirit. As a result of the trauma in my life history, I am aware that this world is good and full of opportunities and second chances, but it is not always safe or secure. I know that difficulties can be overwhelming, at times challenging our very being, but people can overcome them, and every difficulty has the potential to make us into better people.

Through God’s own unforeseen divine plan, my family and I came for further studies to the United States, not knowing that God was not done with my healing process and vocation. I was then introduced to formal counseling. The series of therapeutic experiences intertwined with
my spiritual lifestyle and Christian worldview brought change through a complete healing to my wounded life and a preparation for a professional counselor and crisis intervener in me. Progressively, I learned to forgive absolutely, though I may not completely forget, to look at life and to the future always with optimism; and not to live in my wounded past, to serve with a holistic perspective or to rescue someone in need; but not to take glory or cling to anything that can salvage a life. I am aware, therefore, that my personal experience, presuppositions, pedagogical interest, and epistemological stance may have created the potential for bias to emerge, firsthand, as I conducted this study, analyzed, and explicated the collected data. I used a reflective journal and peer supervision, as well as regular consultation with my dissertation chair and the committee with an aim to mitigate the potential for bias which could contaminate the study. It is worth noting that offsetting any contingent potential for researcher bias, my lived experience served to enhance the study as I have firsthand experience with the targeted phenomenon.

For qualitative studies that seek to get at the insider perspective, active involvement of the observer as a participant is more fruitful than if the observer is not involved (Hatch, 2002). Given the nature of trauma the research participants have experienced, I conducted my study as an internal investigator but without imposing my own views or taking any stands on social or political issues. Research scholars recommend that social science research maintain such a value-neutral position (Berg & Lube, 2012).

Mattoon (2011) highlighted as vitally important to international trauma survivors that psychologists familiarize themselves with the cultural and religious backgrounds of potential clients/study subjects before attempting counseling/research. Young, (2009), as well, in an address to crisis interveners at the National Organization for Victims Association (NOVA), not
only mirrored Mattoon’s focus on the cultural context of the research participants but also highlighted key conceptual differences. According to Young, the meanings of suffering, causes or symptomatologies of suffering, presuppositions about meaning, meanings of time, the place of emotion in language, and the use of metaphor may vary by culture. While people experientially and developmentally form their narrative understanding of life through the use of context and time chronologies, they tend to interpret that understanding by constructing metaphors. As a researcher from within the culture, I wished to serve as an informant and provider of access to my culture. Additionally, I identified key culturally equipped counseling psychologists and language translators in my country to offer counseling services and help in translation. Hoffman and Kruczek (2011) wrote that “most research to date has failed to distinguish emic versus etic multicultural factors, [yet] most probably, cultural subsystem norms interact with other factors to influence an individual’s trauma response” (p. 1115). I gave an emic account of the trauma survivors’ experience of growth and stayed culturally neutral to provide an etic account of the experience by using Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) bioecological model.

**Ethical Considerations**

Owing to its emergent and flexible design, qualitative research has unique ethical considerations, which require extra caution from the researcher (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). As per the research ethics of causing good and less harm to the participants as identified in the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Forms and the 2014 ACA Code of Ethics (American Counseling Association [ACA], 2014), the researcher observed strict adherence to the ethics on care of the informants. Approval from the IRBs that assess ethical issues both at Duquesne University and at the National Council for Science and Technology, Kenya, were sought prior to conducting the human subject research for this study.
**Procedures for Protection of Human Subjects**

As per the Nuremberg Code of 1949 (Annas, Utley, & Grodin, 1992) and the ACA Code of Ethics (ACA, 2014) the subjects must voluntarily consent to participate in a research study. The participants’ consent was sought and the consent forms (Appendix A) were officially signed prior to each interview. Additionally, the participants were informed of their freedom to discontinue with the interviews without any consequences. The purpose and process of the interview was explained clearly and early in the process to the participants. A detailed description of the benefits, attendant discomforts, potential risks, nature, and process of the interviews was read carefully and explained clearly to each participant and to the focus group in the language of their choice. Further, the potential power differential between the researcher and participants was clearly explained. Because the research was unconventional and influenced by a cultural milieu that is associated with informal interactions, the researcher-participant relationship in some cases extended beyond interview session parameters to a non-research interaction as was the case with participant SAM and participant SSK prior to the individual interviews. Such interactive scenarios generated more beneficial research information. Any such interactions were initiated with the appropriate consent of the research participant where appropriate, and an attempt was made by way of a remedy, should any unintentional harm have occurred. Professional mental health counselors chosen from the Kenya Counselors and Psychologists Association (KCPA) were present throughout the interview process to offer counseling services to the participants who may have conveyed emotional upset or distress. Also, the participants were regularly informed of the counselors’ availability for counseling support and a list of their resource phone numbers were provided.
Confidentiality

Each participant was assured of confidentiality and security for any spoken and written information, respectively. I described the limitations on confidentiality to the focus group. Creswell (2007) emphasized the assigning of numbers or aliases to protect the privacy of the informants. To protect the confidentiality of the respondents, all data collected were kept anonymous, and the information from the participants was identified through their pseudonyms, based on what they chose in the consent forms. All the interviews were conducted at the times and venues chosen by the participants but at a location suitably secure for conducting research.

Data Storage and Retention

Copies of all the collected data were securely stored in locked OneDrive computer files and ATLAS.ti software for easy retrieval and confidentiality. Electronic data storage, including the external hard drive and USB, were password protected. In addition, the hard copies of all primary and secondary data—interviews, audio/visual, written notes/reflective journals, and unobtrusive observation measures—pertaining to the study and the participants’ identities were maintained in a locked cabinet that was accessible only to the researcher. After a successful defense of this dissertation, only the unidentified versions of tapes and transcripts will be retained; all the audio sound files and electronic transcripts will be deleted by the researcher. The researcher will shred all hard copy transcripts using a high security paper shredder designed for the most sensitive data.

Report of Findings

After the analysis, synthesis and interpretation, discussion/conclusion, and generation of a proposed theory from the themes and concepts, the research will be defended before the dissertation committee. Consequent to a successful defense, the findings will be disseminated in
public presentation forums and publication in order to educate the participants and readers on the trauma survivors’ experiences of PTG. This effort is also aimed at mitigating the impact of such traumatic experiences among survivors and the communities with chronic ethnic and political violence through resource mobilization and by advocating for the vulnerable and unknown or unheard through such forums.

**Reliability and Validity**

According to Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) credibility is equivalent to the criterion of validity (including both validity of measures and internal validity). Likewise, dependability is an essential criterion for reliability in qualitative research.

**Credibility**

Compliance with the credibility criterion ascertains that the participants’ constructions of reality are tied to the researcher’s portrayal of them (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). To provide ample descriptions and an analysis of the data that represent the reality of the informants, I used a triangulation method for data collection through semi-structured, in-depth interviews, informant observation, field notes, videotape recording, and secondary sources (e.g., visual media). Berg and Lune (2012) define *triangulation* as the use of multiple data-gathering techniques to investigate the phenomenon. This method enhanced the trustworthiness of the study and prompted the achievement of vital contextual factors and cultural issues essential for this research (Levers, 2006).

Van Manen (1990) emphasized that “a good phenomenological description is collected by lived experience and recollects lived experience—is validated by lived experience and it validates lived experience…termed the ‘validating circle of inquiry’” (p. 27). For accuracy and resonance, therefore, the research participants were asked to review the transcripts as rendered
from their individual and focus group narratives before data interpretation. Lincoln and Guba (1985) have termed this process “member checking.” This process added to the authenticity and validity of the participants’ narrative portraits and, hence, to that of the subsequent IPA. I also used ATLAS.ti software to support the process of qualitative data analysis and further establish this study’s credibility/validity, as a carefully conducted, computer-assisted qualitative phenomenological data analysis boosts the validity of the research results, especially at the conceptual stage of an analysis (Friese, 2014). I also remembered that as I phrased the research protocol and set up open-ended intake interviews, with a plan to collect and analyze the data, I had to keep asking myself, “How have I perceived and interpreted the 2007 PEV and recurrent multiple crisis incidents as both a citizen and a crisis intervener/counselor?” Sustaining that awareness through my personal self-reflection, reflective journal, and field notes continually helped me monitor my informants’ subjective perspectives and biases.

**Dependability**

In traditional quantitative research, reliability (dependability) is based on the assumption of replicability or repeatability and is essentially concerned with the possibility of obtaining the same results in potential subsequent observation (Koropit, 2015). To establish dependable and clear trajectories (i.e., an “audit trail”; Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012) for this study, a further detailed and thorough explanation of the data collection and analysis processes and procedures was provided. Additionally, my professional colleagues from KCPA coded several interviews to enhance inter-rater reliability. As dissertation research is iterative and recursive (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012), I revised and updated information continually while remaining flexible for emergent changes in the process.
Data Processing and Analysis

The semi-structured interviews and observation notes were read, and videos/audiotapes were watched/listened to and transcribed verbatim for verbal and nonverbal communication. Idiomatic phrases are often phenomenological reflections of lived experiences (van Manen, 1990). Research participants constantly use metaphors in the process of trying to make sense of their experiences (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Such idiomatic expressions were identified and appropriately analyzed throughout the data collection process.

The Interactive Model, familiarized by Miles et al. (2014), with the three concurrent and cyclical processes was used during data collection and in the reflective and recursive analysis of the collected data in this study. The three components involve (a) data condensation (reduction), (b) data display, and (c) data conclusion drawing/verification as displayed in Figure 3. According to Miles et al., condensation makes the data stronger as the term reduction implies weakening the data or losing something in the reduction process. The authors identified cycle coding methods or steps in the condensation process. A three-cycle/step process was employed in this study: assigning conceptual codes to the data, merging codes with similar content and assigning new conceptual codes, and categorizing similar conceptual new codes into conceptual code families/ pattern codes through a recursive and iterative process facilitated by network view maps. The three components of the model also guided in the determination of the central themes as later described in detail.
Figure 3. Components of data analysis: Interactive model (Miles & Huberman, 1994)

Anything that is qualitative can be coded quantitatively by assigning meaningful numerical values to allow for the analysis of the generated themes and concepts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Ochieng, 2009). To organize systematically the enormous collected data for a thorough analysis, to generate the themes and concepts, to allow for greater insights into the meaning of the data, and to help in generating and examining specific hypotheses, the researcher used ATLAS.ti, computer-aided qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) that supports qualitative data analysis. In social science research, this software is considered one of the most powerful tools for qualitative research.

Analysis with ATLAS.ti Software

First, after verbatim transcription was finished, the text-based electronic transcripts and audio/videotapes were uploaded or associated to the ATLAS.ti Hermeneutic Unit (HU) for analysis. Second, the themes and concepts in this study were coded, a process which involved quotation and coding of data chunks with repeated reading and identification of words often
expressed, idioms, opinions, activities, and phrases, etc. According to Miles et al. (2014) a code is a researcher-generated construct which embodies and hence attributes interpreted meaning to each datum and is useful in the establishment of patterns, relationships, categories, and theories among others in the qualitative data analysis process. In the first coding process, a single quotation was either coded with one code or simultaneously coded with two or more different codes depending on the meanings it embodies. Interpretation of the data was done with an awareness that the frequency of code occurrence does not exclusively determine the meaningfulness of the identified phrases. As emphasized in qualitative research reflected in Bloomberg and Volpe’s (2012) work, the conceptual framework remained flexible and progressively changed throughout the entire analytic process reflecting the participants’ experiences. To understand the participants from their perspective, new emergent descriptors were progressively created, and some were eliminated.

Third, the codes were conceptually categorized into themes and their connections were identified under these new descriptors. Coded quotations which fitted into more than one category were reassessed using the network view map and were put in the more appropriate categories (Miles et al.’s Pattern codes). Fourth, themes were then labelled, and put in hierarchy based on relevance and connections and their connections described. According to Friese (2014), ATLAS.ti’s code-co-occurrence tool, Code Primary Documents (PD) Table, and query tool help find the relations and patterns in the data. Additionally, the software’s network view maps, word cloud views, code-quotations links, and nodes served in this study as a powerful analytical tool for representing and exploring conceptual structures. Based on its relevance in the interpretation of text, participants’ quoted material, secondary data, and videotape, the software was used to build theory based on the themes, interactions, categories, and concepts
found. The findings from this research project have generated key information for policy making, psychological education, and clinical practice/intervention. The process allowed for greater insights into the meaning of the data and helped in generating and examining specific hypotheses. Therefore, it laid also a foundation for future research on PTG experience in the aftermath of the recurrent and multiple trauma associated with post-election violence in the African context.

**Coding with ATLAS.ti Software**

To allow for efficient content analysis of the enormous amount of data collected, ATLAS.ti software was chosen for this study. The software’s coding functions, the retrieval mechanism for the coded quotations, and network view maps facilitated the condensation/transformation (reduction) of data, retrieval of content, identification of the relationships and patterns, and visual representation of the emergent categories of codes and main themes. Memos in ATLAS.ti serve as containers for ideas while research question memos function as building blocks for the results section of the research report (Friese, 2014). The “methodology/analysis process memo,” “research questions memo,” and “personal reflections and observations memo” were created. The researcher then wrote memos continuously while identifying the analysis process, highlighting main ideas from the focus groups and individual narratives, and writing them in brief phrases against each of the four research questions. The source participants’ pseudonyms and quotation numbers were assigned to each phrase in the memos for reference during the analytic process in the results section.

The methodology memo contains a summary of the data analysis process with ATLAS.ti, including information on inductive quotation and coding and multi-document view. Throughout the entire analysis process. I wrote my personal reflexive memo covering the insights,
observations, and gut feelings to elucidate my presuppositions and reduce researcher bias. Reflexivity encourages mutual and continuous reciprocal effects between the researcher and the object of study during the research process (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009). The code quotations of the summary, themes generated from the memos, and themes generated from participants’ transcripts were displayed in the network view map (sample, see Figure 5a) and used in writing the final summary of the findings and generating the main themes for the study.

Data condensation/ Inductive quotation and coding. The data condensation process involves selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the “raw” data that appear in the full corpus (body) of written-up field notes, interview transcripts, participant observations, documents, graphic images and other empirical materials (Miles et al., 2014). This component was used progressively in the data analysis process as it aims at retaining the “whole” while generating the participants’ meanings from their narratives.

After completing verbatim transcription of the collected data, the researcher associated the 16 interview and two focus group transcripts (all in text-based electronic format), the audio/videotapes, and the media graphic images into the ATLAS.ti Hermeneutic Unit (HU) with each as a Primary Document (PD). Next, the researcher repeatedly read the narratives to get a sense of the whole idea and did content analysis of the data collected. The words or key terms, sentences, and paragraphs with phrases of significance in all the PD files were quoted (relevant data pieced out) progressively and coded (conceptually given meaning), using open coding, code In Vivo (key words or sentences), code by list, and quick coding (last used code) functions. The process took three coding cycles involving initial quotation of the data, merging similar codes, and categorizing the codes into code families. These code categories (families) were finally used to generate main themes that emerged for this study.
The "bottom-up" open coding strategy (see Figure 4) was used to generate ideas, concepts, and themes inductively and to identify relationships and patterns in the course of studying the data. Through this strategy, first, concepts which serendipitously emerged were coded in almost every instance for a total of 690 codes in an attempt to reflect the participants' narratives accurately. In addition, from the free quotations made and expressive statements or terms captured through the In Vivo coding function, almost similar concepts noticed from the data were coded into common code levels. Data condensation occurs unceasingly throughout the life of any qualitatively focused project, as it is part of the analysis (Miles et al., 2014).

Second, codes with almost similar concepts in the coding list and their corresponding quotations were merged progressively and given new emergent conceptual codes for a reduced number of 361 codes. This was performed with constant reading and re-reading of the content in their matching quotations. Third, these already merged new codes were then put into code families (categories) in ATLAS.ti Code Family Manager and densely described as sub-themes under more complex common code levels from which the overarching themes emerged as guided by the conceptual framework and the research questions.
Figure 4. The “bottom-up,” three-step conceptual coding process used.

Data display. With reference to the data display component, a “display” is an organized and compressed array of information, often a narrative text in qualitative data, which allows conclusion drawing and action taking based on the understanding communicated (Miles et al., 2014). Creating displays is part of analytic activities, as a good display offers robust qualitative analysis, and these come in the form of matrices, graphs, charts, and networks (Miles et al., 2014). In this study, the code categories were projected in the network view map, and the relationships and patterns were identified (see samples in Figures 5a, 5b, 8 & 9). The constant revisiting, reading and re-reading, comparing and linking or unlinking, and matching of the quotations, original codes, and main codes in an iterative and recursive manner were facilitated.
by the use of semantic network view layout, code-to-code and hyperlink relations functions, and other tools in Code Manager and Code Family Manager.

Figure 5a. Semantic network view generating subthemes and their code categories
Figure 5b. P37 from Figure 5a, displaying burned shops, a code mapping that contributed to the generated subtheme

Multi-document view. To allow for rich comparative analysis and a full understanding of the participants’ thoughts and feelings as expressed in their narratives through verbal and non-verbal communication, the multi-document view/screen in the HU editor was opened. Then three or more documents were simultaneously viewed and analyzed (see Figure 6), with either the transcript, audiotape, and multimedia documents or transcript, video, and multimedia documents or any other empirical materials used during the quotation, coding, and memoing process.
Figure 6. Screenshot of analysis with multi-document view of 3 PDs in Atlas.ti HU editor

**Determining the central themes and conclusion drawing/verification.** As expressed by Miles et al. (2014), the third component, *conclusion drawing/verification*, concurrently flows with the other components, beginning with data collection, and the final conclusions may appear only after the data collection is over. The researcher decides what items mean in the narratives, notes consistencies, patterns, and explanations, and identifies possible configurations, causal flows, and propositions (Miles et al., 2014). In the final stage, the code categories were summarized and further conceptualized into common and succinct overarching main themes. All
the original codes were recurrently revisited in a similar pattern to ascertain that they
corresponded conceptually to these new main codes. The redundant codes, those with concepts
that did not fit into any common code level, were retained and either used in further analysis of
the data as necessary or deleted for lack of use. Phase 1 contains initial codes from the data
chunk (quotations) and phases 2 and 3 entail conceptually merged codes in two steps from phase
I with new conceptual names. Categorization of the phase 3 emerged codes in the code family
manager and viewing the conceptual codes relationships with the network view map led to the
emergence of the phase 4 overarching main themes. (See Appendix G for a table displaying the
four total phases of the coding and merging process using Atlas.ti.)

Finally, conclusion drawing/verification was done with the themes of the research
findings further analyzed, interpreted, and synthesized in light of previous literature and theories
on trauma and PTG in order to generate the hypothesis or new theory. In the last chapter, the
researcher verifies the conclusion through testing the plausibility, sturdiness, and
“confirmability” (validity) of the meanings which emerged from the data (Miles et al., 2014).
Chapter 5, then, involves a detailed discussion and interpretation of the main themes that
emerged from the collected data.

**Delimitations**

**Delimitations/Scope**

The study commenced in October 2015 and ended in January 2016. The research was
conducted in the Rift Valley Region of Kenya where the intensity and frequency of the
skirmishes, PEV, and fire explosion traumas were high. The male and female participants with
traumatic experiences extending over 8 years were interviewed based on their self-identification
as PEV survivors who had also previously experienced one or more political violence-instigated
traumas or, later, the 2009 fire explosion tragedies. Their ages ranged from 35-87 years with an average of 50.56 years.

**Chapter Summary**

This research examined the lived experience of the survivors of the 2007 PEV who also experienced the 2009 national fire explosions. Specifically, it examined how the trauma survivors have made meaning out of their trauma experience. In addition, the project further scrutinized how survivors’ risk and protective factors and personal characteristics influenced their experience of positive change at the time of recurrent and multiple traumas. This chapter has discussed the research methodology, as well as the process and the rationale for the qualitative design of this study as a phenomenologically-oriented inquiry. I described myself as the research instrument and provided a detailed description of the sampling strategy, purposive sampling type, participant selection, sampling criteria, data collection and recording, ethical considerations, data processing and analysis, and delimitations and limitations. Based on purposive sampling, this research examined the lived experience of recurrent and multiple trauma survivors that were identified as having experienced the 2007 PEV trauma. Four research protocols identified here were used in the data collection and analysis. In addition to Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) bioecological model, Van Manen’s (1990) four lived existentials served to inform the research questions, methodology, and explication of the data.

For appropriate analysis and interpretation of the huge amount of qualitative data collected, the researcher used Miles, Huberman, and Saldana’s (2014) model with its concurrent data condensation (reduction), data display, and data conclusion drawing/verification components along with ATLAS.ti software to guide and manage the entire research process. Themes and concepts gathered from the data were code generated by means of ATLAS.ti
software, which allowed for appropriate and thorough code retrieval and analysis with the aid of its codes and network view. The code categories were visually displayed in the network view maps consistently; the relationships and patterns were compared by reading the quotations content and previously made hyperlink levels; and main themes or code families were generated. In addition, memos were written against each of the four research questions, and text memos were continuously and reflexively written and also used to generate themes. Many themes, interactions, and categories were used and systematically refined to derive the main themes and concepts, which were then analyzed and interpreted. Phenomenology assumes a thematic approach to examine the data in order to extract essences and essentials of participant meanings (Miles et al., 1994). In this study, the meanings formulated from the main themes and concepts were further clustered and merged into broader themes for a full description of the informants’ four lived existentials (van Manen, 1990): corporeality, temporality, spatiality, and relationality. In Chapter 4, the 23 themes which emerged are discussed in detail. The research outcomes have generated key information for intervention strategies and policy making. This investigation adds to the scant research on trauma and PTG and helps to lay the foundation for varied studies on PTG in the aftermath of the PEV experience in the African context.
CHAPTER IV: Research Findings

"But Rwandans got to know the dangers of humanity, meaning, in a positive way. Now Rwanda knows how to educate ourselves, our children, our neighbors and friends."

~ Honore Gatera ~ ("Rwandans mark 20th anniversary of genocide," 2014)
(Manager of the Rwandan Genocide Memorial)

In qualitative research, findings should be presented as objectively as possible and without prior assumptions—that is, free from researcher bias (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). To maintain this stance, the informants’ experiences and events were made explicit through using their own words to sustain the accuracy and credibility of the results in this study. Additionally, audiotape and videotape recordings, obtained with the participants’ consent, and field notes were used to complement each other to acquire accurately the participants’ verbal and nonverbal communication and hence provide comprehensive information of the collected data. The data were collected and analyzed concurrently as per the three components laid out by Miles et al. (2014) until saturation was reached: that is, the participants were beginning to share similar data content. To get the content precisely—that is, to transmit the cultural point of view and idioms used in the participants’ narratives—the researcher personally transcribed the data verbatim and consulted with colleagues for content translation and idiom interpretation as necessary. The researcher watched the video and listened to the audio recordings of each focus group and each interview, and inserted information on nonverbal communications, such as body gestures, emotional expressions, pauses, and interludes/interruptions, to portray the context and complete the narratives of the participants. After completing verbatim transcription of the data, the researcher followed up with all the informants to ensure that the transcripts reflected their personal narratives. Their feedback was noted, and adjustments were made in the original transcripts to reflect the participants’ narratives and enhance the description, analysis, and interpretation of the collected data.
The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experiences of the survivors of multiple and recurrent traumas: the skirmishes, the 2007 PEV, and the 2009 multiple national level fire explosions in Kenya. Specifically, this research was intended to examine how the survivors have made meaning out of the trauma. In addition, this research examined the influence of survivors’ risk and protective factors on their interpretation of the trauma and the positive influence of their personal characteristics on their perception of life at the time of recurrent and multiple traumas, as well as at the present in anticipation of regular imminent traumas. The findings of this phenomenological study exemplify the lived experiences of the recurrent and multiple trauma survivors of the skirmishes, the PEV, and the fire explosion trauma as described by the informants of the study.

The conceptual frameworks and research questions aid in establishing the foci and the boundaries for participant sampling and the entire research process (Miles et al., 2014). Moreover, the deeper goal or the thrust of phenomenological research is immersion into the inquiry of the nature of the phenomenon being studied—for this study, trauma as an essentially human experience (van Manen, 1990). In this study, Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) bioecological model and van Manen’s (1990) four lived existentials served as analytical lenses to examine and focus the study conceptually; and the research questions guided in the data collection, analysis, and interpretation. This study was guided by the following main research question: What are the lived experiences of the survivors of the multiple traumas of both the 2007 post-election violence and the multiple national-level fire explosions in Kenya in 2009?

The following four subsidiary questions were addressed:

- How do the trauma survivors describe their lived existentials (body, space, time, and relationships) in the aftermath of the 2007 PEV and 2009 fire explosions in Kenya?
In what ways have the trauma survivors made meaning out of their experiences of the multiple and recurrent traumas?

What do the trauma survivors consider to have been the risk and protective factors in their experiences of the 2007 PEV and 2009 fire explosions in Kenya?

How have the trauma survivors’ personal characteristics positively influenced their perception of life in spite of their exposure to recurrent and multiple traumas?

Additionally, Miles et al.’s (2014) model with its three components—data condensation (reduction), data display, and conclusion drawing and verification—guided the analysis process. “The excellence of the research rests in large part on the excellence of the coding” (Strauss, 1987). ATLAS.ti software was used to manage the voluminous collected data as its coding system facilitated in forming code categories which were finally used to generate the main themes, which emerged from the code categories as follows:

**Research Question #1: The Lived Existentials:**

Theme #1: Fear  Theme #4: Healing  Theme #6: Betrayal Trauma

Theme #2: Loss  Theme #5: Hopefulness  Theme #7: Acute Grief

Theme #3: Frustration

**Research Question #2: Meanings:**

Theme #8: “Forgiveness is the key thing in life”

Theme #9: “I am a peace builder; peace is just like oxygen!”

Theme #10: Collaboration and strong relationships

Theme #11: “Life must continue; God has a purpose for me to live”

**Research Question #3A: Risk Factors:**

Theme #12: The impact of trauma and loss
Theme #13: Chronic anger for cause of violence and/or lack of support

Theme #14: Triggers of trauma

**Research Question #3B: Protective Factors:**

Theme #15: Trust in God  Theme #17: Acceptance  Theme #19: Courage

Theme #16: Social Support  Theme #18: Spirituality

**Research Question #4: Personal Characteristics’ Positive Influence on Perception of Life**

Theme #20: Exercising compassion

Theme #21: Gained courage and motivation for peaceful co-existence

Theme #22: Increased or new spiritual faith

Theme #23: Being appreciative

Demographic information for all the informants is described in detail in this chapter to establish the context of the study. This demographic information is displayed in a table to augment the participants’ narrative description. Next, the research physical settings and culture/environments are described. The participants’ names and the research sites were assigned pseudonyms to preserve anonymity.

Following a description of the demographic information and research physical setting of the informants, this chapter provides a case-by-case narrative description of two focus groups and 16 individual interviews. All the informants who participated in the individual interviews had also participated in one of the two focus groups. The interviews lasted for 60 to 90 minutes each, whereas the focus groups sessions lasted for 120 to 150 minutes each. In this study, English and Kiswahili were the two main languages used in focus groups and individual interviews. Whenever necessary, a translator steadily provided translation in the appropriate tribal language in each zone during the review of the informed consent forms and the interviews.
In order to facilitate a reflective analysis and interpretation of the findings, phrases of significance from each interview and each focus group are organized in correspondence to their matching research questions.

The chapter concludes with a detailed presentation of the clusters of meanings which emerged from the phrases of significance, and their assigned subthemes are organized under their analytic categories and research questions as displayed in the cross-case analysis table (see Table 6) consequent to the narrative descriptions of the interview. Subsequently, the ATLAS.ti software generated network view charts displaying meaningfully organized categories of codes, the patterns and relationships, and the main themes which conceptually emerged are presented. A summary of the key findings is provided. The entire process established fundamental ground for discussing the findings, interpreting the 23 main themes, and drawing conclusions/verifying the results in chapter 5 based on theoretical foundations of conceptual frameworks which guided the study.

**Informants’ Demographic Information**

The participants in this study were 16 survivors of recurrent or multiple traumas of both the skirmishes and the 2007 PEV and also the 2009 fire explosion or other trauma such as tragic car accident, thuggery or conning. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants of this study as per the procedure described in detail in the methodology chapter. The participants were 10 females and 6 males of ages ranging from 35 to 87 years old (with an average age of 50-56). Seven of the informants participated in Focus Group #1: Amani; 9 of the participants took part in Focus Group #2: Upendo, and all the 16 participants participated in individual interviews. The informants granted the researcher permission to collect data by signing the Participant Informed Consent Form, per this study’s procedure as identified in the methodology chapter. The
researcher assured the participants of the confidentiality of the study. As part of keeping confidentiality, pseudonyms are used instead of participants’ and the research sites’ real names, and the participants’ socio-demographic information is not directly linked to their personal narratives.

Concerning the scope and depth of the trauma all the participants said they had experienced in the past, seven of the participants told the researcher that they had experienced one to three skirmishes, and all 16 participants experienced the 2007-08 PEV incidents, together with their families and community members, and in a recurrent and/or multiple manner. Table 2 (No. of Trauma Incidents column) portrays the recurrence (R) and multiplicity (M) of the skirmishes, the PEV, and the fire explosion trauma incidents in the participants’ experience. One of the 16 participants experienced the 1992 and 1997 skirmishes, the PEV with entire loss of property in the three instances, and the fire explosion trauma, including multiple loss of colleagues. One participant experienced the 1992 and 1997 skirmishes and the PEV with entire loss of property in all instances; one experienced the 1992 skirmishes, the PEV with entire loss of property, and the sudden loss of loved ones to violence-associated illnesses shortly after the two incidents. Another participant experienced the 1997 skirmishes with partial loss of property, the PEV with entire loss of property, thuggery in the form of being held at gun-point and the loss of family valuables, and the fire explosion concurrently with the loss of a loved one; in addition, the spouse sustained PEV-associated physical injuries. One participant also experienced the sudden death of a child; then two years later experienced the 1992 and then the 1994 skirmishes with partial loss of property, and again the participant experienced the PEV with entire loss of property, psychological tortures, and attempted rape. Another participant experienced the 1992 skirmishes with entire loss of property and narrowly escaped several gun shots and in 2007, PEV
fire trauma with entire community torched, husband brutally injured, and—some months later—the threat of harm to the family. One more participant experienced the 1992 skirmishes and, like the other 14, experienced PEV with entire or partial loss of property; in addition, like 6 other participants, either the participant or the spouse was injured. Among the participants who lost their entire property during PEV and whose spouses sustained brutal injury, one of them experienced the entire loss of a large amount of farm produce to con men a year after the violence. Consequently, the same participant’s injured spouse died because of the PEV and con-associated physical illnesses. Another participant experienced the PEV with no loss of property, lost one family member during the fights to violence-associated illness, shortly after losing another loved one. The same participant together with three other participants experienced the fire explosion through either single or multiple loss of immediate family and community members. Finally, one participant experienced the loss of an immediate family member through a tragic road accident in which two other immediate family members sustained major physical injuries. In another incident, a participant’s spouse was cruelly assaulted and robbed a few months prior to the PEV. This participant also lost his entire property, including farm equipment and business premises, in PEV. A few years after the PEV, the participant experienced the sudden and unexpected loss of two immediate family members, an incident where both members died within a week after a few days of two different short illnesses. Besides the fact that all the participants of this study experienced the PEV and most of them also experienced the skirmishes, all of them said they sought refuge in churches, police stations, relatives’ homes, rental housing after being evicted from their homes and shortly after were relocated to IDP camps.

The level of education of the research participants in this study ranges from no formal education (one participant) to having a bachelor’s degree (two participants). One participant has
a diploma, one has a CPA-III, (Certified Public Accountant) professional certificate, and one has a PI (Certificate in Primary Teacher Education); three participants have Form 4/12th grade certificates, two participants have a Form 2/10th grade level of education, four participants hold Std 7/7th grade (CPE certificates), and one participant has a Std 5/5th grade level of education.

The participants’ professional occupations range from private medical officer to small-scale farmer. Thirteen of the participants are farmers, with 10 of them being small-scale farmers; three of the participants are active, and one is a retired social worker. Five of the participants are active private business owners or large-scale farmers, while three of them lost their private businesses to PEV. One of the participants is a private medical officer.

All the participants noted having received social support from either the well-wishers, the government, relatives, or God among other sources during and after the violence. However, the amount of support received varied as did the struggles for survival because of lack of support or delayed support. A summary of the participants’ demographic is presented in Table 1.
Table 1.

Informants’ Demographic Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant (Atlas.ti) PD #</th>
<th>Pseudonym &amp; interview type</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Health condition</th>
<th>Years Employed</th>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Endorse Per. Trauma History: Yes/No</th>
<th>No. of Trauma Incidents</th>
<th>Social support received: Yes/No</th>
<th>Religious: Yes/No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. (PD 2) SSK Individual</td>
<td>46 M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Farmer/ former business man &amp; flower farm staff</td>
<td>Chronic health problem – PEV-physical injuries</td>
<td>3, then self emp.</td>
<td>Std 7/ 7th Grade (CPE certificate)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1 (M)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes – Sp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. (PD 3) SJM Individual</td>
<td>52 F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Farmer/ Retired Social worker</td>
<td>BP</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Form 2/ 10th Grade</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2 (R&amp;M)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. (PD 4) SMW Individual</td>
<td>53 F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>BP</td>
<td>Self emp.</td>
<td>Form 2/ 10th Grade</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1 (M)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes – Sp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. (PD 5) SOA Individual</td>
<td>87 M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Chronic itching - PEV-physical injuries</td>
<td>Self emp.</td>
<td>No formal education received</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2 (M)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes – Sp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. (PD6) SAW Individual</td>
<td>60 F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Chron. hd/ache</td>
<td>Self emp.</td>
<td>Std 7/ 7th Grade (CPE certificate)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2 (R&amp;M)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. (PD7) SAM Focus Group</td>
<td>45 M</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Farmer/ owns private b.ness</td>
<td>BP</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Form 4/ 12th Grade</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2 (R&amp;M)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes – Sp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. (PD8) ETK Individual</td>
<td>57 F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Farmer/ retired teacher</td>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>BA - Education</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3 (R&amp;M)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes – Sp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. (PD10) EBT Individual</td>
<td>54 F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Social worker/ retired teacher</td>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Certificate in Primary Teacher Education (PI)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5 (R)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. (PD 9) ECT Individual</td>
<td>68 F</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Farmer/ retired officer</td>
<td>Old age</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Form 4/ 12th Grade</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5 (R&amp;M)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes – Sp.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The research for this study was conducted in four counties along the Rift Valley of Kenya, which was greatly hit by the 2007-08 PEV. The interviews and the focus groups were conducted in different locations with varying site setups. However, the researcher ensured that all the interviews were done in private, confidential venues that were conducive to the study, and all the participants were associated with the milieu of the study phenomena.

**Case-by-case Analysis of the Interviews**

In this section, I provide a sequential case-by-case analysis of the two focus groups and 16 individual interviews of the trauma survivors of the skirmishes, the 2007-08 PEV, and the 2009 fire explosion, among other traumas in Kenya.
Focus Group #1: Amani

Focus Group #1: Amani, consisted of seven participants and was conducted under a big tree, a community meeting ground in one of the counties in the Rift Valley of Kenya. The participants’ contact person made mobile phone calls frequently to remind the participants of our meeting time and venue. The translator and I arrived at the site ahead of time and prepared the seating arrangement for the focus group as well as the audiotape and videotape equipment. Drinking water was available to all the participants during the focus group and individual interviews.

Immediately we arrived at the site, many people came, greeted us, and started socializing with each other. Knowing the scope of the PEV, I was not surprised to see such a big number of people coming for the research study on violence. My only concern was that not all the participants might be willing to sign the consent form if they were not used to such agreements prior to a talk/interview. I was also concerned that some might have confused it for a political forum or could be thinking the study was politically instigated, as there were some political leaders’ cases pending in the International Criminal Court (ICC). Being aware that some people in several parts of the country, including the Rift Valley region, had previously been recruited as witnesses to the ICC cases, I introduced myself in detail as a student and explained to the potential participants about the focus of my study. I showed them the official letters of approval for the research project (see Appendix F) and clearly informed them that the study had no relationship at all with politics in the country, that it was purely academic. Then, I requested those who had personally experienced either single, multiple, or recurrent traumas of both the skirmishes and 2007-08 PEV, among other traumas, to identify themselves. At that point, I observed that people started small conversations among themselves, and their coordinators were
trying to identify those who met the criteria. After the potential participants consulted among themselves, some of them approached me, expressing appreciation for my invitation but stating that they had to leave so that those who were highly affected by the skirmishes and the PEV could express themselves. They then left the site with a word of appreciation from me as well for their coming. Those who had travelled far were reimbursed their transport expenses, and all were given a lunch allowance.

I then sought consent from the research participants as per the procedure described in the previous chapter. Before I began the interviews, I distributed copies of the consent forms to them and systematically reviewed the whole content as they followed in the forms and highly emphasized to them that I will keep confidentiality of their information. A translator steadily translated in the appropriate tribal language my reading of the participant informed consent to ascertain that two elderly women participants understood everything before signing the consent forms. Furthermore, I clearly informed them that their participation in the study was voluntary, that they were free to withdraw at any time they felt they wanted to leave, and that they would get their stated allowance even if they withdrew from participating. I let them know that the consent form covered their participation in both the focus group and individual interviews to be conducted later. I also gave them an opportunity for questions and answers to clarify everything before starting the focus group session. When I invited the potential participants to sign consent forms, provide their demographic information (see Table 1), and participate in the study, a few of them talked to their coordinators and left the site. Those who left told my research contact persons, through their coordinators, that they were unwilling to either sign the consent forms or be recorded for fear of political consequences. I was left with seven participants, four males and
Table 2.

Focus Group #1—Amani: Demographic Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants’ Atlas.ti PD #10 Focus Group #1: Pseudonym: Amani</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Health condition</th>
<th>Years Employed</th>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Endorse Per. Trauma</th>
<th>No. of Trauma Incidents</th>
<th>Social support received: Yes/No</th>
<th>Religious: Yes/No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 (Focus Group) SSN M</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Farmer/ former private business man</td>
<td>Suffers from Chronic physical weakness &amp; memory loss – 2007 PEV physical injuries etc.</td>
<td>Self emp.</td>
<td>Std. 7/ 7th Grade (Certificat e of Primary Education - CPE)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2 (M) - (1992 - evicted &amp; property looted, 2007 PEV- shoot with arrow, house and business property burned, other property destroyed/looted)</td>
<td>Yes -(KES, 10,000 &amp; 25,000, food, clothing, medical services, counseling, 2 ¼ acres, and a house built for - from Government, Red Cross, UN, DRC, churches, and well-wishers)</td>
<td>Yes – Sp.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 (Focus Group) SSK M</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Farmer/ former businessman &amp; flower farm staff</td>
<td>Suffers from Chronic physical &amp; mental health illnesses – PEV physical injuries etc.</td>
<td>3, then self emp.</td>
<td>Std. 7/ 7th Grade (CPE certificate )</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1 (M) - (2007 PEV- shoot with arrow, rescued children from a burning house, entire property destroyed/ looted)</td>
<td>Yes -(KES, 10,000 &amp; 25,000, food, clothing, medical services, counseling, 2 ¼ acres of farm, and a house built for - from God, government, Red Cross, UN, DRC, churches, and well-wishers)</td>
<td>Yes – Sp.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>SJM</strong>&lt;br&gt;(Focus Group)</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Farmer/Retired Social worker</td>
<td>BP – suffers from blood pressure - 2007 PEV trauma</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Form 2/10th Grade</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2 (R&amp;M) - (2007 PEV-Brutally hit with stones, house &amp; entire property burnt)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>(KES. 10,000 &amp; 25,000, food, clothing, medical services, counseling, 2 ⅓ and a house build for - from Government, Red Cross, UN, DRC, churches, and well-wishers).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SMW</strong>&lt;br&gt;(Focus Group)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>BP - Blood pressure - 2007 PEV trauma</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self emp.</td>
<td>Form 2/10th Grade</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>1 (M) - (2007 PEV-evicted, house burnt, property destroyed/looted)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>(KES. 10,000 &amp; 25,000, food, clothing, medical services, counseling, 2 ⅓ acres, and a house build for - the above 18 yrs. old sons got their shares - from Government, Red Cross, UN, DRC, churches, and well-wishers).</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SOA</strong>&lt;br&gt;(Focus Group)</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Suffers from Chronic itching - PEV major physical injuries</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self emp.</td>
<td>No formal education received</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2 (M) - (2007 PEV - fell into burning house while being chased, 2009 - pregnant daughter crashed to death in car accident)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes - (KES. 10,000 &amp; 25,000, food, clothing, medical services, counseling, 2 ⅓ acres, and a house build for - from Government, Red Cross, UN, DRC, churches, and families or well-wishers).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SAW</strong>&lt;br&gt;(Focus Group)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Chronic headache</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Self emp.</td>
<td>Std. 7/7th Grade (CPE certificate)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2 (R&amp;M) -(1992 - Lost entire property to skirmishes, father died immediately after &amp; uncle became insane after losing property; 2007 PEV - house burnt &amp; property destroyed/looted, currently farm-less, suddenly lost husband to asthma &amp; physically disabled grandchild).</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>(KES. 10,000 &amp; 25,000, food, clothing, medical services, and a house build for - from Government, Red Cross, UN, DRC, churches, and well-wishers).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<p>| | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>SAM (Focus Group)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Farmer/ owns private Business</td>
<td>BP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Form 4/ 12th Grade</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>2 (R&amp;M) - (1992 - Narrowly missed death, 2007 PEV - House burnt, property destroyed/looted)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes - (KES. 10,000 &amp; 25,000, food, clothing, medical services, counseling, and a house build for in own farm - from Government, Red Cross, UN, DRC, churches, and well-wishers)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key:  
three females, who briefly chatted about the fears associated with ICC cases, then signed their consent forms, and willingly participated in the focus group and individual interviews. Some of the participants knew each other from when they were in IDP camps before being resettled. That familiarity with each other and a sense of homogeneity of the participants’ experiences may have contributed to their sense of comfort and freedom in expressing their past trauma experiences during the group session.

I commenced the session by asking the participants to introduce themselves one by one, with all of them describing how they had lived after experiencing the skirmishes, PEV, and any other trauma. Participant SSK began by saying, “A major tragedy which I faced is the 2007 clashes.” I then asked him to share in the group what he felt comfortable to say:

I was beaten up, my property was destroyed, my goats were finished, some of my children I rescued them from the burning house, and I am thankful to God that nobody got burnt in that house. So I started facing those challenges beginning 2007 the 8th; that is when I reached [de-identified] showground. So we stayed there, stayed there sleeping on grass like in the bush, we stayed; after about two years again we relocated to…[de-identified, IDPs Camp] where still we experienced hardships. We were then brought back here by the government and allocated these farms you see we now have. So the sufferings that I have gone through since that 2007 until now, I have gone through a lot of hardships. Beginning with mental suffering, thinking about my issues, how my property got finished: I have wrestled with that several times.

Participant SSK having established the communication platform, SMW (his neighbor) next shared her experiences when I thanked SSK for sharing his experiences and opened the floor for the next participant. The rest of the group members paid attention and sometimes nodded their heads, gestures which were either signs of agreement with what was said or a sign of recalling previous trauma experiences. All the participants described their lived experiences in the group. Table 3 depicts the phrases of significance derived from the Focus Group #1—Amani.
Table 3.

Focus Group #1—Amani: Phrases of Significance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical Categories</th>
<th>Phrases of Significance</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Van Manen’s Four Lived Existentials: i. Lived Space</td>
<td>...I rescued them from the burning house, ...I started seeing some unpleasant signals...over there I am seeing a lot [elongated pronunciations] of people, like heaps and heaps, here and there, what are they doing, what is going on!?” ...to enter! I found a lot of people in the building that you can’t even get where to pass…. To turn this way, I saw election posters of [de-identified] put this way [upside down, illustrates]…and also people starting to throw posters around...I decided to get out.... Instantly, to look behind, stones thruu! …we entered into the house…let us enter under the table…. They hit the door with stones until it opened by itself. When it opened, the stones got finished. Now they returned to the other plot to get more stones. I told my husband, ‘get those children out, and I told my daughter; ‘Get out!’ And the younger one; ‘Get out!’ Immediately I finished saying so, there came the stones, thuruururuu! Then we entered into the house…. I ran following the children, to the police [station]…to see aall those lines! It was it was just stones, stones filled everywhere…. “...the house has been burnt and your husband is stack in the house!” … they were burning [his blacksmith shop] and he was pouring the water to extinguish the fire, they did that over and over…. ...to turn this way, he told me; ‘Now we are finished, here they are! Let’s hide here!’ We put down the box! He held my head, bent me down at the fence, he plucked leaves and he eh we threw on ourselves! Over there! People were full there now cutting each other! [Cross talk]. Over there it was now killing each other not a joke! The plane came showering arrows, [cross talk] [group laughter] s aa bullets and all that everywhere. From [de-identified] all those farms…coming this way was now severe. That was now the climax of the violence! Wasn’t that so? [Asking the group] [Group members agree]. Because on 24th, all of us filled the showground…the country stopped [immobilized].</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fearful environment</td>
<td>Saw and heard signs of danger</td>
<td>Chronic psychological stress reactions to trauma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Where you call home, from that day was not home! It became whether you go there during the day or night you live like a gazelle; because you keep checking [hypervigilance] if there is somebody close to you, [pause] and it’s your home [cross talk]…. Where it was your home does not feel like your home, because you live with a lot of fears. Whether it was during the day or at night, because there was a gang...they would use any language to confuse [you], so that fear is still there. I personally remember my bicycle was shot and burst [cross talk]…. That affects one’s mind so much…

…I reached [de-identified] showground. So we stayed there sleeping on grass like in the bush, we stayeed….

Even the food I was given from the line, I was brought for by other people.

To this far we have reached, we have seen God.

ii. Lived Body

I was beaten up,

The stones were coming from this side [pause]…. Now [Inaudible segment] hitting us
We were hit! We were hit!
…I got severely burnt. In fact I will show you the scars. I got burnt!

And also the injuries which I sustained there, they sometimes disturb me…. Like this side I have arrow wounds, I was shot here [touches the left side lower neck]. So this hand keeps giving me problems.

…I was shot with arrows on my leg. This, it came out through this side [shows the scars while illustrating how the arrow went]…I got shot on this, you see, how it came out through this side? I just said; ‘Oh God!’

…I prayed, the prayer was not ending, I tried to sleep, the sleep could not come, since there and then, I got [blood] pressure.

So I started facing those challenges

When I remember those issues, my heart gets disturbed and it reminds me of those incidents. So sometimes I take a medicine called [de-identified], prescribed for people with mental disturbances. So the tortures we went through that time were so severe.
…I have gone through a lot of hardships. Beginning with mental suffering, thinking about my issues…. When I remember those issues, my heart gets disturbed

I was examined and was told it was the torments that I faced which were disturbing me. From there I started struggling with [blood] pressure.

When you go there, you are told there is no medicine and still you are sick.

…I was told that monthly periods stopped prematurely.

I asked him, “Surely! That house will be burnt when I am watching?” I told him, “I will scream.” He told me, ‘Don’t scream. There are others coming from that side.’ I told him, “I will scream.” Then he held my mouth closed [slight laughter] so that I do not scream…. I trembled! I wet myself [urinated]! [Pause] I went numb eh until I fell down. He came back to pick me at around 7 p.m. [Pause] I was not myself!

…I then felt uncomfortable and I decided to get out....

I see things have become a bit better.

I struggled again to look for schools for my children and enrolled them in [de-identified].

iii. Lived Time

…beginning 2007 the 8,th that is when I reached [de-identified] showground….after about 2 years again we relocated to…. So the sufferings that I have gone through since that 2007 until now, I have gone through a lot of hardships.

The last minute on 31st…it was December 2007, my…[immediate] neighbor by the name [de-identified], was shot dead with an arrow. And he was my immediate neighbor. Even, when the police officers took the body, now, from that day we could no longer sleep around there. We relocated elsewhere…. 

Around 5 p.m., they started to burn.

He told me; ‘The night is approaching and we are the only ones left behind. And you see everybody else has escaped it is just us alone.’

…the moment politics intensified, that is when violence broke out…on the 1st when results were announce. I had started seeing the previous day, heaps of people here and there. People were full up the hills. That day, it was on a
Sunday [group members, in unison]…at 1 p.m. when it was announced, all the people started screaming! That scream made no one sleep. At night violence became tough, and for sure, 2 people were killed in our neighborhood and the houses were burnt. From there, violence became even more severe on the 1st now, so it became worse, and that was caused by people complaining that the votes have been stolen.

…but aft, aft, after that, we continued with the medication because that disease became chronic.

…the year 2007 is when we fought, so in the evening people came and burnt houses….

We continued with life in the tent.

when I think that [217?] [/2017/] is coming…for sure I don’t sleep because I am wondering now, “Will we go back to the same situation we were in?” Then I heard [de-identified] [a politician] over the radio saying that election votes may be stolen. I said, “Surely! Again I will have to go back to [de-identified]!? Mmh? And now I have nothing!”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>psychological stress reactions to trauma</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Struggling with psycho-socio-economic challenges of life:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life is difficult!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic physical stress reactions to trauma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frightening scenario /insecure environment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>iv. Lived Relationship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We finally talked with those people and forgave each other, even we usually visit them and sometimes even spend a night there without any disturbances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Built strong relationships with neighbors /other tribes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fearful environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Betrayal trauma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chronic psychological stress reactions to trauma</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I asked my husband;
They were throwing stones on us…they hit us! …they throw stones on us! They throw stones on us! [Illustration, slightly raised tone of voice].

To look through the window, they were those same people whom we have been serving….

…there was a gang…they would use any language to confuse [you], so that fear is still there. I personally remember my bicycle was shot and burst [cross talk] and my friend was shot…. That affects one’s mind so much…

…and I am thankful to God that nobody got burnt in that house.

[De-identified], we just continued with God helping us….

Support from God

…God blessed us, we got registered for this farm, we were blessed we came to this farm….
Meaning Made
You forgive! Forgive even before God because He knows
that you have forgiven them….
I personally…have forgiven even those who burnt for us,
even those who looted or did what
the key medicine for all that we have experienced…the
first thing is to seek peace always…peace is the best
riches more than anything else.
I live well with my neighbors [cough] and I work in my
own farm when I am at peace
I started close friendship with those who burnt my house.
Also they have even visited us…. I showed them the love
which I have for them
Since we came here, we have never left each other with
[de-identified] [other tribe] we are here, we have lived
well
there is collaboration we have…nowadays we have been
working together. If it is in the farm, when you enter into
the farm you cannot get only one tribe. You find every
tribe, in there….
“…after all that we have gone through, we have learnt that
life must continue,
I was just being taken in a bed…[for] almost a year…. So
that part, [the burnt side] now I itch from inside. I itch so
much
...how my property got finished, I have wrestled with that
several times….
So because of those incidents bringing me difficulties I
have developed problems of [blood] pressure

Forgiveness -
"Forgiveness is the Key
Thing in Life"
Peace Building/peaceful
coeexistence
Collaboration and
Strong Relationships
Life Must Continue/Live
is Valuable/God has a
Purpose for Me to Live

Analytical
Categories
Phrases of Significance
Themes
Bronfenbrenner’s
bioecological
model:
i. Risk Factors
...you could not travel to [de-identified; town] because
there were no cars. So we went to the OP and recorded a
statement and requested the police officer to take us to
the hospital. So he told us, ‘Now, you see they have burnt
tires there at the junction, where will we pass? Even us
security officers we cannot pass.’ In the morning at 9:00
a.m. they would meet at the road. They would meeet,
many young men….
the injuries which I sustained there sometimes disturb me
and I keep going to the hospital, back and forth. …so this
hand keeps giving me problems
I was just being taken in a bed…[for] almost a year…. So
that part, [the burnt side] now I itch from inside. I itch so
much
...how my property got finished, I have wrestled with that
several times….
So because of those incidents bringing me difficulties I
have developed problems of [blood] pressure
Frightening scenario/insecure environment
Lack of support -
Protection, public aid
Loss of health or
property/Life changed
completely! It’s difficult
Triggers of trauma
And we took the maize that was burnt… and that is what we were eating

…I reached [de-identified] showground [IDP Camp]. So we stayed there sleeping on grass like in the bush, we stayed….

“…houses were built for us but those houses are falling off, the cows we live with them in the same house [to protect them from being stolen]

[Since 1992] to date, eh the government has not helped us with anything. [Pause]. And we are still struggling...we are still at the road,

There was my child who whenever she remembered that incident…. Whenever we started talking about those incidents then she could wet herself while standing up….

But there is one problem we experienced,…[the children’s schooling interruptions]…. There is a child who moved to 8 to 10 different schools and that affected their performance…. what scares us and make our hearts not settle is this…the children get scared, whenever we hear screams even when some people are fighting, we get scared…rush out and stay there checking on what is going on.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ii. Protective Factors</th>
<th>“It is God! It is God alone! God helped us.”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>the person who helped me until I reached where I have reached, is God. God rescued me from dead</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>…I used to say, “You God know why I am here!” Even when I was serving people and they had their pangas [machetes], I am saying, “God you know I am giving a service, protect me, I am doing your work.”</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>We passed through a lot of problems…we just continued with God helping us</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>But God was with us all through. If you have not been in a violence situation, for sure, you may not be able to tell, it was painful</td>
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</table>
Also [The Kenya] Red Cross. That also did a lot of heavy work!

The churches also did a lot of work…the churches there served you regardless of your tribe.

Even I, my life started with that relieve we were given by Catholic - fertilizers and maize seeds.

AIM [/IOM/] (International Organization For Migration) came and build for us houses, I moved from that tent, [then] DRC (Danish Refugee Council –Non Governmental Organization) came and build for us…that 2 roomed house.

I was built for by the government

…the government loved us and brought us here.

…the transit goods lorries had well-wisher drivers who “helped people so much…were so merciful…. They were transporting people from there [war-torn areas]

“…we need to accept change because if you do not accept change then that problem will come on your way and will finish you.

…even the bible says there is a time to harvest [keep] and a time to throw. So I said that was a time for what? For throwing

I encourage myself, I say; ‘Next, what will I do?’…so that I can recover and sustain my life.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical Categories</th>
<th>Phrases of Significance</th>
<th>Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tedeschi &amp; Calhoun’s Posttraumatic Growth: i. Positive Perception of Life</td>
<td>I am a pastor up to today. Here is the church I have built here That habit of learning through experience to desire to live in unity with each other…is another benefit …may God help us so much, eh to be people who love each other, …were it not for my good neighbors, I would not be here, because they are the ones who helped get me out of the house [when the clashes started]. There is nothing good like having the strength to strive on…so my family is settled, therefore I am grateful</td>
<td>Exercising compassion Gained Courage/Motivation/Cherishes peace Increased/New spiritual faith Being appreciative in life</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
But God did us good, even He gave us other ones, and gave us that cohesion….

My heart knows that God is great, and the government, those are the two key sources of support to us

Even with that, we are grateful to God….

It is just to give thanks. We have life.

even though we have passed through all that…[learnt] to forgive each other

We finally talked with those people and forgave each other

We among ourselves have understood each other…regardless of whatever tribe or what,

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**Individual Interviews with Members of Focus Group #1: Amani**

**Individual Interview #1: Participant SSN**

I conducted my initial individual interview with SSN (Atlas.ti #P1), a 50-year-old male. SSN reported having earned a Certificate of Primary Education (CPE; Std 7/7th Grade) and said he had always been self-employed as a businessman. The participant self-disclosed experiences of physical weakness owing to 2007 PEV associated physical injuries and identified himself as a Protestant Christian. On his demographic questionnaire, participant SSN noted a personal history of two trauma incidents (see Table 2). By SSN’s choice, the interview was done in his house at a time when almost everyone in the household was busy with outside duties, creating a quiet and confidential environment conducive for the interview. Participant SSN jovially welcomed us to his home and expressed a wish that his wife could be there to meet with us and share her ordeal to contribute to the research so that the experiences of those who were affected by the violence might be known publicly. My research team and I appreciated his warm welcome and the comment he made. As participant SSN had previously signed the consent form during the group
session, I reiterated to him that everything would be kept confidential. I also assured him that his participation was still voluntary and that he could withdraw from the interview with no consequences. After the participant expressed his commitment to continue participating in my research and agreed to continue recording his trauma experiences, I positioned the recording equipment and started the interview. I let the participant share more about his experiences with the skirmishes and 2008 PEV, especially anything he didn’t say during group session and comments with regard to the impact the tragedy has had in his life. SSN sighed deeply and began:

Eh the first thing that I saw or effects which I saw in violence is that it was very expensive because it brought about death, it also brings separation or enmity, and destruction or destroying of property. And ah and I saw also that it contribute by bringing a lot of diseases, which I have seen now in many people. Also ah [clears throat] experience which I have found, contributed that time, I have seen sufferings which people go through in other countries where we have been hearing there are violence and whatever, I have seen that, so I used to see that they live in tents, I used to see it as history but now I found myself living the difficult life like people in other countries that I had been observing in the TV [television]. Ah, also in that situation, many things bring about a lot of theft of property because the livestock that were there got lost.

After I inquired if the theft affected him personally, then he confirmed:

…for example, cows, goats got lost, and then the cows which I had remained within the camp, during [the] “Operation Rudi Nyumbani,” aah I took back my one cow that was left…and you heard I said I stayed with it at the camp for one year, after one day when we returned back home it was stolen. That is why I am saying it contributed a lot of theft…. There is theft of a high order…there is theft not contributed by one tribe…it is contributed by all tribes…so even violence creates [bore] stealing habit.

To encourage participant SSN to share more about what had contributed to the socio-economic challenges he faced after the violence, I asked, “So they have stolen from you several times?” He replied, “Yes, and that was by my own people not other tribesmen….” Before I finished probing him to express how he experienced life then and his current situation, he
responded, “My life changed completely because I had gas welding business and it was totally destroyed.” He continued that he had “not been able to get a foundation to resume back to that business again,” had no capital to do his previous business of selling spare parts.

To get a complete picture of what happened during the violence, I asked: “So you held each other and went to the forest but were chased again?” SSN further clarified:

We were chased again now when I had been shot. And I saw we were two, and there were shrubs, we threw ourselves in there. We stayed for a while, then I saw we would die and the night had come, still bleeding. I told mum [wife], “If these people are still surrounding us, then there is no way out, still we will die, there is no need to stay here. If I see, for sure, they are stuck in here, then I know it is us they are putting in siege, then I better get out.” And because I had a ‘panga’ [machete], we had a ‘panga’ which we had gotten on the way, we went with it. So I told her [wife], “When I get out and you see, eh they are overwhelming me, then you hold and try [inaudible segment] cut me, [laughter] if it is to die then we die immediately.” We stayed in that forest. Blood continued to ooze until I felt I was almost dying there. I decided to get out, when I got out, I stood and talked to them…[laughter] they were running away when they saw the fire and people running and so they ran, and we were thinking they were chasing us [laughter]…. So we came out with mum. We went until we reached a place called [de-identified]…. There I told mum there is no need to die here. I stood at the middle of the road, good enough there were women carried by transit goods vehicles. They identified me…. So I entered in, that car took me to [de-identified]…. But as I arrived there, the blood was getting less in my body, because I had bled for long, I fainted there, even before I was taken, I gained consciousness when I was inside [de-identified] hospital…. [Pause].

Participant SSN continued to explain the tragedies he experienced. He narrated articulately:

While we were at [de-identified] hospital, there again we heard that eh, the…[coffins] have been burnt there, violence erupted again in town. Where the coffins were made in shops were burnt, and screams [cross talk]. From there I was treated that night at around 1 a.m. [it was delayed] because violence had continued at night in town. There is something I was encouraging myself with because…our place now, from [de-identified], was burnt that night now. So people came who had been injured, so many now…they were brought from [de-identified]…where I was running my business. They were brought, so many whom I know, who were critically injured until I felt that I was not that sick like them. [Cross talk]…all that place was burnt. There is nothing which was left out….
The interview with participant SSN complemented his narratives from Focus group #1: Amani in providing more detailed information about his lived experience after the skirmishes and PEV. The information from this interview with the participant also contained numerous phrases of significance which matched what those from Focus Group # 1: Amani as per analytic categories organized by the research questions and conceptual frameworks.

**Individual Interview #2: Participant SSK**

We arrived earlier than we had scheduled at the home of participant SSK (Atlas.ti #P2), a farmer, former businessman, and flower farm staff (see Table 2). As soon as he learned from the children playing around that our car was parked nearby, he came and took us on a tour of his small-scale farm. After showing us some of his agricultural projects, which he considered as one of the ways that God has blessed him and his family, he took us to his house for the interview. Participant SSK, a 46-year-old male introduced us to his wife at home and requested that she sit close to him during the interview, stating that she needed to hear his narrative, that it was therapeutic to share it as they had faced the ordeal together. Participant SSK then requested all the children to go and play in the field to create a quiet environment for the interview. In a short conversation with him about his wife’s presence as he shared the traumatic experiences, it was obvious that he had prepared to sit with her during the interview. He stated further that he would show us the child with whom he had attempted to commit suicide and homicide while they were staying at the showground IDPs Camp. Before I began my interview with SSK, I informed him that he could choose not to participate in the individual interview, regardless of the fact that he had signed the consent form during the focus group session. When he approved the interview and recording of his personal narratives, I continued with the necessary preliminaries to the
interview. I also informed him of his freedom to withdraw from the interview at any moment that he wished to do so with no penalty whatsoever.

After addressing matters of confidentiality, I requested Participant SSK to share his experiences from PEV and any other tragedy. I also asked him to share how the experiences of the 2007 PEV traumas had affected his life, and how it has been to live now after what he experienced. Participant SSK described the painful loss of his entire property. He stated, “I had a lot of property enough…[but] all that I had went down to the drain…. The life that I lived that time and now, life is different, how I lived before the clashes, during clashes, and now [cross talk]. I lost property ‘ya thamani kubwa sana!’ [property of great value so so much].” He said, “…I have a P3 in this house that I intended to sue the government, because according to the laws and justice of this country, the government was supposed to protect me and my property.” He expected protection of family, property, and his own life from the government, but this was not assured. He decided to forgive, however, as he said, “I also took a step to forgive them, I decided to forgive them because, you see, they send someone to request for forgiveness. If you did not have anything bad in your heart, you must forgive, so I forgave.” Further, he observed that they had experienced some sense of protection after relocation:

Since we came we have not seen any person disturbing us. [Pause] We have tight security, the police officers are with us, and also I and you, and that other one are the security, we do not depend on guns to protect us. We depend on me and you to protect each other [brother’s keeper]. Yah.

I observed that the participant gradually changed his emotions and tone of voice as he started expressing how he has faced life’s difficulties after the tragic incident. He continued:
“So from there I started the difficulties of, eh, ‘What will I do? Where will I return to? My house is finished? All my property is finished? Except only that one cloth I had on my body. All my clothes were burnt...’”

When I sensed that participant SSK had exhaustively explained his challenging experiences and the reasonably stable life he lives after PEV, I moved to the next inquiry. I said, “As you reflect on the experiences you have associated with the tragedies, describe for us an experience, time, person, place or incident that immediately comes to your mind or stands out most vividly to you.” He responded:

So if you are left with a baby of 6 months [old], the mother is sick in hospital, problems are here, the food is a matter of queuing in the line from here up to the highway to get food, you sleep without food with your child, and you had your own food. [Inaudible segment] that person came and poured paraffin [gas] on the house and lid with a match stick and left, you do not benefit, that person do not benefit. [Switched to tribal language]...[and] you are left in suffering with your child

I have a pain of lack of support from my own sister though she has money and a big house. My sister has money and has a house of more than 3.3 million.... And when we were suffering like that she is there, she has a job, and while we were sleeping on grass at the showground like that...but I blame her as my sister, I was suffering but she did not help me, [gets emotional] she did not even give me even a shirt of 20/- from second hand clothes...that is not very good, that is not very good. [The Kenya] Red Cross and United Nation helped a lot especially when my wife had just delivered. When we were at the showground, I used to hassle to get money for the milk and basic needs for the family and she did not help me at all.

I empathized with participant SSK as he emotionally explained about the lack of support from the family member. As he expressed how unsupportive the sister was, I kept asking myself if they might have had previous relationship issues and whether his relationship stability before the PEV attacks as the situation of an individual prior to a trauma experience might have influenced the impact of the tragedy. To avoid entering deeper into his personal matters I noted his statement and continued to ask how he had made meaning out of the whole experience.
“Considering the experiences you have shared, is there something that stands out as particularly meaningful to you?” Participant SSK responded:

That time, I had seen my life to have reached the end…I do not see anything now that can be heavy… There was a time I felt that there is no meaning in life. ‘Lakini sasa nina tekemeo’ [but now I feel there is hope in life]. I have hope that I will live, and I have put in my mind that I will live with my family until that day when God comes to take me home [he had explained in the group his suicide and homicide attempt while staying in IDP camp with a child]. I have children that I will educate until they become teachers like you. I have learnt to strive on and not lose hope in life…[he showed the young girl he wanted to commit suicide and homicide with]. This is that child I was talking about, and I have left her to God to take care of her future. To take care of all of them and their future.

In this interview, SSK added information to what he had shared in the focus group about his experiences of the violence. The expressions of significance gained from the interview also corresponded to the phrases of significance produced by the narratives from the focus group.

**Individual Interview #3: Participant SJM**

Participant SJM (Atlas ti #P3) is a 52-year-old female retired social worker who currently works as a farmer. SJM noted that she was struggling with blood pressure from a stress reaction to PEV (see Table 2). The interview was done at the house of participant SJM at a time when the home was quiet, confidential, and conducive for the interview. Immediately we arrived, the participant happily welcomed us and quickly removed a cooking pot, wanting to make some tea for us, but we informed her that we had just finished our lunch, so we were okay. As we sat down, I noticed that the participant had been busy in the morning repairing and smearing her worn out house in preparation for our visit. I felt that we might have inconvenienced her by our visit, but then I recalled that she was the one who chose for us to meet at her house. The status of her home environment communicated more of the difficulties the family had been facing, especially knowing that she had explained in the focus group that her nice house had been
entirely burned, along with the furniture that she had bought on loan from ART. Even so, SJM’s face was full of smiles as she briefly explained to us the microfinance business which she does at home to earn her living. After acknowledging her hard work, I informed SJM of our readiness to begin the session, and she sat down for the interview.

I began by informing the participant that she did not have to participate in the interview if she did not want to, even though she had signed the consent form for the focus group. Participant SJM smiled and said that it was fine for me to conduct the interview and do the recording. She observed that we could continue with the interview and that she would share what she could not confidently share in the group. After assuring her of continuing confidentiality, I requested that she describe her experiences of PEV and any other tragedy. I also asked her to explain how the experiences of the 2007 PEV traumas had affected her life and to share how life is for her now after what she experienced. In response, participant SJM spontaneously gave a lengthy explanation and rich information about her afflictions. She narrated that they were beaten with stones at their home and told to move out. They managed to escape with their children while dragging documents in a box to a hideout in the bushes where they helplessly watched their house razed to the ground by arsonists’ fire. At some stage she wanted to scream, but her husband prevented her for fear of security. Later, they managed to salvage a small amount of maize before escaping to the police station. It was at this time that her daughter became traumatized. She said,

While we were still at the station, there is one of my daughters who whenever she could hear gun shots or screams, would wildly run through the bushes. She would run and I would run after her; we could run and run, and we would get her and tie her on her one hand and foot so that she does not untie herself. So she conducted this sickness, the shock sickness [traumatized].
She reported that the burning of houses became more intense on the fifth day. It was at this stage they were taken to town by well-wisher lorry drivers who carried IDPs. She said that “because we had that money from that burnt maize we sold, we went and rented a house close to town that belonged to a friend.” There were further challenges and she mentioned, “Still, there are some boys who wanted to burn us in the rented house that we were in.” At this point, she said, “Another woman whom we were with told us, ‘Let us go to show[ground]; I heard that is where people are.’” She said,

So we went to the showground and registered ourselves. So we used to eat there, whenever you met with people they would hold your hand and buy you food in a hotel, people were so generous… the clothes were those same, same ones, so dirty, even if you were to see us you would feel with us. Showground we did not get registered quickly, we struggled with that so much. Showground was so dirty like you have never seen, there were feces, you sleep here and feces is here, here is a mother with the children, and ahh! You see others do not have the feet [cut], until you fear. I told my husband, “Me, I cannot sleep here! Didn’t we have a rented room, we will be coming here for food, we go to spend the night there, we walk by foot.” So we continued that way spending the whole day in the showground and going to sleep at the [de-identified] house for 4 days about 1 week. At the end of that 1 week, at night we heard, “Guh guh!” “What is it?” ...who wanted to steal that money from that neighbor, so next to our house was a police officer. When people started screaming, the police officer shot on air to scare [away] the gang. To shot out, I also was outside, one of the shots [bullet shell] fell on me here [points to her foot]. I told my husband, “Here I will not stay because I left there where it was dangerous…."

Participant SJM was so expressive that I did not need to interfere with the flow of her narrative other than to make responsive noises. I decided simply to listen attentively to her as I took field notes systematically, except when I needed some clarification. As she continued to explain about the police shoot out, I let her clarify if she was hit. I asked, “Did it hit you?” She responded to the question easily and continued narrating her life struggles simultaneously. She replied: “It did not hit me, it fell down [next to my legs]…sincerely, that bullet would have hit me, it fell down like here when I was like here [shows]. I told my husband I will not sleep again
in [de-identified] if this is how things are; we came from a dangerous place yet again it is the same here...[and] violence started again in [de-identified].” She explained that they moved from one house to another because of threats and finally moved to the showground where the rest of the IDPs were. SJM explained that they worked hard in their new micro-finance project which earned them funds for family upkeep after being displaced. She stated, “We started buying cigarettes from there as my husband was working there and would sell those cigarettes to the customers at the showground.”

We regularly walked by foot, by foot to that center to work, and would get back by vehicle. Reaching the showground, we had not been put in the meal plan yet, so we kept borrowing food from the rest who had gone there earlier and had already been registered. We continued struggling that way, struggling that way. Later we were registered by [the Kenya] Red Cross after 1 month and we were given tents now [pause]...and we were given food. We used to be given food well. We were given cooking oil, green grams, [maize] flour, and we would sell some and get money for other needs like sugar and milk. That was the business which was going on there at the show[ground]. We continued that way with life, continued that way with life.

My interview with participant SJM generated phrases of significance which are almost similar to what I gleaned from the previous focus group and two interviews.

**Individual Interview #4. SMW**

The fourth individual interview was conducted with participant SMW (Atlas.ti #P4) a 53-year-old female who self-identified as a farmer. As reflected in her demographic information (see Table 2), SMW had one trauma experience with entire loss of property during the 2007-08 PEV. The participant self-disclosed her struggle with chronic high blood pressure, a physical illness she said had started while she was at the IDPs camp. I began the session by thanking SMW for participating in both the focus group and the interview. In response, she smiled, saying that she was happy that I am a counseling student wishing to get information on how to
help people involved in tragedies such as what they experienced with PEV. I acknowledged her comment, and then I said, “Please describe for me the experiences you have had as a result of the post-election violence and any other tragedy. You can explain how the 2007 post-election violence traumas had an impact in your life.” SMW inquired, “Should I tell you again what I shared in the group or other new information?” I clarified to her that she might explain in detail what she had shared before and might give additional information about any other experience of trauma events which she may not have been comfortable expressing in the group. Participant SMW responded:

We came from [de-identified] and bought a land in [de-identified].…. We started farming, and had we had a lot of harvest in that year before the violence, we had a lot of food. After the election announcements, we started seeing people grouping themselves up in the hills. Our farm was like a valley this way. They were hiding in the trees like monkeys there. [Cleans throat]. At night starting from 3 p.m. you could hear, Weeh! One corner. Weeh! The other. You see, weeh, weeh multiple times. So when you hear that would you sleep in the house? We would run away and sleep in the forest. We struggled with that problem for about 1 week. The next week, they started [cross talk].

Wanting to know what she meant by “weeh,” I asked, “That weeh [cross talk].” The participant immediately clarified: “They were calling each other. Eh, from every corner and it is at night, and then fears became overwhelming.” As I listened to her and observed how she was explaining her fearful scenario with hand gestures, she continued:

And then the 2nd week...they burnt another woman’s house…. What accelerated everything was, that same time, others had already burnt [houses] from [de-identified] and [villages] coming toward our farm…. When we slept in the forest that way, houses were starting to burn at our place, eh, we hid in another electric fenced farm. So when we heard the noises here, we would go to the other side, again we would hear others. When we went to the other side, then we would hear some in that side, then we would run to the other, so they had surrounded that farm, in fact it was only God who saved us…. That time I was running with my twins…imagine you run until you see the child panting, ha! Ha! Ha! Until you are pulling like a dog! I was telling my heart that time, you know that time my older son had run away, the father had run away! So I was left with these twins, I had decided [told] my God, if it means I being shot with an arrow while holding my children, I will not leave them, I will die with them! I was running at an adult’s pace, you
have nothing just running, because you have heard that here they are they have come, my
children, even to get out of…. My neighbor called [de-identified] was killed completely,
completely.

When participant SMW paused from the extensive narration of her ordeal, I felt with her
for the experience, more so because she had to run around with the children. So, I commented,
“That must have been so tough for you, running like that with the children.” To avoid re-
traumatizing her by letting her concentrate on her painful tragic experience, I asked, “So what
did you do finally?” Then she replied, “When I reached [de-identified], I was given a place to
stay for a few days by another woman” [from one of the rival tribes]. When I nodded my head,
accompanied by an “mm-hm” prompt, then she continued:

And I took my children to school… I told her how everything went and they helped us a
lot when they saw our problems. Then I struggled until I got my way to enter into the tent
[at camp]. For sure there were so many people at the showground, but God helped me to
get in [registered]. I would get food from [the Kenya] Red Cross at the showground and I
would sell at [de-identified] [after the violence] to get fare and some money to take with
the food to the children in where they were with my husband [their father]. Life
continued that way, that way. After some time while at the showground, we were given
10,000 shillings which I used to register for a farm together with everybody else. We
went with my children to [de-identified] and I enrolled them at [de-identified] Primary
School. …[we] continued with life in the [IDP Camp] tent, life with suffering. We lived
for about 3 years there, life full of suffering. Imagine, when you are sleeping in a tent this
way, water is running down here. Tent would sweat until the blanket you have covered
yourself with at night is so wet in the morning, water would run down your body. I said
that I am fed up with living in the tent. That was when we had just been told that we were
going to be relocated by the government and so we came here…. I have never gone there.

As I finished the interview, I sensed it was time, as per this study’s procedure, to give the
participant a chance to ask me questions. So, I asked her, “Is there anything you came wanting
to say or have thought of but have not yet had the opportunity to discuss?” SMW paused for a
few seconds and then replied,

I have seen that being in unity is something good. Because if you have unity you cannot
see the other person in problems and fail to help. If you have love, you will not miss to be
merciful to help, even to offer itself is needed. So I see God Himself…we have seen God and we still trust in Him, and the government have been with us [pause].

I see there is something good, I have a lot of hope in the future trusting in God and I will continue praying for those who have not gotten anything; let us continue praying for them that the government may help them.

I accepted her request for prayers for those who had not gotten any help. Additionally, I informed her of my plan to meet with her later and go through a copy of her interview transcript so that she authenticates it. I thanked her again for her willingness to participate in my research.

As soon as I had gathered up my research equipment, she escorted us to the car. When we reached a convenient place where we could stop, we pulled the car under a tree, and I wrote in my reflective journal when I could still remember everything. As usual, I labelled the interview recorded information for efficient retrieval for our data translation and analysis at night. As I did my reflective journal, I thought of how, with a few prompts, participant SMW was so expressive and could freely and deeply communicate her tragedies. Phrases of significance from the interview with participant SMW mirrored what had been gathered in the previous interviews for this study.

**Individual Interview #5. SOA**

Participant SOA (Atlas.ti #P5) is an 87-year-old male who self-identified as a self-employed farmer and a community clusters leader. Concerning the level of education, the participant said he had not received any formal education. SOA indicated two personal traumas in his history as portrayed in detail in his demographic information (see Table 2) above. Additionally, the participant self-disclosed his struggle with chronic illness owing to major physical injuries sustained in the 2007 PEV.
In order to maintain consistency in the data collection for this study, the same procedure was followed in the preliminary preparations, conducting of all the interviews, and data analysis process. We arrived at our scheduled time at the home of participant SOA but found him to be away running personal errands, having asked his wife to notify him upon our arrival. The wife heartily welcomed us and said she wished she had heard of our study earlier so as to participate in the interviews too. Further, she informed us that even though they suffered a lot as a family, the husband suffered the most as he was burned severely during the PEV and had been incapacitated for almost one year. Upon arrival, participant SOA apologized for the delay and welcomed us into the house for the interview. After establishing my interview rapport through a brief conversation with the elderly participant SOA who appeared to be of few words, I commenced my interview. As with the others, I let SOA know that his participation was voluntary, even though he had previously signed the consent form in focus group, during which he was made aware that his signing was a commitment to participate in the interview too. Moreover, I let participant SOA know of his freedom to withdraw from the interview with no drawbacks at all. Participant SOA cheerfully informed me to go ahead with the interview and commented it was his prayer that his wish for peace and unity and forgiveness for each other from those who suffered during the violence might be heard through my study outcomes.

With his consent, I set up the recording equipment and started my inquiries. Because he did not contribute a lot during the focus group compared to the rest of his team—as he seemed to be of few words—I wished to hear more about his reactions to the PEV trauma events. I asked participant SOA to describe his experiences with the PEV and any other tragedy and the difficulties he faced as a result. SOA quickly responded:

Immediately after voting, so I was somehow feeling sick. I went to the hospital in [de-identified]. [Pause]…and when the election results were announced… To stay shortly,
after about two days, so we were able to hear that fights have started, yet now we did not have any problem [dispute with anyone]. So because I was sick, mum [wife] took me to hide at a nearby stream, saying that the young men have started the fights. Now we could see fire all over, the houses were burning like here and over that other valley, fire! Fire!

SOA’s responses in both the group and individual interviews seem to indicate that he could not express his emotional reactions to having observed imminent danger. Knowing that in our culture, the men—especially elderly ones—do not always communicate their emotions of fear and pain, I had to probe him directly to express if he was scared or fearful while at the valley watching burning houses. Participant SOA said,

Now when they tried to chase me, now houses were burning everywhere, fire everywhere. That time when we were running, I saw my house had not yet been burnt. So I tried to run but I fell on the fire, pop! I laid down. Were it not for other people to return and rescue me, I could have burnt to death.

I took a moment to identify with participant SOA for the tragedy he had experienced. Then I inquired more about who had helped him out of the fire. Previously in the group, I had heard of individuals from the perpetrating groups who had either rescued, protected, or helped those affected in other ways. He responded, “Just the people who were running away from danger too.” He continued:

So I was taken to the hospital in [de-identified]. So even how I was taken to hospital, I do not know, I did not see at all. Even when I was put in a car, I do not know, me, I did not feel. I heard that I was carried on bed…I did not see, I do not know at all! Completely, I do not know [because of unconsciousness]! I was so sick. Eh, for sure I voted but anything else, I do not know.

To continue with the interview I asked, “Did your house get burnt?” Participant SOA replied:

Eh all my house…all my property was lost, goats, cows, donkey—everything were stolen. I had beans in the store; all was burnt. Even all our documents were burnt and therefore have no record of what we had. Even what you see here, we were given by people later. I was left with nothing.
I questioned participant SOA for additional information on how it has been for him to live after the trauma experiences besides being hospitalized. The participant continued to explain his challenging experiences at the hospital and at the IDPs camp saying:

Until we were taken to the showground, there even when I was taken to the doctor, I do not know. Until when we were assisted with food, people were helping me, whenever I went to the line, then people would say, “Give that one food…I would be given and I return [to tent].” Even when people came to give us food and clothing I did not see. I just heard that I was being laid down aside there. We slept out for many days before the tents were brought! Mm. We slept out so much. This violence I would not want it again for years and years [forever and ever]. I do not want it! For all those years, we used to be very, very happy, before the violence and now we are not happy anymore. That one was the first one for us to be affected.

To let him clarify if he meant that it was their first time to be affected by any trauma or the violence I asked, “You said this was your first time to be affected by violence?” The participant responded:

Eh, to see. Even though the one for MAU MAU [Emergency] was like that, but this one was so nasty! This was so horrible. So then, until we were given KES.10,000 by the government and told to buy a piece of land, that was when we were still there in [de-identified] [cross talk]…we stayed in showground for 6 months. So we were helped to purchase piece of land, and the government again helped us to relocate to that farm in [de-identified]. There we were given tents and we lived there for about some, one year or so; then we were brought here again, and we are okay here.

To encourage the participant to delve into his personal experiences in the IDPs camp and his perception of his current living situation, I inquired if he was involved in any way in the emergency and how PEV was different. He responded, “Violence is violence! They were all bad! This one was horrible.” Then he said, “So, life at the moment is good, if another violence will not recur, it is going on well.” At this stage, thoughts about the violence triggered the emotions of participant SOA. It made him disclose another recurrent and multiple traumatic
experience that he and his family had experienced. Participant SOA explained the horrific loss of loved ones with a lot of distress:

All my children were raised up in that [de-identified]; even at the showground we were together; you see, all those children outside, their mother, my daughter was ran over by a vehicle; that was when we were almost leaving [de-identified] to come here.

I empathized with Participant SOA concerning the tragic loss of his loved ones. Finally, I thanked the participant for his contribution to my study through the focus group and interview. I reminded him that counseling services were readily available at no cost to him if he needed them, as he had extensively explained his multiple horrific experiences. I guaranteed participant SOA of my confidentiality. After I cleared away my belongings, I left for the car where I wrote my reflective journal and planned for the next assignment as per my schedule. The phrases of significance made by participant SOA echoed those collected from the interviews in this study.

Individual Interview #6. SAW

After I pledged my confidentiality to participant SAW (Atlas.ti #PD6) for her interview information, I asked her to describe her experiences with the skirmishes, the PEV, and any other trauma event she might have experienced. I told her that she could give more detailed information about what she had already shared and that she could talk about what she might not have had confidence to share in the group. The focus group session seemed to have prepared SAW for the interview as she eloquently provided an extensive narrative of her trauma experiences. Participant SAW expressed her sufferings in relation to uncompensated losses of the 1992 clashes with some emotion:

So what hurts me from that time of clashes until now, is seeing that you are struggling still, and you had your own land that you had bought, and you are on the road still; yet the government has not known how the victims of [19]92, how we went [on with life]. That is what, eh has been agonizing me up to today. [Pause]. Mh? And, another pain, is to see somebody else, the farm is yours; you were not given, you bought it! And your
farm is grabbed from you, and other people enter and build in it. And, when you go to the chief, he writes a letter for you and tells you to go to police, the police tells you to go to court...that is what has also been hurting me, up to today; it has had an impact in our lives, that way of your farm being grabbed yet it is your sweat. We were told that there are groups that help people...when you go there you are asked to register yourself with 5000/-, 6000/-, a lot of money several times since 1992 and at the end there has been no help. To date I have a card...which shows that I am a victim of 1992 and I am still on the road...you see instead of your money being taken just that way, it is better to leave it, and let God help you. Mh? That is what ... has not gotten out of my heart...you just get shocks.... You had possession, and you were stable; nowadays you have nothing...whom you were so much affected! I told them, my house [omitted the words] was burnt, it was burnt at 6 in the morning...it was 15 minutes to 6, my house was burnt, all my property seeh! [Sheds tears]. I did not salvage anything at all. [Pause]. And to date, there is nobody who has come from anywhere even the government to know and it is not me who started? [the skirmishes/PEV?] to check on what to help one with, to help you recover. Heh! And now the years are gone, I told you I’m 60 [years old], there is no one who will call me for casual labor, there is nowhere anyone can hire me. [Pause]. All the property I had earned when I was still strong, what happened with it? It got finished! So when one thinks about that, even at night, I can go to bed and even fail to sleep. Just thinking: “Where will I go, years are getting finished! I have no strength, where I will head to, is where?” So even you are defeated, this world, eh, this Kenya of ours is like what? Because the government ought to have supported us. Mh? So that at least one can try those other places.

To let participant SAW clarify what she shared about sleep disturbances, I inquired, “So eh, you said sometimes you fail to sleep; is it what you still experience now or it is what was happening that time?” Participant SAW responded:

You see when you have a problem, imagine you have a problem that needs money! And you know you had property! Don’t you start calculating that you should not have passed this way; you could have gone to this place, get money to help yourself with? If you have nothing, so isn’t it obvious you will not sleep? Heh! [Emotional]. I tell you those issues will not finish in people’s minds! Because when you encounter a problem you say that if the government had helped me, I would have managed it somehow. But you are just left, no help at all...so even one is defeated, so asks, “And us, oh God, what did we do to you?” Because there is not even a single day I have been remembered, yet there are the problems. Heh? Eeh. [Emotional throughout]. [Long pause]

I maintained the listener’s role to allow participant SAW to stabilize and complete her narrative. She eventually resumed:
So this issues are difficult because, you know if you are a family...our place is in [de-identified] region. That is what shocks me most in that now, I do not have anywhere to call home, because for us we have been meandering from [de-identified] center to [de-identified] center to...and stadium. So you are defeated, “How is this world?” Because we do not have a home. What I have gone through is so difficult. In fact there is something I forgot to tell you last time. I have a brother to my husband who was a reverend; he heard about this problems of 2007...he heard that our step mum is out on the road [evicted]...because the child told him directly over the phone.... He fell down and he died. He got shocked and died. We took him to [de-identified municipality] and buried him.... So you see when you think about all that, you ask, “For sure God, what did we wrong you.” Even when we sit down as a family, we even ask, “And this God, what did we [do to] wrong Him?” …We had bought our own land and were settled and hell broke loose and we left with nothing. At all, at all! At all! ...my brother [in law] lost his...[entire property including livestock]. We tried to let him live with other people who were affected too. It did not work. He became psychologically affected and was retired on medical grounds. When he came home, his health became worse. The farm has been sold and subdivided to so many people. Mm. The farm was sold by the directors or whoever. The wife had been buried at the farm and now the grave has been set at a road reserve, and the tomb stone is still there. Now he goes in [de-identified] town begging 20/- or 10/- from people in the streets. The residents know that the farm belongs to our brother but the chief says unless we go to court there is nothing they can do. Why should we go to court and yet the land was grabbed from us? [Long pause: 2 minutes].

I questioned SAW further about what meaning she had gained in life after her heartbreaks and how she saw the future. Then participant SAW described how she resolved to live her life after the misfortunes. She went on:

In all that I have experienced, what I have learnt is to live well with my neighbors. There is nothing like being a good neighbor. Were it not for my good neighbors, I would not be here; they are the ones who helped get me out of the house [when the clashes started].

However, in response to how she foresaw life in the future, participant SAW explained in negatively of how difficult it may become considering her major losses and age, she stated:

I see that future life will be difficult. I feel that at my old age life will be difficult because [I] will be a person to beg. And how [I] had never though that I will have to depend on others, all my treasures went down with the clashes [foundation lost]. I see now the future lifestyle will be that of a person begging.
As I concluded my interview with the participant, I offered her the opportunity for any question she may have. Participant SAW sat upright, looked me in the eye, and said:

Eh, I have a question. I wanted to ask you… Is there a way that you can report on these we have gone through so that we can get help? It’s good even if you write a book for others to read so that they do not repeat the same but live in harmony.

I reminded participant SAW what I shared in the group as well as with her at the beginning of the interview: that the outcome of my research work may be instrumental in informing the researchers, the government, and any other interested agencies about the impact of trauma. I informed SAW that we would meet again in order to review her interview transcript and let her substantiate it. I thanked the participant for her contribution to my study through the focus group and interview. As SAW left the office, I kept thinking of the adversities she had experienced and how similar her reactions were to those of the previous interview participants. After the participant left, I wrote in my reflective journal, cleared and kept my research equipment, and left for the next appointment. A number of phrases of significance from the interview with participant SAW paralleled what was found in the focus group and other previous interviews.

**Individual Interview #7. SAM**

Participant SAM (Atlas.ti #P7) is a 45-year-old male whose occupation is farming and private business. The participant identified Form 4/Grade 12 as his highest level of education. Participant SAM had experienced two traumas in his personal history of a recurrent and multiple nature related with the skirmishes and the 2007 PEV (see Table 2). Additionally, the participant self-disclosed a blood pressure problem, a physical illness he associated with the PEV. When asked of his religious persuasion, the participant self-identified as a Protestant Christian.
I commented to participant SAM that I remember he had identified to have been affected by both the skirmishes and the PEV. Then I asked him to describe more of the experiences he has had as a result of the skirmishes, the post-election violence and any other tragedy. The participant asked, “Should I repeat what I had shared before or what?” I responded, “Now that you are alone, you can share in detail what you had already shared in the group. Also, where possible please explain how the experiences of the 2007 PEV traumas have had an impact in your life.” In response, participant SAM expressed that he had explained everything regarding the question during focus group session. He said, “Actually, I shared everything during group. There is nothing I left, I shared all that I could remember about what I went through.” I expressed appreciation to SAM for sharing in the group freely.

Next, I asked participant SAM, “As you reflect on all the experiences you have associated with those tragedies, please describe for me an experience, time, person, place or incident that immediately comes to your mind or stands out most vividly to you.” The participant responded,

The way I saw, the life before is not like now. Before [19]92, we had a lot of freedom to go anywhere and do anything but after that day, let me talk of an incident which highly shocked me. The first one that you can say, “I saw death next to me” now, let me put it that way. I was at [de-identified]. One day I left home very early in the morning at 5.30 a.m. with my bicycle heading there, not knowing there is danger somewhere along the road. I met people who were armed and I got shocked, so scared that my day has now come, my life has come to an end. But by God’s luck it was that they had their errands they were running to do, trying to escape. That scared me a lot because from that day, I have never tried again to go anywhere where I am not comfortable at night or in late or such early hours of the day [Clears throat] or when I am alone. That, I am talking of how I saw the interference of freedom of my life.

To let SAM further explain about his encounter with the armed people, I asked, “So you said they were armed, they were headed somewhere?” He replied, “Yes, they had arrows and
bows, fights associated tools like that. You know it was that time of clashes…so where there is alarm, when you hear screams somewhere, all the people would rush to prepare and ran to rescue…so that scares me.” Noticing that participant SAM was not as expressive as he was during the group, I probed him to hear more about his immediate reactions. I asked, “Would you mind to explain more about that moment, how it went when you met them?” Participant SAM comprehensively elucidated that after a dangerous encounter with the perpetrators, the police car patrolling the area protected him from danger. He went on to say:

Clashes were all over, we were so worried. It was that time when Mr. [de-identified] had just been killed, so there was tension everywhere and a lot of problems and fights from many places. I think that is when tribalism started. Before, it was not there, I did not see it, because I went to school and lived with everybody as mixed tribes with no fear of any danger, no problem at all, we lived as brothers and sisters from all tribes. But from that time, it started that you can meet with your usual friend, but is not your friend anymore or you start to separate, you do not see each other or avoid each other that way. [Pause] …many of us did not belief it would happen but tribalism begun that time. We became enemies and started fighting against people from other tribes. People started moving from here to their respective places of origin after their houses were burnt and property destroyed. Freedom of every person to live anywhere and work anywhere was curtailed.

I listened to participant SAM attentively as he narrated his trauma experiences. After a few minutes, he sustained his mood and expressed his intense level of fear about the incident. He said, “Another shocking thing is to find someone cut” and went on to say that he “found two people slashed and dead in 1992.”

If somebody is killed and the face is cut and cut [illustrates with rubbing of palms] beyond recognition…. The slashing was so intense beyond recognition, you could just see that it was a person but was difficult to recognize. Those pictures disturbed my mind so much, and I got so afraid of going even to visit other areas…when you hear of those associated with such issues, you fear.

His recollection of the 1992 and 1997 clashes were despite losing a neighbor friend. He stated that “2007 was more severe than the previous ones.” He said “I had my properties and children
in the village” and “on the first day of the violence,” saw different people that he had not seen before. He said that they tried to prevent them from looting their properties, but “they overwhelmed us because we were few and they were many.” To make an interlude to his talk, I said, “That was on the 31st?” Then I remained an attentive listener. He answered:

Yes, on 31[/12/]2007…. I did not manage to see him and he was my great friend, but because of insecurity I could not…but I saw him at the mortuary. The perpetrators were destructive in a manner that when the other group saw them, they feared. Ayah, when they got into a farm, they slashed all the trees…. On the fourth day we slept outside with a lot of problems as we took care of our property, even during the day there was no sleeping indoors due to insecurity. All that coldness you can imagine. [Pause; cross talk] I moved my family to safer place in town on the second day. The fourth day was when problems were the most, and that is what made it so difficult for us to live there completely. When the perpetrators came to burn houses, and they are people I know them very well, when they came they had guns. I saw them well. They were about 100 meters away from us. When they came, I told my friends who were with me, “You know now that gun is not like an arrow, that can kill you from a distance, let us run [away].” We moved away. When they left we heard that they burnt the center up there close to our home. Then all of us moved to the other side of the valley. After the fire went off, we decided to go and see what was burnt. Before we reached home, I received a phone call.

I asked, “So that was, eh, same day?” Participant SAM responded, “Just that same, same time.”

He continued his lengthy narrative, saying,

Before I reached home somebody called me, “Are you going home?” I said yes, “Be careful there are people, we have seen people run so fast around there.” So that time already they had burnt my house. That is when my house got burnt, with all my property; I did not salvage anything. Everything went with all the property. From that day, struggles begun… I went to [live in] town and would come to the farm and get some food from there. Sometimes you are chased but would escape….

The phrases of significance generated in the interview with Participant SAM corroborated what was found in the previous interviews.
Focus Group #2: Upendo

Focus Group #2: Upendo comprised nine participants, two males and seven females. The venue was a rental office in a town in one of the counties of the Rift Valley of Kenya. Half of the individual interviews on the focus group participants were done in the same rental office while the other half were conducted in the participants’ respective places of residence. The research participants’ contact person from the region assisted the researcher in coordinating everything, ranging from securing the office in a conducive site for the study, recruiting the appropriate participants in an similar pattern to what was used in Focus Group #1: Amani, and mobilizing the participants to see to it that they arrived on time at the venue. As the research team, we arrived at the site ahead of time and organized the room in preparation for the focus group and audiotape and videotape recordings. Most of the participants arrived on time, too. Drinking water was available to all the participants during the focus group and at all the interviews conducted at the site. Some of the participants came in groups while socializing; a few came separately but joined the rest of the people in chatting as they tried to become acquainted with each other. Unlike in the previous focus group, most of the participants in Focus Group #2—Upendo self-identified as professionals and or merchants.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Participants’ Atlas.ti PD #4 Focus Group #2 Pseudonym: Upendo</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Health condition</th>
<th>Years Employed</th>
<th>Level of Education</th>
<th>Endorse Per. Trauma History: No. of Trauma Incidents</th>
<th>Social support received: Yes/No</th>
<th>Religious: Yes/No</th>
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<tr>
<td>8 ETK (Focus Group)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Farmer/retired teacher</td>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>BA – Education</td>
<td>Yes 3 (R&amp;M) - (2008 PEV - Big semi-permanent house and maize plantation were burnt, husband brutally wounded, and son injured/beaten up; 2010 - lost 100 bags of maize worth KES 245,000 to con men; 2012 - Lost husband to violence and con men trauma associated sickness)</td>
<td>Yes - (social support from church and friends)</td>
<td>Yes – Pro/Sp.</td>
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<tr>
<td>9 ECT (Focus Group)</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Farmer/retired public officer</td>
<td>Old age</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>Form 4/12th Grade</td>
<td>Yes 5 (R&amp;M) - (1997 – lost daughter to car accident - 2 injured; 2007 – husband cruelly hit by a robber; 2008 - massive loss of property – Huge house, major business facilities, high level farm tools and equipment, and dairy cows - entirely torched or looted; 2015 - abrupt dead of 2 family members within a week)</td>
<td>Yes - (Government – KES 10,000, family members, friends, &amp; church - KES 10,000, food, and clothing plus undisclosed amount toward children’s fees)</td>
<td>Yes – Cath.</td>
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<td>10 EBT (Focus Group)</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Social worker/retired teacher</td>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Certificate in Primary Teacher</td>
<td>Yes 5 (R) - (1992 - Was threatened and rejected as non-tribal member, house and property destroyed or looted by husband’s tribe’s men; 1994 -</td>
<td>Yes - (Government – KES.10,000, 25,000, Family,</td>
<td>Yes – Pro.</td>
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<td>Name</td>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td>Education (PI)</td>
<td>Education Achievements</td>
<td>Income &amp; Support</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>EMT (Focus Group)</td>
<td>51 F Social Worker</td>
<td>Normal/ Normal/ Husband suffers from chronic physical illness – 2008 PEV brutal injuries</td>
<td>18 Diploma Yes</td>
<td>3 (R&amp;M) - (1992 - several gun shots, narrowly missed death, house burnt and property destroyed/looted, 2008 - Fire trauma with entire community torched, husband brutally cut)</td>
<td>Yes - (food and clothing - from church, friends, and family and counseling from an NGO psychological training school)</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>EPT (Focus Group)</td>
<td>43 F Private medical officer, Farmer, Business owner</td>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>11 BS – Science Yes</td>
<td>1 (M) - (2008 – entire loss of property - House destroyed, farm produce burnt/looted, car destroyed, witnessed own dairy cows cut alive into pieces, verbally abused by her perpetrators while giving them medical services, trauma of serving perpetrators possessing threatening weapons)</td>
<td>Yes - (KES 10,000 from the private employer; other source of support from family, friends, and church; counseling from an NGO psychological training school)</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>KAN (Focus Group)</td>
<td>35 M Hustler</td>
<td>Normal Self emp.</td>
<td>Form 4 &amp; CPA – III Yes</td>
<td>4 (R&amp;M) - (1992 - evicted, property destroyed/looted; 1997 – evicted, 19xx - lost major family business property; father suddenly laid off from work; 2008 PEV - House burnt, property destroyed; 2009 – Horrific fire explosion trauma – narrowly</td>
<td>Yes - (KES 10,000, &amp; 25,000, food, and counseling - from Government, Red Cross, UN, DRC, churches,</td>
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Education

attacked rape by other tribe's men; 2008 - forced by ethnic group members to serve those injured by the rival tribe of the husband, heavily slapped in a public forum by a tribe's man for equally treating the other rival ethnic group

friends, and Church)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Education Level</th>
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<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Normal</td>
<td>Self emp.</td>
<td>Std. 5/5th Grade</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Escaped death, lost many colleagues/friends</td>
<td>Yes – (ATR)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>3 (M) - (1992, 1994, evicted; 2008 PEV- traumatic dead of 2 family members, house and other business property got burnt &amp; other property destroyed/looted)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>KAW (Focus Group)</td>
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<td>F</td>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>Normal - recovering from grief associated loss of wait</td>
<td>Self emp.</td>
<td>Std. 7/7th Grade</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3 (R&amp;M) - (2008 - sudden loss of 2 people to PEV trauma associated illness at different times, 2009- Fire explosion - lost 4 family members in a day)</td>
<td>Yes – (KES. 50, 000, food, children's clothing, medical help, and counseling - from God, Government, Red Cross, UN, DRC, churches, and well-wishers)</td>
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<td>SMA (Focus Group)</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>Farmer/Social worker</td>
<td>Normal – Husband suffers from blood pressure - 2007 PEV trauma illness – brutally beaten</td>
<td>3 Form 4/12th Grade (KCSE certificate)</td>
<td>Yes 5 (R&amp;M) - (1992 - evicted &amp; lost farm produce, 2007-2008 - entire loss of property - house burnt, property destroyed/looted, husband severely beaten; and consequently, attacked by thugs in rental house, August 2008 - lost mother after short time of illness, 2009 - Oil tanker fire trauma - lost a family member to fire explosion, overwhelmed with fears for children’s safety but did not loss them to fire)</td>
<td>Yes - (KES 10,000 &amp; 25,000, food, clothing, medical services, counseling, and a house build for in their farm - from Government, Red Cross, UN, DRC, churches, and well-wishers)</td>
<td>Yes – Cath/Sp.</td>
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**Key:**  
I used the same method in all of the focus groups to facilitate their participation. I said, “You have heard that I am interested in knowing how you have lived after the trauma you experienced. Please describe your experiences of the 2007 post-election violence and also the 1992 clashes, the fire explosion, or any other tragedy which you may have gone through.” Participant ETK, who appeared freer and more social than some of the rest, began with her prolonged narrative. She gave a brief history of the election-related clashes of 1992 and 1997. However, according to her, “the 2007 were completely different from the previous times in that there was calmness during the voting times and it looked like there was no problem,” only for violence to erupt immediately after the results were disputed. She described the situation, in which houses were burnt in rural areas, but because she and her family lived at a nearby shopping center, they thought the fights would not reach there. As the violence escalated, however, there was an influx of people into the center. She said there were a lot of screams in the neighborhood. The attackers finally made it into town:

As they came, I myself was at home and my husband was home too. We were with our old mother together with a family with the children, 10 children who were staying with us. So when they came, they found us home. In fact it was God alone who spoke to them, otherwise they could have killed us because they slashed my cows when I was there. So when they started to burn our maize which we had harvested, I told them, “You could have left that maize so that you eat instead of just burning it”…then the group retreated back saying that for sure… but they [another group] burnt it later…. So when they retreated, then we tried to get out, now to escape…[but] another group came! …they started to quarrel us and my husband told them, “Why are you cutting the cows!” Then they cut my husband's hand and hit our son with a stone. So my husband got cut [on his hand?] and our young son got injured on his foot. [Pause] so then we ran away, then they came and burnt the house…and that house was so big it was a seven-roomed house. And they burnt a store with 200 bags of maize which we had kept [pause]…and a house which was for the children including their library. That is, entirely everything. We went out with only clothes we had on our bodies.

As participant ETK articulately described her multiple trauma experiences of the PEV, the rest of the participants were attentively listening while looking at her. As soon as I expressed
empathy with the participant for her painful experiences, she continued to express how they escaped into the forest and later to a house on the other side which had not been burned. They finally found a way to take her husband to the hospital for treatment, but she said:

It was so painful watching your husband cut, your house burning, all your properties going down to ashes and everything entirely destroyed. It was not easy. Eh. Me, I cried so tearfully because I saw my husband has been cut, my cows have been cut [clears throat], eh, the houses have been burnt…[cross talk] my son has been hurt, he sustained foot injuries…. So it was a bad experience, it was so painful, because now we had left home, we had nothing, we were going to look for somewhere for accommodation, a place to live. So it was a very painful experience. So we went, and the children went their own ways also, some remained in [de-identified], some went to our relatives in [de-identified], others went to [de-identified] that 40 KM [away] again. So it was so difficult and was a hard work. It was hard to travel because you know there were no cars, you had to travel, you walk by foot for all those 40 KM looking for the children, and when you reach where the children are you learn that half of the children are in other parts, and you yourself you are in another part, so they were in about 4 locations, [pause] and all of them from my family. So it was a bad experience and was so painful.

ETK struggled to understand why her “people had been injured…property have been destroyed,” and wondered “why?” She did self-questioning, expressing, “What have you done, what crime have you done?” Further, she stated, “When you try to look for what mistake you have done, there is none; you have voted, the ones who counted the votes were completely different from the ones whose houses were burnt.” She concluded that “it was a bad experience.”

When participant ETK finished relating her experiences, the rest of the group members sat back and readjusted their sitting postures after listening patiently. I commented on the participant’s painful experiences and opened the floor for the next participant. Participant ECT started to explain her sufferings. She reported that she saw people carrying their belongings to the police station and kept wondering what was going on. Then she narrated her fearful experience:

When it reached night time, we started seeing that houses have been burned, we were seeing fire and hearing gun shots. Twak! Twak! When we got out you could see fire
going up, fire going up. So we started fearing for our lives. That night we started ferrying our things outside. And at midnight, we went out completely and went to the maize plantation, the maize had not been harvested. Then the children my grandchildren now, started crying…. But that was not far from home! Ehe. So we spent the night there. There was no sleep even. At 6.00 a.m. very early in the morning, my sons were outside at home, then two young boys, from [de-identified] tribe…they came and greeted each other outside there and said, “Ehe, we are for peace we do not have any problem. Let us leave this violence.” [Pause] so you see they greeted us outside there, then they returned. Immediately after they left, there were people who had gone to seek refuge in a nearby church; all of a sudden, they came so many of them like what? Like swarm of red ants! For real, they came the men with pangas [machetes] the children, the women, even the women! [with head gestures]. I was shocked to see the women coming with stones in baskets. We had to move backward [away from them]. [Pause] so when they arrived they started to burn, others were trying to loot things while others were burning and the house was semi-permanent. [Pause] All that was there!

When she said, “I was shocked to see the women coming with stones in baskets,” I wished to understand her thoughts and feelings about it. So, I asked, “You said they were women….?”

She replied, “The women, the children, and young men.” Then she described the destruction and looting of their property in detail:

About our home, there is a lorry which came following those people [pause] but already those other people had looted because some were looting while others were burning. So when I returned at 9 a.m., that time I didn't even know where the children were. Everyone went his/her own way. I returned, I had a courage, one that I do not know where it came from. I went through the back side there [omitted] the place was now quiet! So when I reached home, I found it eh my neighbor’s now, the roof was falling. So the iron sheets [roofing tiles] burn like if it has been lid with paraffin, I saw it falling down. Then I passed by to go home. That also had fallen, in fact I almost got hit by electricity, I do not know, I wasn’t myself, I did not, it was not me. I saw some items which were not burning, like cooking stove, I had steel made cooking stove. So I almost removed it, and I do not know another spirit in me told me not to remove it. When I looked in the vegetable garden, the clothes which were put there at night were still there, they did not see it! Even I do not know; it was only God on that. Everywhere was so calm! No wonder that time it was so quiet that way, they had carried the cows. But in my home, they took only one cow who was due in January [almost due], a very big one. They took them to the church there, all of them ran there. We had a factory there, others were at the factory and my husband found others burning the maize. My husband told them, “Do not burn the maize, just harvest it. And [omitted, cough] do not burn the posho [maize] mill too; won’t you use it?” And for sure, they heed to him. [Pause] they went to the side of the factory, we had a plant, they burnt, we had three tractors, 3 lorries, they went, [and] eh the house [store] too. I do not know how they burnt the house, yet the roof
was so high, or because of the tractors? [Laughter] the tractors burnt, the tires alone burnt for 3 weeks! Almost 1 month, 3 weeks all that went. The posho mill remained, they used it to mill the maize, when the maize finished, sshee [hand gestures] they burnt it.

I inquired: “They left it?” She answered that “they burned it [posho mill], the maize was still in the farms, they harvested from this farm, that farm, and then next, when the maize grinding was over, then they burnt it and we had two posho mills and animal feed mixer, all which went.”

I empathized with Participant ECT for her catastrophic experience. Before I asked her how she lived after the tragedy, she crouched forward, leaned on the table, and held her chick. While she was in the same posture still, she resumed the floor and related how she has been overwhelmed by worries about the loss of her family documents. In what appeared to be a painful emotional state, she continued:

So what worries me most is that…all the important documents, title deed, land [a]llootment, birth certificates, all those important documents went. If I knew, I personally! If I knew that those issues were not going to end well, I would have carried them in a handbag! So on the 4th, we went to reserve now our ancestral home, we got school and we stayed there among our relatives. While we were still there, we heard that [de-identified] had started through the help of the church [IDP] camp for the affected…so we returned. The children stayed there in [rural home] for 4 months, but I returned with my son and went to the camp. There we met, all of us eh…[lists the group members] and many of us who are not here. That is what helped us a little bit because [de-identified; the initiator of the camp] had gone through this course on counseling. Also [de-identified; a group member] counselled me, as she had gone through it too. I saw that to be a victim in your own country, your own village, your own farm is something so bad!

Participant ECT expressed her anger at the lack of compensation. “It happened that when the compensation time came only one community benefited. Yet, we had gone to the D.O., we wrote our names together with our victim colleagues, we wrote it and was send to the D.C. in….?” Participant ECT then elaborated on the discrimination in compensation based on the tribe of the beneficiary:
When it reaches that eh? [distribution?], they say our names are not there in the list. Until one day we were queuing in a line...and another woman [from another tribe but married to same tribe as the participant] called us, “Please give us your names.” And we were given 10,000 KES. [Low tone of voice] was it not only that Mrs. [de-identified]? [Asks a group member].

The member replied, “Eeh, it was only that.” Then participant ECT resumed her talk:

….that is the only amount that got through, the rest nothing, that is what I got, nothing else. When we went to get that 10,000 [KES] the young men were blocking everything, they did not want any [de-identified participant’s tribe] in that place. [Pause]. They said, “We do not want them! We do not want them! We do not want them!” When they saw me going, they said, “Let that mum come” …they said, “Come mum we know we finished you.” You know they do not fear? …were it not for that woman the [de-identified] we would not have received it…. But when that other amount the 25,000 KES was given, we never got it. When those houses were being built for the victims...they were limiting us in that, even when you have five children and everyone was married and had his own house, they said, “No we will build only two houses and if more, then it is only three, the farm is big.” But you could find a [de-identified rival tribe] who has ½ an acre or a ¼ of an acre would be built for 5 houses, 6, even the 1992 victims…so we asked ourselves, I personally, I asked myself, “Am I a Kenyan?”

Further, Participant ECT expressed her sense of lack of protection from the government stating that more police stations were built to protect one community alone. She relayed that “even if it is how many people, even if it is only 10 families, 15 not reaching 20 families, police station is put there…. In all the areas where [de-identified] were, there were police stations built...[in] every two kilometers....” She wondered “why did they not built a big police station in a central point so that they can be deploying the police to protect...[all] tribes? Why is it that out of 42 [tribes] only one community is protected in Kenya?” She also stated that there was fake compensation of “people who got in IDP camps so that they get help from the government. A person goes and says I do not have a farm; yet the farm is here.” It is this situation that Participant ECT relayed:

As my colleague said, these people who are here are being taken care of even now! There was a time my crops were destroyed by the sheep. I reported to the D.O. many times. The D.O. and his security came to see it. Ayah, the next day again, those sheep increased.
Then I went again to report. There was a time we returned [to the farm] with the chief, two security officers of the D.O. and the D.O. While we were standing there, more sheep and more entered [the farm]. We took how many? 29 sheep [to the administration station]. The D.O. said, “Let them sleep here, tomorrow we will do the case.” The farm had been eaten ¾ of it completely….! When we returned to the D.O.’s office the following morning the sheep had been taken overnight…. When you ask the police officer why the sheep were taken away he said, “Our work is not to take care of the sheep.” That disturbed me! To date, still my heart aah! ¾ of an acre! [Pause] so I saw that here the government do not want to help me. So who do I cry to? Maybe God alone will rescue me.

Issues like that will not finish. Isn’t it even, another time someone told me, “This time we are very ready…we have all the arms” …so it looks like they are well armed. That is what we believe. So, in brief… my heart is still heavy. I do not want to lie to you, because my life is not as usual. Living in the forest, I mean, out for 7 years is not easy because I returned just recently, it is how many? [Asks group member].

The member replied. “Not even a month.” Then I asked, “It is not even a month since you returned to your farm since the post-election violence?” She replied, “Yes, madam, not even a month.” Participant ECT ended narrating her challenges with the late unpleasant incident. She declared:

It is problems which made me return back, I would not have returned even though my farm is very big. They would confront. Another woman told me…. Also, a child confronted my grandchild by asking her, “Where do you live now? Isn’t it that we burnt your houses?” I had to transfer that child to another school. So I saw life is difficult.

I noticed that each of the two participants took a long time to narrate their difficulties. So I requested the rest of the group members to share their experiences but still consider the time as most of the group members had not shared. However, before she spoke, participant EMT expressed that they found the opportunity to voice their tragedies as they had never been interviewed before. Then the participant commenced her description:

Eh, issues of post-election violence and tribal clashes brought me a lot of problems, having lived in a peaceful country since childhood, and then for things to change in one day, was so difficult to accept that you have lived together for all that time, then you can change and harbor envy among ourselves. Eh, it was so difficult to belief that neighbors can later be enemies. Eh, especially in 1992 after the tribal clashes, [cross talk] [object
Participant ECT responded, “Eh, on a Sunday.” Then EMT continued with her story. “We came from church, we had fellowshipped together and then we started hearing screams.” They tried to call around to find out what was going on; but discovered things had changed into violence. She stated how she narrowly missed death as they were escaping:

I narrowly escaped the bullet because we had climbed the hill to another village, we thought maybe there would be safe. I had not known how gun shots sound and I did not know that the gun, by the time you hear the sound coming already the bullets are out. So I was hearing things passing over our heads, and I was carrying the children, my children were very young in 1992. I heard things going weeeh! Weeeh! I thought, maybe it was the wind at night because we were running to sleep in a valley, a big one…. So while we were there we could hear the bullets hitting the trees, eh, cedar trees. There we were told, “Lie down, we are being shot.” When we lied down, we could hear the sound of bullets. There were now gun shots. We were told that, “Already the bullets are close to us.” At that time there were no mobile phones, you could not communicate with anybody.

After participant EMT finished explaining her appalling life journey, the rest of the group members made empathic comments in reflection on her narrative. I remarked on her challenges also and expressed appreciation to her for self-disclosing her personal struggles. Participant EBT took over and recounted her recurrent trauma experiences after 1992. She recalled:

In 1994 again, it was like again hell broke. I saw fire it was just a stare… then I heard the houses were being burnt. So, eh, I stayed, it was at 10 in the morning, and we stayed, come evening I could see people passing my place. I did not know that there was another teacher who had been killed by the [de-identified]. I did not know some [de-identified] were killed in [de-identified]. I did not know because there was no communication…. So, one woman came, I still remember her, at around 6 and then gave me a rope, the rope used for carrying firewood, then she told me, “Can I tie you?” [Sighs] Then it’s like fine [changed tone of voice]. Nothing had sunk in my mind, I had no bitterness. So she tied me 3 times, [Cross talk].

At this juncture, I was surprised to observe the group members following silently the story of participant EBT with no interruptions or feelings of tiresomeness for her lengthy sharing, unlike before when they would dash out of the room and back. As the participant
narrated her trials, I was wondering—probably along with the other group members—why she had to be tied with a rope? I noticed the participant sighed heavily and changed her tone of voice as she talked about being tied with a rope. So, I asked, “Why was she tying you?” Participant KAM also seemed concerned for her security and was curious to know who tied her with the rope and for what reason. He asked, “A lady or a man?” The participant reacted, “Yeh? A lady tying me.” Before we made any further inquiries, the participant continued to explain her ordeal saying:

She knew that there was something that was going to happen to me. She was tying me so that I may not get the shock…so she tied me and then immediately mmh come, six, the house was surrounded by young men [pause] with arrows and bows. So they said that, they told me that, “You can’t be married by a [de-identified].” Amm, it is like I’m, I am doing something bad to their tribe…there was no [de-identified] who had been married by a [de-identified] in that village…I was the one who was doing against, they had not done so…. So when these young men came, fortunately or unfortunately, I had those boys whom I was giving food [lunch and teaching at school]. They had [been] circumcised that December. So they came; it was like a war erupted, who is for Rose [name changed] who is not for Rose. But my group won. So they said that I should not be killed I should not be done anything and those ones who wanted to rape me should not rape me. My kids [sister’s kids] remember I had one girl, the other one was a boy. So they had put us aside. So [pause] in the process of running away, a paved wire cut through my leg! But all the same we could do nothing, we went and hid with my kids because those ones for me showed us where to hide. So I stayed with my wounds that day, the second day, fortunately my brother…[came] and traced me, I was sick so they took me….

Participant EPT was among those who appeared more professional in the group, and much of the time she was attentive but very quiet. However, she freely shared her shocking and painful experiences, and the group members identified with her in what she had faced. I heard some of them utter comments in their reactions as she narrated her vulnerabilities and drudgeries as she served her persecutors. Participant EPT continued expressing her agonies intelligently:

Eh, it was devastating! During the election, it was even, eh, pre-election, so there was a lot of tension. When it was toward election time, I took my children for an interview in a boarding school. That was on 29th of December. I had a branded business vehicle. So
upon reaching town there was fracas. Then I was with 2 children, a driver, and me. Then we had to return back…. Tires were being burnt in town, people were running helter skelter. [smiles]. There was, eh, that suspicion of votes being stolen. It was taking long, and in the process of delay of the release of [election] results so there was issue that votes have been stolen. So people were burning tires and cars were speeding away for safety everywhere. They were saying the business vehicles with my car’s brand name were used to steal votes. I had to hide the identity of my vehicle with posters. Then I decided to go back to [de-identified]. …but reaching [de-identified] in a fraction of a second all those posters were taken off! Eh!? People were hitting the car! Saying, “This vehicle was one of those used to steal votes.” Those were the [de-identified] tribe eh. …but me I am not so fluent in [de-identified]. So I had to really plead with them, I plead I plead until I screamed [mild laughter]. I told them, “Woih! This car is mine and for sure you do not know me yet I am one of you? I am a clinician in [de-identified]. You want to finish my car that way? Eh?” Ah, so I stayed for almost, ah, about one hour pleading with the mob. [Pause] I was released at long last. There were some people who came requesting for a lift, some were [de-identified] and others were [de-identified] [tribes] so we gave them a lift…. So before we reached [de-identified] we told [plan] the [de-identified] to sit close to the windows and door and the [de-identified] to sit in the middle, so that when those people, eh if there will be any issue, then the others [close to windows and door] can respond in their tribal language to those outside while the rest keep quiet. So when we were stopped, then they talked in the language. So that plan worked. When we reached [de-identified] we rearranged the seating again in the same way, the residents recognized us. After pleading with them and they have known the car is mine, they started saying where are you taking the [de-identified]? We pleaded telling them there are no [de-identified] in this vehicle, we did so until we were released, we left. When we reached [de-identified] now, people were carrying things moving up and down helter skelter! You could just see tensions that was there. …So I had to look for a driver to take one of our cars to hide there! In our rural home. Also, I looked for some boys to take my tractor to keep it elsewhere in some of our tribesmen’s home, eh in the village. …that very evening when we arrived and have seen the roads were bad! Tension was there! My car had been hit! I released the children to go to our ancestral land, they used that targeted vehicle because there was no problem with it in the interior…that was on Saturday.

On Sunday, after church I came back home now the house was just empty. Eh, there was emptiness, a feeling of emptiness. Then I stayed, watched the TV [pause] even there was nothing I could take, everything was in the house [defeated on what to take and what to leave], after all it was only me, one person [mild laughter] in the house, where will you take where will you start? I just stayed that way in the house. [Cross talk]. That was the day the election results were to be announced. Then at 5.00 [p.m.] the results were released. A few minutes to the results being announced, I was brought to a very sick child…and I accompanied the mother to the clinic. I just took my personal certificates and all that, put in a very small briefcase, and went with it. So I locked the house and went with her. Did I come back again to the house? At around 5.00 [p.m.] or and a half there, fire was burning everywhere! Eh!? I tried to rush home but reaching somewhere I could not go anymore. I saw fire, fire fire fire! Then! I was defeated where do I go? I just
turned the car. I was unable to go there because there were...[other tribesmen] in the area.

Again, I asked, “So you were not able to go back to the clinic?” Participant EPT responded, “No, I was in the mission hospital now! She continued,

So the whole night we stayed. I slept at the clinic with the kid and other patients, and I continued working. The goodness was that my house was near a [de-identified] [another tribe’s] house and was wooden house that is what made it not to be burnt. But now they vandalized, everything; it was pathetic anyway. The child was well within that night. The mother went home and I sent her to check on my house. [Cross talk] she was a [de-identified] [from her rival tribe]. At around 4.00 - 5.00 [a.m.] people were coming to the hospital, people who have been cut and cut and cut! Others have been shot! Eh! Several injured people. Now remember this lady [herself] had not eaten dinner, has just started working. So I just continued with work. So now it was about stitching and managing the cases of post-election violence.... That lady called and told me that the house has been vandalized, come and see what you can save...[it] has not been burnt. So I said if it has been vandalized, they have looted everything, then what am I going there for? So I could just excuse myself from the clinic, drive some safe distance where home was visible and pull the car aside. Then I could stand there and look over in a visible place. I could see [word omitted], within a short time, very heavy smoke came out from that area! It was my farm which I had not harvested. They were burning my maize in the farm. So they burnt. I just looked at it and said, “Booh! What do I do? I have nothing to say.” I just looked at it [Sobs, moment of silence] then I returned and continued to attend to the patients.

In response, I said, “We understand how it feels to be in that situation.” Participant EPT responded, “Thanks for your understanding.” Then she continued to give another comprehensive explanation of her afflictions. She related how fearful, painful, and frustrating it was for her at the clinic serving patients, some of whom kept abusing her as she treated them. According to the participant’s perception, some of the injured patients might have been attacked while burning and destroying her property at home. Participant EPT explained:

So I just returned. I said, “If God this is what to happen, it is okay.” [Emotional: silence]. I continued I stitched, I stitched, and then my farm now was like a battleground! Now the [de-identified] and the [de-identified] [rival tribes] were fighting there, they burnt part of it, and then, eh, those who injured, still it was me who managed [treated], eh. They got wounded maybe from [accompanied with mild laughter] the same, same farm [hers]. But
remember from the community we were living with them, eh, the mission hospital was not far. So they were coming, and telling me, “For sure doctor,” [?] you know now they had no choice after getting injured. It was that the people who were managing them were the [de-identified] [other tribe], I now, and some nurses whom we helped each other. But I said, “Let me work.” eh. [Pause] I said, “It is a calling.” I saw all the types of weapons which the [de-identified] [tribe] have…I mean, I have never seen in my life! Eh! So they were bringing injured people while holding their pangas [machetes], axes, and other weapons and they tell you, “Doctor please, help this one in critical condition please, please attend to this one first” [Cries] So I just attended to them, I said, “If they will cut me in the process, [cries] even You God You will know I was doing my work.” So I did it, until 2:00 p.m. that [de-identified] friend of mine kept calling me saying, “Please come and check on your house, come see whatever was left. Come, will you finish all those patients?” So I went, on my way home I met with one of the leaders, a [de-identified] but was in uniform…. I told him, “Me, I have done, I am tired, I am hungry, I am almost falling down! Please take me to see my home.” So a wooden house of an immediate neighbor of mine, a [de-identified] [same tribe] was burnt and my farm was burnt, so when I saw the smoke coming out from there then I thought eh even mine has been burnt but that mum kept telling me it has not been burnt come and see, it was bordering with a wooden house of a [de-identified] [other tribe]. …along the road, I found one of the people I saved on the 29th the one I carried in my car. I told him now my brother, that day didn’t I rescue you? I did all I could to protect you from the [de-identified] now it is your turn to help me.” But then I was told he was…and I saw for sure he could not move, he was alone on duty. Yet I needed protection to get to my home. Anyway I got someone else and drove…. You know I just arrived at home there, the [de-identified] were cutting the cattle, even one of them belonged to one of them [tribesmen], I was just keeping for my neighbor…I have a tree close home, so they tied the cows to it and cut. Just cutting and sharing the meat. They were cutting the cows even alive, they were just cutting the cow pap! I asked the [de-identified] man I went home with, I told him, “Please talk to them not to vandalize my house in my presence.” He tried to tell them but they could not listen. …so they stole clothes and whatever they could carry and went. I got a few things and that man helped me to get a cart and we carried them with a donkey…. 

Participant EPT continued to narrate how sick she was after attending to many patients. Their rural home came under threat of arsonist attacks too. She said, “we were stressed on both sides…where we could have run to and where we were running from [living in initially].” They tried to have some people from the other community stay in their home and take care of it. But she said, “Immediately I turned, the people I had given my house stole all my maize I had harvested in another farm, now what was left, and took completely everything left in store. I
went there but I found nothing.” Besides tribulations surrounding their properties, though many patients appreciated her services, mistrust from some patients from her rival tribe ensued in her place of work. She relayed:

In the process of serving now, some were abusive, because in their situation of their trauma, they transfer to you. Eh? There was another one who came and openly said eh, “I do not want to be treated by a [de-identified] [another tribe]. They can inject you poison.” But some were appreciative for the services we gave them, they were saying, “Thank you! You have helped us a lot.” So I did my best that I could, but at some point you feel too that their reaction was very devastating. Eh. Yah. So we just continued…. Later we were encouraged, motivated from the office with some tokens for working…. I believed in service and even whatever somebody could have done to me, I did not mind. I was saying, “God, You know me, You know why you placed me here, let me do my best and You will see.” Eh. …after that even God rewarded me, I was able to settle later, after that moment of struggle, now I have settled at home.

Then I commented on participant EPT for her sharing. Still the participants continued to attentively listen while making brief comments and physical gestures trying to identify or in agreement with the presenter.

Participant KAM began to describe how horrifying 2007-08 was to him: “…during that time of post-election violence I was able to experience a lot of pain, we did not anticipate what we experienced. I personally lost all my property and even I lost two of my loved one, and after that I passed through a lot of problems…[with the family and] they were little children.” I empathized with participant KAM for the loss of loved ones to the violence. Then I asked, “Are you able to share in the group what happened?” He replied, “Yes, I will, Madam, I have been sharing about it. I have no problem sharing about it now.” Participant EBT contributed; “It is only God actually; it was painful, God has helped us a lot.” Participant KAM resumed his account and relayed his fearful encounters during the travel and the difficulties they faced while trying to settle the children in a safer environment. He said,
Shortly afterward, I travelled to a safe place. I passed through a lot of challenges, we boarded a lorry which took us under a flattened tent; but God is good because I am still alive. When we reached [de-identified] the lorry was stopped and it was at night, young men, the attackers climbed up and stepped and stepped all over the tent trying to check on whether there were people inside…. I was praying God that the child may not be stepped on because stepping on him, things would erupt badly but he was not touched, so we passed through there. We were rained on so much and we reached town at around 5 a.m.

….we got a lot of trouble especially for my school going children. Until we were able to get schools, I struggled so, so much. I did not have anything that time, all I had saved for many years as the earnings of my youth had all gone into flames within a single day!! [With rigor and hand gestures]. So it was a matter of begging, whoever had good heart would give you; but whoever did not have it would rebuke you, experiences like that.

Participant ETK added, “Not everyone was willing to help you. It was hard, so hard. We faced the same problems too.” So, I wished to explore more about what happened with participant KAM and his family next. I noted, “It must have been hard trying to put the children in school with those economic difficulties and living with anxiety of not knowing where your loved ones were. So, what happened after you settled them in school?” Participant KAM painstakingly revealed the chronic pain and anxiety which he experienced during and after the PEV:

…I returned specifically to look for my family members, whatever happened with them. I struggled so, so much. Previously, I had looked for them for 10 days without lack. And to go back a little bit, during that time, on the 10th? [January, 2008?] I went to the police [station] that was after searching for them in vain...to report but I was harassed by the police with them saying, “Si mlisema kazi iendelee? Hiyo ndio kazi sasa inaendelea!” [Didn’t you say let the work continue? That is now work continuing]. Eh, otherwise, it was emotionally hurting but we were able to endure it. It was because our fellow [de-identified] were laughing at us, even while I was at the counter another man laughed and mocked me saying, “Hakukupikia simu kwa moto?” [Didn’t she make a phone call to you from the fire?] I told him, “You will get it. Mmm. Today it is me, but tomorrow it may be your turn.” Therefore, I tried to look for a means of getting my family! I went to the [Kenya] Red Cross to report, we tried to search together with the Red Cross, [omitted the whole sentence] finally we started to seek help from the government through DNA and whatever. It took us 1 yr. and over searching without success. And the pain on top of the other [adding insult to injury] was that it was said that our beloved were to be buried without our knowledge, but by bad luck or good luck, I got to know about it while I was at home, and I personally tried to consult with those who were bereaved like me…we
rushed there and we were able to intervene before the burial…and we continued with the DNA, and after 1 year and 5 months we were able to bury our beloved ones….

When participant KAM paused after sharing at length about his misfortunes, I empathized with him for the tragedies. Participant ETK commented, “That violence brought I great loss, eh, we were affected in many ways. I lost my husband shortly after the violence, he got sick due to injuries he sustained and also maybe because we lost all our property.” Then participant KAM concluded, saying:

In all that, we have gone through a lot of challenges, because it is so difficult when you become a beggar while you initially worked. We have tried through all means, without any help from anywhere, [pause] until today! …we have passed through a lot of challenges ourselves. Yes.

Participant KAN stated, “Actually all of us, violence have been our major problem.” Participant KAM responded, “It has been a very big problem!” then he sat back. Participant KAN took his chance to speak and related how violence has been a major challenge to him:

I will talk starting with 1992. I was in primary school in 1992, but I did exam for class 8 after I delayed for almost 5 yrs. because we had to move from there to here, one place to another because of skirmishes. Finally my parents had to move to [de-identified], my father was working with the ministry…and my mum was a farmer, and had borrowed loan from the bank with our XX farm’s title deed as a security. During that mobility, since we were not used to dry place like [de-identified] we had to relocate back to [de-identified]. In that mobility all our finances from what my parents had earned just went, and finally our land was auctioned by bank, because it was a security for that loan my mum had borrowed. We have continued that way, some of us children even did not go to school—for example, the older one. Also my education was affected because of those disturbances of politics. More so, nowadays even my mother I am just praying God for her, because even her she developed heart problem, she has that problem to date. Eh.

I asked, “You said who has health problem?” Participant KAN replied, “My mum. That problem keeps recurring and recurring again.” Then he continued describing his family struggles.

He went on:
My mum was living in this region, but because of those frequent disturbances we saw in 1992, again we saw in 1997, again we saw in 2002, and now the climax which was in 2007, it made my mum to relocate, and to date she has never, eh, desired to return to this region; she lives in [de-identified] town, and the financial stability we had that time is not there anymore. For the children to go to school, it has to take other means; one has to look for help from peripheral sources, maybe bursaries, what we used not to depend on. The foundation we had was finished. So it is a matter of politics; in fact, politics need to be monitored on how, eh, the modest? [/mode/st] it can be used. I am not saying much.

Though he wished not to say much, I probed him to share about the sufferings he said he had in 1997, 2002, and 2007. So, I asked, “Would you mind to explain to us a little about what you experienced in 2002 and 2007?” Participant KAN responded:

…the farm was auctioned…that is when I was doing my class 8 [exams]. So for me the issues of education did not go well, it did not get to the necessary level. Also I got tortured psychologically because, eh, I remember 2007 when we remained close to our home…now as young men we said we will remain there; if it means dying, we die, if not then we live. We remained there with a lot of problems, it was like, [illustrates] this is highland. Here is the forest! Here is the forest. Here is the forest! Here alone was open land. In shopping center there was no food because the shops had been closed [due to violence]. For about one month, there was no food there. We had to go into people’s farms and dig out potatoes. For others whose family members had left their livestock there, we were understanding each other and slaughter the animal, we cook the potatoes and eat. The food you were to eat so fast, either at night when others were keeping vigil. So we would slaughter, cook, and eat as others kept vigil, just alternating, life was like that. And that place was very risky because it was forest all round.

Then I inquired what the participant and his team finally did and if they got help. So, I asked, “What happened finally?” He responded, “We joint the rest when everywhere got calm.” The participant became motivated to share about his experience in the oil tanker fire tragedy. He described it articulately:

Before we came out of this, eh, affection? [/effects/] of politics or to say [after] post-election violence, came that trauma of oil. I remember even me I was there, I got heart attack [from shock?]…. We helped each other…was taking people to the hospital, people were passing close to the center where we lived when naked, no clothes, burnt…and those who were taken through there were friends you knew. What contributed much was the fact that people had just come out of the election violence, they did not have anything in their pockets, we did not have other options. Most of us we were even me for example,
I went there to fetch oil, my friend [who died at the site] and I had gone to fetch the oil because we did not have money, even a single cent in our pockets. When you assess the life that you have had since 1992, has just been a bare wrestle with poverty. So that was an opportunity to us, an opportunity that you cannot let go.

As participant KAN explained the economic challenges which contributed to their rushing to the oil tanker in such fortunes, I observed some of the group members sit upright as they empathized with him. Some shook their heads accompanied by “Mch” expressions. He continued:

There we lost around 70 people in total from our households, average, because they might be more and they were our friends, so it was like, it was a disaster in the entire community. That thing hurt us many families. Even many of those who had survived have since died, because of that smoke [inhaled] or the internal injuries….

Some of the group members joined him, commenting, “It was terrible.” I felt with participant KAN and many other people for their horrific experience of the fire tragedy.

Identifying with Participant KAN and having experiences almost similar to his, participant KAW identified herself and then began her narrative:

I live in [de-identified, but before we were relocated we used to live in [de-identified]. I want to start by saying that in 2007 when we went for elections I was staying with my parents there, my husband’s parents. When violence began, that parent, mum got stroke when she saw violence has erupted. When we started struggling and confused on whether to run with the children to [de-identified] for safety, mum told us to go with the children to seek refuge and leave her there, saying her life had reached the end [going to die]. When she said so, then my husband and I saw it was better to [stay and] die all of us, than to leave her in the house because we could not have carried her during such a hurry as she was a heavy person, she was a big mum. My husband and I told the children to go alone because we could not leave grandmother alone. When the children went, later they called us and we told them we decided to stay with mum, so they also said…that same, same day they returned to stay with us. Also when our neighbor’s house got burnt…they came to camp with us. About 20 people came and camped with us together with their livestock. It happened that almost all people in the community except three families left, those people came to stay with us, and when the government noticed that we were many people there, then some police officers were deployed to come and patrol the area for our protection. After a short while those friends left for their homes of origin and some to town… But we remained now with my husband and the children. We stayeed, then
mum’s health condition became worst. Even to take her to the hospital was a problem because there was nowhere to pass through [road blocks]. But I am grateful to God because the church pastors tried every way possible to see to it that we got help from the government to take her to the hospital. So she was taken to the hospital, she did not return, she died and we buried her in [de-identified].

I felt with the participant and wished to find out when she lost the mother, so I asked, “That was when?” She replied, “That was in 200[7?] [/8/], just that time of violence.” Then she continued:

That issue affected us so much. After sometime, my father in-law went back to our farm but later came back to stay with us in [de-identified]. Because even him, he was so much affected by the violence and now the dead of mum, my father died too. It was just out of that shock, seeing things have gone bad.

I inquired further, “That was after how long from when mum died?” She responded:

It was just after 1 year, then he died. [Pause] so now I was left with one mother, now my mother’s co-wife. But when she saw that she has been left alone, then she got affected by that disease of staying indoors and being served, she cannot do anything, she is helped with everything [depression?]. So we remained with that mum, that was in 200[7?] [/8/].

As the group members shared their experiences, the rest of the members would face the presenter and listen attentively as they reacted with pity through body language more than with words. Participant KAW further conveyed her tribulations associated with the fire tragedy. She recounted:

From there, in 2009 on 31st [January] as my fellows have shared, our children went to [de-identified] where the tank tragedy happened. I remember it clearly, that day was so nice because this media called Inooro [media broadcast station] was passing through our center. It was going to give out the first check whereby people would play and win 1 million. So all the people filled the center. I remember my girls and the young boys said…. We allowed them to go. After some time, all my children came back home. At lunch, my daughter [de-identified] cooked for us lunch saying, “Today I will cook for you the best food that you have never eaten.” We asked her what kind it was. Then she cooked…so fast and served each one of us…the same amount, exact amount [mildly laughs]. So we all ate lunch together. After that, I send my children to go and get sukuma [kale] from the garden, so they left me where? Home. After some time, one of my young boys came and asked whether those who went to get the vegetable had come back. I told him I have not seen them. Then he said, “Let me go, I have heard there is a truck which
fell, let me check if they went to see that truck.” He left me just sitting alone in the house. When he left, I heard my neighbor…she told me, “Mama Peter! [Name changed]. You are in the house yet I have heard that all our children have perished?!” Then I told her, “Mine have not perished, they went to bring? To bring the vegetable.” …she told me, “You are saying so but I have heard that your son was the first one to be rushed to [de-identified] hospital…?” When she told me that, I got shocked. [Pause] When I got shocked, I asked myself, '[de-identified] I was with him during the day when those people [Inooro] passed, we had talked together and we left each other then I returned home?’ When I heard that, I left the house. When I reached the gate, I met with his father. He told me, “Now, things are bad, our son, I heard has passed on.” Then I asked him, “Has passed on how?” He told me, “You are in the house but you do not know people have perished in the oil [fire].” There there! Me, I could not move further, me, I returned home. There is a woman who came to our home and told me, “Have you heard what has gone on?” I told her I have heard but I am unable to do anything anymore. I told her, “If the children have perished, it is most of mine who have died, because there is no one here.” In that fire I lost many of my children. In fact some of them left young children. One of them left behind a wife and young children. One [unmarried] left young children and another one left one child, 8 months old too.

Participant KAW explained her immediate reactions to the heartbreaking news about the major loss of her children. She stated:

There! Stress started. I did not see if the world is real or what, but I did not complain before God. [Pause] there is only one thing God helped me. [Pause] I did not scream. I said, “God, You gave them to me! And because now this burden is so heavy for me, take care of those children” [those orphaned]. [Lowered tone of voice]. So from that time of 20[0]7 and 20[0]9, it is why you are seeing us here wanting to know your genuineness of coming here. Many have come and promised that children will be helped but none has been forthcoming. A pastor came to my house and wanted to buy a farm for my children, now the orphans. He told us to open an account for each one of them so that he deposits some Christmas gifts for them. We opened that account and they took KES 500 registration fee and went up to today…I went and reported to the [de-identified] about it. He told me that was the 75th case about such kind of pastors who have been reported to his office. …I see that there are people who pray for you to be in a tragedy so that they use the situation to benefit themselves.

The participant expressed sadly how she among other affected people have been taken advantage of by con men. However, she explained that she fought assertively against the opportunists.

When participant KAW finished her narrative, participant SMA begun hers saying:

I am [de-identified]. I am a resident of [de-identified], I was born in [de-identified] and got my education there [same place] in [de-identified] primary, from there I joined [de-
identified] high school, I returned and got married there, I have children, and we have a farm here. The difficulties which we have gone through are so many. We used to live well before I got my baby in 1983, and we lived very well until 2000, eh, I mean 1997 when the first clashes began, that is when I started to hear about it.

To let her clarify the year, I asked, “1997?” Then she replied, “Eh, 97…the one which reached us at [de-identified] was that one of 1997.” Then participant SMA continued to explain what happened:

When that one came it affected us so much because it came with might until we had to escape from there and move to live in [de-identified]…. We left our property there we had chicken, maize, everything, because they came abruptly and we were told, “There they are coming! There they are coming!” so we ran away. [Pause]. We lived at [de-identified] for 4 months in a rented apartment. In those 4 months, we had a lot of problems because the food that we had planted we left it home. [Pause] we did not have a way to return and take it. So we started doing odd jobs there, our children had started schooling but they suspended because now there was nowhere to join school in that time, the following year they were to return to school but they stayed home. We decided to return because we were attacked by thugs. We were told, “the residents of [de-identified] came here to do what? Get out of here.” We were chased out of the rental houses. [Pause]. To return we found all our property which we had left had all been looted! We started life afresh. We found that time the house was left, but everything was finished.

In her statement and body language, participant SMA communicated that the impact of PEV was worse than that of the skirmishes which she experienced previously. Immediately the participant started to explain her PEV associated series of tortures, I observed her raise her tone of voice, assume a facial expression which mirrored a sense of might, and verbalize the severity of the violence. The participant coherently related the calamities she and the family among other affected people experienced as a result of the 2007 PEV:

We stayed, election time came again; there was that of 2002 in that one nothing happened. The one which was worst was that of 2007. That was the one which destroyed us completely because when it came, we did not know anything would happen. We were just indoors. Shortly, we heard screams when it was announced that the president who has been elected is Kibaki. To get out, the first thing to see, I saw fire smoke. We asked ourselves what the smoke was for. To ask my husband what the smoke was for, he told me, “Heeh! Keep quiet. You are saying what is the smoke for, yet you are hearing things
are bad?” I told him, “It has become bad, what has happened?” Then he told me, “Are you not seeing that house has been burnt?” We came out at our home. To look out we heard the screams were becoming more. “Eh, it is bad! What is this now, and it is 6 p.m. approaching 7 p.m. in the night so where will we go?” Eh, we said no, let us not sleep before we check what it is. We did not sleep. We patiently waited [background cough] we said let us not get out before we get to know what it is. We closed the gate and sad down. [Pause] let me tell you that before it reached morning, that situation became worst instead of getting better! So that time [a cough from background] while we were home, by that morning we heard that one of the politicians has been killed by [cough from background]…he was a [de-identified] and he was killed by a [de-identified] [participant’s tribesman]. That was now when the [de-identified] were attacked. By then, they had not fought that much, but that is now when the real fight began. It was said, “So now the [de-identified] have joint hands with [de-identified] to attack our leaders?” That was now when the violence became worst. Houses were getting burnt here and there. Me, I did not run away that time. Those whose houses were burnt ran away but I said, “Me, I will just be patient; I will not run away.”

When participant SMA said she decided to stay and patiently observe the security of the environment in spite of the imminent danger, I wished to explore what made her think of remaining. So, I said, “It was unusual for you more so as a woman to remain at home. In most cases, it is the women and the children who are the first ones to run away from such danger.”

Participant KAM commented, “They were after men, they were looking for them. And everyone actually, even the property they were destroying.” Then I inquired from her, “You acted unique; I wonder why you did not think of running to the police station where you said everyone was running to.” The probing made participant SMA reveal emotionally her instinctual motherly protection which kept her home amidst overwhelming fears. She explained:

I have four sons. So I saw they [perpetrators] were looking for, their target was to fight with males and kill each other, I told them [sons], “You go away let me give you money to escape to [de-identified] and then I remain with…” I have a son with disability… “I remain with him and your father to go away.” So one of them rushed to [de-identified] for safety and the second and those other ones together with their father went to police station…. Me, I remained at home with my disabled child who was in the house and [our livestock] for about two weeks. They were coming with bows and arrows. They asked me, “What are you doing here!? You are not going!? I told them, “Now to go where?” …they left. I thought it was finished. After two weeks they came, first what made them come back, they asked me whose cows were inside, eh [no], it happened that there were
young men who were killed when they were burning a house at [de-identified]. Two young men were shot dead. When they got shot, in the morning around 5 a.m. in the morning, at 6 a.m. we heard screams which were so threatening, so we decided to get out. To get out! I saw a large group of men that I have never seen…. So there was another old man who was nearby there…I told him, “Please tell those people coming not to kill us because how they are coming, they are saying no one will be left out.” He told me, “You come and stay close to me here with those children of yours; when they come I will refuse them.” There were young men from our next neighborhood, they were six young men. There was a house, belonging to my brother in-law which had been burnt but he had repaired and made it a kiosk and I had a key to it. These young men had come and told me to hide them because they were almost caught and were going to be killed. So I let them into that house, I locked the door and remained with the key. I told them to let me stay outside and if I see them coming then I will know how to talk to them. So when I talked to that old man and he told me to stay close to him with my children, then I said now let me lie. I told him, “Because you know my son is there and you know he has a disability, and I have locked him inside,” I did not tell him that I have kept those young men, “so when they come and demolish this house won’t they kill him?” So they came with hostility.

The group members appeared to be following her account of what she faced. I was also so eager to know what happened. I questioned, “So what happened?” Then she gave a prolonged narrative of her experiences. She went on:

So he [old man] told me, “Come and stay here I will refuse them.” So they were coming furiously. But the way they were coming I saw, aih these people are dangerous. Then he told me, “Eh, stay here let me go and talk to them there.” So when he was trying to persuade them to leave us, I was seeing how rough they were. So I decided to run home, to see if I could untie the cows outside and drive them into the house and lock them in. To reach home I found that I could not do it again, I was shaking, I had lost strength, I got out and sat down there. I called another [de-identified] [from the perpetrator’s tribe] girl. I told her now what will we do, those young men are inside the house and here they are, they have started to pull down the fence. I told her I do not want to see them dying, let me go to where they are for them to kill me before they kill those young men and my disabled son in the house. I went toward that group of people. That girl saw me going toward them, and she fell down and fainted…. I approached them while raising my hands up. They asked me, “What do you need here!!?” And it is people whom I know all of them. [They asked:] “What do you need here!!? What do you need!!? I told them, “Let me request you, please.” Because I had seen people had started pulling down the iron sheets [roofing tiles], “These house you are demolishing, you know my disabled child, he is the one I locked inside so that he does not keep moving around, and the place is not safe.” One of them who heard me telling them while I was crying told the rest, “Hey wait first! Let us hear what this mum is saying first.” They said, “Tell us what you said again, who did you say are inside here?” I told them that it’s only so and so my disabled son.
[They asked], “Are you sure it is him?” I told them, “Yes.” [Then they asked], “What if we break in and find other people inside?” [I told them], “It is not a lie. Here is the key. If I am lying to you, then if you get somebody else, you kill.” They told me, “Open it!” Even I could not manage. As I tried to put the key to open the door, it was not going in, my hands were shaking and so I took long opening it. They saw [omitted] I was willing to open, but seeing how I was trembling that specific one told the rest, “If you see her willing to open the door, it looks like there is nobody inside. Let’s go!” …so when they told themselves, ‘Let’s go,’ I sat down. Then they told me, “Get out of our way!” I sat at the fence. Then they went down to my house. So I thought, “Now they have gone there and the cows are inside.” So I went there as I kept sitting down again and again. They stood. One of them called me, “Hey, Judy” [name changed]. Because I am known.

“Whose are these cows inside here?” [He asked]. I told him that they are mine…. He told me, “Go and milk the cows and make tea for your son.” I told him I will do so. There I was saved, they left. They ran so fast toward [de-identified]. I couldn’t milk, I saw now instead of going to milk the cows to save the cows, I went back to that house. I found one of the young men had fainted until he had diarrhoea on himself, he was so shocked to hear what was going on outside. I told them now because I have rescued you, let everyone now run for his life…so they ran to the police station through the back street. While they [perpetrators] were in the other neighborhood…one young man from our neighborhood told us, “Since you have known how unsafe it is here, please run for your lives.” So I was defeated on where to go with my son, and the livestock were there too. I was with my daughter in-law and I told her that we stay there so that if they come then we tell them to take the cows and leave us. …around 7 p.m. they came to us. They told me, “Did you milk?” I told them, yes, I milked. “Did you make tea for your son?” I said yes. Then they asked me where my son was and I showed them. Then they told me, “You are so lucky! Because of this child!” Then they told me they are going with the cows…they took 5 cows and 12 goats and left…. We stayed again, the house has not been burnt, we stayed another 2 weeks, then another one came and took a chicken….. After another 2 days, another man came…he told me to go away because the house was going to be burnt. Then I told him I have nowhere to go. Then he told me, “I have told you…eh, please turn!” To turn this way, they had arrived. So there was nowhere I could go. They came just that way, they told me, “Go! Save your life and the child.” So I was defeated on what to do. I left through the back door and went, there was a big rock there [hand gestures]. Together with my son’s wife we stood there. They entered into the house and looted whatever they could carry, to finish carrying, me I just saw smoke [Lowered tone of voice] at home. Upon returning, that house was finished. It was semi-permanent. It got finished, everything got finished. That to end now we moved to the police station, that is where we slept, we did not have even a blanket, we did not have anything. So we were helped by those who were already there with blankets, we did not even have clothes.

After participant SMA finished explaining how she had negotiated her way so that she and her disabled son escaped the torturous presence of the perpetrators, she started relating
another tragic incident which befell her husband. When participant SMA finished describing how she and the family experienced recurrent and multiple trauma, including the husband suffering a deadly beating and how they suffered in their several places of refuge, I empathized with her for all the catastrophic experiences. Then I inquired, “You mentioned that oil tanker explosion, a major tragedy which affected all of us. So how were you affected?” The participant responded, “So now it reached 2009, first, eh…. Mum died in that 2008 August…. Now I have no home, I have nothing, mum has died…”

At this stage, I was starting to feel overwhelmed by the numerous tragedies participant SMA and the family experienced. However, I had to remain composed and objective in order to get the meanings participant SMA was communicating. To break into the monologue mode which she had unconsciously assumed as she told about the terror of the PEV, I desired to know how soon the mother died after the violence as her death was another blow to SMA. I found out, “You said she died in 2008?” Instantly she replied, “Yah, 2008 August. While I was still in [de-identified]….” She continued, “She got shocked, all her cows and everything were stolen. I think she got shocked, she was not old she got shocked and died.” She further detailed the loss of her loved ones, saying, “So in that 2009, we had an elderly family member who was put in charge over us when mum died, mjomba wangu [my uncle]. We were told to be seeking his help in times of need for advice or other key family issues, that uncle was now in our home being like both our father and mother.” Then she alluded to the fire tragedy, noting that “[w]hen that oil tanker came there, he was one of those who [died there?] [/got burnt/] there.” I empathized with participant SMA for all the sufferings she and the family had faced.

Next, I opened the opportunity for the group to share about how they made meaning out of their tragedies. First, I explained to the participants that people may develop a sense of
significance or purpose in life, a consistent pursuit for specific goals, and sense of fulfillment for the attainment of those goals after going through trauma and other sufferings such as they experienced. Knowing that participant SMA had just finished sharing her painful multiple and recurrent trauma experiences, I cautiously and systematically inquired about what meaning the group members might have made out of their atrocious experiences. I explored, “So after going through all those multiple and recurrent traumas of the skirmishes, the PEV, and the fire explosions, in what ways have you interpreted or understood those experiences? Please explain in what ways you have made meaning from those experiences or have sensed a purpose for your life as a result.” When I had finished my question to them, most of the group members looked at each other for some time. I then asked if they understood my question clearly, and they responded that they got it, but they were still thinking of how to express their thoughts in a way that would reflect how they have actually lived their lives. After a moment, participant ETK said, “I know for sure [pause], those experiences were so painful and haaard. But God has helped us to recover and even become stronger.” Participant ECT added, “It is true.” Participant KAN joint, “Yah! That is the truth!” Participant ECT described the meaning she made in life, saying:

I saw that [pause] something comes and pass, and if you look back again you may not be able to move on. And you cannot tell who destroyed you and even whoever destroyed you was also destroyed. So the only thing was to accept that it happened and pray that it does not recur and life continues. Even if you cry for what has passed, you will not recover it again. So it is only to accept and continue to move on in life and to forgive. [Pause] because even that neighbor of yours it may not have been that neighbor who came to destroy you, it may have been someone else from far, who have been destroyed too already in where he came from. And in our place it was mainly those young men, so we just forgave them, there is nothing else, so that we can be able to live together, and built our country Kenya. There is nothing else.

Participant EPT contributed, “Even me, I thought that you have to move on. Life has to move on despite all challenges.” At this point, I sensed that it might have been hard for the participants to actively participate while a member was sharing about personal trauma experiences. Yet, they
were comfortable in discussing how they processed their experiences. Participant EPT continued:

I [thought] that life has to continue…even besides challenges; I work hard. Yah, in fact it’s like I am even better than what I was before that time. So those were just challenges that are never permanent. They are things that come and go, eh. Because I was able to move, I was able to stay better than I used to stay at that time, yah, due to the fact that you organize yourself you just eh [pause] work harder than before [smiles] eh. [Cross talk] I used to live, that house of mine was wooden, I live now in a more permanent house I live more comfortably, so challenges that come are just short-lived.

Then Participant EBT resumed and related the meaning she made from her trauma experiences. She shared, “It has helped us because we have known that all human beings are the same, and we have to spread peace despite what we have gone through.” To encourage participant EBT to illuminate what she wanted to put forward, I questioned, “So for you personally you feel that it has helped you in what way…specifically you?” She retorted:

I am able to see each and every violence to fight [against]. Beforehand I was seeing rape cases, gender-based violence like it was nothing but it has opened my eyes whenever I see any form of violence, I stand and say there must be a stop! May it be wife beating, husband beating, or sexual harassment in any form? Violence helped me to stand to know what is violence, to know that violence any small violence, any bigger violence whichever name it will be given, violence is violence! It gives someone a scar. I came to understand there is a scar that will be healed yes, but when you think of it, it reminds you of the ugly things that you saw, mmh. I went for counseling, so that I can help others I did not want to have bitterness; although my laughter went, I don’t have any bitterness.

To identify a goal participant EBT was striving for, I asked, “So you said you went for counselor training?” She replied:

Mmh. I went for a course in psychological counseling, ehe. And I did not consider my age as old, I felt that is the right time for me to become a counselor so that I help many [smiles]. I became a counselor and am strong in faith. [Pause] Beforehand I would cry; but now I like to help. I like to stand up. I say no. Even now I am not saying I am vacating [de-identified] [place] I am not. Eh, beforehand I was divorcing, [I decided] I am not divorcing. [De-identified] will remain my in-laws, they will remain my friends [inaudible segment]. Mh.
Searching for more meaning the participant may have found in her sufferings, I questioned her further: “So as we continue with this question still, has the experience had any additional meaning in your life? Explain to us.” The participant enumerated:

I think, even though I went through that, 1) I became a counselor, 2) I became strong in faith, and 3) I became strong in peace work, because when I go to work with the team, to help those who get affected, I don’t really work for money, that I should be given money, even with counselling, although I am trained as a counselor there is no time I have gone for paid counseling, I do it... [for free], I volunteer in any circumstance. So I think I came up though it was negative [experience].

Noticing that participant KAN had kept quiet for a while after coming back from receiving a phone call, I thought of engaging him in the discussion. I probed him to share in the group the meanings he may have found after facing the violence related sufferings and oil tanker associated horrific experiences. The participant seemed to have been brooding on what to share for a while, as he then gave a wide and ample information:

All of us are given strength by God, and what makes us to continue with life is those who were here before us. When you follow history there are those who fought for freedom in Kenya; some of them went well, some of them perished, and there are those up to now they are crying for compensation for MAUMAU... the lawyers benefited more, yet it was the old men who were supposedly meant to be compensated for. Therefore, even me, I have been encouraged so much by a person like my grandfather, whom I was named after, who was buried here, here! Here! In the Rift Valley. Because even him, he was a victim of skirmishes like that he knew the story of 1992 how it went he used to tell me how it went when they were fighting for freedom and issues like this, but he was able to go through it even though he later got paralyzed in 2002.... Finally he rested even at least here where most of the family are, we put him to rest. It is not only once that I have seen my mother falling down [pause] and she would fall down, faint and then she would wake up and still moves on. If even her, she is able to bear with it, then I see them as role models to me! Like the vehicle conductors that hit the car and say, “Let’s go,” they are my conductors too telling me, “Let’s continue? Let’s continue our young son!” [In harmony, some group members joined him in unison saying; Mmh!!]. In life, I’ve learnt a lot from them. My father concerning golden handshake, he was not given money, zilikuliwa na 'mabwenyenye [it was taken by the “big” people—corruption]. So even me I did not study well.... So when you see your neighbor how he is motivated to move on in spite of the difficulties he is facing, that encourages you to continue with life, more so [I keep] praying God so that at least His hand may consider you? [/me/] someday. There
are many ways that God can come to you. I am just praying for reconciliation…. Let us leave tribalism and resolve things for ourselves as us common men….

As soon as KAN had finished conveying how he has made meaning out of his trauma experiences and recounting the sources of his encouragement, participant KAW commenced her story of how she values living peacefully. She asserted, “Violence should not recur again. It was this violence which brought a lot of problems, brought poverty in families, and differences, eh. Even those young children who didn’t finish schooling do not live in happiness, every time they keep on remembering what they did what? What they saw, what happened…so I wish violence would end.” The participant relayed that she cherishes the current peaceful situation in the country. She said, “I wish we could stay like the way we are now; there is no violence we are seeing. When one gets out to work, that person has happiness in the heart…you come and eat with your children, with your family, [pause] which is good.”

Next, I inquired as to what the group considered to have either helped them or hindered their recovery as they faced their sufferings, processed them, and became who they now are in their lives afterward: “When you think of all that you passed through during the skirmishes, post-election violence, fire, and other tragedies, what do you consider to have helped you to go through and survive those difficulties?” With big smiles on their faces, the group members looked at me. KAN laughed and said, “Do we even have to ask ourselves!?” The members laughed. Then he said, “It is God!” Many of the group members joined him in unison, “Ni Mungu tu! Ni Mungu. Ni Mungu alituokoa!’ [It is God alone! It is God! It is God who helped us!”] Participant KAN continued, “Hai! Surely was there anyone else who protected us from those fires!? Ehe! None.” Everybody else responded, “Hakuna! [There is no one else!]” I concurred, “For sure, it was God alone.” After observing their body language confirming their
comment that it was God alone who helped them, then I explored, “And who or what else helped you?” Participant SMA replied, “God helped us and Red Cross; they came and helped us even at the showground, we were given food. They brought for us clothes and well-wishers helped us to restart life again.” Participant KAN resumed, “We were given ambulance to take us to the hospital. Police cars rushed some wounded people to hospital. In fact, many of those who were affected in that oil fire were rushed by many, many matatu drivers [Good Samaritans] to the hospital! Many of them! Just there at the road before the police and the Red Cross arrived.”

Participant KAW contributed:

As we have said, it is only God who helped us, sincerely speaking, God helped us because He was using people. During that fire tragedy when all of us were affected, there was not even a friend who could have been able to help you, [all got affected] but to speak the truth, God came through the government to give us food, and when they gave us food, we were able to move on with that, when we were mourning. Isn’t that something true because it is God alone, He came through the government to give us what? Ayah, let’s say for sure, it is God alone who helped us, our fellow members who were not affected, they visited us bringing clothes, coming with sugar I Kg, just that way, eh. Therefore, there were means like that.

Participant SMA made her contribution, too, giving credit to wisdom, her acclaimed personal characteristic which she said helped her not to retaliate when she was offended but instead to forgive. She emphasized:

Wisdom is something very important. Having wisdom. So, that wisdom was able to help me spiritually, to know that there is no need to retaliate all that they have done to me and because they [misfortunes] have come, that it is a must to accept them…. Therefore, when you have wisdom, you will be able to take that perpetrator [background cough] [inaudible segment] you will say, “If it was my child who did it, would I have killed? Won’t I have…so as to reform?” Therefore, I see that, when those difficulties came, they taught us, eh, a lesson I mean gave [us] a means to forgive each other. To live with forgiveness. [Pause] because the moment I forgave them that way, deep in my heart all that they did, and I left everything to God, there are burdens He carried for me! Many of my problems He carried, and they [perpetrators] went and got it; that is why I am saying because there is one even who went and became insane because of eating from people’s properties, others spend their lives in the hospital beds, thoughts, even when they stay home, they sleep with discomfort because of debts. Therefore, that has helped us a lot.
because there are those who observed others walking along the roads while acting this way [demonstrates] like the way they were carrying those weapons that time. Whoever is wise and has seen that, next time when such fights come, will not be quick to do likewise…instead will say, “I have seen the family of so and so who did this and they have all perished.” Therefore, it made us to be like a teacher to the children and other people so that they do not go through the same. I tell them, “You saw the family of so and so doing this and that and now what became of them? Even if we were also finished, what I saw the family of…therefore, do not do likewise.” [Cultural interpretation: victim of one’s own acts—what goes around, comes around.]

Participant EPT pondered on her past experiences and after a while, she commented on Christianity as her stronghold which helped her overcome her tortures:

My Christianity, eh, point of view, only that! I used to say, “You, God, know why I am here!” Even when I was serving people and they had their pangas [machetes], I was saying, “God, you know I am giving a service, protect me, I am doing your work.” So that Christianity in me is a motivator. Again being rewarded for our tireless services during the violence was also another motivator. We were all rewarded for spending those sleepless nights and starving throughout those tough days… [Long pause: 1 minute]. After that, I decided to join, eh, Bachelor of Science Counseling Psychology because I really saw people who were traumatized. I used to go to the [IDPs] camps so now some patients were immobile. So they could come and call me, when they were just in the camps, during that hot time! …so [clears nose], I also saw how people were suffering then I was motivated I said, “I could be having counseling skills, I would have helped these people better than this, because others involved talking only.”

After a long silence, participant ETK talked and concurred with participant EPT by naming spirituality as her support. She stated:

Another thing that helped me to come out of that trauma was the Word of God, because God knew the reason [pause]; that is why I survived that fracas even though it had too many difficulties, God saved me, He gave me life, He really strengthened my life. [Pause] what has given me a lot of hope, is the Word of God which says: ‘I knew you even before you were formed and I have good plans for you.’ So I know that even those wishes of mine, or my goals, I know I will achieve because God has given me other days to live again! So what helped me a lot is the Word of God. Despite I have also attended so many trainings on trauma counseling, but also, God’s Word helped me until I reached this far, yah. And even concerning forgiveness, God’s Word encouraged me saying that I forgive people as He forgave me so that I could continue with that life of Godliness. Yah.
Participant EPT identified her extended family and the community as part of the source of the enormous support she received:

There was strong family social support, eh. At least our extended family and people from home were there for us. Like even that time, the maize was still in our other farm and people came to harvest and kept it in my store in the other new home. At least it was very important. And then again maybe you don’t have 1, 2, 3, they gave you, they helped you, eh. Anytime we needed anything they helped. So that social support system, it is very important. Also, after sometime the church, eh. The church was, eh, coming together, they also helped and we were encouraged. The reward from our place of work, that recognition of our hard work from our employer was also a motivator. It helped to heal. But most of all was the social support system especially from the family, mmh.

At this stage, after hearing the group members recognize their sources of support, I gave them the opportunity to air their opinions of what they considered to have hindered or worked against their struggle to overcome the traumas that they went through. Immediately I finished phrasing the question, participant EPT identified politics as part of the triggers. She declared, “Even those words the speeches you hear, the politics of the day. And, eh, mostly those are the things that you hear, and they take you back to what happened….” Participant EBT considered her happenstance in seeing the ailing HIV victims of violence-associated rape to be her triggers of the tragedies. She stated, “I know of some family members who some of them were defiled, they were raped, people who are now HIV victims and they are so so much down…. [When you see them,] you feel that it stops you from moving on; so when you see those you hear those…will your life be nice? [Cross talk].” EBT considered the confrontations with people from the rival tribes and politics as hindrances to her recovery from violence trauma:

The politics of the day, when I listen to the TV, sometimes I feel like switching it off. I feel they want to restart what was there, because of the way they are talking. They did not suffer! Politicians are able to run away, but we are left. So those are stumbling blocks [to healing?] even today. When I see that the right IDPs are not being addressed, when I get other people are the ones who are being given the money, there are those people who received the 400, 000 KES for compensation that the president was giving, and they did not suffer! Yet there are people like her who suffered sooo much and nobody recognizes
them! It hurts so much. So if there will be compensation for the affected, let us address skirmishes from 1992 going onwards. Let us not forget those who were hurt in 1992, 1994, 1997, it’s like we address what happened today and the yesterdays are forgotten, but they should also be compensated, let us address the historical injustices. Like the politics are the historical injustices that caused the skirmishes. Let us look at the historical injustices that are in the Rift Valley [region]. Because I don’t like when my children are settled now, they again experience what I went through.

After the group members’ extensive discussion on their perceived hindrances to their recovery from their misfortunes, I inquired how they made sense out of their exposure to recurrent and multiple traumas. Participant ECT expressed her decision to accept the reality, remain hopeful, and trust in God for her current and the future life:

I personally, I saw it this way, where I have come from is far and where I am heading to is near [remaining with a short life to live?]. So I just encouraged my heart that I worked so hard and earned enough which was obviously seen. But now it is just to pray God! To hold onto the Word and to pray for the children so that they do not lose hope. [Pause: 30 seconds] what only hurt me most was that the government leaned on one side [partisan regarding support?]. That is the only thing that hurt me.

Participant KAM exposed politics too and tribalism as the key issues he considered to have stalled his healing process. Additionally, he spoke of a sense of fear regarding the possible recurrence of violence:

There is a lot of tribalism. When you consider politics, when one is elected, that person chooses his officers mostly from his own ethnic group, in spite of the fact that there are other tribes. When you check on services that are offered, people from the tribe of that leader benefit. Take for example, construction of roads, that community gets done for, but another tribe is left out. When there is employment opportunity, people from other ethnic groups are not informed about it, not even to be employed, just to be informed about it. There are a lot of discrimination. It makes you feel like you do not belong to your community, your own country, yet you have a title deed to your farm, and you are a citizen. Therefore tribalism make…[life difficult]. We are so worried that we start selling our land. Even the development we should be doing, is very little.

We worry very much because based on how things are going on, we have started selling our farms. As we sell those farms, our hopes which we had here have reduced very much. Because if yesterday we were 3 now we are 2, the hopes of living here is reducing very
much. But the main reason is tribalism, especially now! …therefore this is not hatred but it is a reality!

As the group members were sharing about the deterrents to their recovery process, participant ETK was ruminating on her consistent urge to tell others about the impact of violence, based on her personal experiences. When asked of how she had made sense out of the trauma experiences, she answered:

> Whenever I am alone and remember of those issues concerning clashes, I keep thinking that I wish I can share with more people, I mean to talk to as many people as much as I can so that they cannot go back to the same problems! So that they may not get aggravated and think of repeating those issues of conflicts! I feel, if it were possible for me [then I could] share with as many people as I can because I went through it, to make them understand so that they may not ever think of doing that again, or even think about the violence. I could teach others based on my experience, eh. [Long pause: 30 seconds] I see myself like I have a lot to share from my personal experience of the effects of those fights from what I have gone through so that they understand the impact of violence in order to avoid even thinking of the violence. I don’t even know whether I have expressed it well eh how to fully express it. [Pause] so that regardless of how difficult the experience, eh may not think of ever perpetrating violence again.

Likewise, Participant EBT said:

> When I remember what happened I keep asking myself why the government cannot organize and start civic education, to educate the people to be fully aware not to be cheated…. Because when it is election time…. For us we saw that violence is bad, but the generation coming next…should start school-based, so as to teach the children. To teach them that we ought to live this way, to live in unity, not to bring tribalism again…or in politics…so that they will not go to violence again.

At this point, I felt that the group members had provided meticulous information on how they made sense of their catastrophic experiences. As such, I asked them how their personal characteristics positively influenced their perception of life even though they had experienced several traumas. I realized that not all the participants might be able to comprehend what personal characteristics means and identify them, yet they might have sensed their
influence, so this question aimed at generating information on the positive influence of those characteristics in their perception of life. Participant ECT expressed acceptance as providing her way out. She said the key thing is “[t]o accept that it has happened, even if you do whatever it will not come back. So, you have to move on! Life continues! Mm.” Also, participant ETK spoke about hope, saying, “Another thing is to have hope in life! Yah.” Then participant EMT mentioned resilience, courage, and acceptance, noting that “[n]o matter what has happened you don’t have to break. You bend and move on.” She went on to say that one must take “courage…accept it, and move on.” Concerning the loss of properties, she emphasized acceptance and being resilient, stating that “[e]ven if you lost everything you accept the little you have [and] you see how to utilize it for the best and move on in life.”

I wanted to know if there were other social, economic, psychological, physical, or any other personal characteristics and how they positively influenced the participants’ perception of life. So I asked, “What personal characteristic that you know influenced your perception of life? Also, how else did your personal characteristics positively influence your perception of life?” Participant KAM said, “Patience.” Then, participant ETK identified “courage.” Being more informed on the aspect of personal characteristics, Participant EPT noted,

I am sociable by nature. So I share out unlike a person who is an introvert, who will keep to oneself. So by sharing much with others that helped. Again I was not in a very bad economic background, you know that helped me to rebuild quickly. I was able to move on. [Also] my personality is that of forgetting things. You let go! So I let go easily. Let go other things and start life afresh. Again education kept me going, it made me be busy. Another issue is that I was teaching people on conflict resolution, eh. So it is even like you are debriefing [yourself] anyway [mild laughter] eh.

I inquired further, “So you felt that you were debriefing yourself too?” Participant EPT replied, “Eeh. As I worked for others, it helped me.” Then Participant SMA said, “My personal characteristic which made me cross that bridge and all those problems was being patient [faded
Noticing that the participant used the metaphor of a bridge in reference to her source of support amidst floods of tragedies, I asked, “Can you explain?” Then she identified her patience and acceptance of the reality, saying,

If I was not patient, maybe I would have terminated my life because of what I saw, or say now that I have seen life has become difficult let me get poison and give to my children for all of us to finish; but because I had that patience, and I would not lose hope in life and say this is the end of life, I saw, I must move on with life even if they [property?] have finished. Because even in the farm, if you plant...[and crops get spoilt you still repeat] in order to get food for your life. Therefore, patience is a fundamental thing. Even if somebody wrongs you and later seeks forgiveness, it is very important that you forgive. Whether you have been wronged or you wronged someone it makes even I person with a bad heart reduce cool that bitterness down. Therefore I see it is good to be patient whenever you encounter with such heavy difficulties.

Another thing I saw to have built me during that time of violence is [background cough] that when violence erupted, I did not see [background cough] anyone come, those who fought, to have been a white person or otherwise, they were just Africans like me. Therefore I was saying that it has taught the attacked and the attacker that whether you fight or do not fight you will remain a Kenyan, you will remain an African, you will remain a human being. Therefore you need to ask yourself, “When I am doing whatever I am doing, will I gain anything from it? If not, then why am I doing?” That has thought me a big lesson that there is nothing different that came that made me suffer. Therefore, I encouraged myself saying if it finished or it remained, let God help me because He gave me life and gave me strength to continue with life, let me remain a Kenyan, there will be no day I will be a [de-identified] [another tribe].

Also, participant EBT identified her faith in God and desire for peaceful coexistence with others to have been of great influence on her positive perception of life. She shared:

It is just the faith I had in God, that all human beings are the same that helped me. Also about peace building we were trained on peace work and we learnt that all people need to live in unity. So I think the peace I had and working with peace team, I think that one was very important. Because when I was called in fact the third day, I was even without anything...physical trauma...like this one of food, I had not eaten for three days. Eh, when they reminded me, “Don’t you know you are a peace maker!??” That word made me wake up where I was and start going. So I think the thought of peace made me wake up and forget what I had gone through, it reminded me that I was there for others and also for myself to have peace, mh.
Participant ETK identified hope, courage, a heart for forgiveness, and patience among other characteristics that had positively influenced her perception of life amidst her adversities.

This far I have reached, I see it is good because I have that hope…. I got that peace of heart, [door interruption: 1 minute]. So I have said that after having that hope, and having that forgiveness, and having that heart of patience, I achieved all that I have achieved now because I have an opportunity with no more pain in my heart…because there is nothing disturbing my heart, so I have been able to work well. Eh, even God has blessed me. I have not reached where I was before; but God has lifted me up to some level and it was through that decision to accept, to be hopeful, and to work.

When I sensed that the participants had provided me with comprehensive information on how they have lived their lives after their atrocious experiences, I commented on their participation. I also reminded them of the necessity to keep their confidentiality about the group members’ disclosed information. Finally, I requested them to give their demographic information to my research assistant/translator. To end the focus group session, I booked them for individual interviews and thanked them for their participation. The participants who travelled from far away were reimbursed their transport expenses and given their lunch allowance. Table 5 provides a summary of the phrases of significance gathered from the narratives of the participants from Focus Group #2—Upendo.
Table 5.

**Focus Group #2: Upendo: Phrases of Significance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analytical Categories</th>
<th>Phrases of Significance</th>
<th>Theme</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Van Manen’s Four Lived Existentials: i. Lived Space</td>
<td>…we were running to sleep in a valley, a big one…. So while we were there …we could hear the bullets hitting the trees, eh cedar trees. There we were told, “Lie down, we are being shot.” When we lied down, we could hear the sound of bullets.</td>
<td>Fearful environment</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I narrowly escaped the bullet</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>That was now when the violence became worst. Houses were getting burnt here and there.</td>
<td>Saw and heard signs of danger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>we boarded a lorry which took us under a flattened tent… the lorry was stopped and it was at night, young men, the attackers climbed up and stepped and stepped all over the tent trying to check on whether there were people inside…</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I started seeing people coming with ‘pangas,’ [machetes] others with arrows passing…[while her tribesmen] are there busy preparing,</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>At midnight, we went…to the maize plantation, the maize had not been harvested…. the children started crying… So we spent the night there.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>…all I had saved for many years as the earnings of my youth had all gone into flames within a single day!! [With rigor and hand gestures]. So it was a matter of begging, whoever had good heart would give you; but whoever did not have it would rebuke you, experiences like that.</td>
<td>Chronic psychological stress reactions to trauma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When they came they found us home. In fact it was God alone who spoke to them, otherwise they could have killed us because they slashed my cows when I was there.</td>
<td>Social support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. Lived Body</td>
<td>Trust in God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>…they started to quarrel us and my husband told them, “Why are you cutting the cows!!?” Then they cut my husband and hit my son with a stone.</td>
<td>Sustained physical Injuries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I stayed with my wounds,</td>
<td>Chronic physical illnesses/disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>She told me, “Mama Peter! [Name changed]. You are in the house yet I have heard that all our children have perished?!” …when she told me that, I got shocked. [Pause] When I got shocked, I….</td>
<td>Acute stress reactions to trauma</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>He told me, “…our son, I heard has passed on….people have perished in the, in the oil [fire].” There there! Me, I could not move further…. In that fire I lost many of my children…. There! Stress started. I did not see if the world is real or what,</td>
<td>Acute stress reactions to trauma</td>
<td></td>
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<td>[After] post-election violence, came that trauma of oil. I remember even me I was there, I got [heart attack] [Shocked?],</td>
<td>Acute stress reactions to trauma</td>
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<td>I did not believe my eyes! …the house was vacant…[and] was like a latrine. So everywhere was feces. Feces all the house is…no cooking pot, no nothing. After seeing that I went…and then I fainted….</td>
<td>Acute stress reactions to trauma</td>
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<td>…you walk by foot for all those 40 KM looking for the children…. So it was a bad experience and was so painful.</td>
<td>Acute stress reactions to trauma</td>
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<td>…people came so many of them like what? Like swarm of red ants! For real, they came the men with ‘pangas,’ [machetes] the children, the women, even the women! I was shocked to see the women coming with eh stones in baskets.</td>
<td>Acute stress reactions to trauma</td>
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<td>I almost got hit by electricity, I do not know, I wasn’t myself, I did not, it was not me.</td>
<td>Acute stress reactions to trauma</td>
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<td>There were now gun shots. We were told that, “Already the bullets are close to us.” At that time there were no mobile phones, you could not communicate with anybody.</td>
<td>Acute stress reactions to trauma</td>
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<td>It was so painful watching your husband cut, your house burning, all your properties going down to ashes and everything entirely destroyed…. Me I cried so tearfully</td>
<td>Acute stress reactions to trauma</td>
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<td>…you would see people grouping themselves and talking and there were signs of problems.</td>
<td>Saw and heard signs of danger</td>
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<tr>
<td>…we heard shouts and at night we heard that people had started burning houses for each other…</td>
<td>Saw and heard signs of danger</td>
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<td>As they came toward the…we could hear gun shots….</td>
<td>Fearful environment</td>
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<tr>
<td>…we started seeing that houses have been burned, we were seeing fire and hearing gun shots. Twak! Twak! When we got out you could see fire going up, fire going up. So we started fearing for our lives.</td>
<td>Fearful environment</td>
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<td>People were hitting the car! Saying, “This vehicle was one of those used to steal votes.” …so I had to really plead with them, I plead I plead until I screamed</td>
<td>Fearful environment</td>
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…my heart is still heavy. I do not want to lie to you, because my life is not as usual.

I see life now is the same, I do not see good things or what, I keep seeing it is all the same, because even now there is nothing I am looking forward to see that is better than what I had already seen and is passed

…there is that inner voice eh that always gives you hope, so that hope is the one that builds you to move on.

I saw that life has to continue

…still there is life in the future. Despite of all challenges, still there is hope! …I mean those challenges are not the end of life. There is still a day, I still need that day and also my family still need that day and I look forward to a better life.

We went out with only clothes we had on our bodies.

I saw life is difficult.

So you hear those comments are not good. That hurts, it disturbs. It harass somebody’s heart….

iii. Lived Time

…there were violence during elections like in [19]92, [19]97, and [19]94 there were sense of commotion during voting…. But this time in 2007 it was completely different from the previous times in that there was calmness during voting time and it looked like there was no problem.

At around 4.00 a.m., we heard a lot of screams…and a lot of shouts were everywhere.

Me, I continued to work, I was sick! So in the process I [felt], have you seen, that way of attending to patients or working until you feel dizzy here? [Points at the head]. That was it! [Stress burnout]

…we continued with the DNA, and after 1 year and 5 months we were able to bury our beloved ones….

I got tortured psychologically because eh I remember 2007 when we remained close to our home…now as young men we said we will remain there if it means dying we die if not then we live…. For about 1 month, there was no food there.

Two young men were shot dead…. In the morning around 5 a.m. in the morning, at 6 a.m. we heard screams which were so threatening, so we decided to get out.
It was at 7.30 A. M. when they came to our home in the morning on 1st [January, 2008]…some were looting while others were burning. We could hear…I did not know that the gun, by the time you hear the sound coming already the bullets are out.

[In 1992] I saw houses burning…fire even a match stick, when I light a fire this way [illustrates] I had that trauma, fire trauma is something that could trigger a lot of fear in my life.

…[during 2007 PEV] we started hearing people scream in [de-identified], people shouting… so there I started worrying so much, [I thought]: ‘What will happen if things will get bad like in [19]92 In 1994 that 25th it was like again hell broke. I saw fire it was just a stare… then I heard the houses were being burnt.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>iv. Lived Relationship</th>
<th>But my group won. So they said that I should not be killed… and those ones who wanted to rape me should not rape me.</th>
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<td></td>
<td>When we ran away…if you had little children, no one could help you even to hold your child for you to cross through a wire fence, if you requested somebody to hold the other child for you, that person tells you; ‘Everyone carries his/her own burden.’ So there, I learnt a lot that, so when dead comes closer to you even your brother cannot help you.</td>
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<td>So we went to the forest, then we passed through another route there…and we looked for a way to take my husband to the hospital and the boy who was injured.</td>
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<td>I told my husband at 6, please can you go to the village, leave me alone here at home…they won’t understand, can you leave me?</td>
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<td>There was another one who came and openly said eh, “I do not want to be treated by a [de-identified] [another tribe]. They can put eh they can inject you poison.” …I did my best that I could but at some point you feel too that their reaction was very devastating.</td>
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<td>Eh, it was so difficult to belief that neighbors can later be enemies.</td>
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<td>It was so painful…you were defeated: “Your people had been injured! Eh your property has been destroyed, why? What have you done, what crime have you done?” When you try to look for what mistake you have done, there is none; you have voted, the ones who counted the votes were completely different from the ones whose houses were burnt.</td>
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<td>I tried to think of where my husband was…I could not know where he went. There I learnt that so when the mother has little children, the children become the mother’s [in times of danger?]. That offended me a lot and it put me in a difficult situation!</td>
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…we had fellowshipped together and then we started hearing screams…. All of a sudden, when you try to call your neighbor to run away, you see that…it has changed into violence.

It is human nature, you expect good from somebody you are doing good to…like one he was shot here [points at the side]. They came and told me, “Doctor, please stitch, you help us to stitch.” I stitched it. But where he was shot in, was in my farm…. I was seeing, “Eh! So for sure, they are burning and I am just continuing treating, even it would have been better if I were home.” …but it was only resentment because of that pain you are undergoing…I only felt bad as a human being….

It took us 1 yr. and over searching without success. And the pain on top of the other [adding insult to injury] was that it was said that our beloved were to be buried without our knowledge.

I know for sure [pause], those experiences were so painful and haahaaard. But God has helped us to recover and even become stronger.

I said, “Let me just struggle because I have no strength but I belong to God and God Himself protected me I did not die, because they left me with my feet and hands even though they took all my property, so let me restart life again.”

‘Ni Mungu tu! Ni Mungu. Ni Mungu alituokoa!’  
[It is God alone! It is God! It is God who rescued us!]

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<tr>
<th>Meaning Made</th>
<th>Phrases of Significance</th>
<th>Themes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>God’s Word encouraged me saying that I forgive people as He forgave me so that I could continue with that life of Godliness.</td>
<td>&quot;Forgiveness is the Key Thing in Life&quot;</td>
<td>Support from God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I have [re-]started my life 3 times in thee, even it’s like 4 times…and I decided to work for peace, to be a facilitator for peace.</td>
<td>Peace Building/peaceful coexistence</td>
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<td>beforehand I was divorcing, I am not divorcing; [De-identified] will remain my in-laws, they will remain my friends</td>
<td>Collaboration and Strong Relationships</td>
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<tr>
<td>It is a must that life continues….</td>
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<td>Life Must Continue/Live is Valuable/God has a Purpose for Me to Live</td>
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<td>Something which has given me a lot of hope, is the Word of God which says: ‘I knew you even before you were formed and I have good plans for you.’</td>
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<tr>
<th>Analytical Categories</th>
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<th>Themes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Bronfenbrenner’s biocological model: *</td>
<td>...there were those who the government compensated for, they were given 400,000 KES and some were given farms elsewhere. ...we were not compensated for, here in our zone…for the</td>
<td>Frightening scenario/insecure environment</td>
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IDPs…the government did not build for us…[it] did not do justice to us.

…it disturbed my heart because I saw my property wiped out when compensation time came I was not considered.

Not everyone was willing to help you. It was hard, so hard. We faced the same problems too.

Many have come and promised that children will be helped but none has been forthcoming. A pastor [conman] came to my house and said he wanted to buy a farm for my children, now the orphans…. I see that there are people who pray for you to be in a tragedy so that they use the situation to benefit themselves.

I personally lost most of my property or I lost all my possession and even I lost two of my loved one, And after that I passed through a tough situation or a lot of problems

…many people have not healed to date….

…we had school going children and even now we still have some of them but it became so difficult! …how to get that money [fees] was so hard

the people I had given my [vandalized] house stole all my…[farm produce] now what was left, and took completely everything left in store.

What worries me most is that…all the important documents, tittle deed, land [a]lotment, birth certificates, all those important documents went.

…all my photos which I had taken when I was young were cut in pieces, there was nothing…where are my things!? Where is what!? Where is my bed!?

…they went to the side of the factory…they burnt, we had three tractors, those went, 3 lories, they went, eh the house [store] too…they burnt it and we had 2 posho mills and animal feed mixer, all which went.

Everywhere was so calm! No wonder that time it was so quiet that way, they had carried the cows.

when we escaped then they came and burnt the house…and that house was so big it was a seven roomed house…and they burnt a store with 200 bags of maize…and they burnt a house which was for the children including their library, that is, entirely everything.
My fear was that whenever I saw a police [officer], I could see [visualize] him shooting me with a gun.

What keeps on reminding me every day, there are a times you find these ‘chokora’ [street children] maybe you are out for a function you have been invited…when you talk to these small boys and girls who are street boys [/children/], you realize most of them are there because they lost their property, they lost their parents in the skirmishes…. So whenever I see these children, it takes me [inaudible segment]. It hits me…that really hurts, it takes you back there.

…you hear something like the brake or the tire, tire burst sounds like [laughs] the fire, the bullet [bullet shots: group member’s contribution] shots, you get shocked.

…the politics of the day, when I listen to the TV sometimes I feel like switching it off, I feel they want to restart what was there, because of the way they are talking. They did not suffer! Politicians are able to run away but, we are left. So those are stumbling blocks [to healing?] even today.

### ii. Protective Factors

I really thank God because yes the pain is there but, eh gradually we are trying to work on it

It is only God actually, it was painful, God has helped us a lot.

I saw aall the types of weapons which the [de-identified] [tribe] have…I have never seen in my life! Eh! So they were bringing injured people while holding…[them] [Cries] So I just attended to them, I said, “If they will cut me in the process, [cries] even You God You will know I was doing my work.”

…after that even God rewarded me, I was able to settle later, after that moment of struggle, now I have settled at home.

I was praying God that the child may not be stepped on because stepping on him, things would erupt badly

…after I went through trauma training that is when I could talk with a police [officer], eh interact with a police [officer].

God helped us and Red Cross, they came and helped us even at the showground, we were given food. They brought for us clothes and well-wishers helped us to restart life again.

…but to speak the truth, God came through the government to give us food, and…we were able to move on with that, when we were mourning.
…pastors came and prayed for us, they prayed with us, they talked to us….

…we had not known that there are people called counselors, [pause] counseling. There was a group one team which came to teach us on how to live, not to see life to have reached there? [end?]…. They helped us during that time of victim, clashes and also during that time of this fire. I remember when we went to [de-identified] [hospital] there was their tent. He tried to calm you down, that was another way that we managed to learn to live, since childhood we had not heard about counselors.

Catholic Church helped us with some seeds and some fertilizers and we were able to plant…[and] what we managed to harvest helped me personally to restart my live again!

I saw that in life I had to accept that those misfortunes I experienced were real so that I could move on because I needed another day.

So I have assessed that those issues are short-lived difficulties and if I accept, then they will be over.

I saw that [pause] something comes and pass, and if you look back again you may not be able to move on…. So the only thing was to accept that it happened and pray that it does not recur and life continues….

I have realized that challenges are part of life. Eh we cannot dwell in what happened, we have to find a solution because we must continue living and we have to find a way of moving on.

I said, “God, You gave them to me! Because this burden is so heavy for me, take care of those [orphaned] children.”

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<th>Analytical Categories</th>
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<th>Themes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tedeschi &amp; Calhoun’s Posttraumatic Growth: i. Positive Perception of Life</td>
<td>After 1992 clashes, I vowed for real, I said, “I have to be a peace builder because I do not want the mothers to suffer again the way I suffered carrying my 2 little children.” I went for counseling, so that I can help others I did not want to have that bitterness… I did not consider my age as old, I felt that is the right time for me to become a counselor so that I help many [smiles]. I became a counselor.</td>
<td>Accepting the reality of trauma and loss/Spirituality Exercising compassion</td>
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<td>I became strong in peace work, because when I go to work with the team, to help those who get affected, I don’t really work for</td>
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money…although I am trained as a counselor there is no time I…I volunteer in any circumstance.

we have known that all human beings are the same and we have to spread peace despite what we have gone through

I thought of how to organize to meet with people and conduct talks on reconciliation

I am able to see each and every violence to fight [against]. Beforehand I was seeing rape cases, gender-based violence like it was nothing; but it has opened my eyes whenever I see any form of violence, I stand and say there must be a stop! May it be wife beating, husband beating, or the sexual harassment in any form? So the violence helped me to know what is violence, to know that violence any small violence, any bigger violence whichever name it will be given, violence is violence!

…when you get someone doing it, you just stand there and say that is ‘NO.’ That is, you are ready to sacrifice yourself even if you are going to die. That is what has helped us, being firm and saying no to any type of violence.

…in fact it’s like I am even better than what I was before that time. …[I] just work harder than before…that house of mine was wooden, I live now in a more permanent house [and] I live more comfortably…I was motivated,

I am strong in faith.

…but God is good because I am still alive

When I wake up I thank God, I say thank You. When I see what I have, I say thank You.

…mum’s health condition became worst. Even to take her to the hospital was a problem because there was nowhere to pass through [road blocks]. But I am grateful to God because the church pastors tried every way possible to see to it that we got help from the government to take her to the hospital.

[Since] 1992. There are my neighbors even some of my teachers who died. So I was taking that chance I have survived, therefore there is a reason behind which I do not? I do not know…. If it is fire like this one, a report came that I have perished. So they were shocked to see me helping to carry people to the ho? Hospital!
Individual Interviews with Members of Focus Group #2: Upendo

Individual Interview #8. ETK

The eighth individual interview conducted for this study was with participant ETK (Atlas.ti #P8), a 52-year-old female who self-identified as a farmer and retired teacher. Participant ETK had a three-trauma personal history with recurrent and multiple incidents (see Table 4). The participant was informed of her freedom to choose not to participate in the interview, regardless of the fact that she had signed the consent form in the group, as well as her freedom to withdraw from participating in the interview with no consequences.

To begin, I asked participant ETK to describe her experiences as a result of the post-election violence and any other tragedy. Additionally, I inquired how the experiences of the 2007 PEV traumas have influenced her life and what it was like to live after what she had experienced. After I responded to her question that she could describe what she had shared in the group and maybe in detail, participant ETK shared:

Those issues of post-election [violence] was so heavy for sure…ah it was so painful to loss property because you started questioning on the cause of the conflict…. I was seeing in my heart it was not me, because it was concerning issues of the country and those people…[politicians]. For me I did my voting well and after that it was now violence, my property getting lost, my husband was injured, my child was hurt. So, [pause] in that case I had feelings that it was not supposed to be that way because it was not me who caused it. Ayah, after those post-election problems, consequently many other issues came…which were painful because we had never been displaced, we separated and some of the children went to the relatives [earlier]. When we were all there with the relatives you could see the families that we went to stay with looked like they were tired of us. They [relatives] saw us to be a burden. Yet the relationship that we had with them before was a good relationship. But when we went there now to live with them, you could see those people, they lost trust in us, they got tired of us, they saw us to be a burden to their family. So that was also bringing trauma because that family looked like they rejected us, here we were having a problem, and it was like we had taken problems to them. After that, we put the children together and decided to go to those camps built by the church, we said let us return to [de-identified] so that we go to the camp. [Pause] again there at the camp we had a lot of challenges because, in this camp you have been given 1 tent and this tent you share with everybody and that time even you have grown up children, grown up girls and grown up boys, the father is there, we were all sharing it. People were just
entering in, the child is sleeping here, the father is sleeping there, you are sleeping there, [points to sides] it was embarrassing. You just looked at it that you have lost that value of family privacy, because in the tent, there was not even secret you could talk, you could not talk with your husband, you could not plan children’s issues because all of them were there, and already there were those PEV problems.

After participant ETK explained the sufferings she and the family faced during and after the PEV, she shared her later challenges as she tried to readjust in life:

We would walk long distance to go to the farm. I remember that incident again it was so painful like in the post-election [violence], we cultivated the farm when we were still in the camp until we harvested maize. We harvested 100 bags of maize. So in the process of selling, [pause] we were conned. Someone brought fake banker’s check…[and] went with 100 bags of maize worth 245,000 [KES]. [Pause] so again that brought problems, [pause] it made us now to be traumatized more. You see it like there is something following you, now you have come out of post-election, again the property is stolen, [pause] it disturbed so much. And at that time we had a child in [de-identified] university, and already he was home due to the problem of school fees. So that also caused more challenges! But we were helped by well-wishers to raise funds until that child was able to return back to school. [Pause] so those problems became a lot and were painful because you do not have a home, you do not have where to live even what you have just worked for the little that you have prepared disappears. [Pause] ayah, that maize was taken in 2010, and after that my husband became sick for two years. He became sick from 2010, 2011 we stayed in the hospital just that way, 2012 now he died in June. So that again disturbed me because I was seeing that, “Ah, this person I took him by foot he was walking, [pause; contemplative mood] and he did not return home by foot but in a coffin,” that again traumatized me because we used a lot of resources for his treatment at the hospital. He died when us we had not settled, we were still in in a rental house out there, and we do not have income and we do not have anything and even that time the children were still in school. So that traumatized me again, yah.

Wanting to let her remind me of what caused the death of her husband, I asked, “You said your husband got sick of what? What was the problem?” She replied;

He conducted that disease of getting shocked…[due to] the fact that the cows were slashed and slashed all of them, dairy cows four of them were slashed, they were all finished. Ayah, the house was burnt with entirely everything. So that old man got eh, that trauma made him develop blood pressure, he got a lot of complications due to those problems of conflict of post-election. So he became so sick for a while, let’s say 1 year, 6 months. That pressure caused kidney failure…[and] he died, mm. [Pause: 1 minute] that became another problem, which took time for me to accept because that was a lot for me…. He was not sick before, that husband of mine was a [retired] banker. [And] at that
time we didn’t realize even that there were counselors; couldn’t we have taken one to talk to him? [With crescendo tone of voice]. It’s like we did not know, mm. He did not get social support…. He used to talk and he would say he was feeling that those issues were disturbing him, that he does not have a home, his retirement money he wasted at home, and then the property was burnt entirely with everything…. After those issues became too much is when I was called, I went for training in trauma counseling. That is what helped me to heal.

At this step I asked participant ETK to describe an experience, time, person, place or incident that immediately comes to her mind or that stands out most vividly to her as she reflects on her past tragic experiences. Participant ETK responded, “I like for sure to share, but the good thing now is that I do not share out of bitterness, I do not have that bitterness.” Further she relayed, “Those people who came to attack found us at home and…even though they cut my husband's hand and hit the boy with a stone on his leg, but they did not imagine to slash and slash us to death because they had pangas [machetes]. So, me, I think and sense, I feel, it was God[’s] intervention, so God intervene[d] and that is why I am here the way I am because of God, yah. Mm.” Again, I inquired, “And even before, as you were recovering from all that, what kept coming to your mind?” Participant ETK replied:

Whenever I see any politician talking, I start getting worried that that now might take us back. I start thinking that if this is not prevented it will take us back to the same situation…. I used to get shocked so much whenever I saw any politician talking in a harsh tone, that situation of pulling each other at KICC [which we watched] in the TV and later resulted in violence, that has not come out of my mind, whenever I see, my mind just go…that there is something coming; I start getting worried.

After the participant shared comprehensively about the experience, time, person, place and incident that vividly came to her mind, I then asked what stood out as particularly meaningful to her. Participant ETK relayed, “I have something meaningful, to keep trusting in God and have hope for tomorrow. And determination also, that if I work hard I will be able to succeed, yah. [Pause].” Wanting to discover more, I asked, “So, eh, you would say that what
encouraged you to keep moving is God?” Participant ETK answered, “What encouraged me is my trust in God, I knew that the Word of God in Psalms, David said that he has not seen a man of God forsaken. …I knew that God has a purpose for me, even He renewed my strength, He gave me hope, so, and He gave me love, even my perpetrators I love them.” Then I queried more, “So, ah, how do you see the future?” She replied, “I feel that the future is bright since the much trouble that I had is coming to an end and my children are now starting to get employed those who were still in school…..” Reflecting on her past, she stated, “So I started afresh…on the way there is challenges…it will take time but I am still determined, yah. And I thank God now I am healthy and physically fit, I am fine.”

After this extensive exploration of how the participant has lived since her tragedies, I gave her an opportunity to ask questions or express concerns which she may have wanted to ask or had thought of but had not yet had the opportunity to discuss. Participant ETK expressed:

If it’s possible to have people like counselors who can talk to people in meetings and barazas [public meetings], people who can sit down and give people hope, it would be good, so that they can move on after going through all those problems. It would be better if there was someone you could share so that you could be relieved. One can react by being insane, another one can react by being sick just like that. So if it were possible in future it would be good if counselors were available, if they could be available even to offer free services to the communities...so that is my concern.

After commenting on her petition for counseling services to be availed to the affected, I let participant ETK know that a copy of the interview transcript would be provided upon request. Additionally, I assured her of my confidentiality. I thanked her for her participation in the focus group and individual interviews. The participant’s phrases of significance echoed what was gained in other interviews.
Individual Interview #9. ECT.

The next interview was with participant ECT, a 68-year-old female retired public officer who specified farmer as her current career of choice. The participant registered Form 4/12th Grade as her highest level of education. Moreover, the participant disclosed having experienced five recurrent and multiple traumas (see Table 4). I asked participant ECT to describe the experiences she had from the 2007 PEV and any other tragedy. I inquired from her how the experiences of the 2007 PEV traumas had affected her life and how her current life was after her traumatic experiences. She seemed a little moody as she expressed the vanity of earthly wealth:

In short, I see it like life is useless...because all the things that we had acquired went, it went down to drain, like you did not do anything, everything was lost. [Pause] the only thing that remained with us was life, [pause] only life. I am grateful to God that they were not interested in taking our lives. If they wanted, we would be gone [dead?]. [Pause]...it’s not easy to forget it. It can’t! If something triggers like that it comes up. It is not easy to heal, it is not easy to heal. If it were possible to heal, it would not be in the heart. I’m just talking from right inside my heart, it is not easy [facial expression of pain]. Because when something little triggers it this way, links to it goes to?

Wishing to know more, I asked, “So, ah, mum, would you mind to explain to us what happened?” Then she gave an extended narrative of her painful experiences saying:

It started, eh, on 28th December [2007]...I was seeing people ferrying their belongings to.... so I got worried. When we were at church everything was so cold, and when I came out I started seeing people moving...I stood at the gate as I watched the people’s movement, moving, moving, nobody is greeting anyone, I was wondering.... I went home and the fighting started. Two boys came in the morning, I saw them greeting each other with my sons and they said they did not have any problem and then they left, shortly after, they returned back with sooo many people, ‘kama siafu’ [like an army of red ants], I mean you could not even see the ground, they were carrying baskets and stones. We could even recognize some but we decided to keep quiet.... So! Kraa! [Expression of pain] cows were taken, everything everything! [Pause] maize [pause].

I inquired further, “So, ah, mum you said they were coming with stones, those young men were coming with stones?” She replied, “Even women, they were coming with stones, some in
baskets…. There were people directing them to the various homes that they would burn…[but spare the medical doctor’s] They said; ‘Aah, Let us not burn that. Those are the ones who will treat us when we get hurt or sick.”’ Then I told her, “I wish to hear more about what happened when those people with stones came?” Participant ECT expressed her experience of shock and frustrations when she was attacked:

When those attackers came…. You become helpless. It is like eeh, [struggles to express herself] I don’t even know how to express it...[switched to tribal language to express herself] you see it like, there is no life anymore! Like you are not there anymore! You feel like life has ended. I felt that the world was coming to an end [ends tribal language]. You see things that you never expected you would see in your lifetime. You used to hear about violence in Burundi, Rwanda, where, Somalia eh, even I used to watch even in the TV, even there was a time when I was at [de-identified] I was seeing lorries carrying refugees to Lodwar [Kakuma Refugee Camp]. You start seeing somebody respectable, somebody that you don’t feel could be in a place like that…. People who were very educated, people who were having their own wealth, very rich people, but became refugees, in all means. I never knew one day, one time I will be like them! You imagine how they are going to live, but I didn’t know mine was waiting for me, I became a refugee in my own country [lowers tone of voice].

Wishing to know further how she reacted to the trauma, I questioned again, “You’ve shared about refugees…that time when you felt that the world had collapsed on you, what happened next?” She explained:

There I cannot know because me I was black out. I cannot know. I was seeing like I had lost my mind. Even the time we were escaping to [de-identified] I wasn’t myself, we went to one of our relatives, we stayed there, 2 weeks… [but] I was not myself…I was just coming physically but, eh, I was seeing like nothing happened… That is what I came to think of later when my mind had settled down, when I was healed a bit. I came to my sense and realized that so I had lost my consciousness.

I queried further, wanting to identify the psychological experience of dissociation. I asked, “Were you feeling like life was as usual?” She stated, “It looked like something blocked me in a way, yes I knew that things have gone [destroyed] but….”
Then I inquired from participant ECT if there was something that stood out as particularly meaningful to her considering the experiences she had shared. The participant reiterated her previous statement on life being useless as she responded, “Me, I find life is useless; it is only to hold onto the Word of God and you continue with the life remaining. Mm.”

I asked, “You found that time and you still feel that even at the moment life is useless other than to trust in Jesus Christ?” The probing made the participant convey her painful experiences from recurrent and multiple, sudden and traumatic loss of loved ones. She replied:

The only thing remaining in me is to believe in Jesus Christ. There is nothing else remaining. I may comfort myself inside that circle, mm. [Pause; clears throat] I have gone through a lot in life. In 199[x]…my three children got involved in a car accident…. Soo there was one who had, ah, multiple fractures and was admitted…the girl was taken to [de-identified hospital] and five days later she passed on—had just graduated and almost starting her professional work…. So those other ones were in hospital and…I stayed with them until God helped them they recovered. So I stayed with that whatever that [stigma ?] [/trauma/], or how do you call it? That was a problem I had. And then, eh, last year, I lost also my second born son, through a short illness. He developed headache just a little bit…he told me, “Mum, I have headache, I have headache”…and he was walking, so fast so fast, he entered into the car shuuh! He was taken to hospital. Within six hours he is gone? [died?]…Anyway, so that one is another problem again which befall our family recently in September [2015]… And the following [cross talk] week my co-wife who…she had [blood] pressure and diabetes, when she heard about my son she got affected…she went too. So we had two people to bury. It was one of the most difficult time in my life…. I was given a deep sleep…he was taken to the hospital…. [they called] to tell us that he has died…it was one of the most difficult time in my life! [Pause] because he was not sick that you could think of him dying. Eeh? [Emotional] Sometimes you become helpless in some of the things. That was on a Wednesday, the following Wednesday when we were still doing funeral preparation, my co-wife went [died]. Mine [son] was buried this Saturday…so that we start marathon for that week to bury mum. [Pause] It was hard time for me and my family [cough].

Participant ECT explained her motherly role as source of encouragement. She said, “So going through those things, my husband is the first born among the sons, [as a mother] you have to be strong so that you may be able to stay with the other children.” Then she stated her feelings that “It is something heavy, it is not easy. So adjusting yourself with all those problems is not
something easy, until you ask God completely to be close to you, until you say, ‘I am helpless, come and assist.’”

When participant ECT finished sharing about her past catastrophic experiences, I gave her a chance to ask questions or express concerns she may have had since I interviewed her. Participant ECT expressed, “You know sometime people are called, eh, just the way you have called us now. I personally, I do not know where you are taking it, I am wondering if you are collecting all this information to go and use it for your own stuff that will incriminate us later.” Then she expressed, “Even though we read and signed that thing? [consent form?] but we do not trust so much because there are people who wrote….” (ICC investigation).

I explained again to the participant that my study was purely academic. Then I asked her if she was comfortable with my using her information in this study. Participant ECT stated that the fact that she signed the consent form was to prove that she had fully accepted and was absolutely committed to be interviewed. She said that it was just normal feelings she was expressing based on the fact that the ICC cases had not finished. I assured the participant of the aim of my study and the confidentiality of her information. I also informed her that I would get back to her to go through the transcript and let her validate it. Additionally, I informed her of free counseling services available to her as well as a copy of the interview transcript upon her request. Then I thanked participant ECT for her participation in both the focus group and individual interview. When the participant left the office, I flashed back to all the detailed information she shared in the interview about her recurrent and multiple loss of entire property and loved ones. Then I wrote my reflective journal while her information was still fresh in my mind.
Individual Interview #10. EBT

Participant EBT (Atlas.ti #P10), a 54-year-old female, self-identified as a social worker and a retired teacher. The participant alleged four recurrent personal traumas in her history, associated with skirmishes, PEV, and the sudden loss of a baby (see Table 4). I asked the participant to describe what she had experienced as a result of the PEV and any other tragedy. To describe how the experiences of the 2007 post-election violence traumas have affected her life, as well as what it is like to live now after what she experienced, Participant EBT began her narratives. She said, “Let me go back to 1992 and ’94; those were two incidents. 1992 was the start of the skirmishes, I lost everything that I had brought at that time….” She continued, “Earlier on before the skirmishes I had lost a kid. My kid had fallen on a borehole. So the [de-identified] community had helped me so much to retrieve the body of the child.” I asked, “Eh when was that?” Participant EBT replied:

In 1990 I lost a kid, a two-year-old kid fell in a borehole, eh. So the community, as I was new, helped me so much and so like whatever happened to me in 1992, I did not take it so serious…. That’s why I went back in 1993 because of the love I had for the community. The love I saw among the [de-identified] community…were so nice…. So this time I did not go back with any bitterness, I went back with a lot of forgiveness. You see in 1993 they helped me to recover those things that were lost… I lost everything but they were able to retrieve for me…. But then come 1994 when the skirmishes were so bad, a teacher was killed…so they wanted to revenge…I felt like they wanted to rape me when they came to me…. Come morning that woman whom I said before [in group] came and tied my waist so that I do not get so much affected from the shock…those boys came and defended me…. I did not stay in the house, I went to hide. As I was hiding I got bricked, eh I was cut by…the barbed wire. So when I saw that wound my bitterness came. I was like why should I suffer? I never knew the hate of any other tribe, that time I had noo deeper bitterness but I could sense there was something wrong, eh, that things were not normal…. The hate now was building, you see? At this time I was torn in between I was saying should I be married by a [de-identified, person from another tribe] or not. That is the time I realized the dangers of mixed ma? Mixed marriage…in 1994….
At this point I encouraged the participant to share her personal experiences with a focus on the impact of the PEV. The participant expressed her sense of rejection and frustration at being in a mixed marriage; some of those experiences are relayed below:

…those women said they would not trust me because I was married to a [de-identified]. I felt that they were also my enemies. Suppose I was got by the [de-identified tribe] men, they would have raped me, if I was got by the [de-identified other tribe] men they would also have raped me. So I had to go to stay at [de-identified] police station. So during war I realized that I was in danger and [pause] I got a lot of bitterness. I had never thought of anyone as a [de-identified] or a [de-identified] tribe. Today I am very bad on that, although I tell people not to, but beforehand I would not tell people this is a [de-identified], I would not! But then I just found myself like, I could say, “When I went to the church [her tribe’s camp site] nobody wanted me, when I went to [de-identified, her marital home] nobody wanted me to be there too, [becomes emotional] so these ones are [de-identified tribe] and these ones are [de-identified tribe]…..” One thing that came positively to me, I became very proud to be a [de-identified]. Beforehand I did not want people to know that I am [de-identified]. I would introduce myself as, “I am Jennifer Mwangaza [not her real name] before I used not to tell people I am married by a [de-identified].’ So I am married to [de-identified tribe] and I come from [de-identified] and I am very proud of it because…. And why am I saying so? …I had to start fighting for myself. Beforehand whenever people would talk about such things I would run away but now instead of running I say, “What is it?” …and that one came from 20[0]7 when people were called [de-identified tribal name] just because of the skirmishes, mmh.

I inquired from Participant EBT what meaning she had made from all her sufferings. I asked, “Considering the experiences you have shared, is there something that stands out as particularly meaningful to you?” Then she relayed the significance of a peaceful life saying:

What stands out to be meaningful for me in life is peace. [Pause] that peace is very important! Peace is more important than money! Peace is just like oxygen! [Pause] as I can’t do without oxygen, I feel I can’t do without peace. So it’s like I fight for peace. Even, it [violence] has made me humble. Beforehand I was arrogant. Like [as a leader], when I was dealing with…. But I would [say,] “Aah! You Joyce go!” [Harass]. Okay today I may say, “Go” but on a lighter note. And I may say, “Go” on something that we can compromise. But beforehand imagine I would just tell someone go…wherever you want to go. I would not care stepping on people’s toes! I would not care what people were saying! But these days I try to make peace with everyone….I try to bring peace. Yah, I try to make the place peaceful. I try to ask myself, “Is this place peaceful for all the people who are here?” Mm. So peace is very meaningful. Even when I think of 2017 [clicks] I am asking, “May there be peace.” Mmh? We may lack food but let us have peace, [pause] mmh. [Pause].
Participant EBT explained how she was involved in peace and reconciliation meetings, the challenges they faced while helping out, and the positive outcome in form of forgiveness between the rival tribes.

When we went for a dialogue meeting between the [de-identified] and the [de-identified rival tribes] they would come and then abuse each other but after that I saw the healing coming. Because someone could say, “I will never talk to a [de-identified], I will never! I will never even stay?” Then the [de-identified] [from other opposing tribe] would come and say, “I will never! I will never!” And they would talk and talk…. So after everyone talked, it’s like after sharing, the [de-identified tribe] men and women thought that they were the only ones who suffered and slept outside, but when the [de-identified] came and shared about their suffering too how they slept outside, that they had major loses…so after talking about their experiences [they found] all of them were hurt. So after the many talks, I saw the healing, mmh.

At this point I informed the participant that I would keep confidentiality, as I had promised. I also let her know of my plan to meet her again to go through a copy of the transcript to be sure that the text reflected her thoughts and feelings. Finally, I thanked participant EBT for her participation in the group and interview for this study. After the participant left the office, I wrote my reflective journal and labelled the recorded information for easy retrieval for analysis.

**Individual Interview #11. EMT**

Participant EMT (Atlas.ti #P11) is a 51-year-old female social worker. The participant registered “diploma” as her highest level of education. The participant reported two trauma incidents in her history, of a recurrent and multiple nature (see Table 4). Concerning the scope and intensity of the trauma, the participant stated that the two violence traumas affected the entire family and community.

I asked EMT to describe her experiences resulting from the PEV and any other tragedy, as well as to explain how the experiences of the 2007 PEV traumas have affected her life and
what it has been like to live now after what she has experienced. I informed the participant that she could share her experiences in detail including what she did not disclose in the group.

Participant EMT begun:

Trauma is something that is in us, because there are a lot of challenges in life. First of all, I want to share the incident that I went through in my career. When we mobilized and, ah, organized dialogue meetings with the community, trying to bring them together, ah, to reconcile, people were not happy about it especially my community, and, ah, the [de-identified] community. Immediately after them [affected] going there, aah, the [de-identified] community said that they were not genuine, they were not affected, so the government arm starting with the PPO, the Provisional, aah, Commissioner, came in with full force wanting to arrest me and…[other organizers] that we were cheating the government that the [de-identified] were affected also. Because the message went to the government that it was only the [de-identified] [other tribe] who were affected. So we had to convince them. We had to tell them that the chiefs are our witnesses. And then there was, ah, survey that was done to make sure that these were the genuine IDPs. While we were doing this, the same, same community that were not affected instead of helping us to say this is true, went ahead saying that we were lying.

I inquired, “You mean the [de-identified] community?” The participant replied, “No, no the [de-identified] now.” She continued:

The [de-identified tribe] now went ahead saying that it was not genuine because those who were not affected wanted also to be registered so that they will benefit from the food. They were not seeing the challenges that we were going through, that the government were against the [de-identified] IDP camp. So, instead of supporting the process and telling the government it is true these are our people and they were really affected, they were coming again and saying no, “All of us we need to get these food… After that, the community now organized to destroy our houses, and to do a lot of bad things to us. But ah the chief and the police came and say, “If these could happen the whole community will be in a problem.” So this was a very big trauma to our families and we couldn’t belief the way the [de-identified] could lie. For sure, I couldn’t belief.

Then I asked, “So it is the [de-identified] themselves who came wanting to destroy your ah property?” The participant replied, “Yes! Yes!” Then she continued:

They said that first of all we were “betrayers.” Second, ah, [that] we didn’t want them to benefit from the relief food. The government could not just come and give out food if you were not affected by the conflict. So there was no way that my team and I could lie that the whole [?] [community?] was affected when some of them were having their houses,
their houses were not burnt. As a servant of God, you cannot just lie you cannot just write something which will haunt you. So we stood for the truth and say this was not right…. [Deeply breaths out] so we had to do some reconciliation between the [de-identified] and the [de-identified] and also between us and the [de-identified] community.

I inquired further, “So, ah, did they destroy, that time they destroyed your property….?”

Participant EMT answered:

No, they attempted but because of the security, the DC was very concern and also the chiefs. So they could not just come. They could organize, but they could not succeed. They could hold some meetings talking about it, ah, with a lot of big names [curses] but, ah, finally it cooled down; but most of them up to this date, they still have the hatred that we denied them to be assisted. After that we continued with the dialogue meetings; the good side of it was that people reconciled, especially those who were affected from the [de-identified] and the [de-identified] communities. When I saw reconciliation taking place, when I saw people embracing one another so it became a strength to us even though I was so traumatized I couldn’t understand how to come out of it. But when this process were going on, seeing the DC coming supporting us and also seeing the people coming together, it really helped me and, ah, it gave me the strength and the resilience. And then my team kept on continuing to do the work. And, ah [bird sound], most of these work are so traumatized [/traumatizing/], you listen to stories at times that you get burnouts.

After going through all these, ah my own family members were also against my work, from 1992 that was the time I decided to be a peace builder.

When she talked of 1992, then I recalled what she had shared in the group, and I wanted to hear how she developed her passion for peace building and how she handled it with all her recurrent traumas, including the PEV. So, I inquired, “I remember you explained to us in the group how you went through with the trauma in 1992 and you mentioned your concern for old women and children. Can you please explain a little bit about it?” She responded:

Yes, I made my decision and say, “I will not stand to see women and children suffering anymore. I have to come out strongly, I have to take a career on peace building, so that I will do the reconciliation. I will be talking to fellow women to come out strongly and say no to conflict because they are the people who suffer a lot, they are the ones who are traumatized when they see their children dying and their husbands being killed.” So when I made this decision, the worst thing was that my mother in-law and sisters in-law, were against this and my brothers in-law. So there was a lot of incitement to my family…they really did a lot of, ah, they organized themselves to destroy my family. But what gave me the strength to continue was my husband who stood with me because he realized that
this was a passion in me, and, ah, I wanted to help people, ah, live together. So that was
the strength that I got from my husband. [Pause] and also, ah, my children were really,
really supporting me! They really stood with me, whenever I went out to talk about
peace, and organize some dialogue meetings, and I came home, everything was in order.
They did not listen to my relatives, ah, my brothers-in-law and my sisters-in-law.
[Breaths] Ah, we’ve been living for the last 10 years with my family members ah without
good rapport, healthy relationship with my in-laws. About 2 years ago, my mother in-
law started to recognize the work that I am doing, got sense in the work that I am
doing…. Immediately she accepted, that made great change among many people to come
in. So actually we’ve reconciled and that also gave me strength…because when I am
doing peace building work and, ah, reconciling the community, so same to me I must
reconcile with people and live happily in peace…I came to realize that it is a struggle,
reconciliation is a process….

When the participant talked of her current situation with the in-laws, then I desired to
hear more of what became of her trauma experiences. I questioned, “So how is it like to live
now after all those traumas you experienced?” Participant EMT responded:

What I went through and what I saw other people go through has made a very big impact
in my life. At this moment I can stand and help somebody who is going through a
traumatic situation. It helped me to realize that despite of any challenge there is a solution
or an end to anything that has come into your life. It also helped me to understand that
despite of going through a lot of challenges life must continue. You will not just sit there
and wait for something to happen, it’s a struggle, you have to struggle to change the
situation, you have to accept what happened and come out of it. You cannot dwell on that
situation forever. It’s something that you need to come out of it strongly. You have to
accept it and come out of it. After going through all these, I always reflect back and see,
“If I could come out of this why not somebody else? Why can’t I talk to this person to
come out of this?” So it has given me that resilience of helping people come out.

I probed further, “So as an individual how do you see life now?” She answered:

Ah, the challenges that came along has really changed my life. I am in a better situation,
ah, I am always that strong woman who can say no to any bad thing without fear. Ah, if it
is right I can say this is right, if it is wrong I will not stand to accept any wrong doing. So
I don’t stand for wrong doings, I always say no to [it], and this has really, really given me
strength. So at times when you go through challenges, it is building the strength in you,
yah. [Pause] life should not always be smooth, yah. And people should understand that.

Next, I asked her to describe an experience, time, person, place or incident that
immediately came to her mind or that stood out most vividly to her as she reflected on her
experiences associated with the tragedies. Participant EMT shared about her engagement in helping the affected and how she passionately rescued an elderly woman from another community:

I have a story. It is also about an old woman in 2007, immediately after the post-election violence, ah, maybe that was on 3rd or 4th January 2008. There was this old lady a [de-identified rival tribe] lady, she was very old and, ah, her children, ah, passed on so she was living with the grandchildren. Immediately after the conflicts…the grandchildren ran away leaving the old lady alone. So after all the people had gone, the [de-identified] community had gone, the lady was left alone. I was communicating to the hospital. When some of the women were hurted, I could just help them to be treated, and I could bring the women from the [de-identified] community for rescue and then they would find a way of [safely] leaving the place. So I was told this lady was in the house, and nobody was taking care of her. So I had to find a way of reaching her home...I found the [de-identified, her tribe] men had surrounded her home. So I had to go, talk to the lady, ah, in her [tribal] language…and I told her if she could be assisted to leave the place, because security was not good for her. And she told me, “I will not leave my property and go; I better die with the property.” So I convinced her and then, ah, I had to talk to another [de-identified] lady…to help the grandmother…. So the lady planned to take her away the next day. I had to go and talk to the security officers to check on her place because of the security concern. …ah then I went to the neighbor, talked to her and told her, “This old woman will come and sleep at your house so that…. The following day in the morning when she came back, the lorry was sent from the police station and, ah, they picked everything for her leaving behind the house and, ah, a few things. So immediately she left, the people… went there in the evening, they destroyed the house, remove all the iron sheets [roofing tiles]…. So this is a story that always gives me hope...[I] say, “How did I come up with such an idea saving a life of this woman?” Ah, it’s a story that I always think of it and I am always happy. When I refer the first old woman and came back again and see this other one, I thank God because maybe there was a reason that I could help these old, ah, two women, yah. They were of the same age and even this one the [de-identified] [other tribe] one is still alive…. So it is a story that always touches my heart. I feel like, eh, I am happy, aah, I really did something for this old woman because there was no way for her to get out, and nobody could know that she was left behind, yah.

I commented, “So it became kind of like a reinforcement of the positive stuff that you do?” The participant described the positive outcome of her trauma experiences by responding:

Yah…it always gives me hope because despite of all challenges that I went through after the post-election violence, saving this old woman and others ? Ah, I did a lot of work saving many people, but the one that touches my heart is for this woman…
Something touches my heart, and I just feel like I should go and see… it always remind me a lot of good things. That despite of the trauma, ah, the challenges, ah, there is a story that always gives me hope and encourages me to live with it and to accept, ah, whenever there is a problem you don’t have to say I am not able you have to work out of it and help, yah.

After the participant shared her support to the affected, I thanked her for it. Then I inquired, “Now, going back to the trauma experiences that you went through, is there any other incident or person, or time that you may not have shared about?” Participant EMT then identified her angel heroes along her difficult life journey:

Ah, I always had my younger sister, Lydia [name changed]. In 1992, when people could not help me [raised tone of voice] when my children could not run, Lydia could not leave me [becomes emotional]. She was there, yah she was young but she could always stand and tell me, “What can I do to help you?” She could help me carry the young baby so that I could carry the other one [sobs]. So people could run away, but she could not run, she could just stay with me to help me go wherever I go…. She could encourage me despite of being very young. She was that wise girl that could tell me, “Just go home, I will….” She is that girl that really stood, encouraged me. Despite of being young, she was so wise, she could help me and talk to me, yah [long pause: 1 minute].

Then I commented, “So she became a source of support to you in spite of all that you were going through and considering her age.” The participant replied, “Yah! [1 minute pause] She was, I could not have made it to escape with the little children without her help.” At this juncture, I inquired from participant EMT what stood out as particularly meaningful to her considering the experiences she had shared. She relayed:

Ah, hope is very meaningful to me. Ah, if you live in hope and faith, life will continue. It’s very important to live with hope and faith [pause] and also being with courage. When things turn to be the worst and you have that courage, definitely life will continue. You have to be courageous, you have to think about it. Yah. You don’t have to sit and wait for somebody else. It is you to take the courage and move on. Yah.

After I commented on her sharing about hope, faith, and courage, I probed, “So, ah, besides hope, faith and courage, what else stands out to be meaning in life for you?” The
participant expressed her newfound zeal to advise the affected and gain strength to stand firm amidst sufferings. She responded:

Ah, there was a time I drew my journey … [and] I realized that you cannot just walk in a very smooth life, there must be some challenges. Ah, I continued drawing my line and I realized that despite of all those challenges there is that hope in my life. And I realized that at the moment, I was at a bar. I was seeing myself in a better situation, in a very good situation, a very good environment… continuing with hope that I spoke about it. And, ah, at this moment I am seeing myself a successful woman, being that person who people could run to and ask for advice…. [Pause] I am seeing a bright future for me because being a counselor I will be helping people, I will be assisting other women to know that you don’t have to run away from problems. You have to stand firm and things will change. So I am seeing myself being that strong woman proved to be able to help other people, and I am trying to get some more knowledge so that I could be able to assist. Yah.

After the participant responded to all my enquiries, then I gave her an opportunity to ask questions and share concerns which she may have had. Participant EMT inquired about how I chose counseling as my profession, and I replied to her question appropriately. Then I informed her of my plan to meet again and let her validate her interview transcript. I thanked participant EMT for her participation in the group and interview and reminded her of my contacts and the available free counseling services. I also emphasized my promise to keep her information confidential. Immediately we left each other, then I wrote my reflective journal as usual.

**Individual Interview #12. EPT**

Participant EPT (Atlas.ti #P12) is a 43-year-old female who self-identified as a private medical officer, a farmer, and a business owner. Participant EPT self-disclosed to have experienced one trauma associated with the 2007-08 PEV with multiple incidents (see Table 4). I asked participant EPT to describe her experiences resulting from the PEV and any other tragedy, as well as how the experiences of the 2007 PEV traumas had affected her life and what
it is like to live now after what she experienced. Participant EPT provided a wide-ranging explanation of her losses, saying,

Generally, the experience was not good, eh, given that I lost all my things from that post-election violence, which some I have not regained up to now but a few. However, after serving people with that selfless heart, I was able to be recognized and even given reward for the role that I did. So it was like a turning point in my career. Since that time I have been receiving blessings in my career because of the work I did, yah. But emotionally, at that time specifically, I was down, yah, though I have now regained. But, [pause] I cannot just imagine such conflict again arising when I am in the same place, I think I will fly [laughs mildly]. Eh, it was terrible. So the only good other thing is that my neighbors who were [de-identified, from rival tribe] were supportive to me. …they protected some of my properties. I remember I had a small car which had mechanical problem…they pushed it up to the police station for it to be safe because others could have burnt it, yah. …even the property, while other people were looting from my home, others were asking them, “Why are you doing this to daktari and yet she is serving us?”

When participant EPT finished describing her torturous experiences, I asked, “So, ah, how were you reacting to the situation like physically, emotionally, and all that?” She explained the fearful moments she faced. She conveyed:

Given your family, you are not used to living alone, now you are living alone, it was soo stressing. Eh, it was emotionally putting me down, yah. Again at the workplace, we didn’t even have a watchman, they used to be the [de-identified rival tribe men]. So when the violence started, they fled away because they could not guard at night. Imagine, they [relatives] could come to that staff hostel where I was staying and call me at night without security…when there is a patient, to serve them. I just used to pray before I come out, I say, “God, let it be a patient.” Because it was not in me that I should not serve a patient. I used to see patients with or without a watchman, and they could come knock on my door at night, and then I just said, “God, take care of me because I am going to serve You. Eh I just assume it is a real patient not a thug or somebody who is up to ? [after my life?]”. And actually it happened they were patients and I could manage them, until after sometime now the watchman came back when it was a bit cool, yah. So it was draining me emotionally. [Pause] even what to eat was a problem. You could not access food, there was no food in the [shopping] centers, it was just hard. You could go for a whole day without any food [pause: 1 minute].

Next, I asked participant EPT to describe an experience, time, person, place, or incident that immediately came to her mind or that stood out most vividly to her as she reflected on her
experiences associated with the tragedies. She communicated, “When I was working now, the most, eh, worrying time was when people were armed with all sorts of arms and standing [laughs mildly] next to you [as you are] managing a patient. That is the time I just used to say God; ‘Let nothing happen to me!’ as there were those machetes or what that people had that I had never seen in my life [laughs mildly…..” I sought clarification from the participant about her fearful situation. I queried, “So the people that came with the patients were armed?” She continued to share of the frustrations and incidents and time that kept coming to her mind. She reported;

“Eh, they were armed. It really made me fear, eh, [pause] and then now the site of my house when people were cutting, eh, the cows while alive.”

At this stage I needed to hear additional information for the study. I asked Participant EPT to explain what stood out as particularly meaningful to her, considering the experiences she had shared. Then she explained of how meaningless life can be without mutual respect and peaceful co-existence. She responded, “There is really need to respect life… to respect an individual, eh, and, ah, to have that brotherly-sisterly relationship. Peaceful co-existence needs to be among ourselves and our neighbors, without which, eh [pause] life is so difficult, eh.”

Further, she expressed, “If there is no mutual relationship between you and your neighbor or people you are living with, then life becomes meaningless.”

When the participant finished sharing about her life challenges, I gave her an opportunity to ask questions or share concerns which she may have had but had not gotten an opportunity to ask. Participant EPT said, “I don’t think I have much I can add because I didn’t hide anything, I just said how it was, eh; there is nothing that I’ve left. You’ve given me a free way of explaining whatever I felt, eh.” When the participant had left the office, I wrote my reflective journal, thinking of the common themes arising from all the interviews I had conducted.
Individual Interview #13. KAN

Participant KAN (Atlas.ti #P13) is a 35-year-old male who self-identified as a hustler, a go-getter who wish to achieve the best out of his unreliable minimal economic resources. I asked participant KAN to describe his experiences during the skirmishes, the 2007 PEV, and fire trauma; to explain how the experiences of trauma have affected his life; and to comment on what it is like to live now after what he experienced. Participant KAN narrated challenges concerning a lack of privacy and other sufferings he and his family faced during the skirmishes and the 2007 PEV:

For sure, people pass through difficulties, more so when one has a family, you have for one, you have moved to a strange environment, I am talking about post-election violences, or such other violences that came, and you find yourselves you are in one house, and you have the children, maybe grown up ones. So you find those children do not give you the freedom that is necessary in a family [talks to child]. You find actually psychologically and even physically that things are not going on as usual because you have young children, maybeee your fellow family members are there, maybe you sleep in one house, maybe even one bed, or you spread sacks and sleep together on the floor, so you find for sure people suffer. And as I prepare my mind to tell you of all that have been troubling me soo much until now [pause].

…1997 is when we used to share together with my parents, we were grown-ups, cube was one, and you find that when you were there even the parents were finding it difficult to share one room with you. So in many, many cases you would find us going to look for somewhere to sleep in out there, [pause] you look for friends, lit the fire, and spend the night out there or for some who have a room you go and put up with them. So in all that time you would find that [pause] our parents also had a lot of problems even when we were there, because sleeping for them was with stress because they were not used to sharing with us the same room, more so at night let me say so, or during sleep time, yah.

After his extensive description of his experiences with the skirmishes and the PEV, I wished to know of his current life, so I inquired, “How do you see life now after going through those experiences?” Participant KAN contemplated for a while; then he explained about life being so difficult. He stated, “Life is tough by the way, life is [word omitted] very tough. To try to recall in your mind to accept what happened and what is there…..” He revealed,
We did not manage to pursue our studies, we had to look for odd jobs even though we were still children. All that was contributed by violences. I studied for secondary level for more than 10 years. [Pause] this 20[0]7 is what I think finished it. Eh, I was doing C.P.A. I, clashes came, I could not continue but I resumed back and studied for it on my own, I did up to section III. I have not finished, but I don’t see myself continuing with school now…. Also, I was trying to venture I had a small business in [de-identified] before the violence but now 20[0]7 came and finished again all my foundation. So I found that me….

Next, I asked participant KAN to describe an experience, time, person, place, or incident that immediately came to his mind or that stood out most vividly to him as he reflected on the experiences he has had associated with the tragedies. Participant KAN related what dominated his thoughts saying, “About that, [phone rings] I will just go for my mum.” Then he continued with his narrative about her sufferings and perseverance. He stated:

My mum is the best [role model] because eeh…in 1994…[she] would go…[to the farm]; we are called she has fainted. So we would go for her, but I could…ask her [what troubles her] and she would explain to you nicely that, “So you see life where will we start it?” What was disturbing her so much was [that] after the farm being auctioned due to…a little loan…[she had borrowed], her guarantee was to repay through selling…[farm produce] but now since the farm, the cows all became those stories forgone [due to skirmishes]…so mum I think was not able to withstand that issue. When I see her still fighting hard in life and encouraging her heart that she is still there, bearing in mind all that, so I also give myself morale that things may be better come tomorrow. Sincerely, she gives me another strength [changes facial expression] external [pause] that makes me feel that even me, I am supposed to be there, mmh.

At this stage, I asked participant KAN to identify what stood out as particularly meaningful to him considering his recurrent trauma experiences. In response, the participant expressed his appreciation of being alive: “The magical system to make sure that I was left alive, which many were crying even to just be alive, I saw that God has a purpose for me to live; it is good for me to give Him time to see His plans.” So I inquired, “I remember you explained to us in group that you are a survivor of that fire tragedy, if possible please explain to us about it?” The participant conveyed:
Indeed I did not get any injuries at all from the fire. Aah, only a trouser of mine got burnt a little bit! …God being the able One but the shoes also helped, because it was a matter of a stick entering between the strap of the open [shoe], and the foot, then it trapped me, I fell down and so the fire went fast above me. That is how I found myself to have survived…the fire past over me, by the time I woke up the fire had burnt there in front of me and had finished. So what had gotten fire was the trouser and it was burnt by a small piece of wood which had already been burnt, let’s say it was a charcoal, which had gotten fire that is what burnt the trouser. When I got out from there, the first person to talk to me was a boda [motorbike public means of transport] driver. I told him, “Why don’t you give me a lift to [de-identified]”…to reach home, I was without shoes….

To inquire of his sense of reality after the tragedy, I asked, “You called a boda and went home immediately after the fire?” Then, participant KAN narrated his horrifying experience saying:

After all that, it was like video show because you wake up, you see it like it is not a reality, even you are not there, because at the front, there are people already they have burnt, at the sides they are burning you hear somebody just [crying out], “Nipoeshe! Nipoeshe nipoeshe!” [Cool me down! Cool me down! i.e. extinguish the fire] but there was no gap to do that, so me I cried for what? …even me I was not believing it’s real that I am there….to reach home…[and] I was bare footed…. That thing had made us drunk, and most of the senses could not perform; that much more so the mind, I remember I took bath just there…at a water tap…[outside the house in the open].

Wishing to let the participant substantiate his idea of taking a bath so as to rule out whether he was psychologically dissociated or drunk, I asked, “You decided to take bath out there or you just found yourself bathing?” Participant KAN replied, “I took bath [out] there and it was day time but I did not know that I was bathing; the idea was that I remove those clothes first and put them aside there, then I take bath. I took baaath [word omitted] to finish, that’s when I got shocked.” I asked, “You got shocked of what?” He replied, “That I was out in the open now. It was still day time.” I inquired further, “So you were taking bath to clean the dirt from that fire place or what?” The participant explained:

I was feeling so hot! My heart was beating so so so soo fast, so I was looking for anything cool! That could make me ? [cool?]. I stayed for so long in that water. I stayed,
so when the memory brought me back? [to normalcy?] that is when I realized that truly, I was at the tap, naked outside our house, that is when that scenario aaaall of it faded first and I forgot there was a scene like that? [fire tragedy?]. Immediately it [memory] just came that way, all those stories [about the fire?] was like it was not in my mind even a little. So I said, let me get out to see what has gone on. As I was going up, I kept hearing that a message has been passed that even me I have? I have perished. Because all those who were with me at chamber 1, not even one person got out from there. [Pause] so as I was going up there, I saw people just passing by being taken in boda, in boda, in boda, in fact I cried! I remember I cried a lot. I cried there, for one I tried to look for a place where I could pray to God, I looked for it but I did not get it! Me, I missed where I could pray in, a clean place where I could pray at to thank God, I missed it!

Additionally, participant KAN revealed how and when he regained his consciousness fully and how he reacted to the reality of the fire tragedy. He explained:

We went helping those who were injured, those who had hid themselves… and talked to those who were hospitalized…. [At the hospital]… there was another man who was critically injured…I heard him sending a message through the cousin to the wife that, “The casual work remaining is for her to raise up the children.” So now I resumed my memory back and accepted that for real people have? Have perished. And if people have burnt those who perished there [on site] are very many. Let me tell you, in that minute? [got anxious?]. That was the first time I drunk alcohol. I went and drunk changaa [locally brewed alcohol], even I did not pay, the owner came looking for the money later. So I drunk to at least relax. In fact if someone had given me a shot for me to sleep it would have been better. I drunk and returned back home, we returned again to take others… to help out with those people. But I avoid[ed] being alone, I was avoiding being alone so much. I kept receiving phone calls from people asking me how I was doing…. We made at 2:00 a.m. to go back to the scene… reaching there it was ‘No-go zone,’ so we stood at some distance under a mugumo tree. Even there, I think Satan was walking around, where we stood at, there were safari ants…. Under that tree there were safari ants, I don’t know if they were original or not but I know where we stood we were bitten by safari ants. So I saw that area was like it had its own different issues, I gave myself morale, I said, “If it was meant that I get finished today, let me be finished.” I there, I walked slowly, slowly, and slowly and found myself arriving at home that night.

Additionally, he revealed the struggles and chronic problems he faced then and later, saying:

But I developed getting shocked so much, so much, I have had that thing, up to date I still feel it, sometime when I am sitting if I get shocked, instantly I start panting. I hear myself panting, anything that shocks me, I pant and pant and that thing started as a result of that fire, mm. I struggle with breathing so much, what saves me most of the time is when I drink water, I like drinking water, [and] whenever I drink it, I start recovering.
I queried, “You pant also whenever you recall what happened or only to anything that shocks you?” In response, Participant KAN provided more comprehensive information about the impact of his atrocious experience with the fire. He explained:

It is not when I remember that, before there was that time I could think of it but now, it’s when something happens. I cannot witness a life accident, when somebody gets hit I do not go there even though we have been trained a little bit on…eh, that first aid, but that first-hand site, I am not able to participate that much. That [fire tragedy] affected me let me say so, and I have not seen if it has reduced unless it prove[s] otherwise with time.

At this stage, I questioned participant KAN about what stood out as particularly meaningful to him, considering the recurrent and multiple trauma experiences he had shared. He replied:

Life is there; the only one to take it is God. And just like I developed that thing from that fire, aah it’s many times you will tell me that there is danger and I will tell you that God will take you if He wants to take your life. Me, I saw it there! There! As easy as that! And I believed that. [Pause: 1 minute] when God has said, “Enough!” It is enough, you cannot avoid it. Therefore I am there, I will just live. God will be my helper….

I inquired further, “So how do you see life now?” KAN replied, “What we have gone through are so many and big; what is ahead of us is very little [pause].”

Then I gave KAN an opportunity to ask if there was anything he came wanting to say or had thought of but had not yet had the chance to discuss. The participant asked about how soon I would be done with my studies and, as a counselor, how I wished to use the collected data in the future. I responded to his question appropriately by revisiting the intentions of my research as I had said at the beginning of the interview and in the group. As I finished the interview with participant KAN, I informed him that we would meet again to let him check on the interview transcript for consensual endorsement. I reminded him of my telephone numbers in case he might need help and of the available counseling services. To conclude, I expressed my gratitude.
to the participant for his acceptance to participate in the focus group and interviews, and his willingness to disclose his trauma-related experiences. When I left the residence of participant KAN, then we drove to a center where I wrote my reflective journal in the car and labelled the recorded data for analysis later at night.

**Individual Interview #14. KAM**

The next interview was with participant KAM (Atlas.ti #P14), a 51-year-old male at his place of residence at an appropriate time for the interview. The participant self-identified as a farmer and former small-scale businessman. In his demographic questionnaire (see Table 4), the participant reported no health problems and Std. 5/5th Grade as his highest level of education. Participant KAM asserted there were three specific traumas in his history, the third one being multiple in nature, all associated with the skirmishes and the PEV. Although the participant had signed his consent form in the group for all the interviews, I sought fresh permission from him for the interview.

To start, I asked participant KAM to describe his experiences from the PEV and any other tragedy and to explain how the experiences of the 2007 PEV traumas affected his life and what it is like to live now after what he had experienced. The participant gave a lengthy narrative of the sufferings he and the family had faced during the PEV. He commenced:

> We got problems associated with elections, and those problems hit me so severely. On 1st January 2008 between 10:30 and 11:00 a.m., the perpetrators managed to come and I together with my family members were home; but they were so many people that two or three people would not have prevented anything. So when they came everyone tried to run for his or her own life. Eh, I and my older son stayed within here and were observing how things were going while mum [wife] and the young children ran to the church. We had harvested, and therefore you could not get anywhere you could consider as hideout. When my wife was in church, the perpetrators managed to reach there and to attack and put fire. And I never thought that anything bad would befall my wife.

The participant explained how he anxiously searched for family members:

The participant explained how he anxiously searched for family members:
As I was there…[at the road junction] waiting for those who were coming out from their homes, I saw my elder daughter [come], carrying the youngest child in our family. I asked her, “Mary [name changed], where is mum?” And she told me, “We entered church together but when we were coming out I did not manage to see her as everyone was rushing away for safety, everyone ran on their own. Maybe they are still somewhere around.” [Clears throat] …I stayed there at a safe place at the main entrance and my older children came… So the only one left out was their mother and a 5 yrs. old boy. And when I asked for his whereabouts I was told that he was being carried by his mum and so may have remained there with her. I had no information that they could be there at church. At 6 p.m., I went to Catholic Church, and there I tried to look for the children as I kept asking people about what happened in church. Nobody was able to tell me about my wife what may have happened to her because everyone was rushing out for safety.

…[the following morning] I found the fire was still going on. I had a big store there, so it had gotten fire everywhere. I used to do maize business, I had bought over 100 sacks of maize and also my harvest…I found it still burning in my store. And my house there, I tried to put the fire off but I could not manage because there were many furniture it was still burning. And I had another big house there…and they also got burnt….

As I was just standing out there, I saw [the Kenya] Red Cross vehicle going down there…. I followed the vehicle to church…[and] I found they had carried the burnt bodies…. I did not look so much because I did not have a thought that anything of that kind could have happened…. I was thinking maybe my wife got stuck somewhere and maybe still around because of fear. I tried going round that area and I got four bodies and because there were police officers patrolling the place I informed them…. I managed to go around the first day, second, third without success. I tried to search for her in the camps where people had run for safety…but all in vain. I went round [searching] for 10 days, I had not reported. But on 11th January, I reported to the police that “my people are lost and I do not know where they are yet they were at church and I do not know, they are missing.” Those who were at the counter in fact laughed at me so much until I felt hurt in my heart…. One of them asked me whether my loved one had a mobile phone and if she called me when she was burning. I got so aggravated and I told him, “What you are telling me will come back to you.” So we finished, yes they wrote for me in OB.

Then participant KAM explained the challenges he faced with the children before they temporarily relocated. The participant continued, “…on 12th, I was in a lot of problems, the children had kept asking for their mother and were getting so worried, and so I saw they were gradually getting more emotionally tensed day after the other….” The participant also described his sufferings while anxiously looking for the lost family members and the struggles of being in an IDP Camp. Then, the participant explained his immediate reactions upon discovering an
identification item of his loved one. He revealed that, “I sat down there. I told him, ‘I feel like fainting. Already I have an evidence that my wife got burnt to dead….’” Further, he expressed:

When I saw this clothe, I got assurance that for sure my beloved wife died! And I lost control physically and even I was defeated to support myself to stand up, it forced me to sit down. Even tears was falling down my cheeks so much even to try to prevent, I was completely defeated, eh. So I felt so bad. Even when I thought of it, I said, “So what kind of a problem was this? Because this was not sickness, I had not gotten in any dispute with anyone! Why did such issues come to me!? So I was so disappointed so so much.

To conclude his narrative relevant to the enquiry which I set, Participant KAM expressed the suffering he and the affected families faced. He went, “So we suffered a lot… I kept traveling around so much looking for my family members…[and] again in preparation for that burial…."

When participant KAM had finished narrating his painful experiences, I empathized with him. Then I probed again, “After going through all that how do you see life now?” The participant explained his frustrations of trying to resettle after the major loss; he said, “From there life has been difficult.” Further, he explained:

After that life was still difficult because I had children who had to eat, who needed to be educated, and even to dress up. Therefore, it forced me to hurt so much looking for ways that those children would continue. I had to do odd jobs which I had not done before like casual work so that at least I get school fees for others. And even odd jobs which looked shameful to do; but I did not see that shame, like going to work in a construction site. I had never been employed; therefore to start searching for casual work to do was so difficult. Before this problem of post-election violence I used to…[run a private farm business]; but after all that I became a beggar, looking for odd jobs…although I did not go to do odd jobs for long because I was able to try to see to it that I started farming. Madam, I cannot tell you that I looked for casual work here. I had to go from this county to another county where people did not know me…. I went to [de-identified] side and there I burnt charcoal and started farming…and I started to see the possibility of educating my children. They have continued up to the university. I was able to restart my life again. I left my older children to take care of the other children. I was able to harvest potatoes worth 100,000 KES and bought a motorbike [for micro-business] for my children to use. …so let me say that I have passed through difficult life…I lived in makeshift houses in [de-identified]…and life was so bad because I had never lived in such kind of a situation before. So life became too difficult, so hard for me. But God is good because I came out from there, I am now home…and I am still moving on.
Next, I requested the participant to describe an experience, time, person, place or incident that immediately came to his mind or that stood out most vividly to him as he reflects on the experiences he had associated with the tragedies. Participant KAM responded:

I am among those…peace builders. So often whenever we go trying to talk to people on how a person can live, how a person can avoid issues, and …can encourage oneself, sometimes I feel my thoughts are triggered and sometimes they overwhelm me so much. Yes, one can see it is easy to talk but inwardly there is some specific pain. Because when I tell people that I had a wife, I had this and that, even though I am explaining it hurts me so much, it hurts me. And sometimes it hits me so badly.

I inquired, “And how do you see life now?” Participant KAM conveyed:

My mind has not settled and often I think badly about the incident which happened in our country…. Also, I feel bad when called maybe by the teacher or a child is told to come home for school fees, yet before I used not to have such problems. It reminds me of the people who destroyed my life…. Again, thoughts come to me. I am a human being…[and] sexual urges sometimes overwhelm me; I have feelings but I am defeated…where will I get a wife from? …those urges bring me bad thoughts….

At this stage, I questioned participant KAM on the meaning he has made after his tragic experiences. I asked, “After those struggles what meaning have you found in life? The participant stated,

Based on what I have passed through, I have learnt that in this life, in this world, we need to live with people with cohesion and to live as good neighbors; because as we live separately with others it’s a means of bringing a lot of such problems…. I have learnt also to be hard working, that if you are a hard working person it is possible to move on, you pick up, you can recover quickly…. Also, you [become] a good role model, a teacher to those who will have passed through the same problems, telling them….

Finally, I gave participant KAM an opportunity to ask questions, telling him, “If there is anything you came wanting to say or have thought of but have not yet had the opportunity to discuss this is the opportunity to do so.” The participant responded, “Me I do not want…even when the ICC started, I was called, and I said I did not have any case or witness. They have tried several times to call me…, but I said I am a peace builder, and I want to heal people’s hearts, so I
cannot play two contradicting roles; I have forgiven them.” To conclude, he stated, “I am happy because you said you are a student doing research and I believe you are going to educate others.”

Then I finished the interview with participant KAM and informed him of my plan to meet with him to review a copy of the interview transcript and let him validate his narratives. Additionally, I informed him of the counseling services available at no cost to him if he might need it. I also reminded him of my contact information and thanked him for his participation in both the focus group and individual interviews. Then I packed the research materials, and after my research assistants had finished their part, we left. Before we met with the next participant, we stopped somewhere so that I could write my reflective journal in the car while my mind could still clearly recall the interview information from participant KAM.

**Individual Interview #15. KAW**

The 15th interview was done with participant KAW (Atlas.ti #P15), a 53-year-old female who self-disclosed as a small-scale farmer. Although she stated that she had lost weight previously, owing to major multiple loss of loved ones, participant KAW reported no health problems currently. Additionally, the participant endorsed three specific traumas in her history of a recurrent and multiple nature, the loss being associated with the 2007 PEV and oil tanker fire (see Table 4). After participant KAW welcomed us and gave her consent to be interviewed, I started the interview. I reminded her of the fact that she could withdraw from the interview at any moment with no consequences. Knowing that she had experienced major and severe harrowing multiple loss of loved ones, I let her know that she could share whatever she felt comfortable with. I was aware that her past was extremely sensitive, so I made minimal probes and let her narrative flow as she could share.
To commence the interview, I asked the participant to describe her experiences from the PEV, the fire, and any other tragedy, especially what she had not shared in the group. I asked her as well to explain how the experiences of the 2007 PEV and the fire traumas had an impact on her life and what it was like to live after what she had experienced. Participant KAW started responding by expressing gratitude to God and asking each of us present to turn around and look at a commemorative plaque in her home to confirm that what she was telling us about her multiple loss of loved ones was true. She showed us pictures of her four children saying,

…this is the only one I buried, all [3] the other ones I did not see them [perished in the fire]…this one too I did not see and this one. So it is something heavy to see or talk about, but I thought sometime it is good to witness with your eyes so that as one talks you can understand what is said. [Pause] [Cross talk] in the family I am blessed with so many children [laughs]…. Therefore in the pictures I sense that I stepped down in life [pause, briefly talked about the children] because like this son he’s married and had the wife and those two children, and God had blessed him he had bought a plot and build for his wife and started a business for her…. We stay close to her…. We did not disturb her and she accepted to stay with us not to go back to her parents, she sees here as home and likewise to us we were happy for her decision because that way we will not forget our son….

I empathized with participant KAW in her loss, and she continued by speaking of her trust in God:

…but to speak the truth, I was thankful to God I was telling Him, “Because You saw it fit for those children of mine to go yet it was time for them to raise up their children, do not allow me to keep going out crying telling people: ‘My children died, please help me,’ because God You had a plan.” Let me tell you the truth before God” [pause] I have never gone anywhere, nor have I gotten any welfare support for those children…. But there is a secret I discovered, from that time, I get into this house with my family, we kneel down we tell God; You know 1, 2, 3, that goes on and know these children need to be fed, need to be dressed, and need to go to school. I wait for [baby calls out] something important and I know God is a nearer friend, I keep seeing someone has been send from there saying, “I just felt like coming to visit you.” …has brought clothes, has brought sugar, has come with what or maybe school fees is provided through where!? There! I have never gotten any welfare support from anyone, but from God through people doesn’t it come? …even the Bible tells us: “What can separate us, eh from the love of God?” It is not food, it is not what, even there I can add that, not even the children’ [ends with a smile] can separate us with? With God. So life for sure can be difficult…. But for us when you come to our home you cannot tell if we are happy or not [in mourning moment or not?] because our hope is in? In God. That is the life that we live, mmh.
Next, I requested participant KAW to describe an experience, time, person, place or incident that immediately came to her mind or that stood out most vividly to her as she reflected on the experiences she has had associated with the tragedies. Participant KAW answered:

I feel that God has been with me and sometimes I think about my grandchildren and think that they would be with their parents but I just accept the situation. For example, when I think of Christmas and my children are not coming home to visit, I always remember that. I had kept their pictures in my room and they kept on disturbing me, but when I put them in the sitting room, things keep on changing and I feel okay.

Again, Participant KAW explained her physical and psychological reactions through loss of weight and the disturbing images of her youngest son, respectively:

I used to be a strong woman, healthy looking, even people would confuse me with my older children that time.... But I became thin and I started looking so old! But through prayers and with God gradually cleaning up those painful thoughts, everything resumes back, from that time I keep seeing I am gradually regaining my normal weight and health, I am continuing to recover. What renews my strength and encourages me to continue is when I see those children of theirs. I keep seeing that I am still strong because when they come it is like I have seen them [their deceased parents]. So what keeps hurting me most is about that young son, sometimes I ask God why the second boy did not leave a child [heritage]. Even sometimes I get shocked when the children call each other and I feel as if he will just walk in from somewhere, so I keep seeing that. Even their father, he gets hurt so much. Sometimes he talks about him, he would stand there and say, “At least if John [name changed] had left even a little child, we would have been happy.” But we only thank God for everything [sobs]. [Long pause: 2 minutes].

I felt with the participant in her loss.

At this level, I felt that I had collected substantial information from the participant about how she experienced her tragedies, so I continued by asking how she processed and interpreted these atrocious experiences. I asked, “Considering the experiences you have shared, is there something that stands out as particularly meaningful to you?” Participant KAW replied, “The reason to life is to live well and have the [orphaned] children educated…. As they grow old, to
understand what happened, we need to make them happy so that they do not ask questions, but grow up well.”

When I sensed that participant KAW had provided enough information covering all the research questions for the study, I completed the interview by opening the forum for her to ask questions and air concerns she might have had but had not gotten time to ask. The participant smiled and expressed, “What made me feel free to talk with you and open up to you is because you said you are in school studying for counseling. I felt that I should help you so that you can pass your training and come and help us; there are many of us who need such talks to feel better in life, in their thoughts, things like that, eeh.”

In response to her comment, I expressed my appreciation to participant KAW for her willingness to participate in the focus group and interview, and for disclosing her painful experiences from multiple loss of loved ones during the PEV and in the fire. I also reminded her of the available free counseling services to her whenever she may need. I reminded her of my mobile number and assured her of the confidentiality of her information. I also informed her of my plan to revisit her to review her interview transcript and validate it. Then I packed my research equipment. Before we left, the participant requested that we close with a word of prayer, as we had opened with it too. So, she prayed for me to succeed in my studies and get back to the field to offer counseling services, and she prayed for herself, thanking God for how far He had brought her and the family in providing them with strength and daily needs and taking care of the orphaned grandchildren. Then she prayed for families who had lost their loved ones to the violence and the fire like her, prayed against any fire outbreaks or any other accidents anywhere, and finally prayed for the travelers that they might travel safely in whichever means they use. When we finished the prayer, participant KAW explained that she always prayed this
way, stating that God put in her heart to keep praying for safety in the roads, against any fire outbreaks, and any other accidents everywhere. Then we thanked her for everything and left. I wrote my reflective journal in the car and labeled the participant’s recorded interview for easy access for analysis at night.

**Individual Interview #16. SMA**

I conducted the 16th and final interview with participant SMA (Altas.ti #P16), a 50-year-old female in her current place of residence. She reported no health problems, although she and her family struggle because of the husband’s chronic health problems associated with the 2007 PEV (see Table 4). The participant registered Form 4/ 12th Grade as her highest level of education. Participant SMA confirmed her personal trauma history as having five trauma incidents that were recurrent and multiple in nature, and were associated with the skirmishes, 2007 PEV, and oil tanker explosion.

After the interview preliminaries, I started the interview by asking Participant SMA to describe these traumatic experiences, as well as those from any other tragedy. Additionally, I asked her to explain how the experiences of the 2007 PEV and fire traumas have affected her life and what it was like to live after what she had experienced. The participant began her experiences with the smaller scale 1997 election-related violence. They had planted maize at a forest close to their home, but she stated that because of the 1997 tensions she “ran at a great loss” because she could not access the field for fear of attack. She added that “we were not affected there at home but did not harvest anything because we had been put on curfew.” In 2002, even though violence did not reach where they were, according to her, they received threatening messages. She shared that “those messages were so strong because they were so threatening that you had to move from where you were.” She continued,
It was 10 a.m. in the morning, we were hearing of fights that it had reached...[our neighboring communities]. So then somebody came and hit the gate, we heard the gate hit by force, “Pap!! Get out! Get out!” I told the children, “Get out!” He told us, “You save your lives or you will finish now.” I asked him what it was, then he said, “You are asking why and yet here they are they have reached up here?” So we did not know it was up there, where; we all got out, we just got out that way...[and] escaped for our lives.

To let participant SMA clarify who she was talking about, I asked, “Who did you say told you to get out?” The participant answered: “It was a young son of my older brother....That day I remember him calling us.” Then she continued to describe their escape to the road where she said:

To reach the road this way, that old man who was here in group with us went to the center of the road and stood waving the machetes this way [demonstrates by waving the hand] so that any vehicle that comes may help transport people. By good luck a bus came. It was carrying over 80 people, but we in return were boarded in too, we were carried like maize, we were a total of maybe 150 in one bus, and we were not charged. They said to carry us and drop us in wherever we find it safe, where we wish to alight at, at least to take us out because they [perpetrators] were coming. To reach [de-identified], we were told to look out and see fire at those sides of [de-identified]. We saw smoke, smoke everywhere. We asked what it was and we were told that they have reached there and also [de-identified] our place. We left without anything, sheep, chicken, cows, everything we left behind and went and alighted there in petrol station in [de-identified]. The bus poured [dropped?] us there.

The participant explained further how they suffered after fleeing away from danger. She expressed that with children and being rained on, she felt defeated about what to do. She finally rented a house “which did not have doors, it was not ...finished, it was under construction.” Although she found this shelter, she explained that they “had nothing in it” and they “were assisted with sacks” by a neighbor. They “slept while seated down,” but were able to buy “food and ate... The next day...”, the ordeal was not over. When they were leaving, they took different routes, and she lost contact with her husband, who reconnected with them two weeks later, after being feared dead. She recalled that “after 3 months when things had calmed down,
my husband came to the farm he told us that the house was there, but they [the attackers] had taken everything else.” They were able to return “when things cooled down around that time,” and when the government had announced that people could return to their homes. Participant SAM explained that her family felt better that the house had remained even though everything had been taken away.

The participant considered the 2007 PEV to have been more severe than the tribal skirmishes of 1997 and 2002. She said, “When it reached 6 p.m. in the evening…I heard people screaming” and “We saw smoke,” as soon as the presidential elections results were announced. The participant stated that when she inquired from her husband what the problem was, he told her that “the house of [de-identified] has been burnt” because “they have said election votes have been stolen.” Further she relayed their response to the fearful situation that, “…my husband left, he went to sleep at the forest. That night there is no one who slept. Screams were everywhere, those scream-signs of great dangers.” I tried to restrain myself from using probes so that the participant would have more time to inform, as she appeared expressive in her communication. Participant SMA conveyed extensively her multiple encounters with life threatening situations:

When I saw the place was getting more dangerous, I told my boys…to go to [de-identified] for safety, ones they left, there was no communication between us. They stayed on their own, and I stayed with the young ones. I did not run away, to speak the truth, houses were being burnt coming this way but I just stayed home. One evening…I heard a child…calling me out, “Mummy, the kiosk is burning.” I got out and screamed…. There was another woman who had run for safety in my house, she came and she quiet me, she told me, “You are screaming yet they are outside here so full and with swords.” I told her, “So now they are burning and we are inside and you are inside wouldn’t we perish?” When I screamed, that kiosk continued burning, they did not know we were inside, so they went to our neighbor’s house…. They broke into that house and looted everything as we watched…they were so many with swords, they returned and burnt it…. That house burnt, it blazed until I thought the fire will catch ours. What helped was [that] the wind was now blowing it away from our house. We watched that house burn until it finished, we did not sleep. The kiosk continued burning….
…I went and called these police officers, which is something which hurt me a lot. I told them, “A house has been burnt in the neighborhood, and we [my disabled son, children, another woman, and I] are inside the house. Why don’t you come and help us to get out and escort us down there?” They told me, “You know this time is that very dangerous period? We cannot come and we do not know if they are inside. If they have not burnt the house, go back and stay there we will come tomorrow morning.” So I saw, “This person is not helping me, so whoever took the seat, now it is all of us getting problems?!” …when I returned, I found the children and that woman had recoiled in the house, I told them, “Now it is dangerous, there is no sleeping….” We just kept quiet in the house until morning, we did not sleep. The next day…we went to the police station….

When we went to sleep there, it was only women and children, we heard the back door broke open. To look, we just saw, young men with swords! What helped us, a police officer came. When we screamed, we squeezed ourselves, we went out and those ones had come in, the police officer shot up in the air…and they got shocked, they retreated back. From out there they went to the front, now we all filled there. The police officers were now 3…. A police officer shot out, at the road, even I remember it lit at the tarmac like fire! There was no car, he shot out and the bullet went whizzing and whizzing! That is what made them run away. So I saw here was also dangerous we cannot stay. That house of mine was burnt but not burnt completely [only] on this side…[of the kiosk]. I told them, even here we will die, here is so dangerous we will die? Why don’t we go back home with the children? We returned home.

Before it was evening we were told, “It is better not to sleep in the house. Look for somewhere you can go.” I dressed the children so heavily, only their faces were left out. Then we went…and slept inside the forest until morning, there is nothing which happened that day. So we came back home and cooked, we used to eat at 4 p.m. once per day. We used to come home cook and eat and we would sleep at the forest. …we just continued to live, I had not left because I had cows, I was coming during the day to release the cows out and go.

So it now reached that maximum…another boy came and asked me, “What are you doing here?” I told him I am defeated on where to go. …he told me, “I have told you to go away.” Eeh he told me, “Turn.” To turn, I saw young men coming, soo many with swords…I stood and saw them this way, likewise they stood. So now I have seen that they are people whom I know, no one was talking, I was not talking to them either, we were just looking at each other…. One of them moved forward and told me, “If we did not know you and we know you are mum and you have never wronged us, we would have paid you equally.” They asked me who was in the house, I told them, “John that disabled son of mine.” …they told me, “Do this, get your child and get out and go away.” They escorted me like police officers…I entered into the house, I got that child and we went through the back way. I stood there at the big rock, I did not go far.

A neighbor was given my big milk gallon and I know him…. The house had a lot of stuff! Even if I try whatever means in my entire life to recover I will not get them.
I saw black smoke as we were standing with that son. I told him; Woih! The house has burnt.” I said, “Surely, couldn’t they just carry everything and leave the house.” [Pause] I screamed there. And it was 1 p.m. now. When I saw the house has burnt I told him, “Let’s go home so what are we doing? To reach home the house was burning with a blaze! Hei! Even I have never seen fire like that. That fire started at 1 p.m. until the following day! Just burning! I did not go away. What was left [was] only the kitchen…. Shortly after, while I was just there thinking, others came. They told me, “Because the house has already been burnt, these iron sheets [roofing tiles] which remained, we will go with them.” I told them, “Why don’t you leave even that kitchen alone, at least to have somewhere I can sleep?” They told me, “Is it that you are going to remain? To do what? You are all going.” I told them if you have seen it is fine that way, it is okay.” My iron sheets [roofing tiles] were stolen as I watched. …I was not talking that time…they gave me KES 1000 and left…. I called my husband who at that time was at the police station, I told him, “The house is completely finished, we do not have anything.” He could not come. He was targeted…. We went to AP’s [Administration Police]…to seek assistance and I was told to stay in a house next to the police post…. 

Participant SMA talked of a reconciliation meeting which was held in the community but turned deadly. She went, “My house has been burnt, the next day was a meeting, the government administrative officers attended. Now things are bad.” Then she explained that “the previous day, two boys from the [de-identified] community were killed by a gunshot…[so] at 5 a.m. again there were screams made just close to home, just there. …[we were in] a house of my in-law, it had been looted but had not been destroyed.” I sought clarification about the scream which increased the commotion. I asked, “You said two boys were killed and so people screamed?” Participant SMA replied: “Two, on that night. At around 4 a.m. they were shot.” The participant explained in detailed the fearful and life-threatening scenario and her immediate reactions to it. She went:

So in that morning, they were coming as they screamed [with terrible sound]…and they were so many! About 300. I saw a boy I knew coming downwards, I was just with this child…. I asked him, “What is it again?” You know I did not know there were people who have been killed. He said, “You don’t know there are two young men who have been shoot dead.” “Who?” [I asked]. “Young [de-identified] men have been killed” [He said]. “By who?” [I asked]. He said, “Hee! The police officers killed the ones who were here.” “So what shall we do?” [I asked]. I told him, “Please tell me. What shall we do?” At the road there are no cars! Even you can stay there [waiting for them] the whole week. No
car heading upward or downward! All of them have been blocked, they cannot pass. So we said it is so bad. There is nowhere we will go. If you walk this direction?! You will meet with [de-identified]. If we go this direction?! It is [de-identified] community. If we go this direction?! It is [de-identified] community. If we return this direction?! [De-identified] community. So there is no way, we are left at the center. I told him, “Sincerely, please tell me, what shall we do?” He told me, “Stop saying ‘what shall we do?’ You will be swept today, there is no one who will remain!” He told me, “If there is a place you can go, look for it and go.” I told him, “Where will I look for it? There are no cars. Couldn’t you even just help me to take us with these children to hide us at your home?” He told me, “Where will you pass through? Even you, tell me where you will pass.” …he told me, “Because today there is no one who will remain, even those from [de-identified] will come! …even those from [de-identified] are on the way and you know they have no mercy.” So there, I saw death for real on my face, even the world turned blue. It was not as usual. When I saw my son, this one who has disability, he does not talk, I said, [pause] “Now what will I do?”

Then the participant shared about playing the two roles of both victim and rescuer. In her brother-in-law’s house, she hid some young men who were running for safety. She tried to escape but realized she had left her son locked in the same house. She decided instead to confront the perpetrators, calling them by name.

Shortly, I saw young men running so fast! The [de-identified] [tribe] so fast! I asked them, “What is it?” They told me, “Sincerely we are dead! Could you help us, please help us.” I told them, “Do this, enter this house.” …even me I entered in. I staayed, I told them, “No, I feel my heart is telling me to get out. …let me lock it.” I locked it. I got out and stood at the path this way as they [attackers] were coming downwards. I felt I was finished! I sat down. They were coming. I saw they were getting closer so I tried to go downwards like walking away. As I walked a short distance, then I thought, “Even this child of mine is inside I have locked him in.” I saw that, “Now, I cannot wait to see that child being killed, let me go and let them kill me.” I went back. As I returned this way, I identified one of them. I said I will call, because there was no other way so where will I go? I called them by name. I asked them, “Now sincerely, you want to finish that child and I have put him in that house?” And inside I knew there were 6 other boys, I had locked them in. They asked me, “Which young man?” “John [name changed] my disabled child, I have locked him inside;” [I responded]. Even I don’t have the voice! I am just talking. “I saw it is better to prevent him…he may come and keep disturbing you yet you are doing your work.” They asked me, “Are you genuine!?” As they kept demolishing it…. One of them, I think he was their leader or what, he was a little bit bigger. He called the rest. He told them, “The child of [de-identified] is inside! …[her disabled son] is inside. Do not demolish it.” …they told me come. I went. They asked me, “Are you genuine there is nobody inside here!? Where is your husband!?” I told them, “He is not there…they left long time even I do not know where…I am just left with that disabled son, I could not release him to go.” “What if we open and find some people
are inside!?” I told them, “If you are thinking I am lying to you, let me open.” So now I was telling God, “God, sincerely where you are, do not allow this door to open.” To hold the key this way trying to open, this one said, “Leave that one! Leave her! Come we go to [de-identified]!” When he said, “Let us go to [de-identified],” all of them went. They left me as I was standing there confused. As they left just this way, I felt I was now regaining some little strength. I opened the door, I told the young men, “Now, that God has helped you. Every one of you go to wherever you can go because by now you would not have been there.” So they left. I took my boy and went to where I was staying…I was still home. Now that one pregnant cow was stolen as I looked at it.

A peace meeting turned perilous, creating a fearful situation again, as participant SMA stated, “It was bad [incident]! Because I remember one young man died.”

So after that shooting of those two young men by the police officers, we were called for a baraza [public meeting]; I think it was supposed to be a peace meeting. Government officials had come, and many other people. Leave alone those young men to come, all of them carrying their swords and here was the government there! So as the meeting was going on with people talking, a police officer tried to cross near us there, those young men woke up wanting to finish him with arrows. So it was again to run. Even the police officers did not shoot them. So it ended up erupting as a big fight! Even those who were there ran away for their lives. …the women from [de-identified] were carrying stones in baskets taking to the men, likewise those other ones have arrows, stones are thrown from here and arrows from there. So it was a fight with stones and arrows! We tried to lock ourselves in the house. It was bad [incident]! Because I remember one young man died. He was hit on the forehead [points it], here. [Pause] to make it even worst, the young men from around there pulled the electric post and blocked the road with it. By good luck, a military car came and removed it; otherwise there was no car which could pass. …soon after, the army helicopter came. It helped rescue people, even those who had been hit with stones and arrows, they were carried on it to [de-identified] hospital and those who had not been hurt were carried by the GSU [General Service Unit] land rovers to [de-identified]. Even us that is how we went and lived in [de-identified]…. That is where life changed and became so difficult. So my children, the one who was at the university had to discontinue because I didn’t have money for his schooling. My daughter who was in college had to discontinue too. The cows which I was selling the milk to get money have gone. So we were living in one house with all my children including the wife of my son, we were renting it for KShs 500 per month. So it was us going for odd jobs to get a house, and we could stay 4 days without food because the money you got, that little, you paid rent. My son who was in school, there was a loan he had taken, what is it called that of university?

In response to her search for the university loan’s name, I answered, “HELB.” She continued narrating about her economic troubles:
Eh, HELB [Higher Education Loans Board]. he had gone to take it to help him with his schooling; but he heard we were in difficult situation. So he came home and told me, “Mum I have some money” …instead of telling me it is that of HELB, he knew I was not going to allow him to use it. He told me that it is what he had been saving whenever we send him petty cash. …he gave us KShs 1000 to pay rent and bought us some food and left. That child came to tell me recently that…he deferred and returned home to do casual work with us for our upkeep. Their father, on the other hand, remained at the police station camp. During that time, he [husband] said, “Since everything has calmed down a little bit, let me go home because it got burnt to check on how it is.” I don’t know how they saw him. While walking at the road exist he was caught by four men and he was beaten! A beating for dead…to see him even you could not recognize him, he was cut on his head, face. I saw I have problems twice: here he is in the hospital, there I have children who have dropped out of school, so what kind of problem is this? He was beaten until the teeth fell off. He stayed home and we kept nursing him with the little that we got, even sometime from well-wishers…. Then the government started Operation Rudi Nyumbani. We registered and were given tents. That time there was calmness everywhere even people had started to return home. We brought our tents home…. Additionally, participant SMA shared emotionally her trauma of being attacked by thugs and the children’s disturbances in their schooling owing to problems faced by the family:

When I went back to [de-identified], I think thugs had heard that IDPs are given some money but we had not been given. At 2:00 a.m. while we were asleep, thugs came to us. Even it was God, I say again even it was God, that my husband was home. They kicked the door, they entered and they had guns and [inaudible segment, cross talk]. …I told him, “So what will we do? We have thugs in the compound.” First when I heard a knock outside, I peeped through the window, then I told him, “Woah! Lights are outside!” He told me those are thugs. I told him, “Let us kneel down and raise our hands up.” I remember I had KShs500 and 30Cts which I had…. [Pause] they kicked the door, they entered. When they came in they found us kneeling down with our hands up. My husband tried to enter under the bed, he could not fit in! I told him, “Wee if it means dying let God [?] we have escaped the arrows we have come to a gun.” When they entered in, they just said, “Simu! Pesa!” [Mobile Phone! Money!]. That phone, I removed it and put out there. I removed the wallet which was just there and I got out that KShs 500. They took that 500 shillings and phone and they told me, “If we hear you! Close your mouth and sleep! …they threw it [phone] out there and left. So you see we got difficulty again the second time? Mmh. My son at the university to hear what had befallen our lives again… We were surprised to see him arrive again. He came back home and said things were overwhelming him…that he was not getting anything in his school work. Then he told me, “Mum, the problem I have, I cannot understand anything. I cannot concentrate…let me go and defer…. ” He paid for us the house rent in a nearby place for two months and went back to school, so we moved from the one of [associated with] thugs. So when he left, I saw, “This child has been hurt so much psychologically, this child has been mentally hurt.” I told him, “Do not come home again; go on with your studies and in case
of anything you give us a phone call.” [Participant sobs]. That child went to school. I started getting odd jobs to help my family…. That child called me telling me, “Mum school fees is needed… I have written a letter to the dean…explained all my problems and deferred my studies.” …my children went back to school; but they were told, “What have you come back for? We will squeeze you to death” …though it was hard but they continued that way, until the term finished….

Additionally, participant SMA related the support they got from an NGO. She reported:

That time now when we entered 2009, then that fire [oil tanker explosion] came up, while we were still living in the tent at home. And there was an NGO who was called KAVO, he had started building houses for people [affected]…we had registered. And we were able to be given that 25,000 shillings and 10,000 [shillings] to buy…[basic needs]. Every household was given 35,000…I tried to calculate that…[and] it was not enough even for the child [fees?] to resume back to school….

SMA also recalled the loss of her mother a few months after the PEV and spoke of her grieving experience, combined with struggles in their living conditions. She stated:

…we do not have a home on this side…[20]08 August. …Mum died; we buried her. All her cows were taken, none was left, so she got shocked and when she saw what had been done to us…she got shocked instantly [pause] eh, and she died…. The problems is death on this side, on this other side are problems, but in all that, we were able to survive it because God gave us strength and it [problems] ended. My young son now whom we left when he was in high school did not do well in Form 4 [phone rings, switched off]. …he kept moving from one person’s house to the other [seeking accommodation] just that way, for 2 years; he got a lot of problems while studying…there was nowhere else he could continue, so life became difficult; there is no money….

I empathized with participant SMA for the difficulties she and her family faced in life.

Then it was time to ask about her current life situation: “In all that you have experienced, how is life now?” Participant SMA spoke mainly about her children’s schooling problems:

Life for sure is still hard because up to now that son of mine has not gone back to school. …I keep saying if I had money he would have gone back to school. But even with that I thought it is good he is gaining some experience. He has continued with that casual work of selling sweets and cigarettes, and he is doing well. …he did sales for those people, so recently he bought a motor bike…I am seeing God has been caring for him, I saw he has rented a house for himself, and he told me he is hoping that another 2 years, he will have saved something so as to resume back to school…. [Another child] came out with a C+
and the girl is in Form 4, [10th grade] but this son, the young one, has not gone to any school.

After the participant finished explaining of the difficulties she and the family currently face, then I probed her to describe an experience, time, person, place or incident that immediately came to her mind or that stood out most vividly to her as she reflected on the experiences associated with her tragedies. Participant SMA related her frustrations and the pain from the entire loss of property. She described:

For sure, those things are not easy to come out of your mind so easily. For example, when I see some of my things that I lost and find them at our neighbor’s place and you cannot get it back, it hurts…. I have to buy a liter of milk so that my children could drink, and yet I had cows. Things like that make you remember what happened. My children never finished their education, and could be they would have been well-off now. So you ask yourself, “What shall I do or what will be done for us so that our hearts can heal completely?” When I had my own cows I used to sell milk and educate my children…and buy them clothes, but now I cannot educate my children, I struggle to get them anything [participant sobs]. If it means the house you are living in, it is the house build for you by the government, a house that even when you see, you have saved money aaall those years, you spent the earnings of your entire life to build a good house for yourself, come and finish just here [sobs]. If it were possible for the children, by now I would not be having problems, this one would have finished university long time. Maybe he would have come to help others, but now, they [attackers] cut short their lives just this way. And there is nowhere you can run to for help…. You regret even the election votes you ask yourself, “Why did I vote?” And even the government had the effort to prevent some things…. I also feel bad when I see those who perpetrated us are people we know, even you have eaten at their home, even you have done many projects together, and they could do that to you. When you ask why they did that to you, they say it was Satan who got into them…. Especially the [de-identified] [her tribe] are the ones who suffered a lot, they did not have someone to fight for them…. [Pause] so I don’t know if another fight will erupt in this coming one ? [election?]. [Pause] but because that one has passed, so we are praying God that it does not come again [Pause: 2 minutes].

I next asked participant SMA what she considered to be meaningful to her in life, considering the experiences she had shared. The participant explained at length what makes life meaningful to her:
Life has to continue despite all that we have gone through whether they are good or bad. And if you are somebody who is saved, who knows God, you pray for everyone including those who were your perpetrators so that they may change. Because those children if I had died, maybe would be suffering a lot now. Maybe this generation which I am in now, in times of difficulties who would be seeing them? Or who would be advising them, to tell them how it is? So even if I passed through all that, I have to stay with my children. I have been able to talk to them that in spite of all that has happened, that is not the end of life; I show them that life is so significant or has a meaning. Because if you have fallen down, will you just stay there not waking up? It is a must that you will wake up and go on with life, it is a must that you eat, it is a must that you...even if all was lost.

Therefore [pause] you tell God, “Help me even to forget,” it reaches some time even you don’t remember! …I say, “God help me, remove it for me completely.” When I am with all my children at home, I would think that if this one had continued with education and finished in such a particular year, he would be this way in life [becomes emotional], but once everyone has gone out and I am just there, sometimes I forget.

Participant SMA felt that keeping herself busy helped in her healing process. However, she expressed the frustrations and stress stemming from the husband’s chronic illness:

Again, keeping yourself busy is so good. It makes one…not remember. Even now for me every day I wake up and go to the farm, I return when I am so tired, [and] I don’t remember? It helps me in my life. Ah, the problem that came now like this husband of mine he struggles with [blood] pressure? So that also make me think of many things. There is no work he can do. For money to be available it is I, if he is needed to go to hospital it is me, if he does a lot of work, it puts him in a tendency to fall down. So I must be staying close to him a lot. So I keep asking myself, “If it wasn’t for this violence associated issues which he thought about sooo much [?])” …he lives on a lot of medication. He uses medicine eeevery day...he started with cheaper…and now to…a more expensive medicine. So in life, you get a lot of experience. And that is why I was saying if I would be able to go and talk to people to tell them to change their thinking, not to repeat something like that another time! That disease which is in my family now…the pain of going through it is so painful. …I always tell God to help me not to think of the things of this world... In all that they did to me, I thank God they never took over the soil [land]. You know if they had taken it, I would not have anywhere to come back to? Sincerely, even though we were affected, even our perpetrators must have suffered psychologically too, maybe as they see what they stole or see those people they burnt their houses. When they see, they remember the owners. And that thing tortures them so much [pause: 1 minute].

Participant SMA stated that she had gained blessings in spite of her tragedies:
There is another NGO there eh…they were coming trying to counsel people, here. They were coming frequently to church, they would talk to us. So when we talked, that was in 2009 just after this fire, they were trying to talk to people to return to ? [Normalcy?]…. So I am happy in life because, they have opened my mind. There were information I did not know but I have known; there were things I would have done without knowing, that now I am informed. So many seminars which they invited us to, I have attended. Already it has helped me psychologically, because even sometime they take me…and they teach and I am usually given an opportunity to talk to people. So even though it happened and people got hurt, there are those among them and others who have benefited in some ways. There is a generation which will not repeat this things [fights]!

When she talked of her services to the community, I wondered if she had that commitment even before her difficulties, or if it started afterward. I asked her, “So when you see how you involve in helping people as you said, how different is your offer of those services now from before?” Participant SMA responded:

Now I have a great urge so much even I have helped many [affected] people. Since that time up to now I have been taken all the way to [de-identified] [district], even I have gone up to [de-identified], have gone to help. There is something which tells me stand! Stand and talk to these [hurting] people. And sincerely, whenever I talk, whatever I say, I see people greatly appreciate. Ayah, for example those victims, my colleagues they did not want to see each other with that enemy. I have talked with them until a person can say, “For sure, let us love our enemies.” Let’s not think it was only the [de-identified] [tribe] alone whom I was talking to; it was inclusive of everybody, a Kenyan! Let us call that person a Kenyan! I have talked until I have talked even to women from [de-identified] community when we were in groups [and] we reconciled with each other. I have talked until I have talked to…I don’t know which other group that I have left out? When you talk in that group, ones you have talked, everyone will come with a thought that, “So so-and-so is not my enemy?” …by doing so we have built a means to connect…[now we do business peacefully]

Then I inquired the name of the group. The participant described the nature of the group and revealed the reconciliation they have experienced in various groups:

It comprises of members from many tribes. There are a lot [of self-help groups] that have been formed but that [de-identified] is the one I am a member, and I have seen it is so nice…. I had been chosen to group in this side of [de-identified], and if it means starting a group project we include all tribes in this group. There in that group we talk to them. And we welcome each other so much, you can drink tea together, until you say, “It looks like this [violence] brought us closer together more than we were before.” We help each
other that way, so we see we communicate well…[and] reconciliation has resumed…even though we were affected God came in between.

When I found that the participant had generated themes which matched those of the previous interviews and had exhausted her information, I gave her an opportunity to ask questions or share concerns before I finished the interview. Participant SMA stated, “… I was taken as a social worker and I counsel those who are HIV positives and pregnant mothers. I was taken; that is why I was saying there is a part I gained; if it wasn’t for that I could not have gotten, based on what I went through I got it, so I wanted to check if I can get some advice from you counselors….” I responded to her question appropriately, although it wasn’t actually the focus of the interview.

Then, I reminded the participant of the available free counseling services and of my mobile phone contacts. Additionally, I informed her of my plan to meet with her later to review a copy of her interview transcript for consensual validation. I also informed her that a copy of the transcript could be generated for her and any other participant upon request. Finally, I thanked Participant SMA for her willingness to participate in both the focus group and interview for this study and assured her of the confidentiality of the information she shared with me. Then we left the participant’s home. In the car, I wrote my reflective journal before lunch and the long journey ahead of us.

**Cross-Case Analysis**

The participants in the two focus groups, who also participated in the 16 individual interviews, expressed thoughts and feelings with numerous comparable phrases of significance, which were even further illuminated in the individual interviews. These phrases of significance generated 23 themes obtained through the Atlas.ti coding system. Table 6 portrays a cross-case
analysis of the subthemes generated from the participants’ phrases of significance which permeated the interviews.
### Table 6.

**Cross-Case Analysis**

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In addition to the generated subthemes shown Table 6, the codes for quotations/phrases of significance are shown in Figures 7a and 7b. Together, these demonstrate that the participants’ experience of the trauma events and their stress reactions exemplify symptoms of acute and posttraumatic stress disorder.

Figure 7a. Screenshot: Atlas.ti coded participants’ acute stress reactions to trauma exposure
Figure 7b. Screenshot - Atlas.ti coded participants’ chronic stress reactions to trauma exposure
Other stressors, including chronic physical illnesses stemming from injuries and struggles with socio-economic challenges and all associated with the skirmishes, the PEV, and the fire tragedy, were evident. The samples of these stressors (risk factors) are depicted in Figures 8 and 9.

*Figure 8.* Network view map illustrating a risk factor: Embarrassing scenario/unhygienic environment.
Figure 9. Network view map illustrating a risk factor, Loss: Life changed completely! (Loss of loved ones, health, friendships/neighborhood, entire property/achieved valuables).
After recurrent and/or multiple atrocities, the participants struggled psychologically, physically, and socially in trying to process their trauma experiences. The participants identified various factors which helped them in the recovery process. The key external ones frequently stated were social support, rescue, protection, and counseling services, while the internal ones included trust in God, personal characteristics, and accepting the reality of the trauma. Figure 10 shows “accepting the reality of the trauma” as a sample of ATLAS.ti-generated key protective factors.

Figure 10. Network view map illustrating a protective factor (sample): Accepting the reality of the trauma
Nonetheless, some of the participants identified external gains from the social support received, and most of them conveyed that they had experienced internal positive changes in the aftermath of the trauma experiences. In addition, because the participants had experienced politically related violence trauma, political and tribal associated information inevitably kept popping up in the interviews, but it was suppressed in order to create opportunity for the data relevant to the research questions. Additionally, the outlier information identified in the interview process was not included in the phrases of significance list. The cross-case analysis table (Table 6) depicts the subthemes that generated the 23 main themes discussed in Chapter 5.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter expounds the participants’ narratives from data collected in two focus groups and 16 individual interviews. The information-rich subjects recruited from the focus groups participated in the individual interviews. Chapter 4 describes the interview process employed, the participants’ demographic information, and the trauma narratives communicated in this study. Additionally, this chapter contains the cross-case analysis table (Table 6), depicting the phrases of significance conveyed by the participants, and Figures 7a and 7b, which portray the subthemes of the negative outcomes of their trauma exposure. In Figures 8 and 9, two network view maps are presented, illustrating the risk factors the participants encountered in their recovery process, and Figure 10 shows one network view map sample of the protective factors that facilitated their healing process. My observation and reflective journal information augmented the data analysis process in this study. The Atlas.ti coding system facilitated the generation of the subthemes from the participants’ phrases of significance; from these subthemes further emerged the 23 main themes discussed in Chapter 5.
CHAPTER V: Discussion

“Courageous people do not fear forgiving, for the sake of peace”

~Nelson Mandela ~ n.d.; Retrieved February 21, 2017
(Former President of South Africa)

It is known in the field of mental health that exposure to stressful and traumatic events can create severe and chronic psychological consequences on those who endure it. Psychotraumatization continues to be a pervasive facet of life in the 21st century worldwide (Jakovljevic et al., 2012). Violent conflicts between nations and groups, state and group terrorism, rape as a weapon of war, the movements of large numbers of people displaced from their homes, gang warfare and mass hooliganism—all of these occur frequently in many parts of the world and have vast effects on health in terms of deaths, physical illnesses, disabilities, and mental anguish (WHO, 2002). Exposure of individuals to political violence, such as being in war zones, post-election violence, and other forms of violent conflicts, has been implicated in various mental health outcomes, including high rates of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety (Sousa, 2013; Stermac, Brazeau, & Kelly, 2008). PTSD is a complex, highly debilitating anxiety and suffering disorder because the past is always present in people as they are haunted by the dread frozen in their memory of traumatic events (Jakovljevic et al., 2012). However, considering the sufferings caused by trauma, a growing body of evidence attests to the experience of posttraumatic growth, a positive psychological change that may be experienced by the survivors of the trauma (Sousa, 2013; Stermac et al., 2008; Trauma, Recovery, and Growth, 2008). Despite experiencing adversity and tough times, individuals can experience psychological and spiritual growth owing to the innate human ability to adapt and thrive (Jakovljevic et al., 2012). Numerous studies have been conducted on war, genocide, and political violence in terms of their impact on the refugee survivors or from an economic,
political, religious, or social point of view (e.g., Bellows & Miguel, 2009; Kryger & Lindgren, 2011; Mattoon (2010; Splevins et al., 2010). Additionally, much research has been done on the negative outcomes—the posttraumatic stress and other trauma-induced disorders—but fewer studies have been performed on the positive aspect: that is, the posttraumatic growth among the civilian survivors of recurrent and multiple traumas from various causes, including skirmishes, PEV, and national level fire explosions.

**Purpose**

Responding to the great need for more information about the effects of skirmishes and PEV on the physical and mental health of the civilians, this research study purposed to illuminate the lived experience of the survivors of multiple and recurrent traumas of the skirmishes, the 2007 PEV, and the 2009 multiple national level fire explosions, among other traumas, in Kenya.

Using van Manen’s (1995) lifeworld existentials as the theoretical framework which guided this hermeneutic or interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), a specific focus of this study was to investigate how these survivors have made meaning out of their experiences of trauma. In addition, Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) bioecological model was used in this line of inquiry to examine the influence of survivors’ risk and protective factors and personal characteristics on their interpretation of trauma at the time of recurrent and multiple traumas, as well as at the present in anticipation of regular imminent traumas.

**Guiding Research Questions**

The four questions guiding the study were as follows:

1) How do the trauma survivors describe their lived existentials (body, space, time, and relationships) in the aftermath of the 2007 PEV and 2009 fire explosions in Kenya?
2) In what ways have the trauma survivors made meaning out of their experiences of the multiple and recurrent traumas?

3) What do the trauma survivors consider to have been the risk and protective factors in their experiences of the 2007 PEV and 2009 fire explosions in Kenya?

4) How have the trauma survivors’ personal characteristics positively influenced their perception of life in spite of their exposure to recurrent and multiple traumas?

This chapter provides a discussion of the findings via the data collected from the trauma survivors. Included in the discussion are the 23 main themes that emerged from the analysis of the data. These themes are organized according to the research questions that guided the inquiry and are discussed in the context of the underlying theoretical frameworks. Following the description of each research question is are the implications of the research for the mental health field. Next, the chapter exposes the limitations of the research, identifies the questions generated from the study, and provides proposals for further research on trauma. A summary concludes the chapter.

**Discussion of the Findings**

Several themes emerged as a result of the data analysis, which are incorporated by way of response to each of the research questions that guided the study. These themes were generated through the Atlas.ti coding system and cross-case analysis. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect the data, and the themes that emerged represent the collective voices of the recurrent and multiple trauma survivors in this study. Sequentially, each of the research questions for this study is hereby discussed in conjunction with the corresponding themes that emerged from the collected data, and the implications for the mental health field are then
described. Theoretical assumptions which framed the study will illuminate consistently the meanings from the participants’ phrases of significance.

**Research Question #1. The Lived Existentials**

Van Manen’s (2011) four lifeworld existentials and Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological model (1979) were used to analyze, as well as to form, the first question: “How do the trauma survivors describe their lived existentials (body, space, time, and relationships) in the aftermath of the 2007 PEV and 2009 fire explosions in Kenya?” Eight themes emerged from this question. The participants’ descriptions of their experiences developed into negative themes concerning the sense of fear, loss, frustration, hopelessness, betrayal, grief or pain, and anger consistently reflecting their corporeal reactions to the traumas. Nonetheless, the participants described experiences of healing, hope, and life goals, and they have passion for those who are hurt. For example, they often stated that “Life must continue” or “Challenges come and pass.” Their responses spoke volumes of their reactions of pain and sorrow when their bioecological systems were harmed, tampered with, destroyed, or made insecure by the violence and fire traumas.

In the entire interview process, the participants’ narratives mirrored the lived space, body, time, and relationship—all of the lived existentials which framed the research question. With the highest frequency of 57 and a lowest of one in Atlas.ti Code Manager, the lived existentials were used with emphasis to an average of the following: Lived space, 57; lived body, 44; lived time, 48; and lived relationship, 45. Samples of phrases of lived space included “We had to move from there to here, one place to another because of skirmishes”; “We cannot dwell in what happened, we have to find a solution”; and “I thought that you have to move on.” The descriptors for lived body were “I was hearing things passing over our heads, and I was carrying the children”; “Now, life is now not bad, my heart has settled”; “I blocked it to myself, I blocked
it and encouraged my heart”; “I heard things going weeeh! Weeeh! Me, I thought…”; “Then I became mad! I screamed”; “those ones who wanted to rape me”; “when I see that person, Damu inatoroka (my blood rush)”; “I was now feeling so hot! My heart was beating so so soo fast”; “we have heated tummies because….”; “he bend my head and put me in those leaves”; and “I have never seen somebody like that. He had swollen!!”, etc. Statements on lived time included, “There were a lot of historical injustices that were not addressed and even today they are not addressed”; “After I year and 5 months we were able to bury our beloved ones”; “Living in the forest, I mean, out for 7 years, is not easy because I returned just recently”; “Like me, I see life now is the same, I do not see good things or what, I keep seeing it is all the same”; and “The sufferings that I have gone through since that 2007 until now, I have gone through a lot of hardships.” Phrases of emphasis on lived relationships include the following: “I felt that they were also my enemies”; “I was helped; I did not, eh, I did not get [psychological] sickness. But you see, for my husband that thing became devastating”; “So I cried [was worried] for him,” and “I have put in my mind that I will live with my family until that day when God comes to take me home.”

**Theme #1: Fear**

In the two focus groups and the 16 interviews conducted, the participants, in describing their experiences, reiterated themes relating to fear and of being in a fearful environment.

Merriam Webster’s dictionary defines *fear* as the “painful emotion experienced in the presence or expectation of danger” (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2016).

**Lived space: Fearful environment.** Lived space—the pre-verbal felt space—was described as being in a dangerous and fearful environment owing to the attacks and curtailed freedom of movement resulting from the insecurity caused by the violence and the fires. The
participants related the frightening scenario they faced and the sense of insecurity they experienced and demonstrated how their lived space became instantly unusual during either two or all three of the tragic incidents: namely, the skirmishes, the 2007 PEV, and the 2009 fires. They reacted to their stressors with intense fear. For the participants, life became short and the world frightful. Example of phrases the participants used are as follows: “He told me, ‘Now we are finished, here they are! Let’s hide here!’”; “You are asked, now one could ask you; ‘Who are you?’ The fight got so severe until the plane came to stop it….”; and “how I saw the interference of freedom of my life and how things go.” In this way, participants expressed their internally perceived sense of peril in relation to the violence. The participants used statements such as “I couldn’t, inside there [mortuary], eih! There, even one can die” and [concerning the oil tanker explosion] “We saw that dark smoke. He told me, ‘Isn’t it an oil tanker which had fallen? People were full there and they have gotten burnt!’” In Focus Group #1—Amani, participant SJM revealed, “Whenever we were attacked, then we would move to the [police] station, whenever we went back they would come and attack us…after one week that is when they now burnt everywhere completely!” The participant manifested a great sense of insecurity and fear as she explained, “They would burn one line until it’s finished, next day you move. The next day they would burn the next line, then we would move to the next and they would come and burn that, like that….?” Focus Group #1 participants conveyed:

…to turn this way, he told me; ‘Now we are finished, here they are! Let’s hide here!’ We put down the box! He held my head, bent me down at the fence, he plucked leaves and he, eh, we threw on ourselves! They came with jerrycans of petrol.

…requested the police officer to take us to the hospital. So he told us, ‘Now, you see they have burnt tires there at the junction, where will we pass? Even us security officers we cannot pass.’ In the morning at 9:00 a.m. they would meet at the road. They would meeeteet, many young men…. (SJM).
[After being attacked and injured] I was taken to the hospital. On, that same same day, screams started at the hospital again! [I heard that] all the jeneza [coffin] shops have been burnt...as it was so dangerous, again, fights erupted in [de-identified] town. You are asked, now one could ask you; ‘Who are you?’ The fight got so severe until the plane came to stop it…. Over there! People were full there now cutting each other! [Cross talk]. Over there it was now killing each other not a joke! ...the plane came showering arrows, [cross talk; group laughter] s a bullets and all that everywhere (SSN).

The Focus Group #1—Amani participants share further about their sense of fear in the individual interviews:

The [2002 skirmishes]...we heard the gate hit by force, “Pap!! Get out! Get out!” I told the children, “Get out!” He told us, “You save your lives or you will finish now.” I asked him what it was, then he said, “You are asking why and yet here they are they have reached up here?” So we did not know it was up there, where; we all got out. (SMA)

I am talking of how I saw the interference of freedom of my life and how things go that way. …first, I saw a place where there was smoke, like a house burning and before I even made up my minds whether to continue with my journey or return back, then I met those people so I had to go ahead and...they tried to stop me but I refused to stop and moved so fast; I pedaled the bicycle up a steep hill so fast. By good luck a police vehicle came behind me. That is what rescued me.…. That time, clashes were all over and we were so worried. (SAM).

In Focus Group #2—Upendo, participant EMT thought that she was going to die: “So while we were there we could hear the bullets hitting the trees, eh, cedar trees. There we were told; ‘Lie down, we are being shot.’” Further, she expressed her fears that “[w]hen we lied down, we could hear the sound of bullets; there were now gun shots. We were told that ‘[a]ready the bullets are close to us.’” Participant EBT related a fearful experience in escaping danger during the 1992 skirmishes saying, “So I didn’t know anything could happen, so as we passed, we were seeing the [de-identified tribe] houses were burnt, we could see the [de-identified other tribe] houses were also burnt on the other side.” Remarks from other participants revealed their fear as well:
I passed through a lot of challenges, we boarded a lorry which took us under a flattened tent [no booth]; but God is good because I am still alive. When we reached [de-identified] the lorry was stopped and it was at night, young men, the attackers climbed up and stepped and stepped all over the tent trying to check on whether there were people inside…. I was praying God that the child may not be stepped on because stepping on him, things would erupt badly but he was not touched, so we passed through there. We were rained on so much and we reached town at around 5 a.m. (KAM, FG #2).

I saw all the types of weapons which the [de-identified tribe] have… I mean, I have never seen in my life! Eh! So they were bringing injured people while holding their pangas [machetes], axes, and other weapons and they tell you, “Doctor please, help this one in critical condition please, please attend to this one first” [Cries] So I just attended to them, I said, “If they will cut me in the process, [cries] even You, God, You will know I was doing my work.” So I did it, until 2.00 p.m. that [de-identified] friend of mine kept calling me saying, “Please come and check on your house, come see whatever was left…[by my perpetrators cum patients].” (EPT)

The violence, the fires, and other traumas subjected the participants to several atrocious situations. Although the thuggery and gun shots and finding dead bodies along the road or in the farms were not directly related to the skirmishes/PEV attacks, the incidents contributed to their sense of being in a precarious world. They recounted:

At the end of that one week, at night we heard, “Guh guh guh!” “What is it?” …who wanted to steal that money from that neighbor, so next to our house was a police officer. When people started screaming the police officer shot on air to scare [away] the gang. To shoot out, I also was outside, one of the shots [bullet shell] fell on me here [points on the foot]. I told my husband, “Here I will not stay because I left there where it was dangerous.” (SJM).

…another shocking thing is to find someone cut…. I found two people slashed and dead in 1992…. “If somebody is killed and the face is cut and cut [illustartes with rubbing of palms] beyond recognition…. The slashing was so intense beyond recognition, you could just see that it was a person but was difficult to recognize. Those pictures disturbed my mind so much and I got so afraid of going even to visit other areas…when you hear of those associated with such issues, you fear (SAM).

When it reached 6 p.m. in the evening… and I got out and told my husband, “Aih I heard people screaming, what is it?” …he told me, “Eeh come out and see” We saw smoke. I asked him, “What is the smoke for?” He told me that the house of [de-identified] has been burnt…. I asked him why. He said, “They have said election votes have been
stolen.” …my husband left, he went to sleep at the forest. That night there is no one who slept. Screams were everywhere, those scream signs of great dangers.

The next day we did not sleep in that compound…we went to the police station…. When we went to sleep there, it was only women and children, we heard the back door broke open. To look, we just saw, young men with swords! What helped us, a police officer came. When we screamed, we squeezed ourselves, we went out and those ones had come in, the police officer shot up in the air…[and] they got shocked, they retreated back. From out there they went to the front, now we all filled there. The police officers were now three…. A police officer shot out, at the road, even I remember it lit at the tarmac like fire! There was no car, he shot out and the bullet went whizzing and whizzing! That is what made them run away. So I saw here was also dangerous we cannot stay. That house of mine was burnt but not burnt completely [only] on this side…[of the kiosk]. I told them, even here we will die, here is so dangerous we will die? Why don’t we go back home with the children? We returned home. (SMA)

When I was working now, the most, eh, worrying time was when people were armed with all sorts of arms and standing [laughs mildly] next to you [as you are] managing a patient. That is the time I just used to say, “God! Let nothing happen to me!” …as there were those machetes or what that people had that I had never seen in my life [laughs mildly]…. It really made me fear eh what can happen at any time, eh. [Pause] and then now the side of my house when people were cutting the cows while alive. Just in my compound. …and they have all their…weapons again there. Eeh? That is a time that I’ll never forget. (EPT)

They were calling each other. Eh, from every corner and it is at night, and then fears became overwhelming…. They burnt another woman’s house…. What accelerated everything was, that same time, others had already burnt [houses] from [de-identified] and [villages] coming toward our farm….eh we hid in another electric fenced farm. So when we heard the noises here, we would go to the other side, again we would hear others. When we went to the other side, then we would hear some in that side, then we would run to the other, so they had surrounded that farm; in fact, it was only God who saved us…. (SMW)

At night around 10 p.m. I started hearing stones thrown on the roof of my house… She [wife] told me, “Aren’t those stones? Wake up!”…on opening the door, I saw over 50 spot lights/torches lighting toward me and the scene looked like the moon light. (Pause). And my hut thatched kitchen was on fire [cross talk]. To open the door, so it was a group. I tried to wrestle with them trying to protect the kitchen but immediately I saw they were many, then I instantly went back into the house (SSK).

I saw [the Kenya] Red Cross vehicle going…when I reached there I found they had carried the burnt bodies…. I tried going round that area and I got four bodies…. (KAM)
**Lived body: Fear and acute stress.** In this study, the participants discussed their lived body in terms of their fearful, acute and chronic reactions to their trauma experiences. They communicated unceasingly their experience of intense fears due to the horrific incidents they faced and struggle with enormous emotional pain for the loss of property and or health. Their described acute reactions to the terrifying situations reveal their interpretation of their corporeal existentials, their bodies being at risk, in pain, or other unpleasant situations. Phrases like, “My heart was beating! Even I felt like it was going to stop,” and “I was not myself!” were some descriptors of the participants’ corporeal acute stress reactions to their stressors. Such statements demonstrate the participants’ reactions to the trauma events with shock from the overwhelming fears and dissociation and the unconscious attempt to avoid facing the trauma. Additionally, the participants expressed their emotional pain and sense of hopelessness in response to the destruction of their microsystems and exosystems, their safe havens, and their helplessness as they watched their property being looted.

In both focus groups and individual interviews, the participants discussed their fears and acute stress reactions to their stressors as a result of being harmed and shocked by the attackers’ destructive acts and their weapons and horrified by the callous fire explosion. The “fight or flight” response and helplessness reactions were noticeable among the participants.

In Focus Group #1—Amani, the participants described their acute reactions to their trauma experiences. In the group, participant SAM described his fight reaction to the PEV: “When violence started, so end up in fighting for self-defense because you have the livestock, you have the house, and all that.” In the group, participant SJM described her fear: “I trembled! I wet myself [urinated]! [Pause] I went numb eh until I fell down. He came back to pick me at around 7 p.m. [Pause] I was not myself!” Here, she refers to how she psychologically detached
herself in reaction to being harmed and consequently losing her property entirely. In the group, participant SOA also described his acute stress reaction of a panic attack to the tragic loss of his pregnant daughter to a car accident, saying, “I felt bad in my whole body, all over including my feet, I heard that I fell down [fainted]; I do not know. It wore me out until I felt heat in my head, it hurt me until I was exhausted, aih!” Likewise, in the group, participant SMW expressed her struggle with blood pressure, a psychological reaction to the trauma which she said she had developed immediately after the loss: “One night while in the tent I prayed, the prayer was not ending; I tried to sleep, the sleep could not come; since there and then, I got [blood] pressure.” Then she identified her problem as she explained how she described her situation to the medical doctor saying, “For sure I told him, ‘I did not sleep at all, even for 5 minutes! I was just putting myself down, I was feeling dizzy with my head moving here, here, and here in this direction [demonstrates while touching the head].’ So I was examined and was told it was the torments that I faced which were disturbing me.” Further, the Focus Group #1—Amani participants revealed:

I asked him surely, “That house will be burnt when I am watching?” I told him, “I will scream.” He told me, “Don’t scream. There are others coming from that side.” I told him I will scream, then he held my mouth closed [slight laughter] so that I do not scream. He told me, “The night is approaching and we are the only ones left behind. Everybody else has escaped it is just us alone.” That house burnt down, entirely, while we were watching at the bushes. I trembled! I wet myself [urinated]! [Pause] I went numb, eh, until I fell down. He came back to pick me at around 7 p.m. [Pause] I was not myself! (SJM).

I told her [wife], “God! So they are many!” I asked her to give me a panga [machete] to defend myself with it…. Immediately, I tried to return inside, I was hit by this arrow [points at the left hand side lower neck] and on turning I was hit by a stone on my cheek [presses on the scar]. My [de-identified] neighbor [from the perpetrators’ tribe] who has been like my mother, on seeing my house was burning, and many young men around, she screamed out loud [pause], begging them not to kill me saying, “Do not kill.”
Comparably, Focus Group #2, participants discussed their acute reactions to the stressors. 

Participant SMA started a chronological narrative of her encounter with the violence starting from when she got life threatening messages during the skirmishes to violent attacks in PEV. She began, “When that one [of 1997] came, it affected us so much because it came with might until we had to escape from here and move to live in…to return we found all our property which we had left had all been looted! We started life afresh. We found that time the house was left but everything was finished.” Participant ETK said, “…when we escaped, then they came and burnt the house…. It was so painful watching your house burning, all your properties going down to ashes and everything entirely destroyed, it was not easy.” Weeping painfully in response to the PEV terrible attacks and losses, she continued, “Me, I cried so tearfully because I saw my husband has been cut, my cows have been cut, [clears throat] eh, the houses have been burnt…my son has been hurt, he sustained foot injuries…. So it was a bad experience; it was so painful because now we had left home, we had nothing, we were going to look for somewhere for accommodation, a place to live.” Participant EMT also stated, “Another thing which traumatized me is fire. [In 19]92 I saw houses burning.” Participant SMA continued the discussion by describing her multiple traumas of the 2007 PEV and her responses to them with loss of strength, trembling, and screams. She described her perception of the stressor saying, “But the way they were coming I saw, ‘aih! These people are dangerous.’ …so when he was trying to persuade them to leave us, I was seeing how rough they were…those young men are inside the house, and here they are, they have started to pull down the fence.” The participant revealed her physical reaction to the trauma saying, “To reach home I found that I could not do it again; I was shaking, I had lost strength, I got out and sat down there.” She also expressed her fight-or-flight reaction to the danger: “I told her, ‘I do not want to see them dying, let me go to
where they are for them to kill me before they kill those young men and my disabled son in the
house.’ I went toward that group of people…then they told me, ‘Get out of our way!’ I sat at the
fence.”

The appalling experience of the violence challenged the participants’ corporeal
existentials and caused destruction to their home environment, the microsystem. Participant
ECT responded to the trauma experience with reactions akin to psychological depersonalization
symptoms. In the group, she revealed her psychological dissociation in reaction to the stressors
saying, “I returned, I had a courage, one that I do not know where it came from…in fact I almost
got hit by electricity. I do not know, I wasn’t myself…it was not me; I saw some items which
were not burning….so I almost removed it….” Further, the Focus Group #2—Upendo
participants described their ordeal as follows:

…they found us home. In fact it was God alone who spoke to them, otherwise they could
have killed us because they slashed my cows when I was there. When they started to burn
our maize which we had harvested, I told them, “You could have left that maize so that
you eat instead of just burning it”…then the group retreated back saying that for sure…
but they [another group] burnt it later…. So when they retreated, then we tried to get out,
now to escape…[but] another group came! …they started to quarrel us and my husband
told them, “Why are you cutting the cows?!” Then they cut my husband's hand and hit
our son with a stone. So my husband got cut [on his hand?] and our young son got injured
on his foot. [Pause] so then we ran away, then they came and burnt the house…. (ETK)

When it reached night time, we started seeing that houses have been burned, we were
seeing fire and hearing gun shots. Twak! Twak! When we got out, you could see fire
going up, fire going up. So we started fearing for our lives. That night we started ferrying
our things outside. And at midnight, we went out completely and went to the maize
plantation; the maize had not been harvested. Then the children, my grandchildren now,
started crying…. But that was not far from home! Ehe. So we spent the night there. There
was no sleep even. …there were people who had gone to seek refuge in a nearby church;
all of a sudden, they came so many of them like what? ‘Kama siafu!’ [like an army of red
ants]. For real, they came the children, the women, even the women! [With head
gestures]. I was shocked to see the women coming with stones in baskets. We had to
move backward [away from them]. [Pause] So when they arrived they started to burn;
others were trying to loot things while others were burning and the house was semi-
permanent. [Pause] all that was there! (ECT).
Likewise, the fire explosion tragedy survivors and the victims’ affected family members described the same experience of fear with similar acute stress reactions to the stressor. The participants used such descriptors as “And God help me to be whatever it will be,” and “I told her; ‘If the children have perished, it is most of mine who have died, because there is no one, no one here’” as a result of getting shocking messages about the fire explosion. The same reactions surfaced in the participants’ discussions in both the focus groups and the individual interview sessions. Upon relating her reaction to the traumatic multiple loss of loved ones to the fire explosion, participant KAW revealed experiencing the world as unreal or dreamlike. In Focus Group #1, she expressed:

…she told me, “You are saying so, but I have heard that your son…was the first one to be rushed to [de-identified] hospital…?” When she told me that, I got shocked…. When I heard that, I left the house…. I met with his father. He told me, “Now, things are bad, our son, I heard has passed on.” Then I asked him, “Has passed on how?” He told me, “You are in the house, but you do not know people have perished in the oil [fire].” There there! Me, I could not move further, me, I returned home. There is a woman who came to our home and told me, “Have you heard what has gone on?” I told her I have heard, but I am unable to do anything anymore. I told her, “If the children have perished, it is most of mine who have died, because there is no one here.” In that fire I lost [many of my children]…. There! Stress started. I did not see if the world is real or what….

Similarly, in the individual interview, participant KAN narrated extensively his experience with the horrifying fire and psychological dissociation was apparent in his acute reaction. He portrayed:

…it was like video show because you wake up, you see it like it is not a reality, even you are not there, because at the front, there are people already they have burnt, at the sides they are burning you hear somebody just [crying out], “Nipoeshe! Nipoeshe nipoeshe!” [Cool me down! Cool me down! i.e. extinguish the fire] but there was no gap to do that, so me I cried for what? …even me I was not believing it’s real that I am there. …to reach home…[and] I was bare footed. That thing had made us drunk, and most of the senses could not perform that much more so the mind, I remember I took bath just there….at a water tap…[outside the house in the open].
Participant SMA experienced the same reaction with intense fear as evidenced by her sense of hopelessness and the way she talked to God: “I said; ‘Now if you see the phone [cross talk] has cut off he is not there. So what will I do? Where will I go?’” in response to information about the fire tragedy. She narrated:

I told him, “Don’t tell me that they have perished, yet three of my children are in that side! What will I do now?” I told him, “What will I do?” I made a phone call to my sister who lives around there. To receive the phone call I asked her, “Have you seen my children there cutting timber?” She told me, “Yes, they were here but they have left.” I asked her, “And have you heard that there is fire?” She said, “Even me, I heard about that fire and have been defeated on how to talk because I am not sure if they have reached there.” ...I said let me call James [name changed] to check if they are safe. To call, the phone ruuung. I sat down. I said, “Now if you see the phone [cross talk] has cut off he is not there. So what will I do? Where will I go?” I tried I said, “Let me try again a second time.” “And God help me to be whatever it will be,” [I said]. When I tried a second time, I heard it has been received. My heart was beating! Even I felt like it was going to stop.

In the even freer environment of the individual interviews, the participants relayed similar fearful experiences, acute stress, and other traumatic reactions to their calamities.

Participant SSN expressed experiencing overwhelming fears and a near-death feeling as he expressed the moment saying, “…a major problem which I saw, is that when there is a battle and
a person have been wounded, if there are no people like Red Cross, it can be difficult because that time I saw there were no police officers to help you, there were no Red Cross. Where you were again those whom you were with were also fearing to help because they were in danger, even them the enemies were chasing them.” Similarly, participant SMW expressed her stress reactions to trauma, saying, “It is that I got so much shocked during that violence, I got shock until when I went to see the doctor I was told that if I were pregnant I would have lost my baby, I got shocked so much.” Additionally, the participants expressed:

It was 2007…when I got shot with an arrow, there was a hideout in the forest where the women were hiding in…. I ran, while the arrow was still in my body. When she [wife] saw me she came from her hideout and took me to go with them. To try to cover it, it was not closing because it was still bleeding…. So I had to, my wife died with me because she run with me while I still had an arrow [on my right leg]. We held each other because it was late in the evening, we went all the way to the forest. Again where we went to, [raised tone of voice] again we got chased!! Until it was like I did not have the arrow, I saw death! [Becomes emotional, raised tone of voice, and hand gestures] [Cross talk]…there were shrubs, we threw ourselves in there (SSN).

When those attackers came…. You become helpless. I mean, It is like eeh, [struggles to express self] I don’t even know how to express it...[switched to tribal language to express herself] you see it like, there is no life anymore! I mean, you see it like you are not there anymore! You feel like life has ended. I felt that the world was coming to an end [ends tribal language].

Participant SMA described how she encountered recurrent and multiple traumas saying, “[After the 1992 skirmishes] we were chased out of the rental houses. We decided to return… We stayeed, election time came again. In 2007…. Then the participant shared similar experiences of ‘seeing death’ and ‘the world turning blue’ in her reaction to the fearful PEV stressor too. She described:

…they were coming as they screamed, [with terrible sound]…and they were so many! About 3:00, I saw a boy I knew coming downwards, I was just with this child…. I asked him, “What is it again?” You know I did not know there were people who have been killed. He said, “You don’t know there are two young men who have been shoot dead.” “Who?” [I asked]. “Young [de-identified] men have been killed” [He said]. “By who?” [I asked]. He said, “Hee! The police officers killed the ones who were here.” “So what shall
we do?” [I asked]. I told him, “Please tell me. What shall we do?” At the road there are no cars! Even you can stay there [waiting for them] the whole week. No car heading upward or downward! All of them have been blocked, they cannot pass. So we said, the way it is, it is so bad. There is nowhere we will go. You will not if you walk this direction?! You will meet with [de-identified]. If we go this direction?! It is [de-identified] community. If we go this direction?! It is [de-identified] community. If we go this way, I mean if we return this direction?! [De-identified] community. So there is no way, we are left at the center. I told him, “Sincerely, please tell me, what shall we do? He told me, “Stop saying ‘what shall we do?’ You will be swept today, there is no one who will remain!” He told me, “If there is a place you can go, look for it and go.” I told him, “Where will I look for it? There are no, there are no cars. Couldn’t you even just help me to take us with these children to hide us at your home?” He told me, “Where will you pass through? Even you, tell me where you will pass.” …he told me, “Because today there is no one who will remain, even those from [de-identified] will come! …even those from [de-identified] are on the way and you know they have no mercy.” So there, I saw death for real on my face, even the world turned blue. It was not as usual (SMA).

Participant EPT also reacted with shock (blood rush) in response to her stressor. She expressed:

I was trying my best to handle him, but instead he abused me in front of other patients, and I think it was because of emotions that he had, but up to date imagine when I see that person: Damu inatoroka [my blood rush]; he really abused me. I cannot remember the words, but he really abused me. He said he does not want the [de-identified] to serve him, eh, that we fight them and we pretend that we can handle them, that he cannot even trust the treatment that we give, so [pause for 2 minutes, becomes emotional] (EPT).

Still in the individual interview sessions, participants EBT and EMT stated their experiences of fear and rejection from their communities. For participant EBT, being in a mixed marriage put her in jeopardy as she revealed, “I felt that they were also my enemies: suppose I was got by the [de-identified] [husband’s tribe] men, they would have raped me; if I was got by the [de-identified] [her tribe] men they would also have raped me. So I went…to [multiethnic place]…during war I realized that I was in danger.”

**Lived time: Fear of repeating traumas.** In all the interviews, the participants conveyed their fear of recurrence of skirmishes, political violence, or fires (see Figure 12). As Moehler et al. (2009) highlighted, post-election violence is not an isolated event; rather, it traces back to decades of political and economic grievances and their accompanying history of collective
conflict. The recurrent nature of the participants’ catastrophic experiences and the unpleasant political statements contributed to their fear of repeating traumas. The participants described how painful it was when previously the violence had destroyed their microsystems—their homes, the church, work place, peers, etc., and interfered with their interpersonal relationships, causing enmity, distrust, and separation between neighbors, church members, friends, and colleagues. The participants also reiterated their consistent prayer against any form of fire outbreak and other accidents. Although the exact phrase was not used during the interview process enough to be reflected in the frequency in Atlas.ti code manager, the statement “We are praying that it does not recur,” seemed to be echoed in the participants’ closing remarks in almost every interview conducted for this study.

In addition, the participants communicated their fearful reactions to unpleasant politically related messages from the news media, other negative political and tribal related communications through other means, and the deliberations of the approaching political elections in public domains. However, it was evident in their communication that the participants have progressively healed from their previous traumas. Below are samples of their descriptions, which demonstrate their fear of repeating traumas associated with the skirmishes and the PEV.

These are from Focus Group #1—Amani:

What keeps coming into my mind when I think of those issues is that, I keep asking myself, “Why is it that after every 5 years we have to go back there?” …tribalism is what has made us have this violence issues every time…. It is that politicians keep giving fake promises, just lying to get votes, they give especially to the youth that there will be jobs and money for business [micro-finance]…when they get our votes, they go and stay in their offices and start fighting each other. People follow them for their promised jobs, follow them…until they give up. Specifically! The youth have given up, no jobs, they are frustrated, most of those who burnt houses were hopeless youth…. If the politicians were to give…the youth something to keep them busy, even they would not be thinking of things like that which keeps coming to us after every 5 yrs. To say the truth…we have heated tummies because we are worried 2017 is here, getting nearer; we don’t know how it will be, because it has become like a tradition after every 5 yrs., we have a lot of fears
and we are shaking. But, we would request them to…use their politics in a way that do not bring hatred between this ethnic group and other ethnic groups [cross talk].

But, we are praying God that violence does not recur. Politicians ought to know: let them talk and be in unity because we are the ones who suffer, them they sit together and eat together, we are the ones who are affected (SAW).

Similarly, issues which were tantamount to the fear of repeating traumas were part of the major concerns the participants discussed in Focus Group #2—Upendo. For fear of a repeat of the ordeal, participant ETK and EBT discussed the need for antiviolence awareness campaigns, implicitly recommending violence prevention strategies:

Whenever I am alone and remember of those issues concerning clashes, I keep thinking that I wish I can share with more people; I mean to talk to as many people as much as I can so that they cannot go back to the same problems! They may not get aggravated and think of repeating those issues of conflicts! So I feel, if it were possible for me [then I could] share with as many people as I can because I went through it, to make them understand so that they may not ever think of going to do that again, or even think about the violence. …I have a lot to share from my personal experience of the effects of those fights from what I have gone through so that they understand the impact of violence in order to avoid even thinking of [it]. I don’t even know whether I have expressed it well, eh how to fully express it. [Pause] so that they may not think of ever perpetrating violence again (ETK).

I keep asking myself why the government cannot organize and start civic education, to educate the people to be fully aware not to be cheated…. Because when it is election time…. For us we saw that violence is bad, but the generation coming next…[need] to teach the children. To teach them that we ought to live this way, to live in unity, not to bring tribalism again…or in politics…so that they will not go to violence again (EBT).

The rest of the group participants communicated their fears as well. Their discussion involved waiting for the forthcoming 2017 elections to pass so as to consider cultivating their government-allocated farms in the interior, investing in the education of children over business facilities which may be burnt, and other expressions of fear for any eventuality:

That is why we are saying if it does not recur something else like that other one, we are able to do what? …to sustain ourselves, we can go and cultivate just like that…. The only problem now is that where they gave us the farms, there is a lot of fear. Where you have been beaten by a snake, you look out like this, [demonstrates] you do what? So those
farms you see we do not farm them ourselves, we rent them out we come and rent where? Here, while observing! Especially we are waiting for this year, to wait for this other election to see how it will? But we are fearing people we met there…. (KAN).

Beforehand I was mean to myself… I would not buy the kids best clothes because I want to save. But these days…I say, “Suppose these people come and burn, everything will be burnt, what am I saving for?” These days I don’t save to buy material things, but I invest in education so much. But beforehand I would not invest in education, I would say, “Ah! Why can’t I start a business?” I would tell my children like that, but these days I am investing in education and these days I just feel that, [pause] ah, life is not permanent…. I know there is a day all of us can be the same because there were those ones with stone [concrete] buildings, there were those ones with jikos [huts] and they were burnt just within a short time, and we came to live at the same [tent?] (EBT).

Wah! In that violence for sure, it is something bad. I was just imagining if it had gone for 1 more week, I was imagining of Rwanda [genocide]… I could imagine if it had gone 2 more days it would have been like Rwanda. Violence is bad! It is so traumatizing, it is, eh, I don’t know how to explain but it is bad, Mmh? Even now if it starts again I don’t even know how [laughs] I just hope it doesn’t recur again, mm (EPT).

Equally, in many individual interviews, the participants shared their fears for the potential recurrence of the political violence. Participant EBT reiterated her commitment to educate her children over starting a business which, as she stated, may get burnt: “…I would not invest too much in education. I would like, educate someone and say; ‘Ah! Wacha afike Form 4” [Ah! Let him/her reach Form 4/12th Grade; EBT]” but recognized her change in favor of her children furthering their education. Other participants expressed similar fearful feelings about the violence. They relayed: “…this violence should not recur again. It was this violence which brought a lot of problems, brought poverty in families, and differences, eh. Even those young children who didn’t finish schooling do not live in happiness; every time they keep on remembering what they did, what? What they saw, what happened” (KAW). “So, life at the moment is good, if another violence will not recur” (SOA). Additionally, others said,

If there will be compensation for the affected, let us address skirmishes from 1992 going onwards. Let us not forget those who were hurt in 1992, 1994, 1997; it’s like we address what happened today and the yesterdays are forgotten, but they should also be compensated, let us address the historical injustices. Like the politics are the historical
injustices that caused the skirmishes. Let us look at the historical injustices that are in Rift Valley [Region] that because I don’t like when my children are settled now, they again experience what I went through. That is what I feel. (EBT).

Violence is bad! It is so traumatizing, it is, eh, I don’t know how to explain, but it is bad, Mmh? Even now, if it starts again I don’t even know how [laughs], I just hope it doesn’t recur again, mm.

I cannot just imagine eh such conflict again arising when I am in the same place, I think I will fly [laughs mildly]. Eh, it was it was terrible, eh…. Eh, I, I’ve, ah, I’ve resettled, yah. I’ve moved on, ah, and I just hope the same doesn’t happen again, yah (EPT).

…I always tell God, that violence may not recur again…. I agree with him and he is a young child, so I agree with him, and I told him, “Let us pray God, so that that issue may not recur because it took us backward, it brought a lot of loss.” …we became vulnerable, poor and lived as beggars. As it is, us, the common men, we suffered the loss of lives and property, as we stayed vulnerable receiving supplies for IDPs (SMW).

…for this violence to erupt…it was because many young men were jobless…. They said Kazi kwa vijana [Jobs for the youth!], but the youth were promised jobs that were not given to them; they are idle…. If the government would try all means to help them… If they can get jobs, then when such kinds of disputes arise in the future, because they will not be available, the old men would not go for fights that long. Therefore, that is how I see, it may help people so that this kinds of problems may not recur (SMA).

There is a lot of tribalism... We are so worried that we start selling our land. Even the development we should be doing, is very little. We worry very much because based on how things are going on, we have started selling our farms. As we sell those farms, our hopes which we had here have reduced very much. Because if yesterday we were 3 now we are 2, the hopes of living here is reducing very much. But the main reason is tribalism, especially now! …therefore, this is not hatred but it is a reality! (KAM).

…if I would be able to go and talk to people to tell them to change their thinking, not to repeat something like that another time! That disease which is in my family now…the pain of going through it is so painful.

…so I don’t know if another fight will erupt in this coming one ? [Election?]. [Pause] but because that one has passed, so we are praying God that it does not come again (SMA).

Based on my assessment and seeing how this things happened, it was lack of understanding…even right from the leaders, they ought to talk one thing [be of one mind] because before us going to fight, there is something not put together, they do not understand each other. For us we are interdependent as a Kalenjin, a Kikuyu…you ought to know that, that leader even after losing, will dine together with the other one who won [the election], [but] we ourselves are left fighting and when two bulls fight the grass gets hurt. Let us pray God that they understand each other before we are got up in the fight.
…this tribalism is what has brought a lot of problems, lack of understanding. Whoever frankly wins [the election], let us accept the results and support! Mh? Whoever losses should be satisfied and trust in God to give him next time. (SMW)

Regarding the fire traumas and other accidents, the participants communicated their fears for any repeat of the horrific incidents through prayers and wish for education on prevention measures. During the individual interview, participant KAW closed the session with a word of prayer, thanking God for our time together and seeking safety for everyone, everywhere. Then she stated, “So this is what I always do. I have always been praying for those drivers that they may be careful on the roads. And also for us the people to be cautious of such big trucks, those fuel tankers.”

The impact of recurrent and multiple trauma experiences, it appears, is that witnessing a stressor very similar to, or almost the same as, a prior stressor that the affected individual has internalized may be interpreted as the actual personal experience of the trauma, except that the intensity of the emotional distress may be less. I made this assumption based on my analysis of the participants’ narratives in this study. In Focus Group #1—Amani, participant SSN stated, “Because, there are some places even [mild sound] to date, based on the violence one went through for sure…even if you are persuaded to return in whichever way…you feel even your heart does not want, [pause] to go to that place. Based on what one experienced.” Also, participant EBT described her loss of property to 1992 skirmishes and her acute reactions to the trauma event. Although she did not lose her property to PEV, the fact that she witnessed the neighbors lose their property and that she was evicted triggered the memory of her traumatic loss of property to the skirmishes in 1992. As a result, it seems that the participant interpreted her PEV eviction to include an actual loss of property and that she connects the imminence of violence her actual former loss of property—that is, to her, collective violence results in losing
property. This thought may have been influenced by her fear of being re-traumatized and losing property to a point that she decided not to build structures, which she stated would instantly be burnt, but to invest in the education of her children as discussed in this section on ‘fear of repeating traumas.’

Similarly, as participant ETK described her recurrent trauma through the loss of property to con men, it appeared that the participant considered the situation as an overwhelming omen that follows the family. She stated, “We harvested 100 bags of maize. So in the process of selling, [pause] we were conned. Someone brought fake banker’s check…[and] went with 100 bags of maize worth 245,000 [KES].” The participant explained further the impact of the loss on their lives: “It made us now to be traumatized more….Those problems became a lot and were painful because you do not have a home; you do not have where to live even what you have just worked for, the little that you have prepared disappears.”

**Lived relationship: Fear for family’s wellbeing.** Fear for the holistic wellbeing of the family was a consistent emphasis in all the interviews for this study. In their discussions, the participants highlighted their major concerns for their psychosocial and economic wellbeing and that of their families during and after the violence. As participants described how their situations were, their great shock from the trauma experience was recognizable, along with fear for their safety, pain in experiencing the loss and destruction of their safety and social systems, and concern for their health, food, and accommodation and those of their children during the violence; high concern for their welfare later owing to their exposure to the skirmishes, the PEV, and the fire traumas; and interference with their children’s education and career/future. The experience of such great pain and fear for the safety of the family at the time of the stressors seems to have been intensified by their situation during the attacks, such as being with vulnerable
people, the type of perpetrators of the violence—including culturally and socially unusual groups—and the unavailability of support at the time of the danger. Because of the major losses of either loved ones or property, most of the participants’ concerns for their future welfare and that of their children contributed to their chronic stress and hence became risk factors for their recovery process, as discussed later.

It was evident from the participants’ sharing that their situation with vulnerable family members put them at great risk and contributed to their frustration and feelings of intense fear. Participant SSK communicated in Focus Group #1—Amani, about the exposure of his children to violence trauma and his fear because “…some of my children, I rescued them from the burning house….“ In the same group, participant SJM described being harmed as a family, losing their entire property, and struggling to protect her hurt and traumatized daughter from further harm. As she expressed, the ordeal resulted in her being clinically diagnosed with comorbid depression and hypertension disorders, and her daughter struggling with intense feelings of fear and loss of control and later developing chronic signs akin to symptoms of PTSD. The issues became the participant’s risk factors to her recovery process as discussed later. She said,

They hit the door with stones until the door opened by itself. When it opened, the stones got finished. Now they returned to the other plot to get more stones. So I told my husband, “Get those children out,” and I told my daughter, “Get out!” And the younger one, “Get out!” …. They [children] held each other’s hand and ran away through the back side of the house…they ran that way. …so the difficulty which I had was with my daughter because she was severely hit with stones. So she had a chest problem.

Because that time whenever we could hear gun shots, that girl would run wildly, so I had to keep running after her, I would catch her, I would tie her foot with a rope to a tree because she would run wildly through the bushes of thorns. And there is a dam by the police station too, so we had to keep tying her.
Participant ECT from Focus Group #2—Upendo, described the same experience—how it was fearful for her and the young grandchildren to face the PEV trauma. She said.

So we started fearing for our lives. And at midnight, we went out completely and went to the maize plantation, the maize had not been harvested. Then the children my grandchildren now, started crying…. But that was not far from home! Ehe. So we spent the night there. There was no sleep even. (ECT)

Moreover, as Focus Group #2—Upendo members discussed their trauma, I sensed them communicating more of how they felt frustrated and overwhelmed with fears for their children whom they had to protect. Phrases such as, “imagine you run until you see the child panting ha! Ha! Ha! Until you are pulling like a dog!”; “so now I was telling God,” “God sincerely where you are, do not allow this door to open,” and “Even I could not manage. As I tried to put the key to open the door [to house where son with disability was in], it was not going in, my hands were shaking, and so I took long opening it,” exhibited the participants’ intense fear and frustration while trying to protect their vulnerable family members. In individual interviews as well, participants EMT and SMW expressed feeling frustrated and fearful for the safety of their young children as they escaped from danger during the skirmishes and the PEV. Participant SMA recounted her experience in the individual interview, saying:

I dressed the children so heavily, the children were like what, only the faces were left out. Then we went…[and] slept inside the forest until morning, there is nothing which happened that day. We came back home and cooked, we used to eat at 4 p.m. once per day. We used to come home cook and eat, and we would sleep at the forest.

Participant KAW shared the same feelings of fear for the safety of the children. Her concern was the wellbeing and the future of the orphaned children of the fire explosion victims. During individual interview, she uttered, “I said; ‘God, You gave them to me! Because this burden is so heavy for me, take care of those [orphaned] children’ [with lowered tone of voice].”
Equally, the interplay between the African cultural and social norm of not abandoning the vulnerable, especially the aging and the individuals with disability or lacking capability, and the “fight or flight” reaction created a fearful, frustrating, and real life sacrificing moment for the participants as they risked their lives while trying to protect and nurse their vulnerable adult family members. Their expressions depict the experience of intense fear as they faced danger with the vulnerable family members. Participant KAW stated, “When we started struggling to run with the children to [de-identified] for safety, mum told us to go with the children to seek refuge and leave her there, saying her life had reached the end [going to die]. When she said so, then my husband and I, we saw it was better to to [stay and] die all of us, than to leave her in the house because we could not have carried her during such a hurry as she was a heavy person, she was a big mum.” Further, the participant explained how they risked the children escaping alone during the violence. She expressed, “…us, my husband and I ,told the children to go alone because we could not leave grandmother alone. When the children went, later they called us and we told them we decided to stay with mum, so they also said…[and] that same, same day they returned to stay with us.”

For participant SMA, the motherly pain for the child increased with the conflict of fight-or-flight reactions. In Focus Group #2—Upendo, the participant revealed:

I approached them while raising my hands up. They asked me, “What do you need here!!??” And it is people whom I know all of them. [They asked:] “What do you need here!!? What do you need!!?? I told them, “Let me request you please.” Because I had seen people had started pulling down the iron sheets [roofing tiles], “These house you are demolishing, you know my disabled child, he is the one I locked inside so that he does not keep moving around and the place is not safe.” One of them who heard me telling them while I was crying told the rest, “Hei, wait first! Let us hear what this mum is saying first.” They said, “Tell us what you said again, who did you say are inside here?” I told them that it’s only so and so my disabled son. [They asked], “Are you sure it is him?” I told them, “Yes.” [Then they asked], “What if we break in and find other people inside?” [I told them], “It is not a lie. Here is the key. If I am lying to you, then if you get somebody else, you kill.” They told me, “Open it!” Even I could not manage. As I tried
to put the key to open the door, it was not going in, my hands were shaking and so I took long opening it. They saw [omitted] I was willing to open, but seeing how I was trembling that specific one told the rest, “If you see her willing to open the door, it looks like there is nobody inside. Let’s go!” …so when they told themselves, ‘Let’s go,’ I sat down. (SMA)

Besides, the participants’ pain and fear for their safety seemed to have been exacerbated by the presence of unusual perpetrators—the women—yet, as per the cultural norms, it is the men who wage war against each other, not “the mothers turning against their children.” Their shocking experience was demonstrated by their statements: “the children, the women, even the women! [With head gestures] … I was shocked to see the women coming with stones in baskets”; and “the women from [de-identified] were carrying stones in baskets taking to the men; likewise, those other ones have arrows, stones are thrown from here and arrows from there.” Participant ECT and participant SMA communicated their inexcusable and painful experiences saying:

There were people who had gone to seek refuge in a nearby church, all of a sudden, they came so many of them like what? Like swarm of red ants! For real, they came the men with pangas [machetes] the children, the women, even the women! [With head gestures]. I was shocked to see the women coming with stones in baskets. (ECT)

“So it ended up erupting as a big fight! …the women from [de-identified] were carrying stones in baskets taking to the men, likewise those other ones have arrows, stones are thrown from here and arrows from there. So it was a fight with stones and arrows! We tried to lock ourselves in the house. It was bad [incident]!”

As the participants shared their experiences, it was evident that they had sacrificially risked their lives for the sake of their vulnerable family members. It appeared that the participants who had such a group of family members—including young children, individuals with disability, and sick or aging persons to protect—were subject to high risk for attacks and recurrent or multiple traumatization and, hence, may have experienced more intense fears and frustrations than those who had no extra responsibility to protect or rescue vulnerable family members.
Theme #2: Loss

This theme was also derived from van Manen’s lived existentials. In the entire interview process, the participants expressed how they had experienced emotional pain owing to the entire
loss of their property, achieved valuables, and family documents; the sudden loss of health through injuries and or psychological reactions to trauma; and to some, the tragic loss of their loved ones or the community members to skirmishes, 2007 PEV, 2009 fires, or other tragedies. Additionally, cultural perception of loss was exhibited as some participants identified collective loss of property and loved ones ranging from their own to the extended family members’ losses and described their impact in their lives.

Lived space: traumatic loss of property. Lived space was described in relation to the destruction or loss of property or homes, regular social and work/business environments, the individuals’ comfort zones, and relocation to unique and unfavorable environments subsequent to evictions during the violence or loss in the form of needing to avoid business or social places close to the site because of fear, at least in the case of the oil tanker fire tragedy. Home is where we can be what we are, so, for the violence evictees, there was a profound tragedy that involved more than merely not having a roof over their heads (van Manen, 1990). Some of the things they said—such as “we had to move from there to here, one place to another because of skirmishes,”; “let us go to show [ground] I heard that is where people are. Let us go there we may get the, the food. So we went to the showground and registered ourselves”; and “When I got out of there, [fire explosion site] the first person to talk to me was a boda boda [motorbike public means of transport] driver. I told him, ‘Why don’t you give me a lift? Me to reach home,’”—show the participants’ sense of fear and escape or relocation to safer environments after the tragedies. The violence and the oil tanker fire outbreak destroyed or created insecure lived space for the participants and their associates and, hence, restrictions of their movements to their homes, work, business, social, or farm environments—their Microsystems within the proximity of the accident site. In addition, based on the nature of the trauma as collective violence and huge national level
fires, the participants’ neighborhood and extended community—the exosystem livelihood and general interactions with the same—the mesosystem was curtailed or interfered with temporarily.

With respect to the loss of property, the scope and intensity of the PEV were so large that the numerous affected families were confused, hurt, and deprived of refuge or safety nets. The 15 participants who lost their entire property to the violence described frustration, hopelessness, and pain in reaction to their loss. Six of the participants were also affected by the skirmishes, which acted as both the trauma events associated with their previous attack and loss of property and as the precipitators in the interpretation of the trauma experienced or as part of their preexisting traumatization prior to the PEV. Additionally, the fire explosion had a major impact on four of the participants, one of whom personally faced the horrifying fire; the other three were affected family members of victims. Being a national level tragedy, the fire explosion greatly affected the participants’ neighborhood and extended communities, the exosystem; their interactions, the mesosystem; and the country as a whole, the macrosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1994). It caused major loss of lives and property and immobilized most of the businesses in the affected region and interfered with various public and private institutions’ regular schedules countrywide.

The study participants described their acute stress reactions to the trauma events and identified various ways the violence had affected their lives because of their loss of property. People strive to retain, protect, and build resources, but what threatens them is the potential or actual loss of these valued resources (Hobfoll, 1989). The phrase, “we left with only clothes we had on our bodies,” which was common to almost every discussion with each participant, portrays their sense of sorrow and hopelessness after the entire loss of property and eviction from their homes and the fire explosion, and implies a flight response to the danger. In Focus Group
#1—Amani, participant SSN stated that he kept pondering, “I have no home-state, I have no property, I have no house,” as he mournfully and helplessly lay on the hospital bed after being injured, losing his entire property, and being evicted during PEV. Participant ETK also seemed to continue musing on how painfully overwhelming the tragedies were to her. During the individual interview she stated, “Those problems became a lot and were painful because you do not have a home, you do not have where to live.” Participant SAM expressed how he fearfully and hopelessly fled from danger after a fruitless attempt to defend his property: “I did not manage to salvage anything in the house. I ran with the clothes that I had on and stayed with it.” The participant moved on to relate how painful and frustrating it has been for him experiencing violence associated with recurrent and multiple losses. Starting with the previous loss of property in the 1992 skirmishes, he recounted, “On the part of losing the property, [in 1992] it got lost because… from where one was working, it had to get lost because you could not escape with the luggage.”

Participant SAW said, “My father died of that trauma, because he said; ‘I did not imagine those things [property] would get lost’…he had a vehicle and a very big farm. So there is nothing we came out with from there,” as she expressed (in Focus Group #1—Amani) her painful experience of loss to the 1992 skirmishes as well. She described further that during the PEV, she and her family members experienced intense fear, overwhelming pain, helplessness, and hopelessness as they watched their property entirely destroyed while they were suffering in the cold nights in the bushes after being evicted from their comfortable and safe haven. She stated, “When the election results were announced, we did not sleep in the house…we slept in the bushes.” Likewise, in the individual interview participant SMW said, “When we slept in the forest that way, houses were starting to burn at our place….” In Focus Group #2—Upendo,
participant EMT stated, “We were running to sleep in a valley, a big one…..” Yet the bushes, the forests, and the valleys are not places where one can feel at rest—they are no place to be (van Manen, 1990). Participant SJM spoke of losing everything:

I asked him, “Surely all my belonging is burnt, and I was loaned from ART, I have paid for 15 years? Ayah, the maize is finished! The beans are finished! …[all my farm produce for business and household goods] and I had not cleared paying some of it…. Wooih! I asked him, “Surely, even a blanket, not even one, we did not salvage?” His bicycle and grinder are the only ones we had rescued. Where he hid them…the thieves came and stole them…. I told him, “Now we have nothing. Surely!” I told him, “For sure, even all that I bought while working with the government, everything got burnt completely just like that. All is gone….” [Fortunately,] some young men came…[and helped] us carry our documents box.

In Focus Group #2—Upendo, the participants discussed their loss of property, the sorrow they felt and the frustrations they faced with the rest of their family members during the PEV and the skirmishes, experiences corresponding to those of Focus Group #1 participants. Participant EBT noted that she had experienced recurrent traumas in the skirmishes and the PEV. The participant shared her similar painful experiences during the previous loss in the 1992 skirmishes saying: “I went back, I did not! I did not believe my eyes! …all my photos which I had taken when I was young were cut in pieces, there was nothing…. Where are my things!? Where is what!? Where is my bed!? The house was vacant, and they used the house like a latrine. So everywhere was feces. Feces, feces all the house is…no cooking pot, no nothing. After seeing that…I fainted.”

SAW expressed similar views: “You see, now the [19]92 clashes are over…. So now the one which came to finish us completely, you see you have rebuilt…now you have rebuilt…. We had seen now there was peace, we felt we were home. Then that [PEV] fire erupted.” The participant described the scope of the PEV effect and how frustrating it was for her and her entire family to be evicted: “That time it affected all of us! [hand gestures], the whole entire family.
There was no one anyone could seek help from, saying; ‘Please help get me out of this ditch.’”

She continued, “Eh, in 2007. We were all out on the road, we were all out on the streets, none left inside the house [becomes emotional].” Likewise, for participant ETK it was a painful experience watching her property of great value being consumed by fire and the family members being attacked during the PEV: “They came and burnt the house…and that house was so big it was a seven-roomed house, and they burnt a store with 200 bags of maize which we had kept in store [pause]…and a house which was for the children including their library, that is, entirely everything.” She indicated that their loss was complete: “We went out with only clothes we had on our bodies.”

In the individual interview, EPT said as well, “I lost all my things, eh, my items from that, eh, post-election violence, which some I have not regained up to now but a few.” She further described her painful experience of the loss of property, stating, “I just arrived at home there, the [de-identified] were cutting the cattle…I have a tree close home, so they tied the cows to it…just cutting and sharing the meat. They were cutting the cows even alive, they were just cutting the cow pap!” Participant ECT had much the same story: “…it was December 1st? [January, 1st 2008?] they took a cow who was due mid of that January. It is just cut [alive]! …with the wool [hair?] swie! The cow was just seeing. Hee… it was so painful….” Participant EPT described her painful experience further as well, saying, “I asked the [de-identified] man I went home with, I told him, ‘Please talk to them not to vandalize my house in my presence.’ He tried to tell them, but they could not listen. …I found, so they stole clothes, what, and whatever they could carry and went. I got a few things, and that man helped me to get a cart, and we carried them with a donkey….” The participant also revealed her recurrent loss of property looted by the other tribesmen and her own tribesmen and the anxiety of losing the house in her
ancestral home: “But again I had bought another farm in our rural home and had moved my goats to that farm and the [de-identified, same tribe] stole the goats and slaughtered…and] they said that they were going to burn my house in our rural home, the [de-identified, her tribe] now [because] they saw we were serving everybody equally in our work, me, my husband, and especially my son with the nature of his work. [But] I sent a watchman to take care of the house…. It was noticeable that the recurrent loss of property had greatly affected participant EPT’s life, as she recounted the loss with much emotion, saying, “So it was, we were stressed on both sides…where we could have run to and where we were living in initially.” In response to the loss and the attacks, participant ETK also felt overwhelmed, consequently diving into grievous existential questioning, asking self, government, and God why she faced such tortures. In the group, she revealed: “It was so painful because…you were defeated, “Your people had been injured! Eh your property has been destroyed, why? What have you done, what crime have you done?” She continued, “When you try to look for what mistake you have done, there is none; you have voted, the ones who counted the votes were completely different from the ones whose houses were burnt.” She concluded, “So it was a bad experience.” Participant EPT added, in the individual interview, that “…the experience was not good.” Participant ETK continued, “You were starting to restructure your life again. So it is like I am 8 years old in life, because aall that, wasn’t it brought down? It became ashes!”

Participant KAM described his painful experience of losing property as well, saying, “I had a big store there, so it had gotten fire everywhere.” He described further, “I used to do maize business, I had bought over 100 sacks of maize and also my harvest…. And I had another big house there…and they also got burnt…. For this participant, it was a major loss of both home
business. A number of other participants conveyed with emotion their violence-related multiple sufferings and losses:

Shortly after, while I was just there thinking, others came. They told me, “Because the house has already been burnt, these iron sheets [roofing tiles] which remained, we will go with them.” I told them, “Why don’t you leave even that kitchen alone, at least to have somewhere I can sleep?” They told me, “Is it that you are going to remain? To do what? You are all going.” I told them if you have seen it is fine that way, it is okay.” My iron sheets were stolen as I watched. …I was not talking that time…they gave me KES 1000 and left…. I called my husband who at that time was at the police station, I told him, “The house is completely finished, we do not have anything.” (SMA)

I decided to give the [de-identified; another tribe] to live in my house, the [wooden] one I had been living in instead of it being vandalized completely. But ha! Immediately I turned, the people I had given my house stole all my maize I had harvested in another farm, now what was left, and took completely everything left in store. I went there but I found nothing [laughter]…the store has been destroyed. It just got vandalized. (EPT)

Likewise, the participants described their painful loss of family documents. In the group, as participant ECT described her pain of losing enormous property and important family documents, she seemed to be harboring a lot of pain and sense of hopelessness in her heart still. It appeared that for her, though she lost a huge number of valuables, the loss of family documents was more painful. Participant ECT remorsefully expressed, “So what worries me most is that…all the important documents – tittle deed, land [a]llo[ment], birth certificates, all those important documents went. If I knew, I personally! If I knew that those issues were not going to end well, I would have carried them in a handbag!” In the same manner, participant SOA related the loss of his property and family documents stating, “Eh, all my house…all my property was lost…[and] even all our documents were burnt and therefore have no record of what we had…I was left with nothing.” Pursuant to the participants’ recounting their loss of important family documents, participant ECT described the enormous amount of property she lost to the PEV:
About our home, there is a lorry which came following those people [pause] but already those other people had looted because some were looting while others were burning…. Then I passed by to go home. That also had fallen, in fact I almost got hit by electricity…I saw some items which were not burning, like cooking stove, I had steel-made cooking stove…. When I looked in the vegetable garden, the clothes which were put there at night were still there, they did not see it! Even I do not know it was only God on that…. Everywhere was so calm! No wonder that time it was so quiet that way, they had carried the cows. But in my home, they took only one cow who was due in January [almost due], a very big one. They took them to the church there, all of them ran there. We had a factory there, others were at the factory and my husband found others burning the maize. My husband told them, “Do not burn the maize, just harvest it. And [omitted, cough] do not burn the posho [maize] mill too; won’t you use it?” And for sure, they heed to him. [Pause] they went to the side of the factory, we had a plant, they burnt, we had three tractors, 3 lorries, they went, [and] eh the house [store] too. I do not know how they burnt the house, yet the roof was so high, or because of the tractors? [Laughter] The tractors burnt, the tires alone burnt for 3 weeks! Almost 1 month, 3 weeks all that went. The posho mill remained, they used it to mill the maize, when the maize finished, sshee [hand gestures] they burnt it. …[when] the maize was still in the farms, they harvested from this farm, that farm, and then next, when the maize grinding was over, then they burnt it and we had 2 posho mills and animal feed mixer, all which went. [Pause] so what worries me most is that…all the important documents, title deed, land [a]llotment, birth certificates, all those important documents went. (ECT)

Additionally, the participants expressed with pain their collective loss of property, describing the losses incurred by their extended family members and how had affected their lives. Participant SAW identified the extended family’s collective loss of property to the 1992 skirmishes. The participant emotionally described the loss including the father’s, the uncle’s, and the sister’s marital families’ losses of property to the skirmishes. The participant expressed, “…and my father’s brother had his farm there, four acres…. He left there with nothing and his family…. His farm was grabbed, how many acres? Four.” She continued by listing other losses from the family’s property: “…we had bought our own land and were settled and hell broke loose and we left with nothing. At all, at all, at all! …my brother [in law] lost his …[property]…. The residents know that the farm belongs to our brother but the chief says unless we go to court there is nothing they can do, why should we go to court and yet the land was
grabbed from us?” Likewise, participant SMA and participant KAW explained how the extended family members’ loss of property to PEV affected them. Concerning her mother’s loss of property and health, participant SMA stated, “All her cows were taken; none was left, so she got shocked, and when she saw what had been done to us she got shocked.” Participant KAW stated, “From there, that issue affected us so much. After some time, my father in-law went back to our farm but later came back to stay with us in [de-identified] because even him, he was so much affected by the violence.”

Beside the participants’ use of negative descriptors to reveal their reactions to their experiences of losing their property, their grieving was also evident in their desire, while in hideouts, to return and see how their property was destroyed in spite of the insecurity due to violence. When their property was being destroyed, participants SJM, SAW, ECT, ETK, and SAM stated that they kept watching painfully and helplessly from a distance in their hideouts. Participant SAW recounted, “At quarter to 6 a.m. my house was burnt, my house was the first one in [de-identified] to be burnt” [with body language communicating emotional pain]. Then participant SAM said, “...my house and my neighbors’ got burnt on the fourth day....” Likewise, participant SMA conveyed, “And it was 1 p.m. now...when I saw the house has burnt I told him, ‘Let’s go home, so what are we doing?’ To reach home the house was burning with a blaze! Hei! Even I have never seen fire like that. That fire started at 1 p.m. until the following day! Just burning! I did not go away.... Shortly after, while I was just there thinking....” In addition, after the property was destroyed participants SJM, ECT, KAM, SAM, and SMA [and the spouse] described how painfully they returned to check on their destroyed property. Participant ECT expressed, “I returned at 9 a.m. that time...the place was now quiet! So when I reached home, I found it, eh, my neighbor’s now, the roof was falling, so the iron sheets [roofing tiles] burn like
if it has been lid with paraffin, I saw it falling down. Then I passed by to go home, that also had fallen…” Participant KAM stated, “I found the fire was still going on…. I found it still burning in my store. And my house there, I tried to put the fire off but I could not manage because there were many furniture it was still burning. I couldn’t possibly put the fire off because of that time [insecurity].” Participant SOA made a comment as well that his house had not yet been burnt when he fell on the burning house while he was being chased, though the house got burnt later. The participants who observed sorrowfully from a distance their property being destroyed, those who escaped but shortly returned to see the smoldering ruins of their property, and those who ran away from danger or were chased but later learnt of their destroyed property all may have had similar feelings, thoughts, and reactions to the loss, but their immediate reactions may not have been of the same severity. Those who observed their property destroyed reported their acute stress reactions such as fainting, wetting oneself, and not being oneself.

Additionally, the participants who lost huge amounts of family property and private businesses and other investments versus those who had less may not have been affected equally, though they all lost everything they had. After experiencing the vast loss of their family and business property, the participants seemed to have experienced enormous pain and sorrow. Participant KAM expressed, “All I had saved for many years as the earnings of my youth had all gone into flames within a single day!!” [with rigor and hand gestures]. Likewise, participant SSN, in Focus Group #1—Amani, described his recurrent losses: “I ran at a loss in 1992. So, my youth life got finished there. Again, the wealth I earned for my pension fund, the wealth one plans to settle down well with, again you see it got lost [there, in 2007].” Further, in an individual interview, participant SSN expressed, “That had the achievements of my youth. That! And there is nothing good like the achievements of one’s youth! As you see! Because you will
see and say this was this…remember, *eh uzee hula ujana wako* [old age eats from your youth] [laughter]. I had, I was still young and was happy with what I had done.” Similarly, participant SMA expressed, “You spent the earnings of your entire life to build a good house for yourself, come and finish just here” [sobs]. Then emotionally, she continues, “Even if I try whatever means in my entire life to recover I will not get them.” Also, it was overwhelming for participant ECT to observe her entire enormous amount of property, including family documents, being consumed by the fires and others looted by the perpetrators. In response to the experience, she felt hopeless as she revealed, “All the things that we had acquired [/acquired/] went, it went down to drain, like you did not do anything, everything was lost….” Such tragic experiences including the loss of family members and friends, irreplaceable treasured belongings, official documents, and residence, and loss of community or institutional cohesion may contribute to depression (Goenjian et al., 2000).

It appears that the tragedies had a double impact on the participants psychologically and socio-economically in that besides losing their property, they lost their socioeconomic status as stable families and (for men) their ego as providers of their families. The participants emotionally expressed losing the achievements of their youth and entire lives while they were still strong. For a man and a father in a patriarchal society, the loss of property and entire life achievements was tantamount to losing one’s manhood for the male participants. However, after describing their afflictions, the participants finished their narratives about the trauma events with positive statements. Participant ETK said, “So I started afresh…on the way there is challenges…it will take time but I am still determined, yah.”

**Lived body: Traumatic loss of health.** In this section, lived body is discussed with a focus on the traumatic loss of health due to skirmishes and PEV-related physical injuries the
participants and their families sustained. The participants described their experiences and those of their family members using negative terms which portrayed their corporeal sense of harm, pain, and frustration.

In Focus Group #1—Ammani and in individual interviews, the participants talked about their personal experiences of PEV-related physical and emotional pain and hurt. Participant SSK expressed, “I was beaten up.” Then he explained further about his injuries saying, “…I have arrow wounds, I was shot here” [touches the left side lower neck]. The participant described in detail his struggles due to the injuries (issues discussed in the section on chronic illnesses). “I was shot with arrows on my leg,” participant SSN recounted too. The participant explained further how he was physically harmed, saying, “This, it came out through this side [shows the scars while illustrating how the arrow went]…. In the individual interview, he expounded his narrative about his painful experience: “We were chased again now when I had been shot…. We stayed in that forest…. Then he communicated his frustrations of being wounded and still under his perceived siege saying, “We stayed for a while… Blood continued to ooze.” Then he revealed his interpretation of the situation as a critical moment in his life, saying, “Then I saw we would die and the night had come, still bleeding. I told mum [wife], if these people are still surrounding us, then there is no way out, still we will die, there is no need to stay here….“

“Even me I got severely burnt. In fact, I will show you the scars. I got burnt!” Participant SOA described likewise how devastating it was for him falling onto a burning house as he tried to escape the danger during the PEV. The participant showed scars saying, “You see where I got burnt? …[Shows body injuries]. All this side!” His words and gestures spoke volumes of his painful experience with the fire accident. He explained further that he became unconscious owing to the injuries, stating, “Even going to the show[ground] I did not know which day I went,
I went as a sick person.” The participant explained his unpleasant health condition prior to being chased and, with raised tone of voice, the subsequent injury during the PEV saying, “Eeh!! When the house was burning, I tried to escape, and yet I had been sleeping in the house because I was sick, so I got burnt that way. …when I was taken to the showground [IDP Camp] I did not see [unconscious]. I was being taken to the doctor without me seeing [unconscious].” The participant spoke of his struggles with an illness, from which it took him almost a year to recover. Additionally, during the individual interview, participant SOA expounded on his misfortune saying, “Now when they tried to chase me, now houses were burning everywhere, fire everywhere. So I tried to run, but I fell on the fire pop! I laid down.” Then he conveyed his interpretation of the incident saying, “Were it not for other people to return and rescue me, I could have burnt to death.” His health situation prior to the accident and the age (87 years) may have influenced additionally the impact of violence trauma on participant SOA. Likewise, participant SJM expressed, “Instantly, to look behind, stones thruu thruu! They hit us we entered into the house. We were hit! …[again], there came the stones, thuruuru thruuruu!” In her individual interview, the participant illuminated further her atrocious experience stating, “Before I completely came out through the window…one of them hit me with a stone and I somersaulted,” as she narrated about the painful multiple attacks she and the family members encountered at their home, supposedly a safe haven.

Congruently, in Focus Group #2—Upendo, the participants discussed about the PEV related physical injuries they experienced personally or being hurt through their family members being injured. Participant ETK described the PEV-associated tragic experience which befell her family through the husband and the son being injured by perpetrators. She communicated, “My husband told them, “Why are you cutting the cows!” Then they cut my husband's hand and hit
our boy with a stone. My husband got injured now on his foot? [hand?] and our young son [on his foot?].” The participant explained further their escape from more harm, saying, “So then we ran away so when we escaped, then they came and burnt the house.” Then she explained that they sought for emergency services stating, “We looked for a way to take my husband to the hospital and the boy who was injured. We took them to another hospital….” The participant concluded her presentation with her interpretation of the incident: “It was a very painful experience.” Similarly, in the group, participant EMT said, as she described their painful experience and frustrations because of the injury her husband sustained during the PEV, “My husband…[was trying to protect the house from being burnt], and so he went and tried to talk to those people not to fight but someone, eh, from the other side? [tribe?] came from behind and hit him from his back and broke his arm.” Then the participant explained the challenges they faced while trying to get the medical emergency services. She said, “So it became another incident that there was no means of getting to the hospital, and the patient was hurting a lot…so we took 2 days to get to [de-identified] hospital, and from there we were referred to [de-identified] hospital. It was difficult to get there still.” Then she identified the husband’s disability resultant from the violence saying, “…up to today, his arm is still not well fixed, it has not fully recovered.”

In the same way participant SMA conveyed to the group how frightened and pained she felt when the husband got beaten brutally during the PEV. The participant stated, “He was beaten! A deadly beating! …because the clothes he had worn were torn into pieces; he was cut on his head, even his teeth fell out…I went to [de-identified] hospital and found that for sure he had been beaten brutally.” During individual interview, the participant elaborated how emotional it was to visit her husband at the hospital after the attacks. She said, “He was caught
by four men and he was beaten! A beating for dead…. To see him, even you could not recognize him, he was cut on his head, face.” Then she revealed her reactions to the incident, saying, “I saw I have problems twice, here he is in the hospital, there I have children who have dropped out of school, so what kind of problem is this?” as she stressed that the attacks compounded the socioeconomic challenges the family was facing during the violence.

**Lived Relationship: Traumatic loss of loved ones.** This subtheme seemed the most emotion-provoking one as the participants described their experiences ensuing from the traumatic and sudden loss of their loved ones. It was evident in the participants’ statements that they experienced profound traumatic loss as relationships with their family members, friends, colleagues, and others were abruptly terminated by tragic death. Human beings converse, interact, and transcend themselves, and in a larger existential sense they have searched within this experience of the other, the communal, and the social for a sense of purpose in life, meaningfulness, and grounds for living, as in the religious experience of the absolute Other, God (van Manen, 1990). The participants discussed how their relationships with their loved ones were curtailed, that the deaths interfered with their sense of purpose in life as it related to the deceased loved ones, thus tampering with their sense of meaning in life, and described their experience of sorrow in response to the loss. The expressions the participants used in reaction to the sad news about the traumatic or sudden death of loved ones show signs of shock, disbelief, and hopelessness: “I lost all my possession and even I lost my loved ones”; “we got shocked…somebody who was with us like you now and then you hear he is dead?” “She got shocked instantly [pause] eh, and she died”; and “Has passed on how?” As the participants discussed their experiences they commonly emphasized the abrupt loss of loved ones as the most difficult thing in life.
The participants discussed extensively their painful experience of losing their loved ones to the skirmishes and the PEV. In Focus Group #1—Amani, participant SAW described emotionally her painful experiences and struggles with the recurrent and multiple loss of loved ones who, she said, would otherwise not have died were it not for the skirmishes and the PEV. In her narrative of the loss the participant stated, “My father died of that trauma [in 1992]…due to stress. He said, ‘I did not imagine those things [property] would get lost.’” The participant then spoke of multiple losses during the PEV saying, “My husband had asthma…; from that day, he did not recover again, he died. [Cries]. He died of the cold. That time we, because of sleeping outside because we did not have anywhere to enter [live in].” In the individual interview, the participant spoke of her husband’s loss again: “…there is nowhere to sleep, you sleep outside, no blanket, nothing, heh? [Pause]. …we were left with nothing…. Because of all those cold nights and asthma, you do not have this, you do not have that…cold air entered him so much, [sobs] cold air entered him so much.” Additionally, the participant narrated, in individual interview, the loss of her grandchild under her custody saying, “She [grandchild] needed special attention…she was 9 years old. She had a problem of the brain, spina cord was not connected [spina bifida] so she was …. So when we were evicted I could not get necessary things to change her…she got wounds because of the, the urine. I took her to [the Kenya] Red Cross and she was treated, we tried to treat her but she did not survive, the wound was so deep, so after a short while, she died…. ” Participant SAW seemed to be struggling with chronic grief (discussed under the chronic grief theme) due to the multiple losses as she stated, “So you see now, to say that this issues will ever be over in our minds, it is God alone.” Equally, participant SJM explained in the individual interview about her struggles subsequent to the loss of her parent due to PEV stress. She said, “One of my parents got shocked and died after the [PEV] violence.”
Correspondingly, some of the participants described their painful experience of recurrent and or multiple loss of loved ones to the PEV. Participant KAW spoke in Focus Group #2—Upendo about the loss of her mother-in-law to PEV related illness and, after a short while, the father-in-law as well. She conveyed, “When we did the election…that parent, mum got stroke when she saw violence has erupted…. then mum’s health condition became worst…. So she was taken to the hospital, she did not return, she died and we buried her in [de-identified] in 200[7?]/[8/], just that time of violence.” Then KAW explained that the impact of the loss had likely caused additional death and other illnesses, saying, “From there that issue affected us so much…my father in-law died too. It was just out of that shock, seeing things have gone bad, just after 1 year, then he died. And when…[my mother in law’s co-wife] saw that she has been left alone, then she got affected by that disease of staying indoors and being served, she cannot do anything, she is helped with everything, so we remained with that mum…. …” Similarly, participant SMA described during the individual interview the agonizing experience she had owing to the sudden loss of her mother to PEV-related stress too. She revealed, “My mother got so sick because she had five cows who were almost due but all had gone [stolen]. She got sick; I think she got that sickness of thoughts and died in that August.” The participant communicated the frustrations that she and the family faced as a result of the loss which deepened their sufferings from the PEV difficulties. She said, “We are going to bury her in August, we do not have a home on this side…so you see how it went? The problem is death on this side, on this other side are problems.”

Participant KAM also described in the group his unbearable experience of the unexpected tragic loss of two family members during the PEV. He said, “I lost two of my loved ones…in that tragedy.” The participant described the painful struggles he faced consequent to the loss as
he tried to trace the family members. He said, “I struggled to look for my family members, whatever happened with them. I struggled so, so much. Previously, I had looked for them for 10 days without lack.” He also described wrestling with the painful thought of knowing that the family members were to be buried without their knowledge: “And the pain on top of the other [insult added to injury] was that it was said that our beloved were to be buried without our knowledge…. I personally tried to consult with those who were bereaved like me…we rushed there and we were able to intervene before the burial…and we continued with the DNA, and after 1 year and 5 months we were able to bury our loved ones…. It must have been an excruciating and overly anxious moment for participant KAM to look for the two lost family members for 5 months amidst the violence, struggle to do DNA search and then the burial after 1yr. and 5 months after the loss, and protect the children from danger and provide for their needs in spite of losing the property entirely.

Equally, the participants described their agonizing experience of the tragic loss of their loved ones to the 2009 oil tanker fire tragedy just one year after they faced the PEV atrocities. During individual interview participant KAW explained about the hurting moment she had resultant on the multiple loss of her loved ones. She stated, “This is the only one I buried, all the other ones I did not see them [perished in the fire]…. The participant explained her excruciating experience of the tragic loss of the family members as highlighted in “acute stress reactions” section. For the participant, the horrific fire truncated the relation of connectedness (van Manen, 1990) to her children as she questioned herself in surprise during the ordeal saying, “[Pause] When I got shocked, I, I asked myself, “[de-identified] son I was with him during the day…we had talked together and we left each other then I returned, returned home?”” in response to the sad news about the heartbreaking death of her son. Further, she conveyed the impact of the loss
stating, “So it is something heavy to see or talk about.” Participant SMA described, in the
individual interview, her painful moment from the loss of her uncle to the fire as well. She
communicated, “Our uncle who was left with us that time when mum died there, was in that oil!
Even him he had gone to fetch.” Then she narrated how she was saddened by the news about the
death of her uncle, the only then remaining elderly family member. She said,

So I have sat this way; around 7 p.m. I see somebody coming at night. He told me, “Joyce
[name changed], I have come.” “What is it?” [I asked]. “You know your uncle whom
you, who was left in your family? He is the one who has send me. He has told me to and
he does not see. He got burnt until even he does not have clothes, I could see his burnt
jacket is just there. He asked me if I know Joyce and send me to come and tell you that he
has gotten burnt, and he sees he won’t survive” [he said]. To come, I found the jacket
only just there close to that fire where they were passing through as they ran, is where we
found his jacket. He told me, “He was here.” I told him, “Yes, this jacket is his. So what
will we do? …to go look for him?”

Then the participant expressed the sorrowful impact of the loss of her uncle on her own life and
that of her family, as the deceased had previously been a source of advice subsequent to the
death of her mother 5 months earlier. She stated, “… so even him you hear that he perished in
the fire? So that 2009…it started with burial of that uncle of mine. Even him he just finished in
the fire that way [becomes emotional].” For participant SMA, 2008 - 2009 was a grief-ridden
period for her because of the recurrent sudden and tragic losses of loved ones as marked by the
phrases she kept using: “August. …mum died we buried her,” “so even him…even him,” and
“So that 2009, it started with the burial of that uncle of mine.” Moreover, she expressed the
intensity of the fire tragedy, saying, “And about that tank very many people died.”

Being among the survivors of the fire tragedy, participant KAN spoke in focus group
about the terrifying experience of watching many people, including his friends, neighbors,
colleagues, and other people, burning in the fire like in a video film. The participant expressed,
“I remember even me I was there, even me I got heart attack [Shocked?], I was there…”
Survivors of the fire tragedy. After describing the whole scenario of the fire disaster and his dissociation experience in reaction to the trauma (discussed in detail in the acute stress reaction section), the participant related his painful experience in the loss of many people to the horrifying fire: “We lost around 70 people in total from our households, average, because they might be more and they were our friends, so it was like, it was a disaster in the entire community. That thing hurt us many families. Even many of those who had survived have since died. Because of that that smoke [inhaled] or the internal injuries….” Further, he stated, “People were passed through the road there, and those who were taken through there are friends, you knew.”

The participant described the fire incident as overwhelming, and it recurred when they were still recovering from the violence misfortunes. He stated, “Before we came out of this, eh, [affection?] [/effects/] of politics or to say [after] post-election violence came that trauma of oil.”

Likewise, participant SSK described in the group the shocking loss of his neighbor family friend to the oil tanker fire tragedy saying, “The fire followed him because of the oil he had inhaled.” That “he ran but unfortunately the fire entered him, it overwhelmed him” and he finally succumbed to the injuries at the hospital. The participant went on to express his reactions to the tragic loss. He stated, “So it affected his family and there was a relationship with us.” The participant described further the relationship with the victim stating, “The person who was his friend [participant's family member] did not eat for two days when we heard about it because there was a special relationship between them. It affected that person….”

Moreover, loss of loved ones through tragic road accidents contributed to the overwhelming pain the participants experienced prior to or after the violence and the fires. Participant SOA described his sorrowful experience of the multiple loss of his daughter and the unborn baby a through tragic road accident after the PEV, as he shared in the individual
interview, besides the tragic loss of his health through falling onto the burning house during PEV, as he had previously described in group. The participant said, “You see all those children outside: their mother, my daughter was ran-over by a vehicle…while trying to cross the road and even she was pregnant and even the baby was crushed finished. That vehicle hit her, it left the head there! And that vehicle did not stop.” The tragedy happened when the participant and the family were still in a vulnerable situation, as he stated, “That was when we were almost leaving [de-identified IDP camp] to come here.” (The participant’s description of his acute stress reaction is highlighted in the fear and acute stress section).

Similarly, participant ECT described in the individual interview the impact of recurrent and multiple trauma she encountered in her life. She recounted, “I have gone through a lot in life.” Then she described the multiple nature of the recurrent loss stating, “In 199[x]…my three, children got involved in a car accident…. So, there was one who had, ah, multiple fractures and was admitted first in [de-identified hospital]. …the girl was taken [de-identified hospital] and 5 days later she passed on.” The participant expressed her distressing reaction to the trauma saying, “So I stayed with that…stigma [trauma?], or how do you call it? That was a problem I had.” Then she went on, “Then eh last year, I lost also my second-born son, through a short illness. He developed headache just a little bit…he told me, “Mum, I have headache I have headache”…and he was walking, so fast so fast, he entered into the car, shuuh! He was taken to hospital. With within 6 hours he is gone ? [died?]” The participant expressed the excruciating experience of the loss saying, “I was given a deep sleep…he was taken to the hospital…to tell us that he has died…. So that one, it was one of the most difficult things…it was one of the most again difficult time in my life!” Then she explained how it became more difficult saying, “[Pause] because he was not sick that you could think of him dying. Eeh? [Emotional]
sometimes you become helpless in some of the things.” Then she narrated another sudden loss within a week of the previous one, a situation which she described was devastating to the family: “The following week my co-wife who…she had [blood] pressure and diabetes, when she heard about my son she got affected…she went [died?] too…when we were still doing funeral preparation. So we had two people to bury…. This Wednesday, my son [died]; the next one, mum [co-wife], so she died on Wednesday that we were preparing to bury my son on that Saturday…so that we start marathon for that week to bury mum.” Again she stated, “So that one is another problem again which befall our family recently in September [2015]….” Then the participant described the impact of the multiple losses in her life that, “You know it is a something which is heavy….”

**Theme #3: Frustration**

Generated from van Manen’s lived existentials, this theme was spawned from the participants’ deliberations [of lived body/time] with an emphasis on feelings of frustration (see Figure 12) amidst the violence and fire explosion dangers and destructions and the urgency to escape, protect, rescue, and/or treat oneself or others. The participants described experiencing frustrations in trying to escape danger or to rescue another person from danger or property from destruction, but would experience transport problems, be blocked along the way, or sensed they might be overpowered by the opposing powers. Statements with lived time meaning like, “I stayed for almost, ah, about 1 hour pleading with the mob” and with lived body and lived time such as, “we threw ourselves in there. We stayed for a while,” were made by the participants in reference to their reactions to danger at their times of frustration.

The participants described their frustration in trying to escape from danger but being put under siege or sensing they might be overpowered by the opponents. Participant SSN described
in the individual interview about when they were being chased after he had been shot: “We were
chased again now when I had been shot. And I saw we were two and there were shrubs, we
threw ourselves in there. We stayed for a while.” Then he revealed his fears and negative
thoughts based on his condition saying, “Then I saw we would die and the night had come, still
bleeding. We stayed in that forest. Blood continued to ooze until I felt I was almost dying there.”
Then he expressed his frustrations by saying, “I told mum, [wife], if these people are still
surrounding us, then there is no way out, still we will die, there is no need to stay here. If I see,
for sure, they are stuck in here, then I know it is us they are putting in siege, then I better get
out.” Being overwhelmed with fears of being wounded further and dying, the participant came
up with an unrealistic solution to his perceived thought of experiencing prolonged pain from
injury prior to death as he stated, “And because I had a *panga* [machetes], we had a *panga* which
we had gotten on the way, we went with it. So I told her [wife], ‘When I get out and you see, eh
they are overwhelming me, then you hold and try [inaudible segment] cut me, [laughter] if it is to
die then we die immediately.’”

Acute pain and suffering in the present (regardless of its implications for the future) can
be so excruciating as to lead to suicide; this is commonly witnessed among victims of torture
(Beck & Steer, 1993). The participant continued with a narrative of his distressing experience
and frustrated thoughts: “I decided to get out, when I got out, I stood and talked to
them…[laughter] [I discovered] they were running away when they saw the fire and people
running and so they ran too, but we were thinking they were chasing us [laughter]….” In the
same way, participant SMW spoke of the frustrating experience of trying to escape from danger
while under siege by the perpetrators, and she had young twins to protect as well. The
participant described the situation in the individual interview saying, “We hid in another electric
fenced farm. So when we heard the noises here, we would go to the other side, again we would hear others. When we went to the other side, then we would hear some in that side, then we would run to the other, so they had surrounded that farm…. It must have been so fearful for participant SMW knowing that the neighbor had already been killed and so frustrating to run endlessly with twin young children, as she said, “I was running at an adult’s pace, you have nothing just running, because you have heard that here they are they have come, my children, even to get out of…. To express fully the fearful and frustrating situation which she felt she was in, the participant stated, “In fact, it was only God who saved us…. ” Equally, participant SSN described during the individual interview of another situation whereby he was trying to escape danger but was fearfully overwhelmed by the pursuing opponents’ schemes of attack. The participant recounted, “We were being thrown with some things like [pause] I do not know if it was grenades at night, it was glowing so much that even when you tried to hide, you were defeated…1st eh 31st, 31st [/12/2007]…. ” After explaining the period of the attack, he continued, “They were throwing on us, they get the light, so they could see us but we were not seeing them, and those things would glow in the sky. It was bright so much like daylight…when we tried those ones…even to fight with them was difficult…. ” It seemed the incident had a devastating impact on the participant’s life as he stated, “That specifically scared me a lot, and I ended up having overwhelming fears…. ” Participant KAN also spoke of his experience of frustration and hopelessness after being bitten by safari ants when he revisited the site on the night of the fire explosion stating, “Me, I gave myself morale I said if it was meant that I get finished today let me be finished, so I walked all the way back home.”

The participants also discussed the painful and frustrating experience of struggling to take their injured people safely and quickly to various hospitals for emergency services when
everywhere was dangerous and the transport system had been impaired by the PEV violence. In Focus Group #2—Upendo, participant EMT described trying to take the hurt husband to the hospital: “So it became another painful incident that there was no means of getting to the hospital, and the patient was hurting a lot, the only way to go was to pass the back long route because of several road blocks and road security search, so we took 2 days to get to [de-identified] hospital and from there we were referred to [de-identified] hospital. It was difficult to get there still…. So it took 3 days to get to the hospital.”

Participants SMA, KAM, and SJM shared similar frustrating and fearful experiences of struggling to relocate their children to safer environments during the skirmishes (for participant SMA) and for all the participants, during the PEV when there were problems with transport. Participant KAM had to travel at odd hours with the family, facing dangers with the children from perpetrators, and being in insecure and uncomfortable means of transport: “…I took my children in a lorry without a booth, just a tent.” Participant SMA described in the individual interview her similar situation of struggling with transport, though hers was during the skirmishes:

…we came out, to reach the road this way, that old man who was here in group with us went to the center of the road and stood waving the machetes this way [demonstrate es by waving the hand] so that any vehicle that comes may help transport people. By good luck a bus came. It was carrying people over 80, but we in return were boarded in too, we were carried like maize, we were a total of maybe 150 in one bus, and we were not charged. They said to carry us and drop us in wherever we find it safe, where we wish to alight at, at least to take us out because they [perpetrators] were coming….

The participant’s frustration with the transport was most evident when she said, “The bus poured [dropped?] us there…. You have been poured and you do not know where to go, you do not have anything, you have the children here, the rain is raining! So we were defeated on what to do….” Consequently, participant SMA described the frustrations she and the family members
experienced about additional sense of insecurity after their house and entire property was burnt during the PEV, the situation which was almost similar to what they experienced previously during the skirmishes too. The participant expressed, “So I saw here was also dangerous we cannot stay… I told them, even here we will die, you see here is so dangerous we will die?” Still out of frustration, it appeared that the participant then tried to minimize the condition of their burnt house in order for it to accommodate the family as she said, “That house of mine was burnt but not burnt completely, but was burnt on this side and this side. Why don’t we go back home with the children? We returned home.” However, the insecurity problems still continued as the participant described saying, “…before it was evening we were told; ‘It is better not to sleep in the house. It is better to look for somewhere you can go,’” situations which made the participant keep moving from one environment to the other with the children in search of security. Similarly, participant SJM described her experience of fears and frustration due to transport problems during PEV. The participant revealed that she had felt frustrated until she said, “It was better to walk on foot even if it was in the wild since there were no cars.” Further, she revealed her risky plan to escape the perpetrators’ tortures stating, “When we left the 4th house, I told my husband this house, if I will sleep here again, I will drink poison. There was a shop keeper…I went and told him, her if you have rat bait, please keep it for me, today, I will drink it if we will sleep in where? [The same camp?]”

Having your own car or not was still the same in relation to struggles with transport. Participant EPT spoke of how she got frustrated while trying to travel to escape danger. After her car was hit severally to a level it was almost being burnt, the participant expressed her reactions through screams as she said, “So I had to really plead with them, I plead I plead until I screamed [mild laughter]. I told them, “Woih! This car is mine and for sure you do not know me
yet I am one of you? I am a clinician in [de-identified]. You want to finish my car that way?
Eh?” Although the participant and the car were finally released, it was not easy as the participant
expressed that, “Ah, so I stayed for almost ah about 1 hour pleading with the mob. Then after
that, [pause] I was released we were released at long last.”

Furthermore, participant EPT shared her frustrating experience of wondering what to take
away to hide from being looted or burnt and what not to take as the house was full of her
household property and other valuables. She stated, “…even there was nothing I could take, I
mean, everything was in the house [defeated on what to take and what to leave], after all it was
only me, 1 person [mild laughter] in the house, where will you take where will you start? I just
stayed that way in the house…then I just took my personal det eh whatever my personal
certificates and all that, I went, I put in a very small briefcase and I went with it.” The
participant related other difficulties she faced while trying to return back home from treating the
patients saying, “Then! I was defeated where do I go? I was unable to go there because there
were the [de-identified] [her perpetrators] in the area.”

Comparably, participant EBT related in Focus Group #2—Upendo about experiencing
frustration while trying to escape danger with vulnerable people from her house and confusion of
being in a mixed marriage during PEV. The participant said, “But, then again the [de-identified]
[her tribesmen] came and burnt the houses that were near us…it is like they got mercy on us and
they left us for that night. Come the following day very early at six, I heard people calling me,
“Madam! Madam! Come out! Come out! The house is going to be burnt!” [Whispers].” The
participant explained how she struggled to take the people who had been residing with her
between the opposing teams. She said, “Again we had to carry this person, we had also to carry
the other young kid, and also that…lady she had just given birth to a kid, 2 weeks old. So I
took the kid and then I thought here were the [de-identified] [other tribe] now they were fighting face to face and we were just [in] the middle.” The participant expressed how she felt frustrated saying, “I told them, “Please, please, stop it! For the sake of this small one! For the sake of this one, let let the mum pass, let this teacher who is sick pass, let the son this small boy pass, and then us we are able bodied, let us fight.” So in fact they agreed and in the process, as those ones passed, see I have left but the all [inadequate segment]. Then I became mad! I screamed and told them can we stop please, and allow me to go! They allowed me to go and then I ran…to the church where the others were.” Similarly, participant EPT described experiencing frustration of watching perpetrators vandalize her house and loot the property. The participant expressed, “You want to take something in your house, you cannot take, the house is yours but you cannot access. Eeh? It’s like you don’t have a right over it people are just working on it and you are there looking at them.”

It was palpable that participant KAM must have experienced overwhelming frustrations and enormous anxiety as he kept looking for the 2 lost family members for weeks and months and being with the children who were anxiously asking for the rest of the missing family members, had witnessed the destruction of their property, and had been displaced from their comfort zone, their home. During individual interview, participant KAM revealed the painful and frustrating experience saying, “…on 12th, I was in a lot of problems because the children had kept asking for their mother and were getting so worried and so I saw they had a lot of problems, I saw they were gradually getting more emotionally tensed day after the other.” Additionally, participant KAM shared about his anxious wrestle with thoughts about his missing family members. He expressed, “Before I saw this piece of cloth, I did not have certainty that she died.
I did not have that complete assurance because if it is somebody involved in an accident? [like of a car?] or sickness, you know but this was a fire accident.”

Cultural norms influenced the participants’ response to the trauma and contributed to their feelings of frustration. In individual interview, participant ECT described a situation which portrayed her sense of frustration being the wife of the first-born son who culturally is expected to stay strong as she mourned the dead of both her son and the co-wife who died suddenly within 1 week. The participant uttered, “So going through those things, my husband is the first born among the sons, [as a mother] you have to be strong also so that you may be able to stay with the other children.” She relayed how she felt overwhelmed with pain due to the multiple sudden losses and frustration on how to mourn based on her status in the family saying, “So adjusting yourself with all those problems is not something easy.” Then she expressed how in her state of desperateness she sought for help from God that, “Until you ask God completely to be close to you, until you say I am helpless, come and assist.”
Figure 12. Screenshot of some of the themes
Theme #4: Healing

This theme from van Manen’s lived existentials focuses on the lived body. In spite of losing enormous property and loved ones to skirmishes, PEV, and the fire tragedies, the interviews revealed that the participants had either achieved or were experiencing healing from their calamities. The participants emphasized that “complete healing is a process.” They used expressions such as “I got that peace of heart...” and “I wanted to heal too…” in their discussion of their achieved healing or progress toward it. In Focus Group #2—Upendo, participant ETK described the healing she experienced: “This far I have reached, I see it is good... There is nothing disturbing my heart, so I have been able to work well.... I achieved all that I have achieved now because I have an opportunity with no more pain in my heart.” Participant SOA, in his individual interview, spoke about finally being able to live a worry-free life after processing the traumatic loss of property and health to PEV and loss of children to road accident shortly after: “Worrying so much about things can kill you.” Participant SAW also expressed her sense of freedom today, as she said, “now you live stress free…”.

Some of the participants could gauge their healing process by their ability to socialize with colleagues, neighbors, and church members who were from perpetrating communities, as they had temporarily abstained from interactions with them. In her individual interview, for example, participant ECT said she had abstained from the Bible study (discussed further in betrayal trauma section) while she was still hurting after losing all of her enormous property. She said, “I asked the bishop; ‘What can I do for my heart to accept to go?’ …bishop told me; ‘Aah, don’t worry don’t worry, open your heart first. Do not go when it is still heavy….’” She ended by saying she had begun to attend Bible study again, thus indicating that her healing had progressed to a level that she could attend church with members the majority of whom had been
from the perpetrators’ community. Participant ETK similarly said that “…security wise, peace, even living with our neighbors now there is no problem, because even those neighbors of ours we meet in social places, we meet in churches, so it is not bad.” She went on to say that “life is now not bad, eh my heart has settled…,” as she emphasized the healing she received. Participant KAW, who lost family members in both the PEV and tanker fire, participant KAW indicated her gradual healing when she indicated that she was gaining back her normal weight and health: “I am continuing to recover or how do you say it, that way? [Laughs] I see I am continuing to resume back to how I? I was.” Others spoke of resuming their businesses or of now being able to relax (participants SJM and SSK, respectively).

Generally, the participants conveyed experiencing healing in their hearts progressively and expressed being hopeful in life in spite of their calamities. Psychological well-being is defined as the ability of an individual to balance many different thoughts, emotions, situations, to problem solve and respond to stress in a healthy manner (Bradshaw, Hoelscher, & Richardson (2007). Initially, none of the participants exhibited psychological health in their description of their reactions to their calamities; however, they experienced the symptoms of a healthy psyche as they gradually recovered from their stressors.

Theme #5: Hopefulness and Hopelessness

As a theme, hopefulness/hopelessness is also derived from van Manen’s existentials. Hopefulness may be defined as expecting good things to happen in the immediate future (Gruman, Schneider, & Coutts, 2016), and hopelessness, its opposite and a future-oriented concept as well, is a measure of the magnitude of negative attitudes about the future that may indicate suicidal risk (Beck & Steer, 1993). Consistently, the participants described “being hopeful” while facing their tragedies—having great hopes amidst the struggles to face the life
challenges in the aftermath of their disasters, and being hopeful for a better future, the lived time. Although they had varying degrees of hope which fluctuated according to the situation and time of trauma experience, the participants’ hope acted consistently as a protective factor against the impact of trauma.

Hopefulness was pervasive in the discussions as a theme even when participants indicated they were on the verge of losing hope in their trauma, as portrayed in the following examples: “I was telling my heart that time,…” “if it means dying, we…,” “Still I see I will overcome and move on in life,” and “He gave me hope.” They held onto this hopefulness in the face of perceived danger of dying or losing their entire property. They also seemed aware of the role hope played, at least to some extent, as expressed in the following phrases: “I have hope that I will live,” “It’s very important to live with hope and faith,” “hope is very meaningful to me,” “I look forward to a better life,” and “Another thing is to have hope in life!” In an individual interview, a participant explained how being hopeful was helpful in facing her catastrophes: “I have something meaningful, to keep trusting in God and have hope for tomorrow, to hope for tomorrow…to have a hope in another day. …I have a hope for the future, I have not lost hope…that I will succeed, yah.”

The sense of hopefulness for a better future was pervasive in all the discussions. Participant EMT explained in Focus Group #2—Upendo, “…[I] always reflect and understand that despite of going through these there is a future, there is a future for me,” and ETK added, “…still there is life in the future.” Participant SMA expressed in her individual interview that the fact she still had her house was a source of hope because “we can start life that way,” and another participant felt hopeful because the perpetrators had left “me with my feet and hands even though they took all my property, so let me restart life again.” Likewise, (in individual
participant SMW said, “I see there is something good, I have a lot of hope in the future trusting in God.”

Hope as the perceived capability to develop pathways to desired goals and motivate oneself through agency thinking to use those pathways (Snyder, 2002) was apparent in the interviews, as many participants discussed their goals and their determination to achieve them. Participant SMA stated in the focus group, “I would not lose hope in life and say this is the end of life, I I saw, I must move on with life even if they [property?] have finished because even in the farm, if you plant…[and get poor harvest, you plant again] in order to get food for your life.”

“I mean those challenges are not the end of life,” Participant ETK stated in the group as well. In this, they exemplified the active definition of hope as being both the belief in a better future and the action to make it happen (Tartakovsky, 2013). As participant KAN said, “Yah! I had a business. Even now I am trying to rejuvenate it, to see if it can pick up. I am trying to do it to check if that was ‘The dream come true.’” Many other participants had similar sentiments, one of them saying, philosophically, that “the harvests of life recur” (SAM, individual interview).

Several of the participants expressed hope for a better future for their children. Participant SJM spoke of the possibility of economic empowerment for her children saying, “If I would get KES 10,000 I would start a business for one of my children so that he can help us with income, [in fact] I wish someone would come to help us start business. I wish [also] I would get a loan and buy another machine to help my daughter in-law.” Additionally, the participant said, “If my child goes to school and makes it well he can be able to help us….“ Similarly, (in individual interview) participant SMA expressed, “But even with that I thought it is good he [son] is gaining some experience, he has continued with that casual work of selling sweets and cigarettes and he is doing well. …he did sales for those people, so recently he bought a motor bike…. He
[another son] came out with a C+ and the girl is in [Form 4] 10th grade…,” revealing her sense of hopefulness and great hopes for her children and the family’s recovery process from the loss.

For the participants who had lost either their sons or daughters through tragic accidents or the oil tanker fire explosion, the grandchildren seemed to be the available sign of comfort and hope as they grieved and culturally interpreted their loss of loved ones. In the individual interview, participant SOA alluded to the loss of the daughter, stating, “So we said at least she left us this angel [young girl] [whom] we will just name after her.” Equally, participant KAW communicated her sense of hope in the presence of the grandchildren: “What renews my strength and encourages me to continue is when I see those children of theirs. I keep seeing my life that I am still strong because I see that when they come it is like I have seen them [their deceased parents].”

However, the participants sadness if they lacked a sign of comfort and hope from their children who did not leave any child of their own. Participant KAW stated, “So what keeps hurting me most is about that young son, sometimes I ask God why the second boy did not leave a child [heritage]…. Even their father, he gets hurt so much. Sometimes he talks about him, he would stand there and say; ‘At least if John [name changed] had left even a little child we would have been happy.’” Participant SOA expressed, “So now I am old and I think….Eh. The first born son died”; the son had no child, who would have been the one who would take leadership of the family, as per the African patriarchal social system. In this incident, we can see how cultural orientation, identity, and general lifestyle shape how we identify the threats of traumatic events, interpret them, and manifest our distress at them (Chemtob, 1996; North & Pfefferbaum, 2005).

The role of spirituality in many of the participants’ expressions of hope is perhaps best expressed by two participants:
I do not see anything now that can be heavy… There was a time I felt that there is no meaning in life. ‘Lakini sasa nina tekemeo’ [but now I have something to lean on in life]. I have hope that I will live, and I have put in my mind that I will live with my family until that day when God comes to take me home [explained in focus group a suicide and homicide attempt while staying at the IDP camp with a child]. I have children that I will educate until they become teachers like you. I have learnt to strive on and not lose hope in life. ‘Ni kuamini tu’ [it’s just to belief or have great hopes]. I have a plan in case God provides that…and educate my children and they can go to university and do further developments. [Then shows the young girl he wanted to commit suicide and homicide with]. This is that child I was talking about and I have left her to God to take care of her future. To take care of all of them and their future. (SSK)

Life here is not the end, there is life after. The future life? I see a successful life on my part. And I would wish, me, I see success, in fact yesterday I was telling some friends who had visited me here; I personally see success in life. I do not see here. Even though some people may say, ‘Ooh I was broken hearted,’ for me personally I have a bright future. I see great hope ahead of me. (SSN)

In part, participant SSN seemed to be looking beyond this life to a life in heaven when he says, “Life here is not the end, there is life after. The future life.” He seemed to have some trepidation about his future life while on earth because he said, “But … I feel that in the next ten years I may be too old and have no one to take care of me….”

Part of the source of the participants’ hope seemed to lie in how they interpreted their calamities. In Focus Group #2—Upendo, participant EPT expressed that, “Those were just challenges that are never permanent. They are things that come and go, eh.” Thus, she chose to regard her challenging situation as temporary so as to be manageable. Participant ETK likewise said in the group, “Those issues are short-lived difficulties…they will be over.” Similarly, participant KAN communicated, in his individual interview, his new found resilient attitude: “What we have gone through are so many and big, what is ahead of us is very little.”

Nevertheless, several participants described experiencing, which resulted in some having suicidal ideation or attempting suicide either during the trauma experience or later in the course of cognitively processing their atrocious experiences. Sudden crises experience may lead to
extreme anxiety and feelings of inescapability that culminate in suicidality (Beck & Steer, 1993). In Focus Group #2—Upendo, participant KAN stated, “I got tortured psychologically because eh I remember 2007 when we remained...[close to home] we remained there, now as young men. We said, ‘We will remain there; if it means dying, we die, if not then we live,’” as he spoke of being in a hopeless situation during the PEV. In the individual interview, participant SSK communicated his negative reflections resultant on his tragedies stating, “That time, I had seen my life to have reached the end...” Further he revealed his response to the entire loss of his property to the PEV. He expressed, “So from there I started the difficulties of, eh, ‘What will I do? Where will I return to? My house is finished! All my property is finished! Except only that one cloth I had on my body, all my clothes were burnt...’” Earlier in Focus Group #1—Amani, the participant revealed his suicide attempt after being overwhelmed with despondency, stating, “I almost killed myself and the child [suicide and homicide] when we were at the showground [IDP camp]. We were starving, the child was sick, the mother was admitted in the hospital ward, and the environment in showground was unhygienic with feces everywhere. So life became difficult.” He recounted his attempt at suicide: “I took a rope and my daughter wanting to kill myself and her but...[another lady] saw me crying and she asked me and I explained to her my situation. So she helped counseled me until I left the rope with her and returned....” dependent on me because they were all affected and yet before, they were independent....” Many other participants spoke of moments in which they were without hope as well. Three examples are included here:

…the one which came to finish us completely, you see you have rebuilt. You see now the [19]92 clashes are over, now you have rebuilt.... We had seen now there was peace, we felt we were home. Then that fire erupted. That time it affected all of us! [Hand gestures]. The whole entire family. There was no one anyone could seek help from, saying, “Please help get me out of this ditch,” eh in 2007. We were all out on the road, we were all out on the streets, none left inside the house [becomes emotional]. [Pause]. So because we had,
even there was a time we had prayed that it is even better for God to eradicate all the people! In this area of [de-identified], to finish and God can bring what? A new generation. That was due to the problems we had….

I see that future life will be difficult. I feel that at my old age life will be difficult because you will be a person to beg. And how [I] never though that I may have to depend on others because all my treasures went down with the clashes [foundation lost]. I see now the future lifestyle will be that of a person begging (SAW; Ind. Interview).

That lady…called and told me that the house has been vandalized, come and see what you can save…[it] has not been burnt. So I said if it has been vandalized, they have looted everything, then what am I going there for? So I could just excuse myself from the clinic, drive some safe distance where home was visible and pull the car aside. So I could stand there and look over in a visible place. I could see [word omitted], within a short time, very heavy smoke came out from that area! It was my farm which I had not harvested. They were burning my maize in the farm. So they burnt. I just looked at it and said, “Booh! What do I do? I have nothing to say.” I just looked at it [Sobs, moment of silence] then I returned and continued to attend to the patients…. (EPT, FG #2)

**Theme #6: Betrayal Trauma**

This theme relates to van Manen’s lived relationship existential. A sense of pain and betrayal by fellow friends, colleagues, neighbors, and community members incidental to the skirmishes and the PEV attacks was palpable in the participants’ narratives. Humans’ violence against each other casts a shadow of incomprehension, rage, insecurity, and distrust across a community, as it shakes everyone's personal sense of trust and safety in day-to-day society (Khein & Schermer, 2000). This theme seemed to emerge via two main aspects.

First, they expressed shock and disbelief when neighbors and church members—people whom they had believed to be friends—attacked their personal property. In Focus Group #2—Upendo, participant EMT her sense of betrayal by neighbors and fellow church members: “Because, having lived in a peaceful country since childhood, and then for things to change in one day, was so difficult to accept that you have lived together for all that time, then you can change and harbor envy among ourselves. Eh, it was so difficult to belief that neighbors can later
be enemies.” Specifically referring to the 1992 tribal clashes, she said, “Yah, on a Sunday, we came from church, we had fellowshipped together and then we started hearing screams, we did not know what was going on. All of a sudden, when you try to call your neighbor to run away, you see that it [fellowship] has changed into violence.” Participant ECT expressed similar feelings regarding attacks from fellow church members and neighbors who attacked them during the PEV:

“Two boys came in the morning; I saw them greeting each other with my sons, and they said they did not have any problem and then they left. Shortly after, they returned back with sooo many people, ‘kama siafu’ [like an army of red ants], I mean you could not even see the ground, they were carrying baskets and stones…. We could even recognize some but we decided to keep quiet…. So! Kraa! [Expression of pain] cows were taken, everything everything! [Pause] maize [pause]. “I mean, you see you are valueless! I mean, you see like, I don’t know. What did people see, you yourself you did not take part, your children did not, I mean, you wonder where that came from until you are inhumanly treated that way. It took me even long before I attended church service yet it [the church?] is very close, just there, it took me long.”

Similarly, in Focus Group #1—Amani, participant SSN revealed his experience of suffering inflicted by a familiar perpetrator. He expressed, “I had just come from telling people; ‘I am a pastor, stop fighting.’ I was just told by somebody who knows me for sure; ‘No way!’ I got shot on this, you see, how it came out through this side? I just said; ‘Oh God!’ I told him; ‘Be blessed.’ And I left.” Participant SJM related her shocking experience of watching someone set fire to her house, whereupon it burned down in 5 minutes: “And those who were burning were, were neighbors! And I know them,” as she lowered her tone of voice with diminuendo with a sense of distrust on her neighbors. Participant EBT described her disbelief when “a person” told her family they didn’t belong there, that they must go because she was from another tribe. She felt rejected and betrayed, after having matrimonially identified herself with her husband’s people. “We were told, “The way you are, don’t touch anything, the way you are you go we are escorting you.”
They were burning my maize in the farm. So they burnt. Then I just looked at it and said, “Booh! What do I do? I have nothing to say.” I just looked at it [Sobs, moment of silence]…. So I just returned. I said, “If God this is what to happen, it is okay.” [Emotional: silence]. I continued I stitched, I stitched, and then my farm now was like a battleground! Now the…[rival tribes] were fighting there, they burnt eh part of it, eh and then eh those who injured, still it was me who managed [treated], eh. They got wounded maybe from [accompanied with mild laughter] the same, same farm [hers]. But remember from the community we were living with them, eh the mission hospital was not far. So they were coming, and telling me, “For sure doctor,” [?] you know now they had no choice after getting injured. It was that the people who were managing them were the [de-identified] [other tribe] I now, and some other nurses whom we helped each other. But I said, “Let me work.” eh. [Pause] I said, “It is a calling.”

The second aspect of this theme was participants’ recurrent and collective sense of betrayal and grief from the loss of their immediate and extended family members, in addition to suffering from the loss of their property and that of their extended family members. Participant SAW stated, in her individual interview, “Also what has been in my mind, my sister follower’s father in-law…he was killed in 1992 by the clashes. We tried to follow-up on the case and nothing was done to the killers…[yet] those who killed him are known. His wife left that place and stayed at [de-identified] stadium, homeless…Mh?” The sense of betrayal was clearly aggravated by a failure in the justice system that allowed killers to run free. She explained further,

Another shocking thing was that our father…[after] he was evicted, he got shocked, that shock of disbelief. …whenever he was warned of danger and be told he would be killed, he would say “No way! I cannot be killed! To be killed and yet it is me that all those men when they passed through their circumcision practice it is me who trained them as initiates? Aih! No I cannot belief those talks.” My father…had so many cows, over 200 goats, and a vehicle. …when he was evacuated all his property was stolen and the house was burnt. He was informed that all his livestock and property have gone, and was encouraged to value his life over all that…[but] he got shocked and kept thinking of his property, from that [1992] he started getting sick…and died in June, 1993. [Pause].

Betrayal trauma, or trauma perpetrated by someone to whom the victim was close such as neighbors, patients, church members, and other subjects as was the case in this study is more
strongly related to anxiety, depression, and posttraumatic stress than is trauma perpetrated by someone to whom the victim had no close association (Atlas & Ingram, 1998; Freyd, 1996; Freyd, Klest, & Allard, 2005; Leahy, Pretty, & Tenenbaum, 2004; Lucenko, Gold, & Cott, 2000 as cited in Goldsmith, Chesney, Heath, & Barlow, 2013).

Even in the face of betrayal, they found opportunities for growth. Participant EPT described how, as medical personnel, she had treated perpetrators who were injured on her own property:

It is human nature, you expect good from somebody you are doing good to. It is natural eh. …in fact I didn’t have any bitterness, like one he was shot here [points at the side]. They came and told me, “Doctor, please stitch, you help us to stitch.” I stitched it. But where he was shot in, was in my farm [mild laughter], eh [continues to laugh]. So, they came and said they had gone…[named her farm] and the [de-identified] [her tribesmen] shot them. So I said anyway, I am doing good, I do to not have bitterness I will do to all, both the one who has affected me and the one who has not affected me, I will just do equally to them because they are suffering. I said, “Yes my property has gone that way but it is okay, I will look for others.” So that is what I was seeing, “Eh! So for sure; they are burning and I am just continuing treating, even it would have been better if I were home.” I could not [mild laughter] but it was only resentment because of that pain, that pain you are undergoing as you manage others, eh. I only felt bad as a human being but I continued working trusting in God. (Participant EPT, FG #2)

Theme #7: Acute Grief

The theme of acute grief also relates to van Manen’s lived relationship existential. Studies on grief have found acute grief among survivors of recurrent and multiple trauma and loss (Lindemann, 1944). In the two focus groups and individual interviews, symptoms of both acute and chronic grief frequently surfaced in the participants’ discussion of their recurrent and multiple experience of sudden and traumatic loss of their property and loved ones. The research literature has reiterated that the integration and interpretation/appraisal of trauma vary from individual to individual and from culture to culture based on the nature of the traumatic event, predisposing personality, age of the victim, prior traumatization, and the influence of community
response or cultural value orientation (Burri & Maercker, 2014; Perren-Klingler, 2000; van der Kolk, 1987].

In both Focus Groups and individual interviews, the participants expressed their grief due to the loss of their loved ones. Participant SAW related, in her individual interview, her sorrow and loneliness on the loss of her husband after the PEV in addition to their entire loss of property: “So when that comes to your mind, [pause] I tell you one can go to bed and fail to sleep [sleeplessness]. Because you see you have not stabilized, you are left with the children...so you see I was left alone?” Her symptoms had apparently developed into chronic grief, as she said, “That is why you see me crying here and everywhere else that I talk about that clashes…me, I keep saying my husband, were it not for the clashes, my husband would not have died.” Participant KAM described how his anxiety over his wife, who had been missing for 4 months, developed into full-blown grief when he received confirmation of her death in the form of a piece of cloth: “This is the cloth she had worn that day…. So when I got it I got convinced for sure that my wife perished.” KAM described his physical reactions in being overwhelmed with grief: “When I saw this clothe, I got assurance that for sure my beloved wife died! And I lost control physically and even I was defeated to support myself to stand up; it forced me to sit down. Even tears was falling down my cheeks so much even to try to prevent, I was completely defeated, eh. So I felt so bad.”

Similarly, in Focus Group #2—Upendo, participant SMA asserted that she believed her mother died from stress in the events:

…mum died in that 2008 August. She was not old…[but] all her cows and everything were stolen...[and] I think she got shocked...[and] died…. Now I have no home, I have nothing, mum has died...while I was still in [de-identified IDP Camp]…. So in that 2009, we had an elderly family member who was put in charge over us when mum died, ‘mjomba wangu’ [my uncle]. We were told to be seeking his help in times of need for advice or other key family issues, that uncle was now in our home being like both our
father and mother.... When that truck exploded...even him he got burnt, but it was better he did not die immediately...because when he died? [/got burnt/?] ...he was not recognizable; but immediately he arrived at the hospital he identified himself, and was put an identity bracelet. [Then] he told [de-identified] the one who was here, “I am Judy’s [name changed] uncle. Do you know her? ---- “Please go and tell her that I got burnt but I will not survive.” I got the coat where they were being shown [identification items] but when we went to the hospital you could not recognize, he had gotten burnt everywhere, but he died that night. (SMA, FG #2)

The use of van Manen’s (1990) four lifeworld existentials for this study as the lens to examine the lived experience of the survivors of the multiple and recurrent trauma of the skirmishes and the PEV in Kenya has provided evidence that the participants experienced holistic challenges in their lived existentials (space, body, time, & relationship), as deliberated above. The detailed and enormous information from the participants’ description of their experiences provided abundant information of their lived experiences as the recurrent and multiple trauma survivors of the skirmishes, the PEV, the oil tanker fire among other traumas.

Implications. Van Manen (1990) highlighted that phenomenological research begins in the lifeworld and that its subject matter is always the structures of meaning of the lived human world, not the conceptualized world. The participants’ lived experiences bear out the truth of the structures of van Manen’s four lifeworld existentials.

As revealed by this exploration of the themes emerging from Research Question 1, most of the participants described having an exposure to extreme traumatic events which involved either actual death or a personal experience of threatened death or serious injury (Participants KAN, SSN, SSK, SOA, SAM); threat to one’s physical integrity (participant EBT); witnessing unexpected multiple horrendous deaths of familiar community members, peers, and/or family member(s) (participants KAN & KAM); having an exposure to seriously burnt dead bodies (participants SMA, KAM, & KAN); witnessing serious injury to another person (participants
SMA & EBT); learning about unexpected tragic death of family member(s) and/or neighbor(s) (participants KAW, SOA, ECT, SMA, & SSK); learning about the violent death of a neighbor (SMW, KAM); or witnessing serious harm or threat of death/injury to a spouse (participants SMA, EMT, ECT, & ETK), experiences which met Criterion A1 for the development of characteristic symptoms of PTSD (DSM-IV-TR, 2000).

Though not all individuals exposed to trauma interpret the situation as traumatic, in this study, many participants stated that their distressing reactions to trauma stressors endured for more than one month and some are still struggling with them. As depicted in Figure 7a, the participants in this study experienced acute stress reactions to their stressors, which is clear evidence that they interpreted their experiences as traumatic. Among all the 16 participants for this study, the 15 who had lost property and/or health to skirmishes/PEV associated violence and the 11 participants who lost their family members, friends, or close neighbors because of the various instances of violence, all described acute stress reactions, though the duration of their reactions to the stressors varied. The participants’ various responses to the tragedies involved intense fear, dissociation, helplessness, or horror/shock, the qualifiers for Criteria A2 (DSM-IV-TR, 2000). Furthermore, many participants reported struggling with anomalies presented either in form of persistent re-experiencing of the traumatic event (Criterion B); persistent avoidance of the people, times, or places associated with the trauma and emotional or physical numbing (Criterion C), hypervigilance, panic, or other physiological reactivity in the presence of external cues (Criterion D), intense psychological distress, sleeplessness, memory lapse, physical weaknesses, or loss of weight among other characteristic symptoms of PTSD resulting from their exposure to the extreme recurrent and or multiple traumas.
In addition, as exemplified in Figure 7b, the participants developed chronic stress reactions which, as they described, caused significant distress in their social, spiritual, business, and family lives and also acted as the risk factors to their recovery process from trauma (as discussed later in Research Question #3A in the risk factors section). A review of the literature revealed that after exposure to severe trauma, from either natural or human made causes such as an earthquake or violence, adults are known to be at high risk of developing severe and chronic posttraumatic stress reactions commonly associated with chronic anxiety and depressive reactions (Goenjian et al., 2000). Three of the participants had received a clinical diagnosis with comorbid depression, hypertension (participant SSK, participant SJM, & participant SMW) and psychological illnesses that they associated with the violence, fires, and other traumas, stating that they were not there prior to their catastrophic experiences. Depression and suicidality can emerge not only out of despondency (regarding the future) but also from present agony and suffering or even remorse over the past (Beck & Steer, 1993), as was the case with these participants. The profound, persistent symptoms of PTSD evidenced in Figures 7a and 7b show that the participants experienced acute stress disorder, demonstrating that several of them have developed PTSD and that some of them are still struggling with it.

Shalev et al. (1998) note that major depression and PTSD are independent sequelae of traumatic events, with similar prognoses, and that they interact to increase distress and dysfunction. This study suggests that clinical evaluation and treatment interventions should target MDD and PTSD among the civilian trauma survivors of collective violence, including the skirmishes and the PEV. However, many of the participants communicated in their responses that they had found benefit and personal growth in the aftermath of their recurrent and multiple traumas, as discussed in the remaining themes in this chapter.
**Research Question #2. Meaning**

Van Manen’s four lived existentials were used to examine the participants’ responses to the question, “In what ways have the trauma survivors made meaning out of their experiences of the multiple and recurrent traumas?” “ Whereas ‘Lived meaning refers to the way that a person experiences and understands his or her world as real and meaningful, lived meanings describe those aspects of a situation [for this study, the aspects of the violence trauma and loss] as experienced by the person in it” (van Manen, 1990, p. 183). Trauma survivors cognitively adapt to a life-threatening event in search of the meaning of the experience, an attempt to regain mastery over the event, and a struggle to restore self-esteem through self-enhancing evaluations (Taylor, 1983). At the core of this question was a search for how the participants internalized and made meaning out of their recurrent and multiple trauma experiences of the skirmishes, the PEV, the fires, among other tragedies. The four themes discussed below emerged from this question.

**Theme #8: "Forgiveness is the Key Thing in Life"**

The theme of forgiveness emerged from a focus on the meaning the participants made from their traumatic and sudden loss of property and loved ones to the skirmishes and the PEV. Research literature on collective conflicts has found strong associations between trauma severity and forgiveness in adults (Doran, Kalayjian, Toussaint, & DeMucci, 2012). In this study, the participants accentuated the strength of forgiveness as the key thing in life describing that after wrestling with their painful losses, they found healing and peace through forgiving their perpetrators. For some, the ability to forgive the perpetrators came as a result of either receiving counseling services or organized opposing communities’ peace and reconciliation meetings, or both, at which they were encouraged to forgive their perpetrators as a means to facilitate their
healing process and resume healthy living. However, a few of the participants conveyed their forgiving, “letting go” lifestyle as a personal characteristic. Many of them wrestled on their own with the pain and suffering associated with the violence so that with time, they sensed a compelling urge to forgive their perpetrators in order to facilitate their moving on in life. The participants’ decision seemed to follow Desmond Tutu’s statement relating to healing the wounds from apartheid in South Africa: “…we had a horrendous past. We needed to look the beast in the eye, so that the past would not hold us hostage any more. To forgive is not just to be altruistic, it is the best form of self-interest” (Gail Pellett Productions, 1999).

The participants in Focus Group #1—Amani described their appreciation of forgiveness as meaningful in aiding the healing process after the hurt of the violence. Participant SSK spoke of taking the initiative to forgive his perpetrators saying, “We finally talked with those people and said we forgive each other. I think they also forgave us as even we usually visit them and sometimes even spend a night there without any disturbances. So we are now fine, I see things have become a little bit better [Long pause]. Even those who beat me, I knew them as so and so, but now I have lived well with them.” Participant SAM expressed similar reconciliation: “After counseling we received, we are able to forgive and we have helped each other in other rising needs.” Participant SOA connected his forgiveness with his faith: “So it’s just want to say that you forgive! Forgive even before God because He knows that you have forgiven them…to revenge, will you know who it was? …I just want to say that you forgive.” Participant SAM also said, “I have forgiven even those who burnt for us, even those who looted or did what.” He spoke of understanding between the two sides, indicating the current attitude: “… you find ah all of us regretting, why that thing happened, because it did not help anyone….” He spoke further of his great hopes for continued peace and tranquility in the community and the country:
“Therefore, we have understood each other and I don’t think it will happen again, unless the devil becomes more powerful, but we pray God that it is completely defeated….”

Equally, in Focus Group #2—Upendo, the participants spoke of how forgiveness significantly helped them to gain healing and resume normalcy in life. Participant EMT explained that she felt a need to forgive while going through trauma training, a step which resulted in her healing experience: “I have really grown until I have reached a level where forgiveness is a day to day activity in my life because when I attended the trauma healing training, I learnt about the cycle of forgiveness, how we can overcome the challenges and how we can forgive one another. So that has helped me so much…” Participant ECT seemed to find forgiveness the only way to a good future: “We just forgave them, there is nothing else, so that we can be able to live together, and built our country Kenya.” Participant SMA found forgiveness a means of growth and learning: “Therefore, I see that, when those difficulties came, they taught us eh a lesson I mean gave [us] a means to forgive each other. To live with forgiveness.” Participant ETK found it spiritually helpful: “And even concerning forgiveness, God’s Word encouraged me saying that I forgive people as He forgave me so that I could continue with that life of godliness.” She had experienced a positive impact from forgiving her perpetrators: “…having that forgiveness, and having that heart of patience…I have been able to work well.”

In the various individual interviews, the participants described the meaning of forgiveness as exemplified in forgiving their perpetrators for their losses and hurts: “It is good to forgive each other, if somebody wrongs you, do not hold it in your heart all the time. Forgiveness is a good thing in where you live, in the neighborhood, in your family, with children, with other communities and tribes, mm, forgiving each other is good [illustrates with an incident he
resolved as a community leader)” (SOA). “I decided to forgive them [government] because you see they send someone to request for forgiveness” (SSK). “With our perpetrators, we have forgiven them, those who burnt our houses, those who looted, and everyone. Even though we have not met face to face to tell them I have forgiven them, but for me, I cleared everything in my heart” (SAM).

…when we were coming out of the farm, [another] young man asked me, “Will you forgive us?” I told him, “I have forgiven you.” So, all those problems which I have passed and based on how I have been visiting with them and have been talking with them, even there was a time I spend the night at their place and I did not see any problem at all. I drunk, I slept…I came back. Therefore, my finally word is that forgiveness is the key thing in life. If you are wronged, never repay bad with bad. If you are wronged, revenge with good. Eh finally, I want to say that I have forgiven all of them, in my heart, even when I meet with them I hold no grudge, and I have forgiven them both here on earth and in heaven. (SSK, FG #1—Amani)

If somebody wrongs you and later seeks forgiveness, it is very important that you forgive. Whether you have been wronged or you wronged someone it makes even I person with a bad heart reduce cool that bitterness down. Therefore I see it is good to be patient whenever you encounter with such heavy difficulties…. (SMA, FG #2)

The participants further described their current lifestyles as filled with forgiveness as their personal characteristics which contributed to their recovery process. Participant EPT does not hold a grudge against anyone for long, as she spoke of “forgetting things. You let go! So I let go easily. Let go other things and start life afresh.” Participant SSK noted in an individual interview, “If you did not have anything bad in your heart, you must forgive, so I forgave.” Moreover, the participants described forgiving their perpetrators, portraying how their newfound attitude progressively facilitated their healing:

For me, something that I usually see in life…and also having a forgiving spirit, [pause] I am saying my part personally, how I have seen life…. And also there is another thing I love, to live all the time, even if you do what to me, to live being happy. All the time! You may be surprised to see me having someone who has wronged me here, just here here, and again you get to see me laughing with that person, that same same time or shortly after. I have seen it to be another unique medicine in life. When you live that kind of life, as I see, you lack nothing. Aaha! …because even your enemy, you still feel you
love. I do not keep any grudge with anyone and that is the lifestyle I have gotten used to and I see it to be so good.

But there is something I saw [learnt], later…you know if you have a bad heart, you will not live [laughter]…good heart is a good thing in life…. You know if a person has a good heart that person does not get sick more often, if you have a bad heart it brings you a lot of bad thoughts…. So first I got healed in my heart. Later, my physical body got healed. (Participant SSN, Indiv. Interview)

**Theme #9: "I am a Peace Builder, Peace is Just Like Oxygen!"**

The participants appeared to embrace peace as meaningful in life. They seem to have developed a great zeal to live peacefully, to lead or give peace talks with a purpose to facilitate reconciliation and peaceful co-existence among all community members, and to prevent further violence. Terms the participants used to express their value for peace include “peace is more important than money! Peace is just like oxygen!” and “peace is the best riches, more than anything else.”

It had not been easy for the participants to process their hurts and fully experience peace and reconcile with their perpetrators; nonetheless, they finally realized it and developed the urge to facilitate peace and reconciliation, especially among rival tribes (discussed later). As they described their experience of peace in relation to their traumatic experiences and painful losses, it seemed that several of them realized peace in their hearts through God’s help, by accepting the reality of their experiences, counseling, support groups, or other means they mentioned; however, the aspect of reconciliation between them and their perpetrators was marred by a sense of betrayal and anger at their perpetrators, as communicated through their verbal and body language, so it was not fully expressed in the interviews. Nonetheless, the participants described their peace and reconciliation outreach activities and the successful reconciliations among rival communities.
The participants described deriving meaning from their experience of peace and reconciliation with their perpetrators. In individual interview, participant EMT noted that she had to re-establish a peaceful co-existence with her family and the community because for while they considered her as a traitor to her own community for offering peace and reconciliation services to all conflicting communities. “We’ve been living for the last 10 years with my family members, ah, without good rapport, healthy relationship with my in-laws…. I came to realize that it is a struggle, reconciliation is a process.” Participant SOA spoke of his current peaceful experience and a sense of peace and unity in the community, stating, “Don’t you see even that…we are mixed tribes here and are living well? We are living harmoniously, we have resolved to stay together as one family and would not have a repeat of the same violence.”

From their horrific experiences, the participants developed the urge to be the advocates of peace and reconciliation, as they found meaning in their peace building services from their own personal experiences of peace with the passage of time or, to some, after receiving counseling services. In Focus Group #2—Upendo, participant EBT related her decision to be a peace builder after recurrent trauma and losses to the skirmishes and PEV: “So I have [re-]started my life three times in thee, even it’s like four times. So I did not go away again, I stayed, and I decided to be a peace [builder], that is to work for peace, to be a facilitator for peace, I decided I won’t go back to our home. Now I started talking to thee to these [de-identified] and, [de-identified] [rival tribes] that we all belong to God.” Equally, in individual interview, participant KAM revealed, “I am a peace builder and I want to heal people’s hearts,” the meaning he found after the multiple loss of loved ones and entire property to the PEV.

In various individual interviews as well, the participants described how they made meaning of their tragedies through passionate involvement in peace building engagements in the
communities. Participant SOA explained his leadership assignment saying, “Here, I was elected as a leader of the Nyumba Kumi [A Government Peace Initiative]…. We are many, the whole country and we lead well, we do not want anything to do with violence.” He also described his role in peace building as a leader saying, “We met and decided that we do not want this again, we do not want this at all! We are living peacefully with each other.” Participant EBT described her zeal in peace building at every opportunity: “So I changed, [pause] and I attend a lot of meetings, like when I get a baraza [public meeting] even in the church when I get women sitting I like empowering them, mmh [pause] in a faith that is peaceful, telling them about peace, talking to them about how they should handle their every day to day life, their children and…. [So] whether I am in a men, women or whatever the meeting is intended for, I preach peace and I encourage them on the great need for [formal] education of our children.” She appeals to their desires for the future of their children: “I tell them if our children are poor and not educated…they will be the ones that will burn us, they will be the warriors and the rest; so I teach them with a purpose….” Participant SMW spoke of the need for love: “Let us love each other. Because now if my hand would be cut off [severed] and put there at the road, eh a Kalenjin’s, a Luyah’s or any other person’s, whoever passes by will say I crossed the road and I found human hands put there; but you see, will that person be able to identify so as to say it was the hand of a Kalenjin or a Kikuyu or whoever? [No; response]. Therefore, if it will not be possible to identify who is who, let us then love each other.”

Other participants expressed the same sentiments in some detail:

What stands out to be meaningful for me in life is peace. [Pause] that peace is very important! Peace is more important than money! Peace is just like oxygen! [Pause] as I can’t do without oxygen, I feel I can’t do without peace. So it’s like I fight for peace. Even, it [violence] has made me humble. Beforehand I was arrogant. Like [as a leader], when I was dealing with…. But I would [say,] “Aah! You Joyce go!” [Harass]. Okay today I may say, “Go” but on a lighter note. And I may say, “Go” on something that we
can compromise. But beforehand imagine I would just tell someone go...wherever you want to go. I would not care stepping on people’s toes! I would not care what people were saying! But these days I try to make peace with everyone...I try to bring peace. Yah, I try to make the place peaceful. I try to ask myself, “Is this place peaceful for all the people who are here?” Mm. So peace is very meaningful. Even when I think of 2017 [clicks] I am asking, “May there be peace.” Mmh? We may luck food but let us have peace, [pause] mnh. [Pause]. (EBT; Ind. Interview)

I have seen the key medicine for all that we have experienced, and this is not only me but even every human being...the first thing is to seek peace always. Even if politics can get to whatever level, even if it is a Kikuyu politician with whatever good politics, even if it is a Kalenjin or a Luo, every citizen as a common man, it is a must that we learn to seek peace. Because I have seen peace is the best riches more than anything else. Because, I have ever starved without food for many days, even while here. I have ever gone bankrupt several times, even here, but because I have peace, I have never freaked out and I have never run away. But violence is bad because it does not consider the young or the old. Therefore what I have learnt is to seek peace. And when I see an outbreak of fire [caused by violence?] anywhere, my work is to inform people that violence is bad. It is good to educate people to strive for peace. Eeh! (SSN; FG #1—Amani)

Eh after 1992 clashes, I vowed for real, I said, “I have to be a peace builder because I do not want the mothers to suffer again the way I suffered carrying my 2 little children.” What made me really think of [cross talk] after [19]92 when we were crossing the river, during that time [of clashes] the river was flooded, and there was this old woman who had found it difficult to walk further, so people who were able to run could run as fast as they could, so nobody could even border about an old woman or somebody who is carrying a baby or has children. So by the time we reached the river, people had gone way far, everyone was saying, “Yaha! Carry your own burden.” So at the river I could not stand seeing that mum swept by the water and she was really old. So I told the old woman, stay with these 2 children so that they do not follow me and enter into the water, let me take this older one and the young one across the river until we reach a safe distance, then I will come for you and these two other children. This old woman told me, “I am of no value, eh go with your children, let me wait for [de-identified] [rival tribesmen] to come and kill me.” Then she started shedding tears. So my older child had reached an age she could understand that she had to stay with the baby so that I go back for the rest. So I took her across the river to a safer place and I left the baby with her and returned for the rest. I took one of the two children across and left her under the care of that older one, then I returned for the old lady and the remaining child and when I had helped her to cross the river then she told me, “Thank you so much, the fact that you have helped me to cross the river, eh I will not die, go with your children, let me come slowly until I reach where there are people.” But because we were still in a risky place, I could not leave her because I feared that: “What if I leave her and then she dies yet she was in my hands then what will happen?” But the rest of the team were saying, “Everyone with his own burden.” So I tried to push on with this old woman and my children until we reached the first house [at the safe side] then I left her there and continued with the journey.... (EMT; FG #2—Upendo)
Theme #10: Collaboration and Strong Relationships

The participants described their newfound meaning in collaborating and building strong relationships with their perpetrators, neighbors, and everyone, though an enormous sense of betrayal and anger remained (see discussion on those respective sub-themes). Still, they found it important to interact with former enemies so as to live peacefully and harmoniously in the community and as part of the means of preventing other forms of violence. The participants used such phrases as “...if we live well...then we will progress. In my opinion, that is how I see”; “We welcome each other so much, you can drink tea together, until you say; ‘It looks like this [violence] brought us closer together more than we were before,’” and “...if it means starting a group project, we include aaall tribes in this group.”

The participants revealed they found meaning by building good collaboration with their perpetrators and in their communities. In an individual interview, participant said, “Again here, we help each other with neighbors so much.” Equally, participant SAM expressed his opinion on the new changes he has experienced in the community saying, “…me and my friends we talk, and I cannot get something [information] in this part and miss to tell that one because that person is from another tribe, I ask direct. If a cow is stolen nowadays, leave those other years before [violence], if it is stolen from our place I make a phone call to [de-identified] and he tells me I heard that your cow…and we have witnessed them returned.” He continued by speaking of working together collaboratively: “If it is farm work, nowadays we have been working together. If it is in the farm, when you enter into the farm you cannot get only one tribe; you find every tribe, in there....” Participant SMA noted that was involved with a group that works toward development and harmonious living: “There are a lot [of self-help groups] that have been formed
but that [de-identified] is the one I am a member, and I have seen it is so nice…. There in that
group we talk to them.”

In individual interview, participant SMW said, “…now I have strong relationships which
I have never had before. Even though I moved way far from home, I have bonded with strangers
everywhere, at the tent [IDP Camp], my neighbors here....” Similarly, in Focus Group #1—
Amani, participant SSK related, “I started close friendship with those who burnt my house.
Also, they have even visited us…. ‘Yaani,’ (I mean] I showed them the love which I have for
them.” In individual interview participant SAW expressed, “In all that I have experienced, what
I have learnt is to live well with my neighbors. There is nothing like being a good neighbor.”

The participants seemed to have discovered positive attitudes and strong relationships to
be part of the means of preventing other forms of violence. Participant KAM said, “Based on
what I have passed through, I have learnt that in this life like when we are in this world, we need
to live with people with cohesion and to live as good neighbors…. Participant SAW added, “I
live well with my neighbors.” Participant KAM noted the effects of not being united, stating,
“Because as we live separately with others, it’s a means of bringing a lot of such problems [as
violence?]” Participant SAM conveyed the resourcefulness they have in the community: “…we
have helped each other in other rising needs....” Many of the participants indicated that
relationships had been rebuilt with the perpetrators:

For me, I cleared everything in my heart. And now they are my great friends, those who
did that, they are my very close friends. I don’t know whether they know that I saw them
burning our houses or they do not know, that I do not know; but they are my great
friends.” Yes to date, still he is a neighbor. We have lived well that way. We
communicate so much with that neighbor and is now my friend on development matters.
[Clears throat]. We have seen that we have gradually resolved that thing…and we feel
now people are cooperating. We have decided to be good neighbors and our brother’s
keepers. Life has its own history.... (SAM; Ind. Inter.)
I want to say also that if you want to build a house, you do not build it just roughly you have to establish a good foundation. So the foundation which I started to build between me and those friends of mine who finished my property, I started close [strong] friendship with them. I have been visiting them there…. (Participant SSK, FG #1)

Theme #11: "Life Must Continue; God has a Purpose for Me to Live"

Another theme generated through van Manen’s lived existentials was the finding of meaning in living, and the valuing life over property and everything else that the participants had lost entirely. They overwhelmingly described appreciation for being alive, for self, family, and every other human being regardless of their relationship, tribe, or race. Not only was their appreciation of life increased but also their tolerance for personal difference with other people. As they described their struggle to come out of their trauma experiences and move on with life, they exhibited the resilient attitude they had assumed in order to recover from their trauma and loss. They emphasized that “life must continue.” They shared their sense of purpose and meaning in their lives since having survived the dreadful experiences of the skirmishes, the PEV, and the fire explosions, demonstrating that positive automatic cognitions moderate the relationship between event stressfulness and meaning in life (Boyraz & Lightsey, 2012).

Additionally, they explained experiencing a change in their personal values in life. Generally, the participants had a mutual appreciation of life as valuable and consensus in understanding that life must continue. Phrases which they used included, “all human beings are the same,” “I see a human being as a human being,” “life have got an end,” “life is not permanent,” “life must continue,” “I see life is still there with its meaning,” and “I want to put my life together.”

Expressing a newly found appreciation for life itself after the entire loss of her extensive property, participant ECT said in her individual interview, “…the only thing that remained with us was life, [pause] only life.” Participant KAN delivered a similar sentiment: “Life is there, the only one to take it is God.” Additionally, participant ECT spoke of her gratefulness that her
family members were still alive: “There is nothing bad like losing life. So because we were all alive, so you just say these things of I mean what is searched [worked] for will be found but life cannot be found [replaced?]. [Long pause].” Likewise, participant SAM said, “Life itself has a meaning, life has a lot of meaning because despite the fact that you have gone through that, you must put yourself somewhere to see how the future will be and move on with life. And you cannot finish due to loss of property because if you have life, then you will get everything else.” Participant SMA spoke of trying to pass this gratitude for life on to her children: “I have been able to talk to them [children] that in spite of all that has happened, that is not the end of life, I show them that life is so significant or has a meaning.” Participant SMA described how precious is her life as God’s image, even though she had suffered a lot. In Focus Group #2 she stated, “…again I think; ‘If I don’t vote again, won’t that person whoever will win may come in a bad manner and let me be severely attacked again?’ Let me just struggle because I have no strength but I belong to God.” Other participants spoke of their increased sense of the value of life as well:

…and to live or life has a lot of meaning…to live, there is a great significance. First, you are a good role model because you will be a teacher to those who will have passed through the same problems, telling them you? [I?] passed through this and this but I am still alive because of this. So to live have a lot of meaning…. (KAM, Ind. Interview)

And just like I developed that thing from that fire, aah it’s many times you will tell me that there is danger and I will tell you that God will take you if He wants to take your life. Me, I saw it there! There! As easy as that! And I believed that. [Pause: 1 minute] when God has said, “Enough!” It is enough, you cannot avoid it. Therefore I am there, I will just live. God will be my helper…. (KAN, Ind. Inter)

Many of the participants found their struggle to come out of their trauma and sufferings and their determination to move on with life to be meaningful. In speaking of family members’ support for one another, participant ECT noted that, “Life must continue!” ETK as well said, “I saw that life has to continue, so that I do not live a miserable life, until it messes me up until
even I miss to work. Then participant ETK continued, “...[though] on my part that experience affected me so much, because it affected me and it affected the family but eh we try to struggle to continue because the fact is that life has to continue...” She reiterated later, “It is a must that life continue and still there is life in the future.” Participant EMT, also noting that life must go on, said, “You will not just sit there and wait for something to happen, it’s a struggle, you have to struggle to change the situation.... You cannot dwell on that situation for forever; so it’s something that you need to come out of it strongly.” Many of the participants expressed similar sentiments: “We must continue living and we have to find a way of moving on and applying our resilience” (EMT); “I on my part, in my opinion I see that ... life must continue regardless of whether there are problems or there is happiness” (SMA); “Because if you have fallen down, will you just stay there not waking up? ...even if it is whatever, will you just stay that way, even if all was lost? It is a must that you will wake up and go on with life....” (SMA).

In talking about how they survived their atrocities, the participants communicated a sense of purpose and meaning in the fact that their lives were spared. Participant KAN said, “The magical system to make sure that I was left alive, which many were crying even to just be alive, I saw God has a purpose for me to live and it is good even for me to give Him time to see His plans.” Likewise, participant ETK stated, “I knew that God has a purpose for me.” It seems that the more recurrent tragedies the participants experienced and the higher their intensity, the more they valued their lives and sensed a purpose and meaning.

In all those things I have heard from [19]92, there are my neighbors even some of my teachers who died. So I was taking that chance that I have survived, therefore there is a reason behind which I do not? I do not know. So I was just living of history, what has happened. If it is fire like this one, I report came that I have perished. So they were shocked to see me helping to carry people to the ho? Hospital! So it is a matter of me on my part! It is the aftermath results.” (KAN, FG #2)
Indeed I did not get any injuries at all from the fire. Aah, only a trouser of mine got burnt a little bit! …God being the able One but the shoes also helped, because it was a matter of a stick entering between the strap of the open [shoe], and the foot, then it trapped me, I fell down and so the fire went fast above me. That is how I found myself to have survived…the fire past over me, by the time I woke up the fire had burnt there in front of me and had finished. So what had gotten fire was the trouser and it was burnt by a small piece of wood which had already been burnt let’s say it was a charcoal which had gotten fire that is what burnt the trouser.

I kept hearing that a message has been passed that even me I have? I have perished. Because all those who were with me at chamber 1, not even one person got out from there. [Pause] so as I was returning up there, I saw people just passing by being taken in boda, in boda, in fact I cried! I cried a lot. I cried there, for one, I tried to look for a place where I could pray to God, I looked for it but I did not get it! Me, I missed where I could pray in, a clean place where I could pray at to thank God, I missed it! (KAN, Ind. Inter.)

**Implications.** “If there is a meaning in life at all, then there must be a meaning in suffering,” declared Victor Frankl (1959, p. 65) after surviving the sufferings in Nazi Concentration Camp. Nelson Mandela (n.d.) also stated, “Courageous people do not fear forgiving, for the sake of peace.” The participants in this study seemed to derive their sense of purpose and meaning through living with and advocating for forgiveness, commitment to peace building, establishing good collaboration and strong relationships, and living with a sense of purpose and meaning in life. Their passion showed as they described their zealous involvement in forgiveness, peace, and reconciliation talks, and their zest for their commitment to collaborate and build strong relationships with others, especially their perpetrators; and they found value in these engagements. The participants emphasized the significance of peaceful co-existence and harmony in their communities and the country as a whole.

These findings suggest that the sense of purpose and meaning the participants found through forgiveness and peacemaking contributed to their progressive recovery and healing. Weinberg (2013) confirms hope, meaning, and purpose as three key ingredients in a recovery-oriented approach to living.
The presence of meaning following adversities is associated with positive change (Linley & Joseph, 2011). The findings of this study indicate that the participants experienced positive change in the form of renewed purpose and meaning in the aftermath of their recurrent and multiple trauma experiences of the skirmishes, the PEV, and the fires among other traumas. ACORD International supported Community Social Peace and Recovery, a community-based peace and reconciliation program among a few others, which were made available in various communities during and after the violence, but there were no all-inclusive, consistent established programs whereby all violence-affected individuals could be actively engaged. USAID (2017) noticed this discrepancy in mentioning that “despite the gender dimensions of conflict, women in Kenya are excluded from the peace-building process…. Since they are not offered a place at the table, their full peace-building potential is yet to be realized.” This study has found that involvement in forgiveness and reconciliation talks, peace-building engagements, and establishment of collaboration and strong relationships have been extremely important in helping the civilian participant survivors of the skirmishes and the PEV find purpose and meaning again in life. This finding suggests the need for an established national level program that actively engages all individuals affected by civilian skirmishes and political violence in such recovery approaches in order to help them restore meaning and purpose and achieve quick recovery and optimal positive change.

The participants also reiterated their sense of God’s purpose in sparing their lives during their catastrophic experiences. They emphasized their newfound meaning in working hard and waiting on God or trusting in Him to unfold His plans for their lives. Though the participants reported several religious/church-based disaster victim-survivor support programs, they did not identify any formally established religious programs where all the civilian affected
individuals/IDPs were actively involved. Thus, this study suggests a need for formal and comprehensive disaster victim-survivor-focused religious programs that enhance the search for recovery and meaning for all affected individuals who sense God’s purpose in their survival.

**Research Question #3A: Risk Factors**

Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological model (1979) was used to form and explore the 3rd research question: “What do the trauma survivors consider to have been the risk and protective factors in their experiences of the 2007 PEV and 2009 fire explosions in Kenya?” The participants described the psycho-socio-economic challenges they faced in their life transitions over time, which is the bioecological model’s chronosystem. Three of the themes emerging from this question reveal the risk factors that inhibited the participants’ recovery from their trauma experiences. The five themes generated from this question also uncovered the protective factors that facilitated their healing process, which is discussed in the protective factors section under Research Question #3B. The themes generated on risk factors include a) a complete life change from trauma and loss (e.g., chronic physical illnesses, chronic stress reactions to trauma, socioeconomic challenges, and worry about children consequent to trauma experiences, physical injuries, loss of loved ones, and loss of property), b) chronic anger for the cause of violence and/or lack of support, and c) triggers of trauma and loss (e.g., recurrent traumas as triggers, subsequent psychosocial happenstances as triggers, and fear of re-traumatization).

**Theme #12: Complete Life Change from Trauma and Loss**

The interviews revealed the impact of the tragedies on the participants, as they incessantly expressed that “life changed completely,” and “life is difficult.” It seemed the trauma stressors overwhelmed the participants of this study (see Figure 9 and the following section on risk factors). All of the participants still struggle with various chronic stress reactions
to their trauma, ranging from depression and hypertension, to fear of re-traumatization and betrayal trauma (i.e., difficulty in trusting). Five of the participants personally continue to struggle with physical illnesses, and two of them stated that their spouses wrestle with the physical illnesses resultant from the skirmishes and the PEV tragedies. Additionally, one of the participants reported a spouse’s death after fighting with physical illnesses subsequent to PEV injuries and recurrent entire loss of property to PEV and conmen. Nine of the participants have ongoing chronic and excess worry for the wellbeing of their children as a result of the traumas, especially relation to their education and careers (see section on risk factors). The participants reported that these physical and mental illnesses caused major psychological and socioeconomic problems in their families. Such illnesses and worries may have substantially impaired the participants’ functioning and recovery process. Therefore, several sub-categories were derived from this main theme on the complete life change from trauma and loss, which the participants’ risk factors in their recovery: a) loss of health–chronic physical illnesses, b) loss of health–chronic stress reactions to trauma, and c) socioeconomic challenges.

Loss of health: Chronic physical illnesses. Generated from Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological model, the risk factors, this sub-theme on chronic physical illnesses, caused by chronic stress to their physical, psychosocial, and economic well-being, was common in the participants’ discussions of their tragedies. The participants displayed emotional stress as they described their unexpected chronic illnesses. Some of the participants who had sustained physical injuries openly showed the scars of their wounds, signs of their stressful experiences on their ‘self.’ They also spoke of the medical, financial, social, and physical challenges they continually face in their chronosystems while trying to sustain their health, marriages, and general well-being, and provide for their families. Their health situations became chronic risk
factors to their recovery from their traumatic experiences. In expressing the chronic problems stemming from their tragic experiences, the participants used such phrases as “I am not able to accomplish what I have planned unlike before….” and “my hand and leg sometimes bring problem when am working due to the injuries that I got during the violence.”

The participants also revealed that the tragedies-associated physical illnesses affected their marriages and caused other psychosocial and economic difficulties in their lives, their families, and their general well-being. Participant SSN revealed in individual interview that his injuries had “affected relationship with mum [wife], even my body from that time has eh become weak.” He summarized by noting that “violence also brought me problems due to injuries which I sustained that time.” Research has borne out that trauma-related psychological impairments may cause physical weaknesses along with physical injuries. Participant SSK from Focus Group #1, said that “the injuries which I sustained there, they sometimes disturb me and I keep going to the hospital, back and forth. Like this side I have arrow wounds, I was shot here [touches the left side lower neck], so this hand keeps giving me problems.” He spoke further of economic challenges stemming from the physical problems: “At the moment, life is a bit difficult. Because before I was attacked I had enough strength, my body was well; but now I am not able to work well at the farm.” Many other chronic physical problems were mentioned: “It is that I got so much shocked during that violence…. I don’t take too much salt, or too much oil. The diet has been given to me…but am not able to afford. Those problems were not coming to leave us to live, it was to shock us completely and finish us” (SMW); “I was just being taken in a bed…[for] almost a year. Eeh. So I recovered, so we were brought up to here…. So that part, [the burnt side] now I itch from inside. I itch so much” (SOA)
Participants also described many problems arising from their spouses’ violence-related physical illnesses and injuries. In Focus Group #2—Upendo, participant EMT recounted her husband’s struggle with the injured arm stating, “…up to today, his arm is still not well-fixed, it has not fully recovered. So there are a lot of things [challenges?] that has happened…."

Participant ETK described her husband’s struggles with PEV associated injuries, other illnesses, and death:

He conducted that disease of getting shocked…[due to] the fact that the cows were slashed and slashed all of them, dairy cows four of them were slashed, they were all finished. Ayah, the house was burnt with entirely everything. So, that old man got eh, that trauma made him develop a lot of complications in his body. He started developing blood pressure, then he got a lot of complications due to those problems of conflict of post-election. So he became so sick for a while, let’s say 1 yr. 6 months. So after that aah that pressure caused kidney failure…[and] he died, mm. [Pause: 1 minute] that became another problem, which took time for me to accept because that was a lot for me.

**Loss of health: Chronic stress reactions to trauma.** As the participants recounted their challenges with their health situations and lifestyle, it was clear that they struggled for some years with chronic stress in reaction to their trauma experiences and subsequent physical and psycho-socioeconomic challenges. Some of the difficulties they reported include depression, hypertension, memory loss, loss of weight, physical fatigue, chronic grief, intrusive memory of the deceased, and sleeplessness among other mental illnesses and weakening. Political violence and wars have profound implications on the health and well-being of the survivors: they may develop trauma-related disorders from the direct effects, including casualties and indirect socioeconomic effects like disintegration of family and social networks, disruption of the local economies, dislocation of food production systems, and exodus of the work force, situations which act as risk factors that threaten recovery from the tragedies (Pedersen, 2002).
Some of the participants recounted their struggles with chronic mental illnesses, which they developed in reaction to their trauma stressors, subsequent physical and psychological illnesses, and socioeconomic difficulties, identifying their clinical diagnosis and prescribed medication. Participant SJM talked about her socioeconomic challenges: “So I saw how my husband’s life has gone and our property has been burnt, our belonging is finished, all my children are all over…” She seems to have found her loss and socioeconomic struggles to be overwhelming, as she reported attempting suicide and being diagnosed with depression. “In fact there was a time I took a rope and wanted to hang myself inside the house. It is my younger daughter who cut the rope…. I saw everybody was looking to me to take care of them…. I got depression, I kept feeling high heat on my head, [blood] pressure, and confusion.” Similarly, Participant SSK spoke of his chronic mental illness: “Beginning with mental suffering, thinking about my issues, how my property got finished, I have wrestled with that several times…. When I remember those issues, my heart gets disturbed and it reminds me of those incidents…the tortures we went through that time were so severe.” He noted that he sometimes takes psychotropic medication “prescribed for people with mental disturbances.” Participant SMW noted that worry about her children’s education caused blood pressure problems and that she had developed a sensitivity to loud noise: “I do not like noise, even radios, even celebrations [with noisy instruments] I do not like and I got it due to this problem of clashes…. ” She noted that she takes medicine for blood pressure, and if she doesn’t, she starts having headaches.

The rest of the participants spoke of chronic psychological pain owing to trauma, loss, and socioeconomic struggles in IDP Camps along with resettlement and other issues; however, they did not report any clinical diagnosis. Their descriptions indicated symptoms of depression and chronic anxiety. Subsequent to exposure to severe trauma, such as political violence, adults
are prone to high risk of developing severe and chronic posttraumatic stress reactions associated with chronic anxiety and depressive reactions. (Goenjian et al, 2000). Participant ECT related, “My heart is still heavy, I do not want to lie to you, because my life is not as usual. Living in the forest, I mean, out for 7 yrs. is not easy because I returned [home] just recently….?” She elaborated in the individual interview: “It’s not easy to forget it, it can’t! If something triggers like that it comes up. It is not easy to heal, it is not easy to heal! If it were possible to heal, it would not be in the heart; I’m just talking from right inside my heart, it is not easy [facial expression of pain].” Likewise, others spoke of memories as the source of chronic pain: “When I remember of my immediate neighbor who was butchered there, my blood stops, I don’t want it in my heart at all! I cannot tell my children to go and live there because it is a war-torn place…but I will never” (SMW). “It [houses] burnt until my main fear to date is fire…eh it was a very bad experience, it was not something easy to overcome it. So it has been there in my mind, but eh I really thank God because yes the pain is there but, eh gradually we are trying to work on it” (EMT).

To date I have a card…which shows that I am a victim of 1992 and I am still on the road...you see instead of your money being taken just that way, it is better to leave it, and let God help you. Mh? That is what eh has not gotten out of my heart…you just get shocks…. I told them, my house [omitted the words] was burnt, it was burnt at 6 in the morning…it was 15 minutes to 6, my house was burnt, all my property seeh! [Sheds tears]. I did not salvage anything at all. [Pause]. And to date, there is nobody who has come from anywhere even the government to know and it is not me who started? [skirmishes/PEV?] to check on what to help one with, to help you recover. Heh! So even you are defeated, this world, eh this Kenya of ours is like what? (SAW)

Another participant (ECT) spoke of being forced to commute 20 km to work on her farm because the house was gone, and another (ETK) said, “But the truth of the matter is that those problems affect many people and many people have not healed to date…..” Daoud, Shankardass, O’Campo, Anderson, and Agbaria (2012) suggest that there are adverse long-term health impacts
of collective violence on IDPs when compared to non-IDPs, proposing that such may be due to disparities stemming from IDPs’ unhealed post-traumatic scars from their catastrophes, or from becoming a marginalized minority within their own society owing to their displacement and loss of collective identity.

Participants also described experiencing chronic sleeplessness, weight loss, physical fatigue, and loss of memory in reaction to their calamities and consequent physical and psychosocio-economic worries. Such anomalies, including chronic sleeplessness, loss of weight, physical fatigue, and loss of memory are identified with stress reactions to calamitous experiences. “All the property I had earned when I was still strong, what happened with it? It got finished!.... So when one thinks about that, even at night, I can go to bed and even fail to sleep. Just thinking, ‘Where will I go, years are getting finished! I have no strength, where I will head to, is where?’” (SAW). “When I went through that, I became weak. I used to be a strong woman, healthy looking, even people would confuse me with my older children that time…. But I became thin and I started looking so old!” (KAW) “Based on how I understand myself, it affected my memory. It has become worse in that I am not able to think well like before…even I do not tell her [wife] but I myself know it” (SSN).

The betrayal by neighbors and fellow church members and consequent lack of trust was a source of chronic stress as well. Regarding her distrust of a neighbor who kept her property, participant SMA said, “Those things are not easy to come out of your mind so easily. For example, when I see some of my things that I lost and find them at our neighbor’s place and you cannot get it back, it hurts, yet it had been announced to people to return items to their owners…. A neighbor was given my big milk gallon and I know him…. I also feel bad when I see those who perpetrated us are people we know, even you have eaten at their home, even you have done
many projects together, and they could do that to you. When you ask why they did that to you, they say it was Satan who got into them….” Confronting former neighbors keeps the pain alive for some: “When you see somebody that person may ask you; ‘Now, you and so and so where do you live nowadays?’ And it is someone you were thinking it is a woman, your friend, a woman colleague she tells you something like that, eeh? You are suffering!” (ECT) ECT related a similar experience for her grandchild: “Ayah, with that case of the child, my grandchild was told at school: “Sasa mnaishi wapi? Tulikuja tukachoma kwenu” [So now, where do you live? We came and burnt your home]. The child cried and he refused that school until we had to take him to another school. Mmh! We took him out completely from that school, we took him elsewhere.”

**Socioeconomic challenges.** Bronfenbrenner’s model was used to examine this sub-theme, under the risk factors. The participants emphasized that recurrent and/or multiple sudden loss of property, loved ones, and other sudden losses had changed their lives completely. Their microsystems—that is, their homes, their places of security, comfort, and safety—were shattered by the violence and the fires. Most found their socioeconomic challenges after their tragic experiences as overwhelming. The loss of property, compromised and poor living conditions in IDPs Camps, and current low standards of living after resettlement were part of the risk factors to their recovery process (see Figure 9). “Life changed completely,” “life is difficult,” and “life can be difficult” were recurring phrases used to express their struggles following their misfortunes.

Severally, the participants recounted the sufferings they experienced in IDPs Camps and other places of refuge. They faced varying challenges, from starvation and overcrowding in places of refuge (IDPs camp/ tents) to living in unhygienic environments or in houses with insecurity or of a sub-standard level from their own homes, among others. “Until we were able
to get schools, I struggled so much. …I did not have anything that time, all I had saved for many years as the earnings of my youth had all gone into flames within a single day!! [With rigor and hand gestures]. So it was a matter of begging, whoever had good heart would give you; but whoever did not have it would rebuke you” (KAM) “…no casual work, no food, and all those problems. We were living on begging” (SMA). Also, participant KAM stated, “I passed through a tough situation or a lot of problems…we sought refuge at a church in, [de-identified] where we slept there in the cold, and it was because I had a family or many children. I was not able to sleep because the children did not have anything to cover themselves with or whatever, yet they were little children, [pause] and we stayed there with a lot of problems because even food, we did not have food, we were not taking bath, we were not sleeping well because we did not have even a blanket to cover ourselves or a mattress…”

Participant KAN described challenges with both shelter and food: “We remained here with a lot of problems, this is highland. Here is the forest! Here is the forest. Here is the forest! Here alone was open land…. And this place was very risky because it was forest all round.” In shopping center there was no food because the shops had been closed [due to violence]; for about 1 month, there was no food here, we had to go into people’s farms and dig out potatoes. Others whose family members had left their livestock here, we were understanding each other and slaughter the animal, we cook the potatoes and eat.” Then he explained their eating plan with risk at the camp saying, “The food you were to eat so fast, either at night when others were keeping vigil or ? So we would slaughter, cook, and eat as others kept vigil, just alternating, life was like that.” Others spoke of difficulties with having a small baby, sick mother, and no food (SSK), living in makeshift houses (KAM), living in a tent for three years (SMW), and eating burnt maize (SJM).
Temporary relocation to another IDP camp added insult to injury for some of the
participants. Participant SSK described the difficulties in the first camp, from which “…after
about 2 years again we relocated to…[de-identified, IDPs Camp] where still we experienced
hardships.” Similarly, participant SJM described their struggles in a second camp stating, “The
place was a forest and we had a lot of problems in settling there…[we] feared stepping on snakes
or so.” Her family also suffered from lack of food:

We struggled because things, the food, the cooking pots…were ferried by other lorries
and they got stack on the way because of the rains… We struggled for three days without
food. We starved, wuuuh, my child fainted, [cross talk] a young boy…. I asked another
woman for milk and I gave him to drink. Within no time, after drinking the milk, so it
was starvation, he recovered…that week we suffered a lot….we struggled with
famine…before the [Kenya] Red Cross brought food. We finished 1 week. [Again] we
struggled with hunger until we had to enter into the interior looking for casual work in
exchange of food products! …we stayed for about 1 month without food.

Embarrassing scenarios (see Figure 8) from the lack of privacy which the participants
faced in IDP camps contributed to their difficulties and were part of the risk factors to their
recovery process:

Again there at the camp we had a lot of challenges because, in this camp you have been
given 1 tent and this tent you share with everybody and that time even you have grown
up children, grown up girls and grown up boys, the father is there, we were all sharing it.
People were just entering in, the child is sleeping here, the father is sleeping there, you
are sleeping there, [points to sides] it was embarrassing. You just looked at it that you
have lost that value of family privacy, because in the tent, there was not even secret you
could talk, you could not talk with your husband, you could not plan children’s issues
because all of them were there, and already there were those PEV problems. (ETK, II)

We were lying on each other this way, [illustrates] my husband in the middle, my
daughter there, I on this other side, and the little children, just inserting our feet there, we
were inserting the feet how? We all covered ourselves with one blanket. (SJM; Ind. Inter)

For sure people pass through difficulties, more so when one has a family…[and] have
moved to a strange environment, I am talking about post-election violences, or such other
violences that came, and you find yourselves you are in one house, and you have the
children maybe grown up ones. So…[you lack privacy and] you find actually
psychologically and even physically that things are not going on as usual because maybe
you sleep in one house, maybe even one bed, or you spread sacks and sleep together on the floor, so you find for sure people suffer.

…we used to share together with my parents, we were grown-ups, cube was one, and you find that when you were there even the parents were finding it difficult to share one room with you. So in many many cases you would find us going to look for somewhere to sleep in out there, [pause] you look for friends, lit the fire and spend the night out there…because sleeping for them was with stress because they were not used to sharing with us the same room, more so at night let me say so or during sleep time, yah. …all that have been troubling me soo much until now…. (KAN, Ind. Interview)

I had to do odd jobs which I had not done before like casual work so that at least I get school fees for others. And even odd jobs which looked shameful to do; but I did not see that shame, like going to work in a construction site. I had never been employed, therefore to start searching for casual work to do was so difficult. Before this problem of post-election violence I used to…[run a private farm business]; but after all that I became a beggar, looking for odd jobs… Madam, I cannot tell you that I looked for casual work here. I had to go from this county to another county where people did not know me…. I went to [de-identified] side and there I burnt charcoal and started farming…and I started to see the possibility of educating my children. (KAM, Ind. Interview)

Another source of suffering came from rejection from people who might have been expected to give them some support. Most of the participants from one tribal group sought refuge initially among their relatives in the ancestral land (integrated), but some reported a sense of rejection/lack of support, and all of them finally relocated to IDP camps to look for registration and public aid. Participant ETK said, “…they saw us to be a burden to their family. So that was also bringing trauma because that family looked like they rejected us, here we were having a problem, and it was like we had taken problems to them.” Participant EPT other family challenges: “My children used not to talk even in…[tribal language] they don’t know…[the relatives] used to enjoy them…saying ‘these ones are not taught how to work, not taught the [tribal] language.’ It was a mockery on my side that ‘what kind of a mother is this who does not teach the children their mother-tongue?’” All of this, she said, affected her children emotionally. Those who managed to escape with money rented houses for their families but based on the nature of the violence, they also faced financial difficulties for lack of jobs and other alternative
sources of regular income. Participant SMA had a place to live, but it had difficulties of its own: “We went to live in [de-identified]. That is where life changed and became so difficult… I rented a house which…was under construction…it had nothing in it, we just entered in with the children. We slept while seated down but we bought food and ate… We were living with all my children including the wife of my son. …so it was us going for odd jobs to get a house [rent], I remember we could stay four days without food because the money you got that little you paid rent and you stayed without food.” Participant SAM went to live in town but “would come to the farm and get some food from there. Sometimes you are chased but would escape….” He explained in the focus group that he had taken two cows to town, “[but] it became difficult to get something to feed them…[so finally] we sold them at a throw away price. One cow which would have costed 60 to 80[000] would cost 6000 or 8000 the most; it was a throw away price. The goats would get lost just that way when they mingled with others….”

Participants who had investments in the bank rented housing accommodation for their families, but still they related their frustrations and sufferings from either scarcity of basic needs, poor or sub-standard living conditions, rejection (especially the children in schools), thuggery and other forms of stealing owing to lack of appropriate security, and other forms of sufferings in their temporary shelters, though later many of them re-counted borrowing loan for their resettlement.

Haa! Even the house I went to live in was inhabitable, if you see it you will laugh, but I liked it. It did not have even windows but I liked it. That was the only house I could call it my house. I did not have anything; [but] that house was a house I was living in, I liked it because even if it was like what, where else did I have another one? Even when I start to recall now I feel hurt more than that time [long pause: 1 minute]. (ECT, Ind. Inter)

Given your family, you are not used to living alone, now you are living alone, it was soo stressing. Eh it was emotionally putting me down, yah. Again at the workplace, we didn’t even have a watchman, they used to be the [de-identified] [rival tribe men]. So when the violence started, they fled away because they could not guard at night. Imagine, they
[relatives] could come to that staff hostel where I was staying and call me at night without security...when there is a patient, to serve them. I just used to pray before I come out, I say, “God let it be a patient.” Because it was not in me that I should not serve a patient. I used to see patients with or without a watchman, and they could come knock on my door at night, and then I just said, “God, take care of me because I am going to serve You. Eh I just assume it is a real patient not a thug or somebody who is up to ? [after my life?].” And actually it happened they were patients and I could manage them, until after sometime now the watchman came back when it was a bit cool, yah. So it was draining me emotionally. [Pause] even what to eat was a problem. You could not access food, there was no food in the [shopping] centers, it was just hard. You could go for a whole day without any food [pause: 1 minute]. (EPT, Ind. Interview)

Most of the participants, at the time of the interviews, were still coping with housing and financial difficulties owing to having lost everything previously. The following is a representative sampling of their remarks: “My life before was very good! And it is different so so much from this! There were things I had done like buildings I had built for my youth, it is finished...my house, stores, and now I do not have any of that…. If it means the house you are living in, it is the house build for you by the government, a house that even when you see, you have saved money aall those years, you spent the earnings of your entire life to build a good house for yourself, come and finish just here [sobs]” (SSN). “I have to buy a liter of milk so that my children could drink and yet I had cows.... You see now things like that make you remember what happened?” (SMA). “…I had a lot of property enough…. So all my property got finished, my property finished. All that I had went down to the drain.... [Cross talk] I lost property ya thamani kubwa sana sana sana! [Property of great value so so so much!].... So when you see the life that I lived that time and now, life is different, how I lived before the clashes, during clashes, and now…” (SSK).” Houses were built for us but those houses are falling off, the cows we live with them in the same house [to protect them from being stolen]” (SAW).
For some of the participants, their financial instability at an advanced age was a significant source of stress. “If you see somebody like me now, how many years will I go?” (ECT). “And now the years are gone, I told you I’m 60 [years old], there is no one who will call me for casual labor, there is nowhere anyone can hire me…. [and] the size of farm work I do this years is not the same as I used to do before…” (SAW). “My life is so short, and I am old and I am starting to age completely, and I have no pension, and I have to feed those children…now for me if I even go for weeding casual work I cannot finish it. …going for that casual work you get 200/- and your aging body is finished even you are eh [laughs] you are defeated to finish it [weeding], so you wonder what can I do with that, [200/-]…” (SSN). “I am aging now and therefore my work is a bit slow, when I was young I was doing it with a lot of rigor. … Consider the gap between 2007 you count 8 yrs. down the line when we were not stable and were not even thinking of doing anything…but you can imagine 7, 8 yrs. down the line you did nothing!” In the individual interview, this participant summarized, “To speak the truth those problems since that time of those issues we have never been able to settle. Because you know for somebody to settle, it takes a very long period? Since all those years we have not settled” (ETK).

**Worry about children.** The main theme on “The Impact of Trauma and Loss: “Life changed completely! It’s difficult,” for this sub-category was deconstructed using Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological model focusing on the risk factors. As the participants described their socioeconomic challenges, their worry about their children’s wellbeing, their careers, and their future after the entire loss of property was consistent in all the interviews in this study. The terms the participants used as they narrated their concerns included “There is something I encountered which is big! A big blow! Big! About my children, because…[of poor education],” “my children have gone to eight different schools [within a few years after the PEV],” “To date
when she remembers that! From that time she started falling...because of the shock due to the trauma she experienced,” and “Even now the children study with a lot of difficulties.”

Worry about the children’s current general wellbeing was a common concern among the participants. Participant SJM described in individual interview her worry for the children and struggle with other life stressors stating, “What comes into my mind is about my children and the problems they have and this increases my pressure. The children sometimes wonder why am not helping them.” Then she expressed her chronic pain and frustrations stating, “I wonder whether life will be like this for the rest of my life.” In Focus Group #1—Amani, she relayed, “…all my children are all over…my daughter in [de-identified], their property was looted there….”. The participant associated her family’s sufferings to the loss during the violence. She stated, “Also my sons have no work because one was running a business in a garage, all was brought down; and it is because of? …that daughter of mine she used to send me 3000 shillings each month, now she could not send anymore.” Then she expressed, “I see that it [violence] affected the children.” Then she summarized emotionally her thoughts saying, “Were it not for that violence I would be able to sustain myself. You see how it brought me difficulties?” Similarly, participant KAM described in individual interview his difficulty in meeting the family needs stating, “After that life was still difficult because I had children who had to eat, who needed to be educated, and even to dress up…. Therefore, it forced me to hurt so much looking for ways that those children would continue…. ” Then he related his challenging life situation saying, “…but after all that I became a beggar, looking for odd jobs…. ”

Concern for the children in their struggle with chronic anxiety was another challenge which showed to be the participants’ hindrance to their recovery. Participant SJM unveiled in individual interview her enduring difficulty of trying to support her daughter wrestling with...
chronic anxiety resultant on her traumatic experience during the PEV. The participant recounted, “When we went to the showground she kept falling down, and when we relocated to [de-identified], she kept falling and she nose bled so much. Eh, I was told it is because of the shock due to the trauma she experienced.” Similarly, participant SMW relayed in Focus Group #1—Amani, her worry about the daughter stating, “There was my child who whenever she remembered that incident…when she recalls, then she gets disturbed. Whenever we started talking about those incidents then she could wet herself while standing up.” Then she related the chronicity of the problem saying, “She gets shocked so much from that time. She does not want to recall those tragedies. So we continued with those difficulties until we relocated to [de-identified]…[and] we continued with the medication because that disease became chronic.”

Worry about children’s education. The participants recounted their emotional pain for the violence associated interruption of their children’s education. In Focus group #1—Amani, participant SMA relayed, “…my children, stayed home until August without going to school [8 months]…they struggled with their education a lot. Nowhere near that was safe for them to join school in where we were, no school fees…. The next year we decided to take back [home] the children and now they had to repeat their classes in 2009 and immediately after starting school was that tanker explosion [lost uncle and many familiar neighbors to it].” Likewise, participant SSN related in individual interview his worry about the children’s difficulties in education and their future stating, “I had good plans for my children before, that of all the things has become so difficult, in fact it has put me in stress so so much…even more than anything else! I have been relying on farming to educate the children but the drought was so severe this year…. “ Also, participant SJM recounted in Focus Group #1—Amani, her difficulties of raising funds for her children’s education after losing her private business to PEV. She stated, “Also my children’s
education, it has been a struggle. I have to go looking for some casual work to educate at least one…. I have two children in secondary [school] and I am defeated, how will I educate them?” Then in individual interview she conveyed, “So even now, I struggle to get school fees…my children are being sent home because I am not able to raise school fees.” Equally, participant SMW described her worry for her children’s difficulties with their schooling. She stated, “The children nowadays struggle with their studies as they are frequently sent home for fees…[yet due to poor harvest, there is no money].” Additionally, participant KAM communicated his economic struggles for the children’s education. He said:

Before the clashes my life was very well because I was able to educate my children without any problem, I used to get them food without any problem…They were living comfortably…I had wealth…[and] I had never been employed, I was self-employed. But in the current life, sometimes even I go pushing each other with other parents [while] looking for bursaries for my children; but during that time I never went seeking for such help…. I am a beggar; but at that time never did that. Therefore I see that life is difficult now, because this problems of education, problems of whatever, I did not have it completely! (KAM Ind. Interview)

Though frequent relocations were in search of better accommodation for the participants and their families among other violence affected people, it worried them as it affected their children’s schooling. Participant SSN related in Focus Group #1—Amani their frequent relocations and concern for the children’s education. He relayed, “But there is one problem we experienced,…[the children’s schooling interruptions], my two children were in Form 2/10th Grade. …we left the showground [IDPs Camp] after 1 year, we went to another place we were given…so from there I think the government saw that we were squeezed up…[and] they decided to get this farm and we were relocated here.” Then he identified the impact of the relocations stating, “There is a child who moved to 8 to 10 different schools and that affected their performance….” Similarly, participant ECT described her relocation with the grandchildren
stating, “We escaped to [de-identified] where I put my grandchildren and so we stayed with our relatives and then we prepared to move to IDPs camp.” Also, participant KAN recounted in Focus Group #2—Upendo, the complications with his schooling saying, “Some of us children even did not go to school…[especially us the older ones, our] education was affected because of those disturbances of politics.”

Additionally, the participants communicated their worry about their children’s poor academic performance, their careers tampered with, and their future. Participant SSN relayed in individual interview the children’s poor academic performance saying, “Eh my son first-born did “O” level and failed he got a ‘D’ [clears throat]. The second born girl got a ‘D’…[yet prior to PEV] they were good children [students] when they were in [de-identified] secondary [school].” “…my daughter was very bright but she never finished school, she was in form 2…,” Added participant SJM in Focus Group #1—Amani. Then participant SAW related her difficulties in individual interview saying, “I took my daughter to college for accounting course and she could not finish because of all those problems…and so it was difficult to get her school fees. She got married and she was very bright…but she has no work, she has no papers [credentials].” Also, participant SMA recounted her problems in individual interview stating, “So my children, the one who was at the university had to discontinue because I didn’t have money for his schooling. My daughter who was in college had to discontinue. The…[business I was doing] to get money [for fees] have gone…. In the same manner, participant KAN described his challenging situation of experiencing frustrations when he was a teenager due to economic difficulties. He stated, “With mum struggling to meet the family needs I saw to stay without doing anything in the house is so frustrating, so I went looking for odd jobs to keep myself up in school.” The situation became difficult for the participant as he did not manage to continue with his schooling
and realize his goal as he expressed, “But it was so hard. So you find yourself you have gone and
gone and gone until the last minute? [you fail to continue with school?].” Further, participant
SSN relayed his worry for the children’s joblessness and their future saying, “The children are
not employed anywhere due to poor academic performance. Unless God bless them in His own
way through other means to get jobs, but regarding schooling, that is finished, and we have
forgotten.” Then participant SMA expressed, “My children never finished their education and
could be they would have been well off now. So you ask yourself; ‘What shall I do or what will
be done for us so that our hearts can heal completely?’” Additionally, she stated, “I also
remember when I had my own…[private farm business I would] educate my children…[meet
their financial needs] but now…I struggle to get them anything [participant sobs]. …by now I
would not be having problem, this one would have finished university long time, [and] maybe he
would have come to help others, but now, they [attackers] cut short their lives just this way.”
Further, the participants related their problems with their/children’s education being impaired by
the violence saying:

I will talk about my education, me I can possibly clarify, Form 4 [national examination] I
did…[9 yrs. after the 8th Grade Std. 8 exams]. [Pause] Aaall that was contributed by those
conflicts because 1997 when many of our property, the foundation of my parents all got
finished, and after that to get finished we became now sacrificial [sacrificial?] lambs, I
and my older brother. We did not manage to pursue our studies, we had to look for odd
jobs even though we were still children we had to look for jobs, because even it reached a
point whereby you find yourself being the farm manager elsewhere, you provide
sometime you go for those manual jobs. Even though it was like child labor but that was
the work we could do that time. I left school first…. All that was contributed by
violences. I studied for secondary level for more than 10 years. [Pause] but eeh even this
20[0]7 is what I think finished it because eh I was doing C.P.A. I, clashes came, I could
not continue but eh I resumed back and studied for it on my own I did up to section II and
III. So far, I have not finished but I don’t see myself continuing with school now because
so far other issues have come up elsewhere, mmh. (KAN, Ind. Interview)

My son at the university to hear what had befallen our lives again… We were surprised to
see him arrive again. He came back home and said things were overwhelming him…that
he was not getting anything in his school work. Then he told me, “Mum, the problem I
have, I cannot understand anything. I cannot concentrate…let me go and defer….” He paid for us the house rent in a nearby place for two months and went back to school, so we moved from the one of [associated with] thugs. So when he left, I saw, “This child has been hurt so much psychologically, this child has been mentally hurt.” I told him, “Do not come home again, go on with your studies and in case of anything you give us a phone call.” [Participant sobs]. That child went to school…[but shortly after] called me telling me, “Mum school fees is needed… I have written a letter to the dean…explained all my problems and deferred my studies.” Life for sure is still hard because up to now that son of mine has not gone back to school. …[again] my younger children went back to school; but they were told, “What have you come back for? We will squeeze you to death” …though it was hard but they continued that waaay, until the term finished…. (SMA, Ind. Interview)

The participants described their challenges in raising up their children in a disciplined and stable manner after their enormous loss of property to the violence, the socioeconomic situations which often triggered their trauma and loss and thus impaired their recovery process. Like everyone else, the children struggle with the impact of trauma and loss, eviction, and adjustments to socioeconomically unstable and different environment, and stress among their family members in the aftermath of collective violence. The normal interactions (mesosystem) in their family, school, with peers, and church family (microsystem) and their families’ neighbors, family friends, health and legal systems (exosystem) are curtailed by the violence. As such, their reactions to the anomalies have an impact on their families especially their primary caregivers. Participant SJM relayed in Focus Group #1—Amani, her family problems which she supposed to be indirect cause of the loss of property. She expressed, “Likewise with my children, they see, the way I raised them before is different from now. So even when I try to advise a child, they see that I cannot help them in any way so they do not heed to my piece of advice…it has brought problems in my family.” Moreover, the participants found it difficult to gather for their grown-up children who would be now or previously were independent. Participant SSN relayed his challenges in individual interview saying, “[My daughter] has given
birth to a child at home and I am taking care of the grandchild. Her older brother there he is with a ‘D’ and has now gotten married and does not have any work….” Then he continued, “…from there I saw they are broken hearted, they told me dad…. It is me again that give them heart because….” Participant SJM described in individual interview her challenges stating, “Life now for sure is not like that time during the violence but I cannot compare it with that time before we were attacked…. So I still see life is difficult because they [grown up children] still depend on me.” Additionally, the participants described their socioeconomic problems in relation to their children’s upkeep stating:

I have children to take care of them and even the children who had married, they were evicted so have nothing, just struggle like me. A parent is a parent. Because even those who are married still comes to the parent, they always come to me in times of problems and me as a mother, I have nothing to help them with…. Where I used to rely on to help them, there is nothing. So one is defeated on how to help because there is nothing I was left with, I was not helped with anything at all, at all! (SAW Ind. Interview)

However, though life changed completely for all the participants as they all suffered during the violence and in their temporary shelters, socioeconomic status especially better level of education and being employed influenced the nature of their resettlement after their tragedies. It looks like life is not difficult still for most of the participants who stated they borrowed loan to resettle their families and rejuvenate their businesses or start other sources of income (e.g. participants ETK, EPT, & SAM - though ETK said she is still low economically) and those who were on payroll (e.g. participants ETK – spouse, EMT, EPT, EBT). As reflected in their demographic information, most of these participants had better level of education and employment (spouse or self) than the rest of the participants who described to be struggling with difficult life still. In Focus Group #2—Upendo, participant EPT expressed, “I was not in a very bad economic background, you know that helped me to rebuild quickly. Life was I was able to
move on…. Again education kept me going, it made me be busy.” Therefore, it appears that education and employment acted as protective factors to slightly less than half of the participants though it did not develop fully as a main theme as it did not represent most of the participants’ socioeconomic statuses. Hence education and employment were not discussed in Research Question #3B under the protective factors for the participants of this study.

Theme #13: Chronic Anger for Cause of Violence and/or Lack of Support

In exploring participants’ experience with the risk factors aspect of Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological model, anger was a common theme that emerged in the participants’ discussions of their experiences of the skirmishes and the PEV attacks. The participants described their catastrophes and ensuing difficulties in a way that portrayed their experience of chronic and enormous emotional anger and pain against the government and their respective perpetrating tribes for the attacks; their immediate family members (some of them) for lack of help to escape during the attacks or support immediately after; and the government, the relatives, and extended family members for perceived lack of public aid and other forms of social support after the violence. These emotions, so evident in their verbal and body language as they discussed their painful experiences, may have significantly delayed the participants’ recovery process from their traumatic experiences. “[Since 1992] to date, eh, the government has not helped us with anything. [Pause]. And we are still struggling...we are still at the road”; “…we did not get the security from the government…but those other ones were protected....”; and “with the relatives you could see the families that we went to stay with, looked like they were tired of us”; the participants used such expressions to speak of their painful experiences of anger and sense of lack of support as they faced difficulties associated with the violence.
Anger at the government – For the cause or lack of prevention of violence. The participants were angry at the government, either because it was perceived as the cause of violence or because it did not prevent its occurrence. “Those issues of post-election [violence] was so heavy for sure…ah it was so painful to loss property because you started questioning on the cause of the conflict…. I was seeing in my heart it was not me, because it was concerning issues of the country and those people…[politicians]. For me I did my voting well and after that it was now violence, my property getting lost, my husband was injured, my child was hurt. So, [pause] in that case I had feelings that it was not supposed to be that way because it was not me who caused it” (ETK). “For sure, I feel all our young children should be taken by the government and given work so that the pain [anger] is gotten rid of from us the parents. Even if the government gave us small farms, they should have seen the children and their education. You see we have a burden which we have been left with, yet the government caused it; it would have removed for us children like those ones [points at loitering youth close by]…” (SSN). “You regret even the election votes you ask yourself, “Why did I vote?” And even the government had the effort to prevent some things….” (SMA). Participant SSK spoke of his plan to sue: “I have a P3 in this house that I intended to sue the government; because according to the laws and justice of this country, the government was supposed to protect me and my property. The government did not take good care and security of me and my family.” However, unlike participant SSN, participant SSK seemed to have resolved his anger, as he revealed, “After extensive considerations, they themselves send their people to come and ask for forgiveness…and I also took a step to forgive them….” Participant SMW used an idiomatic expression to address the situation stating, “‘When 2 bulls fight the grass gets hurt.’ Let us pray God that they understand each other before we are got up in the fight.”
Anger on the government, family, and relatives for lack of protection and/or support during violence. A great many of the participants expressed anger and pain for the perceived lack of protection and/or support from either the government, the immediate, and/or the extended family members during the attacks or in the course of the violence. “Even inside the business center there, if you had business premise, that was burnt, they were targeting buildings belonging to the [de-identified] [tribe]. And the police officers were there, maybe they were so many that the police feared to counter-attack them…. The only thing was that we did not get the security from the government, [another member mildly laughs] but those other ones were protected, but God, we had a very big soldier, God who was our overall Securicor both on earth and in heaven. So that is how my family was helped” (ECT). Participant KAM spoke of harassment from officials while searching for his lost loved ones: “I went to the police [station] that was after searching for them in vain…to report but I was harassed by the police with them saying, Si mlisema kazi iendelee? Hiyo ndio kazi sasa inaendelea! [Didn’t you say let the work continue? That is now work continuing]. … Those who were at the counter in fact laughed at me so much until I felt hurt in my heart…. One of them asked me whether my loved one had a mobile phone and if she called me when she was burning.” The participant then described his reaction: “I got so aggravated and I told him; ‘What you are telling me will come back to you.’ So we finished, yes they wrote for me in OB.” Participant SMA reported similar lack of cooperation from the police:

…I went and called these police officers, which is something which hurt me a lot. I told them, “A house has been burnt in the neighborhood, and we [my disabled son, children, another woman, and I] are inside our house. Why don’t you come and help us to get out and escort us down there?” They told me, “You know this time is that very dangerous period? We cannot come and we do not know if they are inside. If they have not burnt the house, go back and stay there we will come tomorrow morning.” So I saw, “This person is not helping me, so whoever took the seat, now it is all of us getting problems?!?” …when I returned, I found the children and that woman had recoiled in the house, I told
them, “Now it is dangerous, there is no sleeping….” We just kept quiet in the house until morning, we did not sleep. The next day…we went to the police station….

Participants EMT and SMW, in their frustration and fear, questioned their husbands’ parenting role to protect their young ones as well as their family members’ lack of help to them so as to escape danger. “When we ran away…that time nobody would help you. If you had little children, no one could help you even to hold your child for you to cross through a wire fence, if you requested somebody to hold the other child for you, that person tells you; ‘Everyone carries his/her own burden.’ So there, I learnt a lot that, so when dead comes closer to you even your brother cannot help you” (EMT). Noting that she did not know where her husband was at the time, EMT revealed her interpretation of the perceived lack of support in her time of danger: “There I learnt that so when the mother has little children, the children become the mother’s [in times of danger?]. That offended me a lot and it put me in a difficult situation!” Participant SMW described a similar situation: “That time I was running with my twins…my older son had run away, the father had run away! So I was left with these twins, I had decided [told] my God, if it means I being shot with an arrow while holding my children, I will not leave them, I will die with them!” She went on to relate how her neighbor had been killed. However, she interpreted her husband’s absence differently, noting that males were the target for attack during the violence, leaving her to assume the role of protector of the family:

I have four sons. So I saw because they were looking for, their target was to fight with males and kill each other, I told them [sons], “You go away let me give you money to escape to [de-identified] and then I remain with” I have a son with disability, “I remain with him and your father to go away.” So one of them rushed to [de-identified] for safety and the second and those other ones together with their father went to police station…. Me, I remained at home with my disabled child who was in the house, and…[our livestock] for about 2 weeks.
Anger at the government, family, and relatives for lack of support to resettle. The lack of support seemed never-ending, even as the participants attempted to resettle and go on with their lives. Participant ETK felt she was discriminated against: “…when you think about that poverty that you have been put into and that poverty was politically instigated, and political in the sense that it is the government that rules the country and she never remembered to help her people, and the government has a lot of machinery to use to get to know who were seriously affected, exactly; until in the final end you hear that compensation is going on, even to date it is continuing compensation, this person is my witness [points at a group participant], they continue to say it is the IDPs but they are not the IDPs they are regular residence who are continuing with their normal lives as usual and everything, [changed tone of voice starts] and they are the ones who are being compensated! [Omitted].” Likewise, participant EBT corroborated that certain people who did not need it as much were getting compensated: “…when I see that the right IDPs are not being addressed, when I get other people are the ones who are being given the money…who received the 400,000 KES for compensation that the president was giving, and they did not suffer! And there are people like her who suffered sooo much and nobody recognizes them! It hurts so much.” Participant SMA added, “[During] eh, ‘Operation Rudi Nyumbani’ [Project], that money was supposed to be given to the victims who were returning home but it did not reach them for sure. So when you put together those concerns, you have gone to a place where you have lived with a lot of problems, you have been told, ‘Go back home, your money is there.’ When you reach home, you have struggled until you reach there, that money which you would have been given to help you start life again is not there! Your life the little which you had in where you have come from, it is not there! [Finished in moving back?]” Participant SAW may have spoken for many when she said, “But! Our neighbors for sure we
have forgiven each other but the government is the one we blame completely because it would have come to the grassroots and identify who were affected and so know who and how to help us…so we stay stressed up forever here in the village… To date, eh the government has not helped us with anything, [pause]…[yet] we are still at the road…. Because when you encounter a problem you say that if the government had helped me, I would have managed it somehow. But you are just left, no help at all….” For sense of perceived lack of support and desperateness, participant SAW questioned God as she stated, “…so even one is defeated, so asks; ‘And us oh God what did we do to you?’ Because there is not even a single day I have been remembered yet there are the problems. Heh? Eeh. [Emotional throughout].” A number of other participants described their feelings of anger and sense of discrimination for lack of support while trying to settle as well:

Later, they brought people who were registering people for compensation. They went and registered the [de-identified] in their farms and came to our place too and registered us. [Pause]. Those people for sure were registering people, they were not like doing fake registration, but finally, the [de-identified] [tribe] were compensated while we the [de-identified] [another tribe] were not given, they were given 10,000 shillings but we were not given, and later they were given 25,000 shillings but we were not given. So, all those issues were so painful because, you can imagine you have lost everything,…[and] you are still told you planned violence, and even you do not know people planned violence in where? You are told you planned. So when they came to do compensation, they compensated that other tribe of the [de-identified] but us we were left out, we were not compensated for and they did not even help us in any way. So all those issues were painful ones as you see those issues were not good, we were not treated justly, because they leaned on one part over the other, one part was helped while other part was not and yet when violence erupted, when we fought with those people, wasn’t it that we all suffered? Those who were compensated for fought with who? So those issues were not good. And they disturb. Even me it disturbed my heart because I saw my property wiped out when compensation time came I was not considered, even me eh [background sound] I know the government may not be able to compensate 100% until I recover my wealth back to my original state but if they were to come to the grass roots and assess how people suffered then it would have helped because that 35,000/- was not meant that it will make someone resume back to the previous living status but it was not fair for one side.

…when they started the compensation process [for the PEV affected persons]…there were those who the government compensated for, they were given 400, 000 KES and
some were given farms elsewhere. But us, as [de-identified] [tribe] we were not compensated for, here in our zone...for the IDPs, which the church helped built for us, the government did not built for us. [Pause]. So those issues are not good for sure, personally, I see they are not good. And even those concerns are in our hearts still, us the [de-identified] so about that, we cannot say it is finished because when something little happens they refer to that scenario, saying even we were affected but we were not given anything. So you see on the side of those people, one person was eh was given a farm elsewhere, and was given 400, 000 KES and still has a farm in the previous place of residence. So that person benefited, twi? Twice. So it was not fair, the government did not do justice to us [de-identified]. Those issues are really hurting people, personally, it hurts me so much. It disturb peoples’s hearts because you see we are still in that ditch we are under poverty so much because we are living in mud houses, we have not been able to sustain ourselves because that time when that incident affected us, we had school going children and even now we still have some of them but it became so difficult! Even for those children to finish schooling because how to get that money [fees] was so hard. [ETK, FG #2—Upendo)

Again the government became, I do not know if the government knew or it was just those people, leaders who were giving out...but when the money was brought to the ground that money went to one community. The only one that we got was that from the camp organized by the church...there we got cooking pots, some money and a few other items. And with this issue of money, I do not know where our names were going to... what happened to the names and yet they were taken, our names were never gotten anywhere, I don’t know where the money was going to. One [de-identified] lady married to a [de-identified] [her tribe] helped us to get 10, 000 shillings each. I don't know how the government would know that the people did not get. The help given is not reaching everybody [affected people], there are those who are getting and there are those who are not getting, but we live it to God. Whatever defeats a person, a human being you live it to God [long pause]. [ECT, Ind. Interview)

So what hurts me from that time of clashes until now, is seeing that you are struggling still, and you had your own land that you had bought and you are on the road still yet the government has not known how the victims of [19]92, how we went [on with life]. That is what eh has been agonizing me up to today. [Pause]. Mh? ...and, when you go to the chief, he eh writes a letter for you and tells you to go to police, the police tells you to go to court...that is what has also been hurting me, up to today, it has had an impact in our lives, that way of your farm being grabbed yet it is your sweat. We were told that there are groups that help people...when you go there you are asked to register yourself with 5000/-, 6000/-, a lot of money several times since 1992 and at the end there has been no help.... Because the government ought to have supported us. Mh? So that at least one can try those other places. [SAW; Ind. Interview)

Participant KAW seemed not to be angry either at the government or at her relatives, but at the conmen active at the time, who kept interviewing her and letting her fill out social support
forms, without any forthcoming support: “Let me tell you the truth before God, [pause] I have never gone anywhere, nor have I gotten any welfare support for those children. I filled out forms which would have made me a millionaire but there is no welfare support I am doing what? I am getting. Many have come and promised that children will be helped but none has been forthcoming...I see that there are people who pray for you to be in a tragedy so that they use the situation to benefit themselves.”

Anger at the government and perpetrating tribes for lack of support to resettle or impairing resettlement. Participant SMA conveyed her emotional pain saying, “…when you think clearly that your perpetrators have not been touched and nothing has been done to them and we know them, it hurts. Nobody has come to tell them you took these items return them…. So we were asking ourselves, this government after seeing what happened, and there were places they were going they were counseling people so that such problems may not recur…."

Participant SMA perceived a lack of support and sense of discrimination in spite of her and her tribal group’s sufferings: “…we have all the 42 tribes…[pause] when it reaches election, everyone elect their person, but those who do not have their leader anywhere, even though they vote they are the ones who suffer most…they just elect someone else, but finally no one to help them in such times of problems. We still see those who stole our things and they cannot return them…I see it but cannot do anything about it because again it may start more chaos and I do not want to do something that may be against the law.” Participant SSK said, “at times [when I go out] I see my goats, that there they are. That thing disturbs me but I am defeated on what to do. So the difficulties that I have gone through are such issues.” Participant SAW conveyed a similar experience of seeing someone else in possession of her property: “And, another pain, is to see somebody else, the farm is yours, you were not given you bought it! And your farm is
grabbed from you, and other people enter and build in it…that is what has also been hurting me, up to today, it has had an impact in our lives, that way of your farm being grabbed yet it is your sweat.” Several other participants expressed similar sentiments:

There was a time my crops were destroyed by the sheep. I went and reported to the D.O. many times. The D.O. and his security came to see it. Ayah, the next day again, those sheep increased…. There was a time we returned [to the farm] with the chief, two security officers of the D.O. and the D.O. While we were standing there, more sheep and more entered [the farm]. We took how many? 29 sheep [to the government administration station]. The D.O. said, “Let them sleep here, tomorrow we will do the case.” The farm had been eaten ¾ of it completely…. When we returned to the D.O.’s office the following morning the sheep had been taken overnight…. When you ask the police officer why the sheep were taken away he said, “Our work is not to take care of the sheep.” That disturbed me! To date, still my heart aah! ¾ of an acre! [Pause] so I saw that here the government do not want to help me. So who do I cry to? Maybe God alone will rescue me. [ECT; FG #2)

As I was hiding I got bricked, eh I was cut by…the barbed wire. So when I saw that wound my bitterness came. I was like why should I suffer? I never knew the hate of any other tribe, that time I had noo deeper bitterness but I could sense there was something wrong eh that things were not normal…. The hate now was building, you see? At this time I was torn in between I was saying should I be married by a [de-identified] [another tribe] or not. That is the time I realized the dangers of mixed ma? Mixed marriage…in 1994…. [EBT; Ind. Interview]

When the compensation time came only one community benefited. And we had gone to the D.O., we wrote our names together with our victim colleagues, we were writing until it was send to the D.C. in…. When it reaches that eh ? [distribution?], they say our names are not there in the list. Until one day we were queuing in a line…and that [de-identified] woman [from another tribe married to same tribe as the participant] called us, “Please give us your names.” And we were given 10, 000 [KES each]. [Low tone of voice] was it not only that Mrs. [de-identified]? [Asks a group member]…that is the only amount that got through, the rest nothing, that is what I got, nothing else. (ECT; FG #2)

**Anger at relatives for lack of support – Accommodation or resettlement.** Many participants described family struggles in terms of lack of support or dissatisfying accommodation from extended family members. Participant SJM stated, “All my relatives do not assist me because I have a lot of problems. One of my parents got shocked and died after the violence; [and] my brothers took over my parents’ property and cannot help.” Participant ETK
had a similar experience: “Ayah, after those post-election problems, consequently many other issues came…which were painful because we had never been displaced…. They [relatives] saw us to be a burden. Yet the relationship that we had with them before was a good relationship; but when we went there now to live with them, you could see those people, they lost trust in us, they got tired of us….” Others corroborated these experiences:

I have a pain of lack of support from my own sister though she has money and a big house. My sister has money and has a house of more than 3.3 million…. And when we were suffering like that she is there, she has a job, and while we were sleeping on grass at the Showground [IDP Camp] like that…but I blame her as my sister, I was suffering but she did not help me, [gets emotional] she did not even give me even a shirt of 20/- from second hand clothes…that is not very good, that is not very good…. When we were at the showground, I used to hassle to get money for the milk and basic needs for the family and she did not help me at all. [SSK; Ind. Interview.)

My children used not to talk even in…[tribal language] they don’t know…[the relatives] used to enjoy them… It was a mockery on my side that ‘what kind of a mother is this who does not teach the children their mother-tongue?’” They were saying ‘these ones are not taught how to work, not taught the [tribal] language.’ So in fact the children were emotionally affected. But now they are okay…. (EPT; Ind. Interview)

It is interesting to note that the participants seemed to react to the loss of their property and loved ones through violence with pain, grief, anger, a sense of betrayal, and cries to God; but the anger and sense of betrayal were absent in their reaction to loss through the oil tanker fire, road accidents, and other natural catastrophes. Their reaction was more focused on those cases on a cry to God for help and healing, even though they were all traumatic and instantaneous losses. It has been suggested that posttraumatic stress reactions to violence may differ from that to natural disaster (Frederick, 1920). Regarding her loss of property, participant ECT described and exhibited in body language her negative reactions and entrusted her perpetrators to God, saying, “May God forgive them because there is no other way.” But in relation to the natural
catastrophes, participant SMA responded (to the oil tanker fire tragedy): “And God help me to be whatever it will be.”

**Theme #14: Triggers of Trauma**

This theme was explored using both the risk factors in Bronfenbrenner’s model and the lived body in Van Manen’s lived existentials. Based on information from a century of study of traumatic memories, Van Der Kolk (1998) discovered that unlike trauma narratives, sensory imprints often endure over time and, triggered by reminders, may return with a vividness as if the experience were happening afresh. The participants demonstrated various forms of chronic psychological impairments in relaying their struggles, along with symptoms of depression and chronic anxiety disorders in response to frequent triggers. According to Beck and Steer (1993), extreme trauma in the past can be a cause of depression, as witnessed in cases of bereavement and other profound losses. The participants communicated their chronic experiences of irritability/outrést of anger, hypervigilance, avoidance behavior, and panic attacks, among other anomalies subsequent to their recurrent and multiple trauma and loss, characteristics commonly identified with stress reactions to cataclysmic experiences. Neuner et al. (2004) noted that adjustments to the PTSD diagnosis have manifested a general recognition that traumatic exposure can cause a chronic condition characterized by symptoms of involuntary intrusions of the past, avoidance behavior, and general hyper-arousal, and that it must be viewed as a mental disorder.

**Recurrent and perceived traumas as triggers.** Memories of political violence acted as triggers to the participants’ previous trauma and loss. This was evidenced by statements of recall or reflections with expressions such as “it was just like,” “even there I think,” “like there is something following you,” “In 1994 that 25th it was like again hell broke. I saw fire it was just a
stare….,” “to return him to hospital, exactly!” and “we got misfortunes starting with,” used by the participants. The triggers often had a major impact on the participants owing to their preexisting conditions as evidenced in their narratives about their struggles and fears. As a result, the participants used various psychological defense mechanisms to face their painful realities and process their trauma and loss. In this study, some of the participants associated the recurrence and multiplicity of their traumas and their interrelated frequent triggers with some supernatural powers, either as manipulations from Satan or perceived punishment from God. Participants SOA, KAN, ETK, and ECT associated their experiences and triggers with demonic powers. Participants SOA: “Eh, I don’t know maybe that was a plan of Satan, it is just like that violence,” in reference to the loss of his daughter. Then participant KAN said, “We finally made at 2.00 [a.m.] at night we went back to the scene…to reach there it was no-go-zone…there was nowhere to go. We stood at some distance under a mugumo tree, even there I think Satan was walking around, where we stood at there were safari ants, and we were bitten,” after his encounter with the horrific fire explosion. The participant explained his reactions to being bitten by safari ants saying, “I there, I walked slowly, slowly, and slowly I found myself arriving at my house that night.” Likewise, participant ECT stated, “It was just a bad spirit that was passing, it was a bad spirit passing,” in relation to her PEV attacks. Then participant ETK expressed her interpretation of the incident saying, “You see it like there is something following you, now you have come out of post-election, again the property is stolen, [pause] it disturbed so much.” To the contrary, however, participant SAW interpreted her situation as a punishment from God. After the recurrent and multiple loss of entire property and loved ones to the 1992 skirmishes and the 2007 PEV with no social support, as she stated, she struggled with chronic stress and so asks God what wrong she and the family did. In her individual interview she stated, “I keep asking
God; ‘What is it that we wronged you? Why don’t You forgive us because these problems have passed?’’ Nonetheless, all the participants expressed sensing God’s protection and provision amidst their tragedies as discussed in the protective factors section on “Trust in God” to help them overcome their difficulties.

In this era of globalization, when news about political violence can haunt anyone, anywhere, those whose families have suffered political violence in the past are particularly vulnerable to current distress (Weingarten, 2004). It was noticeable from the participants’ phrases of significance during the interviews how imminent trauma or threat to their lives becomes a trigger of previous trauma experience. “We started hearing people scream in [de-identified], people shouting, people shouting, [pause] so there I started worrying so much, [I thought]: ‘What will happen if things will get bad like in [19]92’” (EMT). “[In] 2002, what affected me again so much…when we heard there is violence, it did not reach us there even but it was just the messages which reached there. Those messages were so strong because they were so threatening that you had to move from where you were…. So the worst one that came was that of 2007” (SMA). “Isn’t it even, another time someone told me; ‘This time we are very ready…we have all the arms’ …so it looks like they are well armed. That is what we belief” (ECT).

Unpleasant political statements also trigger the participants’ past catastrophic experiences and hence impair their healing process. Fadal, Price, Levy, Temesgen, and Goretti, (2009) emphasized the need to sensitize stakeholders to what may be perceived as provocative or hate speech. Upon identifying from their research studies on PEV that the laws and definitions of hate speech may not be easily or quickly clarified, the authors stressed the need for dialogue about hate speech, what it might include and how thinly-veiled references to violence can also constitute hate speech. In various interviews, the participants described their painful sense of
retraumatization and fears for their future consequent to hearing signs of political disputes:

“Even those words the speeches you hear, the politics of the day, and eh mostly those are the things that you hear, and they take you back to what happened…” (EPT). “…The politics of the day, when I listen to the TV sometimes I feel like switching it off, I feel they want to restart what was there, because of the way they are talking. They did not suffer! ...so those are stumbling blocks [to healing?] even today” (EBT). Others of the participants narrated their chronic fears of political violence and triggers as well:

After that violence of 2007, whenever I see any politician talking, I start getting worried that, that now might take us back. I start thinking that if this is not prevented, it will take us back to the same situation where we have come from. So I used to get shocked so much whenever I saw any politician talking in a harsh tone…that situation of pulling each other at KICC [which we watched] in the TV and later resulted in violence, that has not come out of my mind, whenever I see, my mind just go…that there is something coming; I start getting worried.

Ah! Whenever they talk, I fear! Even today, even now! When I see one standing at the podium the next day another one stands and starts objecting the other when they talk in News and then they start pointing fingers on each other…again, aih I get so worried! I get so worried sincerely. It appears like signs of conflict, yah…. It’s like early warnings, [pause] early signs...I sense that such issues are not good, mm. (ETK, Ind. Interview)

When I think that [217?] [/2017/] is coming, [mild laughter from group members] for sure I don’t sleep because I am wondering now, “Will we go back to the same situation we were in?” Then I heard [de-identified] [a politician] over the radio saying that election votes may be stolen. I said, “Surely! Again I will have to go back to [de-identified]!? Mmh? And now I have nothing!” Those worries when I think of political election that is coming, sleep disappears; but I keep telling God, [pause] Hei! To help those big people, those politicians…. So whenever I hear politicians starting to talk about election politics, hmm? Genuinely, I start feeling my thoughts go back…. (SAW, FG #1—Amani)

**Subsequent psychosocial happenstances as triggers.** The participants seemed to find that trauma experiences impaired their recovery process. The participants spoke about Christmas seasons, memorabilia, and their chronic experience of irritability/outbursts of anger ensuing from their appalling experiences. For KAW, Christmas seasons trigger her loss of loved ones: “When
I think of Christmas and my children are not coming home to visit, I always remember that. I had kept their pictures in my room and they kept on disturbing me but when I put them in the sitting room, things keep on changing and I feel okay.” “When I am with all my children at home, I would think that if this one had continued with education and finished in such a particular year, he would be this way in life [becomes emotional] but once everyone has gone out and I am just there, sometimes I forget” (SMA). Likewise, participant SSN: “…whenever I think of 1992 when we were being chased and when we saw the first houses have been burnt…. So again 2007 when you see similar incident coming, how we were being chased until, when I had been shot with an arrow, Mum [wife] herself was going as she was holding my hand [pause] and when she holds my hand again, [that is] [/that way/], then I start recalling of when…[we were in danger].”

Triggers of sexual assault threats during PEV commonly disturbed participant EBT during her volunteer mission work to survivors with almost similar misfortunes: “I know of some families who are sick, some of them were defiled, they were raped, people who are now HIV victims and they are so so much down…you feel that it stops you from moving on. So when you hear those…will your life be nice?” Participant SJM described her anger: “…for me, yaani [I mean] I was getting easily angered, and if I could get shocked, I felt I could kill someone with whatever I had, and then I could realize later that I was doing bad.” Similarly, participant SMW spoke of her enduring irritability/outbursts of anger:

I remember there was a day I was called and told, come, it has been said that you come to be beaten because you have refused to take the 10,000 KES and get out of the camp [lived in IDP camp>1yr]. The other ones [in the camp] said; ‘Come fast kumearhiba [things are bad - violence warning terms]. To hear that, immediately, I opened the tent this way, zip! Then I threw away the bag. So I went to where the money was being given out…I found myself firmly holding the police officer this way [illustrates]. I shook him and told him; ‘If you have decided to kill us, start and start with me and my family. Because I cannot come from [de-identified] where I have been beaten, now I am in the
hands of the government, and then I get to be beaten again.’ That officer saw me and shook his head and told me; ‘Mum, to kill you for what?’ [I responded]; ‘For sure you have come to work, start and start with me and we end the story.’ So that officer saw for sure that I was going insane, but those counselors helped us a lot. So I was counselled. Even as we went to our homes we were followed up by the counselors. (SMW FG)

The participants’ description of their experiences show that they struggle still with chronic hypervigilance and avoidance behaviors, the bodily reactions to external cues (e.g., loud noise or any form of scream), though some participants stated that their problems were gradually reducing. Although avoidance became a coping mechanism for the participants of this study, it was a maladaptive method as studies on coping with bereavement have suggested detrimental effects for avoidance in extreme cases of loss to violent loss survivors (Meier, Carr, Currier, & Neimeyer, 2013). The participants communicated that they avoid danger associated places, people, and times, the identities associated with their trauma.

In the first focus group, participant SAW spoke of her chronic hypervigilant actions: “So what scares us and make our hearts not settle is this…the children get scared, whenever we hear screams even when some people are fighting, we get scared. We cannot stay in peace, we must do what? Rush out and stay there checking on what is going on.” Her neighbor shares her fear of collective violence, and they help each other with information: “What pleases me, this old man [group participant] pleases me so much, my neighbor. When there are screams, he calls me, he asks me, ‘What is going on?’ …When we get to know what it is, we inform each other….”

Participant SAM admitted to having chronic hypervigilant behavior as well:

Where you call home, from that day was not home! It became whether you go there during the day or night you live like a gazelle. Because you keep checking [hypervigilance] if there is somebody close to you, [pause] and it’s your home [cross talk]…. That time, immediately, it was a duration of about 2 years….. Where it was your home does not feel like your home, because you live with a lot of fears. Whether it was during the day or at night, because there was a gang…they would use any language to confuse [you], so that fear is still there. I personally remember my bicycle was shot and
burst [cross talk]…. That affects one’s mind so much…. You have to check on the time you are traveling [pause]…because you can either be killed or taken as a thief suspect…. 

In various interviews, participants described their struggle with chronic panic anxiety for fear of re-traumatization, characteristic symptoms of panic disorder. “It is not when I remember that, before there was that time I could think of it; but now, it’s when something happens. I cannot witness a life accident, when somebody gets hit; I do not go there even though we have been trained a little bit on…eh, that first aid, but that first-hand site, I am not able to participate that much… I developed getting shocked so much so much, I have had that thing, up to date I still feel it…. sometime when I am sitting if I get shocked instantly I start panting. I hear myself panting, anything that shocks me I pant and pant and that thing started as a result of that fire. …mm, I struggle with breathing so much” (KAN). The participant then identified his emergency remedies: “What saves me most of the time is when I drink water; I like drinking water, whenever I drink water I start getting [better], I start to recover.” Participant EMT also spoke of her chronic anxiety and triggers: “Also other stumbling blocks like dangers and fire, the fire makes you remember the 2007 [violence]. Maybe you hear something like the brake or the tire, tire burst sounds like [laughs] the bullet [bullet shots: group member’s contribution] shots, you get shocked. You just remember the way the shooting [was]….” Similarly, participant SOA revealed his chronic pain in Focus Group #2—Upendo, in reaction to the tragic loss of his expectant daughter to car accident stating, “I still feel it.” Other participants said similar things:

One day I left here very early in the morning at 5.30 a.m. with my bicycle…not knowing there is danger somewhere along the road. …I met people who were armed and I got shocked, so scared that my day has now come, my life has come to an end. But by God’s luck it was that they had their errands they were running to do, trying to escape. That scared me a lot because from that day, I have never tried again to go anywhere where I am not comfortable at night or in late or such early hours of the day [Clears throat] or when I am alone.
It was that time of clashes…. So when you hear screams somewhere, all the people would rush to prepare and ran to rescue…so that scares me. (SAM, Ind. Interview).

You see these things like beer and cigarettes, [and] bang you see all that brings a lot of problems and are also causing people to fight.... those things are bad. If the legal policy would be adhered to as the president said that it stops, that would help. That would be good.

My heart do not like things like that, they can make me pass through the same experience, I was burnt, I do not want to hear people say this went like this and that, talks that can incite people and bring violence again. My heart knows that God is great, and the government, those are the two key sources of support to us…. (SOA, FG #1—Amani)

Chronic grief triggered by recurrent traumas and happenstances surfaced as another major risk factor to the participants’ healing process. Research scholars have emphasized various influences, including the nature of the traumatic event, predisposing personality, age of the victim, prior traumatization, and the influence of community response or cultural value orientation in the affected individuals’ integration and interpretation or appraisal of trauma events (Burri & Maercker, 2014; Perren-Klingler, 2000; van der Kolk, 1987). It appeared that the aspect of culture, age, prior traumatization, and the nature and recurrence and multiplicity of trauma events were major influences in the participants’ experience of chronic grief. Participant SOA, who was 87 years old and a survivor of PEV, described his struggle with chronic grief and the intrusive memories of his deceased children: “Eh, you see the spirit now. Even that daughter now. When I think of my daughter and she loved me so much and she died, I feel bad and her brother got sick, he conducted sickness and now he is resting there.” He seemed to suffer from hallucinations owing to the tragic loss of his children and the fact that both were buried close to him at a visible site at home. “Eh. So now they keep scaring me, they put together the graves. Mm. [Pause]. Those are issues of memories.” Participant SAW along with her family was evicted and suffered major loss of property among other difficulties which the family had just
faced, all of which may have intensified their feelings about the loss of loved ones. SAW explained, “The community had not stabilized...the community had not calmed down, we were still in fears and shocks.... It was so hard for me,...you are on the road, you have nothing...I lost my husband, I lost my disabled child....” Then emotionally, she said, “Exactly what the father did, that is what he did. We returned him to the hospital, the fifth day, he died.” This statement revealed that the loss of her husband to 2007 PEV-related stressors triggered the loss of the father in 1993 with the 1992 skirmishes-associated trauma and loss. heavy in my heart but it is not that I keep going out telling anybody.” KAW revealed seeing intrusive images of the deceased young son. She stated, “Even sometimes I get shocked when the children call each other, and I feel as if he will just walk in from somewhere, so I keep seeing that.” Other participants recounted their chronic grief and triggers as well:

Eh, an issue like that [about the loss] keeps coming to mind regularly. I am among those people called peace builders.... So often whenever we go trying to talk to people on how a person can live, how a person can avoid issues, and how a person can encourage oneself, sometimes I feel my thoughts are triggered and sometimes they overwhelm me so much. It’s because yes, one can see it is easy to talk but inwardly there is some specific pain. Because when I tell people that I had a wife, I had this and that, an issue like that, even though I am explaining hurts me so much, it hurts me. And sometimes it hits me so badly. (KAM Ind. Interview)

SOA, the 87-year-old, seems to have relived and grieved for the loss of his mother when he lost his daughter, even though his mother had died at birth. He seemed to identify with the little granddaughter orphaned by the mother (his daughter) at almost the same tender age as he was. He said, “So you know even me when I was born I never saw my mother because she died when I was born, it hurts me so much. My mum died and left me as a young baby, I did not see her face, I cannot even tell. Mm.” Participant EMT was overwhelmed with a phobia of police officers, apparently from the trauma she experienced in the 1992 skirmishes: “I got overwhelmed...
with fears, it was just recently after I went through trauma eh training that is when I could talk with a police [officer], eh interact with a police [officer]. My fear was that whenever I saw a police [officer], I could see [visualize] him shooting me with a gun.” She further expressed her fear of fire (pyrophobia) stating, “[In 19]92 I saw houses burning…fire even a match stick, when I light a fire this way [illustrates] I had that trauma, fire trauma is something that could trigger a lot of fear in my life.”

The participants also described their enduring struggles with marital issues after their PEV tragedies and subsequent painful thoughts of their trauma and loss which they trigger. PEV injuries induced sexual dysfunction as well as sexual urges because of either the loss of a spouse difficulties with the spouse’s health, and these emerged as chronic stressors. Participant SSN spoke of his marital struggles: “…I have passed through relationship problems in the family, eh before you get to understand each other with mum [wife]…[it takes a while].” Likewise, participant KAM said, “Also, thoughts come to me. I am a human being like everyone, so sexual urges sometimes overwhelm me, I have feelings but I am defeated I cannot do anything about it…. So I struggle so much because an issue like that used not to come to me that time when I was with madam…."

With all of the psychosocial and economic challenges that have been discussed here, most of the participants who sought refuge in IDP camps said that they had received some social support, including counseling and medical services, when they were in the camps. However, they were displeased by what they considered to be prematurely curtailed services while still in transit or before they had fully resettled in their places of relocations. Moreover, all the participants who initially integrated with their relatives expressed lack of social support including public aid, medical and counseling services to buffer their stressors. “Me I have not gotten any, except only
when we meet with those who are sharing who went through post-election violence like me but I have not had counseling from those professionals. We counsel one another, we tell each other life must continue!” (ECT). “So there, we see it would be better to get counseling to educate one on how to console our hearts to be at peace…. Please come and help people because some people’s hearts have not yet, like with my uncle…. You see, we need counseling to help us move on in life [blows her nose and sits back—emotional]” (SAW).

…the pressure got so high and at that time we didn’t realize even that there were counselors [crescendo tone of voice], couldn’t we have taken one to talk to him [husband]? [Decrescendo tone of voice]. It’s like we did not know, mm. He did not get social support. If he had gotten that of being talked to I think it would have been okay, because we used to talk and he would say he was feeling that those issues were disturbing him, that he does not have a home, his retirement money he wasted at home and then that property was burnt entirely with everything, so it kept disturbing him…. So me after those issues became too much is when I was called, I went for training in trauma counseling. That is what helped me to heal. Otherwise even me those problems had disturbed me. [ETK II]

**Implications.** The deleterious immediate and long-term effects of the traumatic events they experienced on the psychological, physical, and social wellbeing of the participants have certain implications for emergency workers: psychological crisis intervenors and Red Cross staff, trauma counselors, educators, government, and policymakers. Mental health services should be provided to recurrent and multiple trauma survivors of skirmishes and political violence among other traumas in Kenya and other developing countries. Mpofu, Peltzer, and Bojuwoye (2011) noted that the development of systems either to sustain the well-being or to respond to ill health should be tied to the historical, social, and environmental conditions in which they occur. The findings of this study show that the participants struggled with the psychological and physical impact of trauma and loss, harbored chronic anger for the cause of violence and/or lack of support, and still wrestled with the triggers of trauma and loss and fear of re-traumatization
owing to recurrent trauma experiences and subsequent psycho-socio-economic happenstances which trigger their past traumas. It is important for the mental health and medical service providers to be aware of the anomalies faced by the survivors, (e.g., chronic stress reactions to trauma such as chronic physical illnesses –diabetes/hypertension, depression, and PTSD; socioeconomic challenges, including worry about children consequent to trauma and loss experiences; physical injuries; loss of loved ones, and loss of property).

Even most of the participants who initially stayed with relatives reported lack of social support in form of public aid from the government and expressed a sense of rejection and minimal support from relatives and neighbors. The participants who sought refuge in IDP camps expressed that they received some social support, including counseling and medical services, when they were in the camps but were displeased by what they considered as prematurely curtailed services while they were still struggling with illnesses and in transit or before they fully resettled in their new places of relocations. Brown and Andrews (2012) posited that social support may decrease the likelihood of a major stressor provoking clinical depression or other forms of psychopathological illnesses. The psycho-socioeconomic challenges that the initially integrated participants of this study faced suggest the need for the government and the emergency service staff support for these types of refugees as well. More attention should also be paid to the size and security of the IDP camp, habitability of the tents, and tent assignments to families with young adults and teenagers, as the participants identified congestion, insecurity, lack of privacy and unhygienic environments as contributors to their stress after their trauma experiences. Jong and Reis (2013) identified that guidelines on psychosocial interventions in post-conflict areas emphasize that crisis intervention should be based on local needs and built on culture-specific expertise. Furthermore, Ebede-Ndi (2016) noted the necessity to return to
African values, philosophy, and psychology in order to develop tools and instruments essential to meet the needs of Black people everywhere. The unpleasant trauma responses of all the participants suggest the need in the future for immediate psycho-socioeconomic intervention and continued psychological and socioeconomic support during the transition and resettlement process.

In addition, mental health services providers need to understand that the survivors have chronic anger owing to the cause of violence or perceived lack of support subsequent to the skirmishes, and PEV tragic experiences. In the face of their calamities, the participants of this study used avoidance as a coping mechanism prior to accepting the reality of their traumas. Such a dysfunctional mechanism implies the need for psychological crisis intervenors and trauma counselors to help survivors quickly find healthier coping strategies.

Several of the participants had been not aware of the existence of formal counseling. Upon hearing about the services from the group members, they stated that they had never received any counseling services in spite of their recurrent and or multiple mental tortures, while a few expressed receiving the services from NGO sponsored international well-wishers and national counselors. This lack of knowledge implies weak administration in relation to crisis intervention supervision and services and minimal training of crisis intervenors. Thus, as a preventative measure for mental illnesses, there is a need for established counselor supervision and crisis intervention strategies to ascertain that all the civilian survivors of such events as the skirmishes, the PEV, and the fire trauma can immediately receive crisis debriefing and progressively obtain trauma counseling services in times of political violence, skirmishes, and other crisis situations. Steel, Silove, Phan, and Bauman, (2002) found that trauma survivors who had been exposed to more than three trauma categories had a heightened risk of mental illness.
after 10 years of resettlement compared to those who had experienced no trauma exposure, while affected individuals with a high degree of exposure to trauma had long-term psychiatric morbidity. Considering the recurrent skirmishes and post-election instability in the country and frequent fires along the Trans-Saharan highway in the Rift Valley, the study suggests that crisis intervenors and trauma counselors should be trained to offer crisis intervention and mental health services in Kenya to address the severe psychological impact of recurrent and multiple traumas among the survivors. Policy makers also need to consider abolishing inflammatory tribal or political statements in the media, as these can serve as triggers to those harmed by ethnic conflict.

**Research Question #3B: Protective Factors**

This study also aimed to explore the protective factors which helped the participants face and survive their recurrent and multiple trauma and loss. Protective factors account for individual differences in reactivity to environmental or biological risks (Shonkoff, Meisels, Zigler, 2000). This second part of Research Question #3—“What do the trauma survivors consider to have been the risk and protective factors in their experiences of the 2007 PEV and 2009 fire explosions in Kenya?”—refers to the protective factors of Bronfenbrenner’s bioecological model. An examination of the study data using this model shows that cognitive, spiritual, and psychological processes played a key role as the participants searched for their anchor and immediate source of refuge amidst their traumatic experiences and later as they progressively recovered and resettled.

The five themes which emerged for this question on protective factors are trust in God, social support, acceptance, spirituality, and courage. Salient to the participants’ discussion of their calamitous experiences and subsequent copious difficulties was their trust in God for
rescue, protection, provision, strength, healing, and peace etc. Social support received from family, neighbors, church, government, NGOs, and other well-wishers helped the participants in their recovery process and resettlement as well. Moreover, acceptance of the reality of trauma and loss, spirituality, and courage, among other characteristics which emerged from the study data, contributed to their healing process. As Hobfoll (1989) states, such personal characteristics are resources to the extent that they generally aid stress resistance.

**Theme #15: Trust in God**

After exhausting their discussions on the deleterious effects of the violence and fire explosion in their lives, nearly all the participants concluded their narratives in this study with the statements such as “it was God,” “but God has been with us,” “He renewed my strength,” and “He gave me hope….” In Focus Group #1, participant SSK asserted, “It is God! It is God alone! God helped us.” He appealed to the group to confirm his thoughts: “Surely was there anyone else who protected us from those fires?” The rest of the participants responded in unison, “Ehe! [No!] It’s only God!” The participants expressed their sense of God’s rescue and protection from violent dangers and horrific fires and His healing of their excruciating pain from their tragedies. Their consistent emphasis on God’s provision through other means—the Red Cross, government, well-wishers, NGOs, having renewed strength etc.—also revealed their trust in God for His provision in their temporary places of refuge, during resettlement, and for the future.

The participants in this study credited their trust in God for rescue and protection and for helping them to move on in life amidst their calamities and in their life struggles after. Being overwhelmed with and traumatized by unprecedented catastrophic PEV and horrific fire experiences, the participants felt powerless and homeless. However, as a psychological defense mechanism in their cataclysmic moments, they put their trust in their only available anchor, the
higher power—God—to fight their battles for them and sought refuge in Him when their safe havens (their Microsystems, mesosystems, and macrosystems) were destroyed and their life transitions (chronosystems) were compromised. Vaillant’s (2008) statement “The greater the suffering, the greater the power of hope” (p. 111) mirrors the participants’ inner feelings and thoughts during their calamitous experiences. Participant ETK believed that God was her source of protection from danger: “God is the one who has brought me from all those problems to where I have reached, eh, there is one word I think it says, ‘God did it.’” She described her great trust that it was God’s protection that helped them survive their dangerous moment, saying, “Those people who came to attack found us at home and...even though they cut my husband's hand and hit the boy with a stone on his leg, but they did not imagine to slash and slash us to death because they had pangas [machetes]. So me, I think and sense, I feel, it was God[‘s] intervention, so God intervene[d] and that is why I am here the way I am because of God, yah. Mm.” In the focus group, ETK had previously stated, “In fact it was God alone who spoke to them; otherwise they could have killed us because they slashed my cows when I was there.” Participant SSK described his sense of God’s protection from peril after his existential crisis, hopeless moment, and consequently, attempting suicide and homicide. He said, “In my opinion, the person who helped me until I reached where I have reached, is God. Because were it not for God, I would have perished in that tree [attempted suicide], so He was the first source of my help. Again He became the first to help my family, and He was able to rescue us from all those problems, so God is number 1st source of my help.” Participant SMA asserted that “…God Himself protected me I did not die…” Many participants offered similar statements: “God saved me” (ETK “God is the first one who helped me. [Cross talk]. First, God rescued me from dead during that arrow shot” (SSN). “God helped us, there were truck drivers who had been told to help carry people. So they
carried us to town” (SJM). “I always tell God, that violence may not recur again…. Let us pray God that they understand each other before we are got up in the fight” (EPT).

…I took my children in a lorry without a booth just a tent. When we reached [de-identified] the lorry was stopped, the young men climbed up and searched the lorry, they kept stepping and stepping on the tent but my children kept silent and I was just hearing them talking and by the grace of God they did not get us…and so the lorry left, we were able to go until we reached [de-identified] town. (KAM, Ind. Interview)

Shortly, I saw young men running so fast! The [de-identified] tribe so fast! I asked them, “What is it?” They told me, “Sincerely we are dead! Could you help us, please help us.” I told them, “Do this, enter this house.” …even me I entered in. I stayed, I told them, “No, I feel my heart is telling me to get out. …let me lock it.” I locked it. I got out and stood at the path this way as they [attackers] were coming downwards. I felt I was finished! I sat down. They they were coming. I saw they were getting closer so I tried to go downwards like walking away. As I walked a short distance, then I thought, “Even this child of mine is inside I have locked him in.” I saw that, “Now, I cannot wait to see that child being killed, let me go and let them kill me.” I went back. As I returned this way, I identified one of them. I said I will call, because there was no other way so where will I go? I called them by name. I asked them, “Now sincerely, you want to finish that child and I have put him in that house?” And inside I knew there were 6 other boys, I had locked them in. They asked me, “Which young man?” “John [name changed] my disabled child, I have locked him inside;” [I responded]. Even I don’t have the voice! I am just talking. “I saw it is better to prevent him…he may come and keep disturbing you yet you are doing your work.” They asked me, “Are you genuine!” As they kept demolishing it…. One of them, I think he was their leader or what, he was a little bit bigger. He called the rest. He told them, “The child of [de-identified] is inside! …[her disabled son] is inside. Do not demolish it.” …they told me come. I went. They asked me, “Are you genuine there is nobody inside here!? Where is your husband!” I told them, “He is not there…they left long time even I do not know where…I am just left with that disabled son, I could not release him to go.” “What if we open and find some people are inside!” I told them, “If you are thinking I am lying to you let me open.” So now I was telling God, “God, sincerely where you are, do not allow this door to open.” To hold the key this way trying to open, this one said, “Leave that one! Leave her! Come we go to [de-identified]!” When he said, “Let us go to [de-identified],” all of them went. They left me as I was standing there confused. As they left just this way, I felt I was now regaining some little strength. I opened the door, I told the young men, “Now, that God has helped you. Every one of you go to wherever you can go because by now you would not have been there.” So they left. I took my boy and went to where I was staying…I was still home. Now that one pregnant cow was stolen as I looked at it. (SMA, Ind. Interview)

Participants also emphasized their trust in God for healing as they processed their trauma and loss in the aftermath of their tragedies. What encouraged me is my trust in God…it is God
who rescued me from all those problems, yah” (ETK). “The only thing remaining in me is to belief in Jesus Christ. There is nothing else remaining. I may comfort myself inside that circle, mm. [Pause; clears throat] I have gone through a lot in life” (ECT). Participant SMA spoke of God’s rescue and healing of her husband saying, “But God saved him because he did not die [from a brutal beating]. …I say, ‘God help me remove it [pain] for me completely.’ Participant SOA likewise believed that God had helped him to heal: “I was just being taken in a bed. Until God helped me to recover.” Participant SAM had experienced psychological healing as well: “At the moment am doing well because I prayed to God so much to help me recover from those traumas and move on in life.”

Participants also trusted God for provision in their temporary shelters of refuge, as they resettled after their tragedies, and for their future. “We passed through a lot of problems, a lot of it but in all that we persevered and we saw God…. We just continued with God helping us…” (SMW). “The problems was death on this side, on this other side are problems, but in all that we were able to survive it [with life], because God gave us strength and it [problems] ended…. even though we were affected God came in between” (SMA). Participant KAW emphasized finding meaning through her prayers and trust in God for provision for her family: “I get into this house with my family, we kneel down we tell God; ‘You know 1, 2, 3, that goes on and know these children need to be fed, need to be dressed, and need to go to school.’” She spoke of her trust in God’s response as she said, “I wait for [baby calls out] something important and I know God is a nearer friend, I keep seeing someone has been send from there just coming from there saying, ‘I just felt like coming to visit you’ …has brought clothes, has brought sugar, has come with what or maybe school fees is provided through where!? There!... I have never gotten any welfare
support from anyone, but from God through people doesn’t it come? ...life is okay because God is just helping me.” Nearly all of the participants had similar statements, some at greater length:

As we have said it is only God who helped us, sincerely speaking, God helped us because He was using people. During that fire tragedy when all of us were affected, there was not even a friend who could have been able to help you, but to speak the truth, God came through the government to give us food, and when they gave us food, we were able to move on with that, when we were mourning. Isn’t that something true because it is God alone, He came through the government to give us what? [Food and other forms of social support]. Ayah, let’s say for sure, as we said, it is God alone who helped us, take for example our fellow members who were not affected, they visited us bringing clothes, coming with sugar I Kg, just that way, eh. Therefore there were means like that. (KAW FG #2—Upendo)

What gives me more strength when I remember all that I have gone through, eh there is a calf I was left with a small calf of how many months? Three. When the cows were stolen, I was left with a calf of how many months? A calf 3 months old. It became a blessing to us. I moved up and down with it in [de-identified] and it has filled my home with cows. There is no one among my children who do not have a cow and they are milking out of the off-springs of that calf which was left when it was how many months? 3 months old. So I tell them that this calf, God saw it should be left to be of blessings. (SAW, Ind. Interview)

Religious/spiritual beliefs offer a means of coping with trauma in the aftermath of collective violence including skirmishes, post-election violence, and war (Mattoon, 2011). The participants’ instantaneous trust in God in their crisis moments and after, became a protective factor. It supported them as they faced the reality of the impact of their trauma and loss, progressively processed their recovery, and resettled after their misfortunes. A significant amount of research literature on posttraumatic growth has identified religious coping and spiritual variables as protective factors that greatly influence individuals’ experience of growth ensuing political violence or significant interpersonal transgressions (Bryant-Davis, & Wong, 2013; Mattoon, 2011; Prati and Pietrantoni, 2009; Schultz, Tallman, & Altmaier, 2010) and in the context of a natural disaster (Chan & Rhodes, 2013).
Theme #16: Social Support

Social support surfaced as another key protective factor which sustained the research participants in the course of their tragic experiences, as they struggled with the impact and in their progressive recovery. Social support is defined as the perception and actuality that one is cared for, has assistance available from other people, and is part of a supportive social network (Widiger, 1997, as cited in Kaur, 2014). Even with the severity and scope of the tragedies experienced, the social support which the participants of this study received helped them to buffer the effects of those tragedies as they faced them and to wrestle with the cataclysmic impact as they progressively recovered from their long-term effects. Scholars who research the influence of social support on the impact of trauma posit that support reduces psychological distress and hence "buffers" (protects) individuals from the potentially pathogenic effects of stressful events (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Boundless Psychology, 26 May 2016). In both the individual interviews and focus groups, the participants pointed out various forms of social support they had received, which helped sustain them in their struggles as they faced their tragedies, during their recovery process, and afterward, as they resettled. This support ranged from rescue/protection to tangible and information support which they received from government, churches, Kenya Red Cross, and other International Agencies (UN - United Nation, DRC - Danish Refugee Council; 1956, IOM - International Organization for Migration; 1951, and other NGOs), local well-wishers, family/relatives, and or neighbors etc. The participants received services from the government law enforcement officers/equipment (police officers, military officers, district commissioners, and/or military personnel helicopters) and medical doctors/service officers from all tribes. Rewards/encouragements for tireless service to victims or from victims was a motivator and current sense of security as well.
In both focus groups and individual interviews, the participants reported receiving rescue/protection services from government law enforcement officers/equipment during their tragedies. Participant KAW noted, “About 20 people came and camped with us together with their livestock. It happened that almost all people in the community except three families left…and when the government noticed that we were many people there, then some police officers were deployed to come and patrol the area for our protection.” Similarly, participant EBT expressed, “The administration police came to help us and I asked the [Kenya] Red Cross for support….” Participant SMA described a rescue for her husband: “I received a phone call and was told, ‘Do you know your husband has been beaten? He has been taken to hospital by a police car.’” Participant EMT told the group how the police had helped her family as they were rushing the husband for emergency treatment at the hospital after being injured during PEV: “It was difficult to get there (hospital) still until some of the police officers who had been deployed helped to accompany us to clear the road until the hospital. So it took three days to get to the hospital.” Participant KAN confirmed that “police cars rushed some wounded people to hospital.” Many participants had similar stories to share: “The government tried to help where possible, like me, I was taken by police to record a statement here at [de-identified] police station. And even a P3 [legal document as evidence for bodily harm] was written for me” (SSK). “I ran following the children, to the police [station]. That time to see aaall those lines! It was just stones, stones filled everywhere…. We went to the police [station]. Aaall the evictees filled there” (SJM). Participant SSN described in the group how the government tried to stop the fights by imposing a curfew and deploying military officers during the PEV: “The fight got so severe until the plane came to stop it… Yes, helicopter is what [cross talk]. The plane came showering arrows, [cross talk] s aa bullets and all that everywhere”
The participants also told of receiving rescue/protection/travel to safety from well-wisher public and private vehicle drivers regardless of their tribes (e.g. the truck [lorry] drivers, bus drivers and manambas (public vehicles transport conductors) and other well-wishers, even strangers, with other types of vehicles during either the skirmishes, fire explosion, or PEV. Participant KAN noted, “In fact, many of those who were affected in that oil fire were rushed by many many matatu drivers [Good Samaritans] to the hospital. Just there at the road before the police and the Red Cross arrived.” Even though most of the participants expressed a sense of betrayal by neighbors and other familiar members from their perpetrators' tribe/community, some of the participants also said they had received rescue/protection from them during the violence events.

So, one woman came, I still remember her...then gave me a rope, the rope used for carrying firewood, then she told me, “Can I tie you?” … She knew that there was something that was going to happen to me. She was tying me so that I may not get the shock…. So when these young men came, fortunately or unfortunately, I had those boys whom I was giving food. They had circumcised that December. So they came it was like a war erupted, who is for Rose [name changed] who is not for Rose. But my group won. So they said that I should not be killed I should not be done anything, and those ones who wanted to rape me should not rape me. (Participant EBT, FG #2)

When we came here in [de-identified] the first time, we were given food by our neighbors, they are so generous! Church members, people from here and there, they brought us food! People here they welcomed us and they would let us go and work at their farms to get cash, and things got well…. (Participant SJM, Ind. Inter.)

Social support in the form of government public aid, Red Cross, International Agencies, and from well-wishers/ neighbors, family, relatives, and or tribesmen helped the participants adjust to life after their tragedies. The public aid ranged from tangible support (e.g., establishing IDP camps for various communities, support from District Commissioner (DC) and his administrative staff etc., financial assistance, material goods, and/or services like health services to meet their socio-economic needs) to information support (e.g., provision of instruction on how
to settle in IDP camps—hygiene, health, and nutrition information, advice on security measures, relocation/resettlement plans, and suggestions on micro-business or adjustment plans). It also appeared that the allocation of land to some IDPs by the government became a sign of hope and stability as legal ownership status would help them borrow loans for personal development, hence contributing to their recovery after their entire loss of property. The social support from well-wishers/neighbors (e.g., shelter, clothing, food, etc., during transit, at the IDP camps) and from family, relatives, and or tribesmen, and community-based organizations (CBO; e.g., GEMA and self-help group) facilitated the participants’ adjustment, resettlement, and recovery from their tragedies. To reveal their sense of support, the participants used expressions such as the following: “Whenever you met with people they would hold your hand and buy you food in a hotel, people were so generous….”; I was given a place to stay for a few days by another woman, and I took my children to school… I told her how everything went and they helped us a lot when they saw our problems”; and “Even what you see here, we were given by people later. I was left with nothing.”

Participants also discussed the social support they had received in the form of financial assistance, material goods, and or services including health services, and its resourcefulness to them in their dire need for help in readjusting to life. These included the social support they received from well-wishers/neighbors, family, relatives, and or tribesmen. EPT stated, “The only good other thing is that my neighbors who were [de-identified; from rival tribe] were supportive to me. …they protected some of my properties. …I had a small car which had mechanical problem…they pushed it up to the police station for it to be safe because others could have burnt it.” “…I fainted after that they [neighbors from rival tribe] gave me…and then they donated food for me and escorted me back” (EBT). Participant EMT stated, “But ah what gave me the
strength of continuing was [that] my husband stood with me…. So that was the strength that I got from my husband. [Pause] and also, ah my children were really really supporting me! They really stood with me….” Similarly, participant SSK noted, “My brother came to give me some clothes. We went to the showground and were helped by well-wishers. We continued with that life until now life resumed this way.” “The encouraging words that you get from others, you are being encouraged. So encouragement is also part of it [received support]” (EMT). “What has helped us as she has said sharing…with other people, and also speaking in it is like speaking out speaking it out, the ethos calling them ethos. …ok you share” (EBT).

The people we found in wherever we were taken [alighted in] were welcoming you with a lot of respect. Anywhere that you went! Whether it was children, they were giving you food, and what, and what, they were so supportive…. Everyone regardless, whoever you met was merciful. Anywhere you ran to, they were helpful. Even the ‘Manamba’ [public transport contactors] and the drivers, in the [public transport] stages, they were so helpful…. [The Kenya] Red Cross. That also did a lot of heavy work! Also, the 5th is the government. The connection with the government came in after [the] Red Cross’ recommendation [cross talk]….

The churches also did a lot of work. Because whenever you reached a point where you were in need, the churches there served you regardless of your tribe. They could just know that you were needy, they were not serving based on the tribe. Therefore, whether it was a Kalenjin, a Luo or whoever, they could just know that you were in need, and they treasured you.(Focus Group #1, participant SSN)

At that time we were trying to escape to our relatives’ home through [de-identified]. …we reached eh [de-identified] and the people of that community were waiting for us [victims] on the other side,…[they] had boiled maize and milk and put along the roadside, the [displaced] people would pick and continue with the journey. ….they boiled the milk and put in a big gallon, when you reached there they would say that as you pass please fetch the milk for the children. (FG #2, participant EMT)

She [neighbor from a rival tribe] then ran to the road while screaming. By coincident a police Land Rover was passing by and so she removed her clothes [sign of danger] while screaming [for help] at the road and so the police [officers] talked to her and the police car came and took me to [de-identified] police station and then to the hospital…. (SSK; Ind Int.)
The participants also spoke of receiving social support from the government, the Kenya Red Cross and other International Agencies, and churches/religious leaders, etc.: “We were registered by [the Kenya] Red Cross…[and] were given tents now [pause]…[and] food. We used to be given food well…and we would sell some and get money for other needs like sugar and milk…[and we] continued that way with life” (SJM). “God helped us and Red Cross, they came and helped us even at the showground, we were given food. They brought for us clothes and well-wishers helped us to restart life again” (SMA). Participants ECT, SAW, and SMW also mentioned getting help from the Red Cross, noting that they helped “so much.” “And UN [United Nations],” the group participants mentioned in unison. “And also UN. [Pause]. They were very supportive” (SSN). Then participant KAN added, “When we continued that way during that time of fight? [2007?], the government [cow mooing] gave us KShs 10, 000 that was first one, they returned later and gave us KShs 20--was it KShs 25,000? [asking another group member].” EMT also spoke about government help and how it gave her “strength and the resilience.”

Social support in the form of land allocation to some IDPs by the government instilled a sense of hope into the violence-affected families. “We left the showground after 1 year, we went to another place we were given, when we were given 10,000 shillings [each] which all of us used to buy plots in where we got relocated to in another place called [de-identified]…. So, from there I think the government saw that we were squeezed up because we were here, here, and there, and it is tents, I think, so they decided to get this farm and we were relocated here” (SSN) “A police officer took us to the office and we registered for a farm and later we were relocated to that farm in [de-identified]. Finally we found ourselves brought here. Life continued that way [some sound]” (SJM). “Also another person who helped me a lot is the government…helped me with
that Kshs10,000 and…later with 25,000, and considering the need, finally gave us a farm and build a house for us. Now I have my own farm and my own house and my family here…I am happy with my fellow members of the farm” (SSK).

Social support from church/religious leaders, as well, contributed to the participants’ recovery and readjustment to life. In Focus Group #2, participant KAM relayed, “Catholic Church helped us with some seeds and some fertilizers and we were able to plant, while we were still getting that one gallon of relief maize once in a while…. What we managed to harvest helped me personally to restart my live again! …I started there to wake up, to move on with life gradually…. “Even I, my life started with that relieve we were given by Catholic, fertilizers and maize seeds. So I started, I slashed the farm and planted, so my life started there” (SJM). “…the church pastors tried every way possible to see to it that we got help from the government to take her to the hospital” (KAW). “There was what the government called ‘Operation Rudi Nyumbani.’ When that came, I was able to return. We had a camp at home besides the current police station here…everyone was able to take care of the farm” (KAM). “Again, [AIM ?] [/IOM/] [International Organization For Migration] came and build for us houses, I moved from that tent, DRC [Danish Refugee Council –Non Governmental Organization] came, build for us…that two roomed house” (SJM).

The participants identified additional means of support, including various medical and counseling services and other health and or hygiene information support from medical doctors/service officers and counselors from all tribes. “The hospitals were so helpful too; they also helped a lot when we were injured…. So the doctors were good people, they never check on who you were. The doctors attended to you based on your need, whether it was a Kalenjin, was a Kikuyu, a Luo, whichever tribe. So, the doctors were very very helpful” (SSN). “We were given
ambulance to take us to the hospital” (KAN). Participant SMA also mentioned her husband being taken to the hospital for three weeks after he had been brutally hurt as she spoke of medical support.

Some of the participants also identified counseling services as part of their support, which facilitated their progressive recovery from their trauma. “Again, what helped us to start and move on until now, [aand?] [/are/] the counselors…who were coming to do for us counseling those from AIM; they did for us counseling for a very long time. Even though our hearts were still so hard; but they did not get tired, they continued to give us counseling and we accepted, and we accepted even to forgive…. After counseling we received, we are able to forgive and we have helped each other in other rising needs” (KAM). “We have had several counseling sessions and are able to cope with life” (SAM). “Again I am pleased with…there is another NGO there eh it has been taken by ACK [Anglican Church of Kenya]; there was a time they were coming trying to counsel people, here. …they would talk to us what. So when we talked, that was in 2009 just after this fire, they were trying to talk to people to return to ? [Normalcy?]” (SMA).

Informal sharing with other affected individuals—individual one on one informal sharing/conversation/ encouragement, support group sharings, local and international exchange visits to other trauma/violence victims and hearing their stories—all of this contributed to the participants’ healing process as well. “And also joining the church; you meet somebody else with more problems than you! And as you share the two of you, you find the other one being your medicine, you feel that your problems are better than hers/his, you get healed” (SJM). “The encouraging words that you get from others, you are being encouraged” (EMT). Other participants spoke in an extended way about the counseling services that contributed to their recovery:
There was a teaching we saw, there, when we were in [de-identified], we had not known that there are people called counselors, [pause] counseling. There was a group one team which came to teach us on how to live, not to see life to have reached there? [end?]. There was one who was called [de-identified]. They helped us during that time of victim, clashes and also during that time of this fire. I remember when we went to [de-identified] [hospital] there was their tent. He tried to calm you down, that was another way that we managed to learn to learn, since childhood we had not heard about counselors. And there we were encouraged to know that: “Tusione hapo ndio mwisho! Tujue maisha bado yataendelea, na tuu uwe wakakamafu kupambana nayo. Ndio.” [We should not see there to be the end! To know that life will still continue, and to persistently fight with it. Yes] [Part. KAN; Focus Group #2—Upendo).

Another thing which contributed to which built me so much was sharing, sharing ideas with others has helped me so much. And also exchange visits, you visit other people who have gone through the same trauma or different trauma and listen to their stories as they share. It also helped you to feel that you were not alone. (EMT; Focus Group #2)

…my recovery most came when… I shared with the counselors. I was able to tell them everything. …you know that time the things were very fresh in my mind. There were those…bodies I had seen, I would not sleep at night, there were those people who were abusing me insulting me… in confidence I was able to share, I was able to talk to people who would not charge me. I was able to cry when I was talking and beforehand I would hold my tears because I would not like to show people how I was feeling… I was just keeping quiet, just seeing what people are passing through, but when I was alone with the people we were sharing with [in group], I was able in fact to cry. …I would like, [te] hit the tables and anything and say like, “When shall this world end!?” So sharing was very important to me [pause]. Mmh. (Participant EBT, Ind. Inter.)

Good dialogue meetings between fighting communities facilitated forgiveness and reconciliation and were thus some of the protective factors which contributed to the participants’ recovery from their tragedies. “After that we continued with the dialogue meetings…the good side of it was that people reconciled, especially those who were affected from the [de-identified] and the [de-identified] communities” (EMT). “…what helped us so much to move on is that we accepted to sit down and reason together… as all residents of this location… we put ourselves together as all tribes, the government, women, elders, and we saw how life will move on and that is how life started…. We put our efforts together so that we could be able to live here... [together]” (SAM). Other participants expressed the same:
We lived in peace in that...[in a] meeting which was conducted for elders, youth, elderly comprising of all of us [tribes,] we talked and we said that this is our location and it will be built by us as many tribes, we said each person to return home and settled down peacefully and we continued having good neighborhood and.... So from there we understood each other, and the elders came to an agreement and we continued in unity and still to date we are one. (Participant SAW, FG #1)

**Theme #17: Acceptance**

The theme on acceptance was generated from Bronfenbrenner’s model, the protective factors. Acceptance, the functional alternative to experiential avoidance (dysfunctional) involves an active taking in of an event or situation and cognitively processing it through but rejecting dysfunctional change agendas (Hayes, et al., 1999, as cited by Leonard, Follette, & Compton, 2006). It involves building a positive account from this moment forward, with all of our past experiences, both the “good” and the “bad” in tow, living a valued life with the history rather than living a life driven by the history (Walser & Hayes, 2006). Acceptance acts as one of the keys for effectively coming to terms with excruciating events (Walser & Hayes, 2006). In the study, the interview data distinctly revealed acceptance as another key coping mechanism that buffered the participants’ exposure to risk, with which they could experience progressive recovery and readjust to life in the aftermath of their recurrent and multiple traumas. Various phrases that reveal this attitude include the following: “At times life may not go the way you wanted to go. There are a lot of challenges in life”; “Even the Bible says there is a time to harvest [keep] and a time to throw. So I said that was a time for what? For throwing”; “For me I see it this way, life eh the best place is where you are, make it good.” All of these portray their cognitive processing and acceptance of the reality of their traumatic experiences.

Most of the participants described how they struggled but finally accepted the reality of their trauma experiences in order to move on in life. “We need to accept change because if you
do not accept change then that problem will come on your way and will finish you. Therefore, we need to identify that we used to live this way and now we need to live this way, so that life continues…you understand each other and life goes on well” (SAM). “You have to accept what happened and you have to come out of it. You cannot dwell on…[the] situation for forever…. You have to accept it and come out of it” (EMT). “I have realized that challenges are part of life” (EMT). After processing the loss of significant family members his and entire property to PEV, participant KAM accepted the reality of the traumatic experience: “So I was so disappointed so much. [Pause] but later I had to cool down because I did not have any option.” “[The only option is] to accept that it has happened. Even if you do whatever it will not come back. So, you have too to move on! Life continues! Mm” (ECT). Other such expressions included the following:

I saw that in life I had to accept that those misfortunes I experienced were real so that I could move on because I needed another day…. Despite of all challenges, still there is hope! As I can continue, to do my work gradually even though it may take long but by the end of the journey, it will I I succeed. So, I see that challenges for sure have become more but I know for sure that when I accept, there is a future life, I mean those challenges are not the end of life…. So I have assessed that those issues are short-lived difficulties and if I accept, then they will be over. (Part. ETK, FG #2).

…but to speak the truth, I was thankful to God I was telling Him, “Because You saw it fit for those children of mine to go yet it was time for them to raise up their children, do not allow me to keep going out crying telling people: ‘My children died, please help me,’ because God You had a, a plan.” (Part. KAW, Ind. Inter.)

I saw that [pause] something comes and pass, and if you look back again you may not be able to move on. And you cannot tell who destroyed you and even whoever destroyed you was also destroyed. So the only thing was to accept that it happened and pray that it does not recur and life continues. Even if you cry for what has passed you will not recover it again. So it is only to accept, to continue moving on in life. (Part. ECT, FG #2)
Theme #18: Spirituality

The spirituality theme was also engendered by Bronfenbrenner’s model, the protective factors. Psychologists concur on the influential effects of spirituality and faith—meditation, contemplation, and prayer practices—in stress management and general happiness. Devotion to these practices facilitate individuals’ validation of their own existences, cultivating coping abilities, viewing stress as short-term and external, and generating social support for stress management (Boundless Psychology, May 26, 2016). In this study, the role spirituality of the participants played in cushioning them from the impact of their trauma experiences was vivid in their description of how they responded and processed their trauma challenges. The participants exhibited heightened and elaborate expressions of God’s presence amidst their struggles. “Eh my Christianity eh point of view, only that! …I used to say, ‘You, God, know why I am here.’ Even when I was serving people and they had their pangas [machetes], I am saying, ‘God, you know I am giving a service, protect me, I am doing your work’” (EPT “I knew that the Word of God in Psalms, David said that he has not seen a man of God forsaken. So I knew that trusting in God will help me because I know that those who trust in Him are never forsaken, yah. I saw it is better to trust in God…” (ETK). “I had gotten saved even before all that happened. So I dependent on the Lord. Even when all those problems came…” (KAW). “If you live in hope and faith ah life will continue. It’s very important to live with hope and faith” (EMT). “Wisdom was able to to help me spiritually, to know that there is no need to retaliate all that they have done to me and because they [misfortunes] have come, that it is a must to accept them…” (SMA).

The participant also faced the reality of their loss using a spiritual approach. Participant SMW described how she had built her house with the door facing a specific direction, stating that God had previously shown her the site in a dream prior to the violence: “I have built my
house in [de-identified] facing the front and behind my house there is a road, as I saw earlier in a
dream back then when I was in [de-identified] [years back before the violence] [illustrates]. I saw
that even though I have suffered so so much, now I have God’s blessings.” Likewise, in
individual interview, participant KAW stated, “For us when you come to our home you cannot
tell if we are happy or not [in mourning moment or not?] because our hope is in? In God. That is
the life that we live, m mh….” (KAW) “Eh somebody saying like me that I am saved or I belief
in God, I have to abide by the biblical truths…some things recur. For peace to prevail, or to be
possible to live well, we should be ready as Christians for whatever happens, you should be
ready for the consequences” (SAM). “What can separate us, eh from the love of, of God? It is
not distress, it is not food, it is not what? Even there I can add that; ‘Not even the children [ends
with a smile] can separate us with? With God’” (KAW). Many other participants described their
spiritual interpretation of their tragedies as well:

Another thing that helped me to come out of that trauma was the Word of God, because
eh you know that God knew the reason [pause] that is why I survived that fracas even
though it had too difficulties, God saved me, He gave me life, I mean He really
strengthened my life. [Pause] and something which has given me a lot of hope, is the
Word of God which says: ‘I knew you even before you were formed and I have good
plans for you.’ So I know that even those wishes of mine, goals, or my goals, I know I
will achieve because God has given me other days to live again! So what helped me a lot
is the Word of God. Despite I have also attended so many trainings on trauma counseling,
but also, God’s Word helped me until I reached this far, yah. [ETK, FG #2—Upendo]

…if I did not have the Word of God and wisdom that I have, and ah that hope I had for
my children, for sure I see, I would have been insane. Or if not that, I would have been
one of those people who take a rope and hang oneself...so when I remember that all
things work out by the grace of God, so, mm my thoughts are renewed again, my body is
renewed again, my life is renewed again! But if I were seeing it from human point of
view, like, you know now I am talking like any other human being! But I know that God
has great things for my life. I see eh the future of my children is not what I had seen, and
is not as I had thought, but I belief God has good thoughts about them and He has good
plans for their future…and there again I feel satisfied. (Part. SSN, Indiv. Inter.)
Theme #19: Courage

The attitude of most participants was fundamentally courageous; hence, courage seems to have been a common coping mechanism. “Courage is also a source of life. When things turn to be the worst and you have that courage definitely life will continue” (EMT). “I encourage myself, I say; ‘Next, what will I do?’ …. I work for myself with my own hands. So that I can recover and sustain my life” (SSN). Participant KAM described in the interview being a role model to the affected as a person of courage, saying, “[You are ?] [/I am/] a good role model because [you ?] [I] will be a teacher to those who will have passed through the same problems, telling them [you ?] [I] passed through this and this but I am still alive because of this.” “So when you see your neighbor how he is motivated to move on in spite of the difficulties he is facing, that encourages you to continue with life…. You have to be courageous, you have to think about it. Yah. You don’t have always to sit and wait for somebody else. It is you to take the courage and move on. Yah” (KAN). Commented participant EMT in individual interview. “I saw it this way, where I have come from is far and where I am heading to is near [remaining with a short life to live?]. So I just encouraged my heart that I worked so hard and earned enough which was obviously seen…” (ECT). Moreover, the participants described being courageous as following in the steps of their family heroes/heroines:

My mum is the best [role model] because eeh…in 1994…[she] would go…[reaching the farm] we are called she has fainted. So we would go for her, but I could…ask her [what troubles her] and she would explain to you nicely that, “So you see life where will we start it?” What was disturbing her soo much was [that] after the farm being auctioned due to...a little loan...[she had borrowed], her guarantee was to repay through selling...[farm produce] but now since the farm, the cows all became those stories forgiven [due to skirmishes]...so mum I think was not able to withstand that issue. When I see her still fighting hard in life and encouraging her heart that she is still there, bearing in mind all that, so I also give myself morale that things may be better come tomorrow. Sincerely, she gives me another strength [changes facial expression] external [pause] that makes me feel that even me I am supposed to be there, mmh. [KAN, Ind. Inter.]"
All of us are given strength by God, and what makes us to continue with life is those who were here before us. When you follow history there are those who fought for freedom in Kenya, some of them went well, some of them perished, and there are those up to now they are crying for compensation for MAUMAU… the lawyers benefited more; yet it was the old men who were supposedly meant to be compensated for. …[also] I have been encouraged so much by a person like my grandfather, whom I was named after, who was buried here, here! Here! Because even him he was a victim of skirmishes like…[19]92, he used to tell me how it went when they were fighting for freedom and issues like this, but he was able to go through it…. It is not only once that I have seen my mother falling down [pause], and she would…faint and then she would wake up and still moves on. If even her she is able to bear with it then I see them as role models to me! Like the vehicle conductors that hit the car and say, “Let’s go,” they are my conductors too telling me, “Let’s continue? Let’s continue our young son!” [Some group members joint him in unison]. In life I’ve learnt a lot from them. [KAN, FG #2)

…[when] I flash back to history, my mother tells me about her experiences during the [MAU MAU] Emergency. It got her when she had just gotten married with no child. My father was jailed for 7 years and eh mum was relocated to her relatives at [de-identified]. [Pause]. All that she went through she was beaten up and all that but she she did not die. Later my father was released and reunited together with mum and they moved back to the highlands. And it did not block them from getting wealth, because they went and bought land and continued to do farm work and get other properties [pause] and were blessed with us their children. It means to be patient is good because…. When you become patient, God also blesses you in other ways. Therefore the body may be injured through tortures of being beaten and starving, but later, God will bless you with a good life. Because like for her case, whatever she went through that time, she does not recall. She remembers them like history. [SAM, Indiv. Interview]
Psycho-socio-economic factors—such as social support, education, employment, and world-view—greatly influence mental health by either increasing the vulnerability to, or protecting the individual from, the trauma and stressors of life (Schweitzer, Melville, Steel, & Lacherez, 2006). The participants in this study identified various conditions and issues which they used as their coping mechanisms against the impact of recurrent and or multiple trauma and loss on their lives and facilitated their recovery process. The themes on
trust in God, social support, acceptance, spirituality, and courage emerged as the key conditions and personal characteristics that acted as the protective factors from the impact of trauma. Schweitzer, Melville, Steel, and Lacherez, (2006) found that social support—particularly perceived social support from the trauma survivors’ ethnic community—played a significant role in predicting mental health outcomes. However, most of the participants of this study stated receiving minimal or no support from either the ethnic community members or the relatives. Thus, policy makers and emergency staff need to work to create awareness among ethnic community members and relatives on the positive impact of their support and help the affected to get support from the same.

In their studies on the association between posttraumatic stress and acceptance of social changes, Kazlauskas and Zelviene (2017) found that the acceptance of social changes might be an important psychosocial factor for impeding PTSD in the aftermath of trauma exposure. However, the findings of this study (Research Question #1) show that the participants experienced various mental illnesses, including MDD and PTSD, and psychological associated illnesses, such as hypertension; nonetheless, their final acceptance of the reality acted as a protective factor, as reflected in the emergent themes (this section). This situation implies that although the participants interpreted their experiences as traumatic, they experienced growth by progressively facing and accepting the reality of their recurrent and multiple traumas.

Research scholars on trauma have shown that coming to terms with the reality of trauma—attempting to make sure that one’s life or personhood does not become defined by it—is one of the dominant challenges confronting individuals who experience it; these researchers concluded that attempts to “not have” the trauma and cognitive and emotional reactions accompanying it may account for much PTSD-related distress (Walser & Hayes, 2006). The findings of this study support the literature that emphasizes the great need for
intervention measures aimed at increasing optimism, social support, and specific coping strategies to promote the survivors’ experience of positive changes in the aftermath of trauma (Prati & Pietrantoni, 2009). Further, this study suggests that counsellors working with survivors of skirmishes and political violence need to consider both individual psychological factors and ecological ones in their interventions (Staciu & Rogers, 2011).

**Research Question #4: Positive Influence of Personal Characteristics on Life Perceptions**

Tedeschi and Calhoun’s (1999) posttraumatic growth model was used to explore this fourth research question with an aim to identify the participants’ positive outcomes from their recurrent and or multiple trauma experiences and to form the research question: “How have the trauma survivors’ personal characteristics positively influenced their perception of life in spite of their exposure to recurrent and multiple traumas?” With benefit finding and personal growth being the central point of this study, the five broad domains of posttraumatic growth—new possibilities, relating to others, personal strength, spiritual change, and appreciation of life (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1999)—were used as a guide to interpret the positive outcomes of the participants. The research literature on trauma has reiterated that the integration and interpretation or appraisal of trauma varies from individual to individual and from culture to culture based on the nature of the traumatic event, predisposing personality, age of the victim, prior traumatization, and the influence of community response or cultural value orientation (Burri & Maercker, 2014; Perren-Klingler, 2000; van der Kolk, 1987). The four themes generated by the research question portray the positive outcomes of the civilian survivors of the skirmishes, 2007-08 PEV, and fire explosion trauma in Kenya. These generated themes are exercising compassion, gained courage and motivation for peaceful co-existence, exercising increased or new spiritual faith, and being appreciative.
Theme #20: Exercising Compassion

Participants’ exercising of compassion through zealously helping and empathizing with other trauma survivors was evident in the findings of this study. They described having a great urge to help out and finding benefit and a sense of fulfilment in intervening in times of trauma incidents. These conditions conveyed how their personal characteristics positively influence their perception of life in the aftermath of their trauma experiences. Participants used phrases such as “There is something which tells me stand! Stand and talk to these [hurting] people,” and “Therefore my prayers have not reached the end.”

In both focus groups and individual interviews, the participants discussed their passionate involvement in liberating individuals from violence-related traumas, situations almost similar to their past traumatic experiences. Participant KAW told about her newfound role of compassion to road travelers consequent to the multiple loss of her loved ones to oil tanker explosion: “God put in my heart to keep praying for safety in the roads, against any fires [outbreaks], and any other accidents everywhere.” Participant EPT credited her personal characteristics with helping her come out of her trauma. “My personality has really played a great role…I am sociable by nature…[so] I share out unlike a person who is an introvert, who will keep to oneself. So by sharing much with others that helped. ….” She indicated that being sociable was fruitful in terms of her own healing as she reached out to other affected individuals with open and optimistic spirit: “As I worked for others, it helped me.”

Participant KAN expressed his consistent concern for the integrated individuals saying, “…there are those integrated so now our problem sincerely! Because they are our colleagues. Those who went to [de-identified], where, which, where and where, but for us who were in the tents, those of us who came and entered the te, tents, maybe those are the ones who were
followed. But the integrated ones who came to stay with their brothers, like that, there is no one who has bene, benefitted. And if we were to hear that they have benefitted, we could even be having? Having happiness, to be followed like us who were in the te, in the tents.” “As I am talking now, there are so many people who did not get a place to live. So I personally, I have not gotten tired of praying for them…. I myself knowing what we went through I have taken it as my responsibility to pray for them at least to get help like we did…. I keep praying…to God for those people…at least to get even if it is a piece, even if it is a plot, to give them so that they self-sustain and continue with life…let us continue praying for them that the government may help them” (SMW). Participant KAN described his involvement in response to the oil tanker crisis: “…we went helping those who were injured, those who had hid themselves…and I talked to those who were hospitalized…. What I did I was just identifying, that so and so be referred to General Hospital, here and there and those who were critically injured, we called their relatives and passed the information that they follow them to [respective] hospitals…. But I said, ‘Let me work.’” Participant EBT described how she helped organize a school for the children: “The other [de-identified] teachers decided they were not going to come back to school. But I decided I have to liberate that…I organized the boys and the girls ah I organized them in a way that they would be feeding in my house…they would not go for lunch. Then I would use my lunch [time] to teach them…. We started doing something called peer teaching, because now the [de-identified] [teachers] had gone and nobody was coming and the government was not bringing teachers so I started peer teaching…..”

Some of the participants went even further in an attempt to equip themselves with trauma counseling and peace building skill. “…I am seeing a bright future for me because being a counselor I will be helping people, I will be assisting other women to know that you don’t have
to run away from problems. You have to stand firm and things will change…I am trying to get some more knowledge so that I could be able to assist” (EMT). “…I went to train myself as a counselor, in the year 2009 to 2011 I did my diploma in counseling, just because of the trauma things I went through and then I saw that by that time during the skirmishes there were so many people suffering and burning up of the many things they saw. So that is whom I am….

And I did not consider my age as old, I felt that is the right time for me to become a counselor so that I help many [smiles]. I became a counselor….” (EBT). Participant EBT further summarized her zealous service: “Even though I went through that… I became strong in peace work, because when I go to work with the team, to help those who get affected, I don’t really work for money, that I should be given money… although I am trained as a counselor there is no time I have gone for paid counseling, I do it…[for free], I volunteer in any circumstance. So I think I came up though it was negative [experience].” Other participants spoke of reaching out to others with compassion:

I thought of how to organize to meet with people and conduct talks on reconciliation because I felt so bad, and what motivated me to do so [start reconciliation talks] was this old woman and also my children. When you request somebody to help you hold the baby, then that person says, “Aah! Everyone will die his/her own death.” So it was so bad, it was so painful. Same thing to 2007, nobody could help you. That is when I got that deep understanding that, the people who suffer most [during violence] are women and children. So I started developing a passion in me to be a peace builder, and eh I desired a lot to learn how to help people overcome the trauma. That is when I tried and took a course, I got it and also I wanted to heal too…. So eh it has really helped me…and I have started becoming that person who needs to bring the community together. So that’s how ah I have really worked with eh the trauma, [pause] the issue in my life. (EMT; FG #2—Upendo)

…this days I am ready to help, I see a human being as a human being. I am even ready to give a shoulder they can cry on it…. When I watch…the Chemelil the skirmishes that are taking place, the Trans Mara ones, I feel, “Why can’t they take me there? …I go and tell them that at the end of this oh, nothing will come out. It’s better, your neighbor will remain your neighbor and you can stay….” Yah. So these days [swallows saliva] I feel positive, and…[I like doing] something that is positive…[and] I hate tribalism.
So I changed...I attend a lot of meetings, like when I get a baraza [public meeting] even in the church when I get women sitting I like empowering them, mmh [pause] in a faith that is peaceful telling them about peace, talking to them about how they should handle...their every day to day life, their children and.... [So] whether I am in a men, women or whatever the meeting is intended for I preach peace and I encourage them on the great need for [formal] education of our children. I tell them if our children are poor and not educated...they will be the ones that will burn us, they will be the warriors and the rest. So I teach them with a purpose.... (Participant EBT, Indiv. Interview)

Now I have a great urge so much even I have helped many [affected] people. Since that time up to now I have been taken all the way to [de-identified] [district], even I have gone up to [de-identified] to help.... And sincerely, whenever I talk, whatever I say, I see people greatly appreciate.... Let’s not think it was only the [de-identified] alone whom I was talking to, it was inclusive of everybody, a Kenyan! Let us call that person a Kenyan! I have talked until I have talked even to women from [de-identified] community when we were in groups [and] we reconciled with each other. I have talked until...I don’t know which other group that I have left out? (Participant SMA, Indiv. Interview)

I was communicating to the hospital. When some of the people were hurted, I could just help them to be treated, and I could bring the women from the [de-identified] community for rescue and then they would find a way of [safely] leaving the place. So I was told this lady was in the house and nobody was taking care of her. So I had to find a way of reaching her home...I found the [de-identified] [her tribe] men had surrounded her home. So I had to go, talk to the lady ah in her [tribal] language...and I told her if she could be assisted to leave the place, because security was not good for her. And she told me, “I will not leave my property and go I better die with the property.” So I convinced her and then ah I had to talk to another [de-identified] lady...to help the grandmother.... So the lady planned to take her away the next day. I had to go and talk to the security officers to check on her place because of the security concern. ...ah then I went to the neighbor, talked to her and told her, “This old woman will come and sleep at your house so that....” The following day in the morning when she came back, the lorry was sent from the police station and ah they picked everything for her leaving behind the house and ah a few things. So immediately she left, the people... went there in the evening, they destroyed the house, remove all the iron sheets [roofing tiles].... So this is a story that always gives me hope...it always gives me hope because despite of all challenges that I went through after the post-election violence, saving this old woman and others ? I did a lot of work saving many people.... (Participant EMT, Indiv. Interview)

Later, there were a lot of killings, there was a [de-identified] [tribe] woman whose 2 children were killed, and her husband was also killed. That increased the pain in my life. So I said I have to do everything to see to it that killings like this do not recur. After 2 months after we had started [the program] or 1 years still there were that problem of conflict. So I I returned again I thought I must return to the IDP camp in [de-identified] because most of the women who ran to that [de-identified] camp were from [de-identified]. When they were in the camp they were saying, eh, when they go to their farms, they were being beaten, which was not true because everyone had gotten tired
[reached tolerance level?]; people were thinking of how to reconcile and come together. So we had to go back to the camp again; upon reaching the camp we were chased again, when they chased us we left, we said we will not go back again, let the government do continue with it because at that time the government had said that the camp had become overcrowded and so would force people to go back to their farms. So we thought, how people would be released before they are talked to. So we decided to go back, to return we found a child had drowned in a cattle dip, and it was traumatizing and nobody was willing to help them. We went and the women were willing to talk to us and we helped in raising funds for the burial…. We asked for their reconciliation with the other group and they did their communication through letters…until they finally decided to meet each other face to face and talk…. (Participant EMT, FG #2)

Theme #21: Gained Courage and Motivation for Peaceful Co-existence

The experience of trauma, war, and loss cannot result in only negative outcomes; it must also play a critical role in mobilizing social cohesion and demonstrating the capability for resistance as well as resilience of individuals, social groups, and communities (Zarowsky & Pedersen, 2000). The participants described their gained courage, strength, new found confidence, and high motivation as they live their lives and intervene in current trauma experiences. Their statements portray their commitment to preach peace, for peaceful co-existence, change, and hard work for a better living. In short, they realized positive change in their lives.

“Going through those problems has taught us a lot” (SJM). “Now I stand up. When they call me a [de-identified] [tribal name] I I speak up I say yes I am a [de-identified] but I came here…let us accept each other” (EBT). “Life has an importance of moving forward, I belief this, that to overcome problems sometimes you do not escape, you face the challenges head on [with courage]…. ” (SAM). In Focus Group #2, participant SMA narrated how her personal qualities positively influenced her perception of life after her tragedies: “…my personal characteristic which made me cross that bridge and all those problems was being patient [faded sound]…. if I was not patient, maybe I would have terminated my life because of what I saw, or say now that I
have seen life has become difficult let me get poison and give to my children for all of us to finish; but because I had that patience, and I would not lose hope in life and say this is the end of life, I I saw, I must move on with life even if they [property?] have finished because even in the farm, if you plant…[and it get spoiled, you plant again] in order to get food for your life.” “Yah emh when I think about eh conflict or violence, it always make me to go out of my way to make sure that I talk about it, tell people the consequences, what can happen, how can people lose their lives…. So it I always take it to be a tool; I always tell people that this is not right, eh” (EMT).

In Focus Group #2, participant EBT revealed her self-sacrificing fight against violence:

“Beforehand I would cry; but now I like to help. I like to stand up. I say no. When you get someone doing it, you just stand there and say that is ‘NO.’ …you are ready to sacrifice yourself even if you are going to die. That is what has helped us, being firm and saying no to any type of violence.”

I am able to see each and every violence to fight [against], beforehand I was seeing rape cases, gender-based violence like it was nothing but it has opened my eyes whenever I see any form of violence I stand and say there must be a stop! May it be wife beating, husband beating or sexual harassment in any form? Violence helped me to know what is violence, to know that violence any small violence any bigger violence whichever name it will be given, violence is violence! And it gives someone a scar. I came to understand there is a scar that will be healed yes, but when you think of it, it reminds you of the ugly things that you saw, mmh. (Participant EBT; FG #2)

What I went through and also what I saw other people go through has made a very big impact in my life. At this moment I can stand and help somebody who is going through a traumatic situation. Ah it helped me to realize that despite of any challenge there is a solution or an end to anything that has come into your life…. So after going through all these, I always reflect back and see, “If I could come out of this why not somebody else? Why can’t I talk to this person to come out of this?” So it has given me that resilience of helping people come out…. (Participant EMT, Indiv. Inter.)

Before ah the start of the violence 2007-2008, I was being called a [de-identified] [tribal name], I would run away, but then come 20[0]9, 2010, 2011 after the training I became positive I started thinking now [and] looking at life in a positive way whereby I say, “Although there were skirmishes, I have come out as a stronger woman. I have come out
now ah okay….” But beforehand I did not know how to say so. I was taught by 20[0]7-20, 20[0]8 [experience]. (Participant EBT; Indiv. Inter.)

…a very strong one [woman] because I don’t care whether this is a [de-identified] [ethnic group], or a [de-identified], and I don’t think of them as a [de-identified] or who! But I’ll stand up! Eh. I’ll say there must be peace in any violence. But before that I was running away and screaming. [Now] my scream are screams of shouting and saying the positive words because I have found that women are…they can accelerate the skirmishes. (Participant EBT; FG#2)

Passing through tragedies seemed to have produced a high degree of motivation to help other people affected by violence. So let me say that someone’s habits begin early in life…. My character was to help others and I feel that I still have that spirit of helping. Especially nowadays, I get a great desire to help people so so much” (SSN). “I am seeing myself being that strong woman proved to be able to help other people…. And ah at this moment I am seeing myself ah a successful woman. Ah I’m seeing myself being that person who people could run to and ask for advice” (EMT). In her individual interview participant EMT also said,

Something touches my heart and I just feel like I should go and see…it always remind me a lot of good things. That despite of the trauma, despite of the challenges there is a story that always gives me hope and encourages me to live with it and to accept, ah whenever there is a problem you don’t have to say I am not able you have to work out of it and help, yah. (Participant EMT, Indiv. Interview)

The participants appeared to have gained courage and commitment to preach peace and reconciliation which resultant on their tragedies they identified to be meaningful in life. “That habit of learning through experience to desire to live in unity with each other…is another benefit” (SSK). “Is there a way that you can report on these we have gone through…? It’s good even if you write a book for others to read so that they do not repeat the same; but live in harmony” (SAW). “So for me it [experience] is something that it has really motivated me to talk about peace to to encourage people to live peacefully and embrace one another” (EMT). “I had
not eaten for three days; eh what made me when they reminded me, ‘Don’t you know you are a peace maker!? ’ That word made me wake up where I was and started going.... [The] thought of peace made me wake up and forget what I had gone through, it reminded me that I was there for others and also for myself to have peace, mh” (EBT). Others of the participants described their desire for peace and reconciliation as well:

A major word that I want to say last is that we do not want any more violence. That is a major thing. We do not want violence in life. We do not want violence a hundred times a hundred times. Anybody who wants violence should go far away from Kenya. We do not want violence forever and ever. Mm. We want one Kenya not 2 Kenyas, 2 Kenyas is bad, 1 Kenya from bottom to top, from the child, to the father, to the child ? [mother?] all of them. Eh, 1 Kenya full of peace and unity among all the tribes. We do not know who started the violence and we do not want any case against anybody. Do not do something that you have heard [hear say] and have not seen in your own eyes. That is the truth, there is nothing more. (SOA Indiv. Inter.)

In our country, may God help us so much, eh to be people who love each other, to be people who when we see bad coming up, are people willing to sit down as tribes and be able to troubleshoot [come up with solution] issues because there are some issues [pause] even the common men themselves have some ideas…. (SSN, FG #1)

I made my decision and say, “I will not stand to see women and children suffering anymore. I have to come out strongly, I have to take a career on peace building, so that I will do the reconciliation. I will be talking to fellow women to come out strongly and say no to conflict because they are the people who suffer a lot, they are the ones who are traumatized when they see their children dying and their husbands being killed.” (Participant EMT, Indiv. Interview)

[Breaths] ah we’ve been living for the last 10 years with my family members ah without good rapport, healthy relationship with my in-laws. About 2 years ago, my mother in-law started to recognize the work that I am doing, got sense in the work that I am doing…. Immediately she accepted, that made great change among many people to come in. So actually we’ve reconciled and that also gave me strength…because when I am doing peace building work and ah reconciling the community, so same to me I must reconcile with people and live happily in peace…I came to realize that it is a struggle, you cannot just, reconciliation is a process…. (Participant EMT, Indiv. Interview)

The participants’ discussions show their sense of gained motivation to work hard for better living consequent to their loss of entire property to the PEV. “I was motivated, I am
telling you it’s like I even worked better than before, eh to get better things” (EPT). “Especially nowadays, I sense I need to work so much! …I have worked hard, I have never done my farm work like I am doing nowadays…. I have made up my minds to settle down here and work hard, and do farm work with full force…” (SSN). “If we live like the way we have lived, even our country Kenya will progress because even these houses you see here we have built, they had not been built that time…. Therefore if we live well [nose blowing] then we will progress” (SAM).

Participant EPT in Focus Group #2 expressed her commitment to work harder and her realized economic development:

…even besides challenges I work hard. Yah, in fact it’s like I am even better than what I was before that time. So those were just challenges that are never permanent. They are things that come and go, eh. Because I was able to move, I was able to stay better than I used to stay. Yah, due to the fact that you organize yourself you just eh [pause] work harder than before [smiles] eh. [Cross talk] I used to live, that house of mine was wooden, I live now in a more permanent house I live more comfortably, so eh challenges that come are just short-lived.

When I look at myself, I lost everything…but I feel that even if… I have gone 3 times through the skirmishes, these days… I hustle so much, [mostly,] I’m in the farm; beforehand I had leisure life, I would stay and watch the TV. I would stay and not think there is a tomorrow…. Were it long time ago, I would not have come to do your interview. [Tongue sound] but these days, I feel that okay…[even] I can work another job [a sneeze].” But beforehand I was relaxing. I liked to relax so much. I did not like to work, yah. So I changed. (Participant EBT, Indiv. Interview)

Theme #22: Increased or New Spiritual Faith

The participants of this study established a new faith in God after their tragedies. In Focus Group #2, participant EBT stated, “I became strong in faith.” “I saw it is better to trust in God because it is God who rescued me from all those problems, yah, yah” (ETK). “What I have learnt is to ask God to help me and I stay without many worries and live a healthy life until he calls me in heaven. You know, worrying so much about things can kill you. Eh” (SOA).
Theme #23: Being Appreciative

The participants reiterated their appreciation to God for His protection and provision and to the neighbors for their protection during their tragedies. “I am grateful to God that they were not interested in taking our lives. If they wanted, we would be gone [dead?]” (ECT). “I am thankful to God that nobody got burnt in that house” (SSK). “For me, were it not for my good neighbors, I would not be here, because they are the ones who helped get me out of the house” (SAW).

Participants also exhibited heightened expressions of gratitude for the support they received which facilitated their recovery and adjustment after their calamities. In individual interview, participant SMW expressed her appreciation for the social support she received from the neighbors saying, “Again here, we help each other with neighbors so much. Since we settled down here, I have never slept without food, I have never lacked salt or [had] any problem…. From the time we came here, I have been harvesting.” She spoke further of her gratitude to God: “…and I get visitors whom I had never seen before…. So I told God, surely, You are great, You can pick somebody from the ditch to eat with the rich…” Participant SAW expressed similar sentiments: “There is nothing good like having the strength to strive on… and I strove on and I stood firm. So my family is settled, therefore I am grateful.” She concluded, “Therefore I am grateful to the almighty God because God is good.” “After the clashes God gave us strength and we have started to build. But God did us good, even He gave us other ones, and gave us that cohesion…” (SAM). “My heart knows that God is great, and the government, those are the two key sources of support to us” (SOA). Several other participants expressed their gratitude as well:

It’s a great benefit that I was given this land and the house I was built for. Actually, even I see those who were of my age who faced tragedy like this [violence] but did not get houses like this, like the farms, those people, their lives were finished! Therefore I see myself to be ahead. Based on the fact that I was given a farm and I was built for, that
again healed my heart so so so much! [Pause]. Because when I observe others, even we were with others who were millionaires, their stone [permanent] houses were destroyed. I usually see that person who came and was built a house worth 10,000/- which they were building for people. You see that person is seeing own house worth 10 million outside there, it was destroyed, it is finished. And eh that person has been built by the government just a little house worth 10,000/-. When I see myself, I am different from them, different that even, as their pastor I just pray for them.

...in that long time we stayed, the government gave us enough food. For sure, I personally want to say that we got the food until we were able to get our own [farm produce]…so we eat and we sell, [pause] and we educate [children] and life goes on. (SSN, Ind. Inter.)

Since we came we have not seen any person disturbing us. [Pause] We have tight security, the police officers are with us, and also I and you, and that other one are the security, we do not depend on guns to protect us. We depend on me and you to protect each other [brother’s keeper]. Yah. (Participant SSK, Indiv. Interview)

…the government loved us and brought us here. Now our lives here is what we take care of. We have iron sheet houses which we did not have. You see even electricity has been installed for us? We are alive even though we fought during violence, now it is just to pray God because He has brought us this far. We have farms now even better than what we had before. So we have no problem. So, we do not have big farms but we are still rich…. So you see even motorbike moving around here, such development is a sign of God’s blessings…. It is just to give thanks. We have life. (Participant SOA, FG #1)

**Implications.** The findings of this study support the overwhelming research evidence that individuals facing a wide variety of very difficult circumstances experience significant changes in their lives that they view as highly positive (Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). Further, the degree to which they regard the changes as positive is influenced by protective factors, including socioeconomic status, social support received, level of education, and spirituality and faith (Boundless Psychology, May 26, 2016; He, Xu, & Wu, 2013; Rimé, Páez, Basabe, &Martínez, 2010; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). The participants illuminated vividly the themes which depicted their posttraumatic growth experience subsequent to their traumas.

The emergent themes for this research question on compassion, courage, and appreciation show that though the participants experienced negative effects, they still found psychological benefit and personal growth consequent to their recurrent and multiple trauma experiences. With
changed tone of voice or body language, the participants of this study all expressed their newfound satisfaction, zeal, and commitment either to intervene in times of trauma crisis, voluntarily serve the violence affected people, or confront any violence-related provoking anomalies. Additionally, the participants spoke of gaining more trust and/or new faith in God, gaining more strength and courage or assertiveness, zealously engaging in peace and reconciliation talks, and living with complete forgiveness and emphasizing it, among other characteristics of positive change experienced in the aftermath of extreme trauma. These characteristics are embodied in the five broad domains of posttraumatic growth: new possibilities, relating to others, personal strength, spiritual change, and appreciation of life (Calhoun & Tedeschi, 1999). After an extreme trauma stressor, the survivor endures significant cognitive processing which involves experiencing an utterly holistic change in life processes and revision of fundamental schemas about the self, others, and the future (Tedeschi, 1999). The reaction leads first, to the establishment of dysfunctional negative schemas, which result in anomalies such as PTSD symptoms, and then to the construction of positive adaptive ones with consequent positive meaning (PTG; Tedeschi & Calhoun, 2004). Therefore, based on all these analysis outcomes, the participants seemed to have experienced PTSD and posttraumatic growth in the above listed key areas as they processed their trauma experiences progressively. The findings of this study provide significant implications for the mental health professions: they need to be aware of posttraumatic growth experienced by trauma survivors and to employ a pathological approach to trauma situations by establishing posttraumatic growth promotion strategies, especially in developing countries prone to skirmishes and political violence.
### Themes Delineated from the Research

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question #1: The Lived Existentials:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Theme #1: Fear</td>
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<td>Theme #2: Loss</td>
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<td>Theme #3: Frustration</td>
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<td>Theme #6: Betrayal Trauma</td>
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<td>Theme #7: Acute Grief</td>
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<th>Research Question #2: Meanings:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Theme #8: “Forgiveness is the Key Thing in Life”</td>
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<td>Theme #9: “I am a Peace Builder, Peace is Just Like Oxygen”</td>
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<td>Theme #10: Collaboration and Strong Relationships</td>
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<td>Theme #11: “Life Must Continue, God has a Purpose for Me to Live”</td>
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<th>Research Question #3A: Risk Factors:</th>
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<td>Theme #12: The Impact of Trauma and Loss</td>
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<td>Theme #13: Chronic Anger for the Cause and/or Lack of Support</td>
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<th>Research Question #3B: Protective Factors:</th>
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<th>Research Question #4: Personal Characteristics’ Positive influence</th>
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<td>Theme #20: Exercising Compassion</td>
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<td>Theme #21: Gained Courage and Motivation for Peaceful Co-existence</td>
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<td>Theme #22: Increased or New Spiritual Faith</td>
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<td>Theme #23: Being Appreciative</td>
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#### Limitations of the Study

Various limitations are inherent in this analytical research design. In using the nonprobability sampling strategy for social science research, the investigator does not base the sample selection on probability theory or test the hypothesis (Berg & Lune, 2012; Glesne, 2011). Because a purposive sampling strategy was used for this study, the participants did not entirely represent the whole population with recurrent and or multiple skirmishes, PEV, and fire
explosion trauma experiences. The meanings they have made out of their trauma may not be generalizable because of the research methodology and the participants’ subjective experiences, as well as the political and geographical region from which they come. Even though the 2007 PEV trauma experience may be generalizable, the recurrent skirmishes and the 2009 Sachangwan national level oil tanker fire explosions are not, even though the participants were all from the same Rift Valley region. The scope of the population affected by the fire explosion was more regional, whereas the former was a country-wide tragedy.

In addition, because of the time span, those who experienced high PTG may have relocated, may not have been able to recall much of the experience and/or the resolutions they made after the incidents, or may not have been interviewed. Because of the voluntary nature of the participation and the research design, the number of informants may not have been large enough to obtain sufficient data (Berg, 2009). Additionally, it is not clear whether other external variables may have influenced the participants’ recall or disclosure of their lived experiences in the aftermath of their serial trauma experiences. Furthermore, some may have experienced less recurrent traumata than the ones identified, and others may have experienced less severe trauma.

To elucidate my presuppositions and reduce researcher bias, I wrote my personal reflexive memo covering the insights, observations, and gut feelings throughout the entire data collection and analysis process. Even so, based on my training as crisis intervenor and my involvement in crisis intervention services in response to the 9/11 New York terrorist attack, the 2007 PEV, and the Sachangwan oil tanker fire explosion tragedies, I may have unconsciously influenced the research process. Reflexivity assumes mutual, continuous, and consistent reciprocal effects between the researcher and the objects of study in the course of the research process (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009).
In addition, because I come from one of the rival ethnic groups associated with the skirmishes and the 2007 PEV, I may have had an effect on the responses of the participants, as they may have thought either that they had an opportunity to report their issues directly or that they should withhold some information about their thoughts for fear of being politically targeted in the future. Even though I assured the participants of my confidentiality, they may have decided to reserve some information for fear of being followed up, owing to some political violence-associated previous investigations and the then-impending Hague case against some politicians from the same region.

**Implications for Future Research**

The fear theme generated by the participants in both focus groups and individual interviews as they described their fearful experiences highlighted, among other causes of fear, how the participants were shocked by the involvement of women and children in waging war against the other ethnic groups during the skirmishes and 2007 PEV. Therefore, it would be worth conducting research on the participation of women and children in skirmishes and PEV attacks. Further, examining the psychological impact of the participation of women and children in skirmishes and PEV on the affected mothers is important too.

In the “Impact of Trauma and Loss,” theme, focusing on the ‘Loss of health: Chronic stress reactions to trauma,’” the participants described some of the difficulties they experienced including depression, hypertension, memory loss, loss of weight, physical fatigue, chronic grief, intrusive memory of the deceased, and sleeplessness among other mental illnesses and physical weakening. After conducting research among South African adults aimed at establishing an association between hypertension and mental disorders in sub-Saharan Africa, Grimsrud, Stein, Seedat, Williams, and Myer (2009) urged further examination of the role of traumatic life events
in the aetiology of hypertension and the temporality of the relationship between hypertension and mental disorders. Based on the outcomes of this study, it seems vital that further inquiry be conducted on the rate of comorbidity between hypertension and various mental disorders, such as depression and anxiety among recurrent and multiple trauma survivors of the post-election violence in developing countries.

Given that the participants described as a significant part of their painful experiences the multiple loss of loved ones, an investigation of this type of loss in the 2007 PEV and fire explosion should be carried out to inform the establishment of intervention measures. In addition, the participants described a sense of hopelessness at their enormous loss of property while others described having pity on those who lost property worth very high value, unlike them. This issue of property loss calls for research on the psychological impact of the value of the property that the survivors of PEV trauma lost.

One finding of this study was that the skirmishes and 2007 PEV affected individuals from a specific ethnic group who were initially integrated with their relatives in their places of origin prior to relocating to the IDP camps, whereas those from other ethnic groups went straight to seek refuge at various police stations and IDP camps. These initially integrated participants from the ethnic group were apparently forced by socioeconomic challenges to relocate from their ancestral homes to the IDP camps. Causal comparative research could be done to determine the reason for the existing difference in their instantaneous decisions about where to seek refuge consequent to the violence. The outcomes may provide key information for the establishment of emergency rehabilitation measures for future intervention with IDPs.

Finally, the participants identified various conditions and personal characteristics that apparently protected them from their potential chronic severe mental illnesses and facilitated
their progressive experience of posttraumatic growth. A confirmation of the effectiveness of such situations and attitudes in buffering those affected by the skirmishes, the PEV, and the fire explosion traumas could be a resource for generating strategies for political violence psychological intervention.

Questions Generated by the Research

Below are the questions generated by this research:

- How has the transgenerational trauma associated with the skirmishes and the PEV affected the offspring of the trauma survivors?
- What was the rate of the comorbidity of hypertension and mental disorders—including depression, anxiety, and PTSD—among the recurrent and multiple trauma survivors of the 2007 PEV and 2009 fire explosion?
- Did the PEV-affected individuals who experienced multiple loss of loved ones and some property experience more stress than those who experienced the loss of a loved one and an enormous amount of commercial and personal property worth millions of shillings?
- Does the experience of multiple loss of loved ones and some property influence the experience of more positive change and growth than the experience of losing an enormous amount of property of great value?
- How did the losses to the 2007 PEV, as compared to losses to the 2009 natural fire tragedy, influence the trauma survivors’ interpretation of their multiple loss of loved ones and their subsequent recovery process?
- How much does media communication on discontent in political issues trigger trauma among the survivors of political violence?
• Is it true that the primary trauma survivors of the skirmishes and PEV gained resilience from the influence of the MAU MAU Emergency secondary traumatization?

• What psychological impact did the PEV trauma have on those who had a history with the skirmishes trauma as compared to those who had history of both the MAU MAU Emergency secondary traumatization and skirmishes trauma?

• What was the degree of impact of the skirmishes, PEV, and fire explosion traumas on women, men, elderly, and young individual survivors?

• How does the participation of women and children in the skirmishes and PEV attacks influence the affected mothers’ perception of their trauma and loss?

• Have the skirmishes and 2007 PEV-affected individuals been able to establish and nurture genuine relationships with people from their previous rival ethnic groups?

• To what degree did the individuals affected by the skirmishes and PEV experience a sense of betrayal from their previous friends, colleagues, or community members from their 2007 PEV rival groups?

• What impact did the perceived lack of social support from the government have on the 2007 PEV-affected integrated individuals?

• What psychological impact did the received social support have on the skirmishes and PEV trauma survivors?

• Do the skirmishes and PEV trauma survivors who adhere to some form of spirituality experience more growth than those who do not?

• What significance does supervision have in the provision of emergency/crisis intervention services, positive change, and posttraumatic growth among the skirmishes, PEV, and fire explosion trauma survivors?
• How effective were the Ministry of State for Public Service Counselors’ (MSPSC) intervention services to the 2007 PEV trauma survivors?

• Were there cultural barriers between the PEV trauma survivors who received counseling and the NGO-sponsored foreign counselors who offered the services? How effective were the services of the foreign counselors compared to those of the natives?

• Considering the frequent political violence and other catastrophes in the developing countries, are there enough psychological crisis intervenors in the mental health field to offer crisis debriefing to the affected? Are there sufficient and appropriately equipped trauma counselors?

• Where trauma counselors and/or crisis intervenors are available, do they receive counseling supervision services consequent to their offer of trauma counseling and/or crisis intervention services?

• What percentage of the civilian populace in Kenya is aware of the existence of formal counseling, psychological crisis intervention, and trauma counseling?

• In developing countries highly hit by political violence and other man-made and natural traumas, what percentage of the mental health professionals is aware of the notion of posttraumatic growth?

**Conclusion**

The purpose of this study was to examine the lived experience of the survivors of multiple and recurrent traumas, of the skirmishes, the 2007 PEV, and the 2009 multiple national level fire explosions in Kenya. The findings of this study have shown that in facing their cataclysmic situations, the participants interpreted them as traumatic, hence experiencing mental and physical illnesses; however, it is evident that out of their calamitous experiences, they found
benefit in living their lives and thus experienced posttraumatic growth. The study provided
detailed descriptions of how the trauma survivors made meaning and lived purpose-filled lives,
resulting in their experience of growth in the aftermath of their heartbreaking trauma experience.

The study involved 16 participants who participated in both two focus groups and 16
individual interviews. The participants described vividly their recurrent and multiple trauma
experience of the skirmishes, the 2007 PEV, and the fire explosion. Atlas.ti software effectively
facilitated the coding of the voluminous collected data out of which emerged the 23 themes that
best represented the participants’ lived experiences in the aftermath of their recurrent and
multiple trauma experiences. That the participants of this study were traumatized by their tragic
experiences is evident in the emergent themes of fear, loss, frustration, hopelessness, betrayal
trauma and acute grief; and in their response to the trauma with various mental illnesses,
including acute stress, depression, hypertension, and PTSD. The participants expressed a sense
of hopelessness and anger toward the perpetrating tribes as well as the government. However,
the participants asserted that they had found meaning from their traumatic experiences through
strongly embracing forgiveness, engaging in peace building and reconciliation, emphasizing
collaboration and strong relationships, and a strong belief that life must continue. Although the
risk factors were overwhelming, based on the nature, scope, and intensity of the recurrent and
multiple trauma experienced, the participants also identified key protective factors, both external
(social support) and internal (trust in God, acceptance, spirituality, and courage), which helped
them wrestle with and experience personal growth. The participants perceived life positively and
experienced posttraumatic growth through exercising compassion; gained courage and
motivation; and cherished peaceful co-existence, increased or new spiritual faith, being
appreciative, and living with forgiveness.
The study findings emphasize the benefits found and the experience of posttraumatic growth by the recurrent and multiple trauma survivors. It also reveals the need to incorporate such insights into emergency services, crisis intervention strategies, trauma counseling, training, and policymaking for mental health services in order to buffer the impact of trauma and facilitate benefit finding and growth among the recurrent and multiple trauma survivors of skirmishes and political violence, among other traumas in developing countries.

This study’s findings create awareness about the previously unexamined experience of the recurrent and multiple trauma survivors of the skirmishes, the PEV, and the fire explosion traumas in Kenya. Implications for future research and questions generated by the research were provided. It was anticipated that with such vital information provided, further inquiry on the experiences of the recurrent and multiple trauma survivors of the skirmishes, the PEV, and the fire explosion traumas will be made with a consideration of insights on chronic physical and psychological impairment and an awareness of benefit finding and personal growth.
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Appendix A: Participant Informed Consent

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY
600 FORBES AVENUE • PITTSBURGH, PA 15282

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY

The Lived Experience of Recurrent and Multiple Trauma Survivors of Kenya’s 2007 Post-election Violence

INVESTIGATOR:
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Doctoral Candidate
Counselor Education and Supervision Program
Department of Counseling, Psychology, and Special Education
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601 Duquesne Union
Pittsburgh, PA 15282
Phone:
Email:

ADVISOR:
Lisa Lopez Levers, Ph.D., LPCC-S, LPC, CRC, NCC
Rev. Francis Phalba, C. S. Sp. Endowed Chair in African Studies
Professor of Counselor Education & Supervision
Department of Counseling, Psychology, and Special Education
School of Education
Duquesne University
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SOURCE OF SUPPORT:
This study is being performed as part of the requirements for the doctoral degree in School of Education at Duquesne University, and, is supported by a scholarship from a private sponsor. It was approved by both the Duquesne University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and Kenya’s National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI).

PURPOSE:
You are being asked to participate in a research project that seeks to understand the experiences of the survivors of several traumas, ranging from the 2007 Post-election Violence to the 2009 major fire explosions in Kenya among others. Specifically, this research intends to explore how the survivors have interpreted their experiences after the trauma. In addition, this research will look at the influence of survivors’ environmental factors, individual states, and personal characteristics on their interpretation of trauma at the time of several experiences of those traumas and at the present.

In order for you to participate, you must:
- Be an adult over the age of 18
- Have experienced the 2007 post-election violence and other incidences such as the fire explosions

To participate in this study, you will be asked to: Voluntarily agree to be interviewed, both individually and in a group. I am seeking your agreement and need you to sign the consent forms before each interview.

As part of my degree requirements, I am conducting research seeking to understand how trauma ranging from the 2007 post-election violence to the 2009 major fire explosions, among others, have had an impact on your life as a survivor. You will be asked to describe how you have lived after the trauma, how you have interpreted or have thought of your experience, what the experiences have meant to you in life, and what discouraged/inspired or helped you while processing through your traumatic experience. I also am interested in how your personal characteristics positively influenced your perception of life, in spite of your exposure to several severe traumas.

I will ask that I may audio and videotape your responses to the questions so that I can listen carefully to what you have to say as I also take notes. First, I will ask that you agree to participate twice in a focus group, with each group lasting 1½ to 2 hours. In addition, you will be asked to allow me to interview you. The interviews will be done once and the interview will last approximately 1 hour. All the interviews and focus groups will be conducted at the time and place of your choice but in an environment notably secure for conducting research. The focus groups and the interviews will be recorded through both audiotape and videotape. All the information collected will be put in a text form, and the outcome will be used for research purposes.
Before the interview, you will be asked to complete a form or demographic data sheet about your economic status (including education level, income, family size, and other aspects of your life), nature of the traumas/fears, how often (frequency), and how severe (intensity). If you may be unable to read or write, you will be questioned orally, and responses to the questions on your personal information will be appropriately filled in.

These are the only requests that will be made of you.

RISKS AND BENEFITS:

There are no risks greater than those encountered in everyday life. Be informed that professional mental health counselors from the Kenya Counseling and Psychologists Association (KCPA) are available to offer counseling services if you may need during or after the interview. While there are no direct benefits to you, the information collected in the study can be of benefit in understanding the experiences of survivors of similar trauma ranging from post-election violence to fire explosions among other traumas.

COMPENSATION:

Participation in the project will require no monetary cost to you. You will be reimbursed up to KShs 1000 ($10) for travel costs and/or lunch (where necessary) each time you attend the focus group or the interview. You will need to provide receipts to the research team at each visit. The research team will give you reimbursement cash and let you sign a Petty Cash Voucher against the amount you receive.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

Your participation in this study, your personal identity, and any personal information that you provide will never be revealed to anyone who reads the research. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed regarding the information that you share in the focus groups, although that request will be made that everyone involved in the focus groups respect common norms related to keeping group information confidential. The information that you may provide to the researcher in an individual interview will be kept confidential and not reported in any connection to you or your identity in any way. Each participant will be given a unique pseudonym (a given name to hide identity) in the final written analysis. Likewise, the identities of any persons who you mention in the interview will also be de-identified.

Your real name will never appear on any interview form or any other research document. All written and electronic forms and study materials will be kept secure and will be destroyed after transcription. Your response(s) will only appear in themes and data summaries. Any study materials with personal identifying information will be maintained for five years and then destroyed.

Copies of all the collected data will be securely stored in locked OneDrive computer files and ATLAS.ti software for easy retrieval and confidentiality. Electronic data storage, including the external hard drive and USB, will be password protected. In addition, the hard copies of all primary and secondary data (interviews, audio/visual, written notes/reflective journals, and non-intrusive observation measures pertaining to the study and your identities will be maintained in a locked cabinet that is accessible only to the researcher. After a successful defense of this proposed dissertation, only the de-identified versions of transcripts will be retained; all the audio sound files and electronic transcripts will be deleted immediately after transcription by the researcher. The researcher will shred all hard copy transcripts using a high security paper shredder designed for the most sensitive data.

RIGHT TO WITHDRAW:

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are under no obligation to participate in this interview. You are free to withdraw your consent to participate at any time with no consequences.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS:

A summary of the results of this research will be supplied to you, at no cost, upon request.

VOLUNTARY CONSENT:

I have read the above statements, or it has been read to me, and I have understood what is being requested of me. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about it and any questions I have been asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I also understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my consent at any time, for any reason. On these terms, therefore, I certify that I am willing to participate in this research project. I understand that should I have any further questions about my participation in this study, I may contact the principal investigator of this research project, Jane C. Lang at phone email, or the researcher's dissertation adviser, Dr. Lisa Lopez Llevers at 1 412-396-1871. Should I have questions regarding protection of human subject issues, I may call Dr. Linda Goodfellow, Chair of the Duquesne University Institutional Review Board, at 412-396-1886.
Participant's Signature ______________________________ Date (Day/month/year) 

Researcher's Signature ______________________________ Date (Day/month/year) 

(If illiterate- A literate witness, where possible selected by the subject, and have no connection to the research team). I have witnessed the accurate reading of the consent form to the potential subject, and the individual has had the opportunity to ask questions. I confirm that the individual has given consent freely.

Name of witness (Print) ______________________________ 

Signature of witness ______________________________ Date (Day/month/year) 

Expiration Date: 10-27-2017

Duquesne University IRB
Protocol #2015-10-9
Approved: 10-28-2016
Appendix B: Focus Group Interview Questions Protocol

1. How do you describe the impact of your experiences of the 2007 PEV and 2009 fire explosions in Kenya?

2. In what ways have you interpreted your experience of the multiple and recurrent traumas of PEV and fire explosions? Have the experience had any meaning in your life?

3. What do you consider to have helped you to go through and survive your experiences of the 2007 PEV and 2009 fire explosions in Kenya? What hindered or worked against your struggle to overcome the traumas?

4. How have you made sense of your exposure to recurrent and multiple traumas?

5. How have your personal characteristics positively influenced your perception of life in spite of your exposure to recurrent and multiple traumas?
Appendix C: Semi-structured Individual Interview Questions Protocol

1. **Introductory Question:** What types of experiences have you had as a result of the post-election violence and any other tragedy? How have the experiences of the year 2007 post-election violence traumas had an impact on your life? How is it like to live now after what you have experienced?

2. **Transition Statement:** As you reflect on the experiences you have had associated with the tragedies, describe an experience, time, person, or incident that immediately comes to mind or that stands out most vividly to you.

3. **Meaning Question:** Considering the experiences you have shared, is there something that stands out as particularly meaningful to you?

4. **Closing Question:** Is there anything you came wanting to say or have thought of but have not yet had the opportunity to discuss?
Appendix D: Participant Solicitation

Hello,

My name is Jane Cherotich Lang’at from here, Kenya. Currently, I am a doctoral candidate at Duquesne University in Pennsylvania, USA. I am writing this letter to inquire the possibility of your participation in a research study that I am conducting as part of the requirements of my training for doctoral degree in counselor education and supervision.

My interest is to explore the experiences of people who faced trauma ranging from the 2007 post-election violence, 2009 fire explosions such as was experienced in Sachangwan, and Moi’s Bridge among others. I am looking for adult subjects who were previously interviewed by the media or self-identify to have experienced several of these indicated life threatening traumas. The participants should be willing to be interviewed in group and individual session concerning their experiences and how they have interpreted life after.

Participation in this research is absolutely voluntary. There are no greater risks associated with participation in this study than you would encounter in everyday life. All information from the study will be kept confidential. While there are no direct benefits to you, the information collected in the study can be of benefit in understanding the experiences of survivors of multiple trauma ranging from post-election violence to fire explosions among other traumas.

I am requesting you to participate in the focus groups and an individual interview. The focus group interviews will last for approximately 1 ½ to 2 hours, while the individual interview will last about 1 hour each. The sessions will be scheduled at a time and place convenient to you. You will not receive any compensation for participation, except reimbursement for your transport, but there will not be any cost to you either.

You will be reimbursed up to KShs.1000 ($10) for travel costs and/or lunch (where necessary) each time you attend the focus group or the interview. You will need to provide receipts to the research team at each visit. The research team will give you reimbursement cash and let you sign a Petty Cash Voucher against the amount you receive.

This study has been approved by Duquesne University Institutional Review Board. It also has been approved by Kenya’s National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI).

If you know you meet this requirement and are willing to participate in the study, please respond directly to this e-mail or contact me through my mobile phone at [Contact Information] and email: [Email Address].

Thanks in advance,

Jane Cherotich Lang’at
Appendix E: IRB Approved Research Project Protocol

To: Jane Lang’at
From: Linda Goodfellow, IRB Chair
Subject: Protocol #2015/10/9 - Approval Notification
Date: 10/28/2015

The protocol The Lived Experience of Recurrent and Multiple Trauma Survivors of Kenya’s 2007 Post-election Violence has been approved by the IRB Chair under the rules for expedited review on 10/28/2015.

The consent form, recruitment script and protocol summary are stamped with IRB approval and one year expiration date. You should use the stamped forms as originals for copies that you distribute or display.

The approval of your study is valid through 10/27/2016, by which time you must submit an annual report either closing the protocol or requesting permission to continue the protocol for another year. Please submit your report by 09/29/2016 so that the IRB has time to review and approve your report if you wish to continue it for another year.

If, prior to the annual review, you propose any changes in your procedure or consent process, you must complete an amendment form of those changes and submit it to the IRB Chair for approval. Please wait for the approval before implementing any changes to the original protocol. In addition, if any unanticipated problems or adverse effects on subjects are discovered before the annual review, you must immediately report them to the IRB Chair before proceeding with the study.

When the study is complete, please terminate the study via Mentor by completing the form under the Continual Renewal tab at the bottom of your protocol page and clicking on terminate. Please keep a copy of your research records, other than those you have agreed to destroy for confidentiality, over a period of five years after the study’s completion.

If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

Linda Goodfellow, PhD, RN, FAAN
IRB Chair
goodfellow@duq.edu

Attachments:
- Protocol 2015-10-9 Consent Form approved.pdf
- Protocol 2015-10-9 Recruitment Script and Flier approved.pdf
Appendix F: NACOSTI, County Commissioners,’ and County Education Officers’ Letters of Research Approval
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Ref No: NACOSTI/P/15/56825/8803

Date: 30th November, 2015

Jane Cherotich Langat
Dispasses University
USA.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on “The lived experience of recurrent and multiple trauma survivors of Kenya’s 2007 post-election violence,” I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in Baringo, Kericho, Nakura and Uasin Gishu Counties for a period ending 25th November, 2016.

You are advised to report to the Secretary General, Kenya Red Cross, the Commissioner of Refugees, UNHCR, the County Commissioners and the County Directors of Education, selected Counties before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf of the research report/thesis to our office.

Said Hussein
For Director General/CEO

Copy to:
The Secretary General
Kenya Red Cross.
The Commissioner of Refugees
UNHCR.

COUNTY COMMISSIONER
UASIN GISHU COUNTY
29/11/15

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND CO-ORDINATION OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Telephone: 234-23-2213471;
2341359, 315751, 2329420
Fax: 234-23-310245, 318249
Email: secretary@nacosti.go.ke
Website: www.nacosti.go.ke
When replying please quote

Ref No. CC.SREDU.12/1/2 VOL1/211

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION - JANE CHEROTICH LANGAT

The above named student has been given permission to carryout research on “The lived experience of recurrent and multiple trauma survivors of Kenya’s 2007 post-election violence.” for the period ending 25th November, 2016.

Kindly give her all the necessary support to facilitate the success of her research.

J. B. Alludo
For County Commissioner
Nakuru County

8th December, 2015
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION – JANE CHEROTICH LANGAT
PERMIT NO:NACOSTI/P/15/56825/8803

Authority is hereby given to the above named to carry out research on “The lived experience of recurrent and multiple trauma survivors of Kenya’s 2007 Post- election violence” Baringo, Kericho, Nakuru and UasinGishu Counties for a period ending 25th November, 2016.

Kindly accord her the necessary assistance.

MAURICE SAKA
FOR: COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
NAKURU COUNTY.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

This office has received your request for authority to carry out research on “The lived experience of recurrent and multiple trauma survivors of Kenya’s 2007 post-election violence,” in Uasin Gishu County.

We wish to inform you that your request has been granted for a period ending 25th November, 2016.

The authorities concerned are therefore requested to give you maximum support.

We take this opportunity to wish you well during this research.

B. K. ROP
For: County Director of Education
UASIN GISHU COUNTY
Appendix G: Table of Coding Phases

Table: The Four Coding Phases of the Two Focus Groups and 16 Individual Interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question #1. Lived Existentials:</th>
<th>Peace is Just Like Oxygen!”</th>
<th>Theme #15: Trust in God</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme #1: Fear</td>
<td>Theme #10: Collaboration and Strong Relationships</td>
<td>Theme #16: Social support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme #2: Loss</td>
<td>Theme #11: “Life Must Continue, God has a Purpose for Me to Live”</td>
<td>Theme #17: Acceptance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme #3: Frustration</td>
<td>RQ2. Meaning:</td>
<td>Theme #18: Spirituality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme #4: Healing</td>
<td>Theme #8: &quot;Forgiveness is the Key Thing in Life&quot;</td>
<td>Theme #19: Courage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme #5: Hopefulness and Hopelessness</td>
<td>Theme #9: &quot;I am a Peace Building,</td>
<td>RQ4. Positive Outcomes:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme #6: Betrayal Trauma</td>
<td>Theme #11: &quot;I am a Peace Building,</td>
<td>Theme #20: Exercising Compassion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme #7: Acute Grief</td>
<td>Theme #21: Gained Courage and Motivation for Peaceful Co-existence</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ3A. Risk Factors:</th>
<th>Theme #12: The Impact of Trauma and Loss</th>
<th>Theme #22: Increased or New Spiritual Faith</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme #13: Chronic Anger for Cause of Violence and/or Lack of Support</td>
<td>Theme #14: Triggers of Trauma</td>
<td>Theme #23: Being Appreciative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RQ3B. Protective Factors:</th>
<th>Triggers of trauma</th>
<th>education/career/future: A big blow! Big!</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theme #15: Trust in God</td>
<td>Grieving loss of loved ones through traumatic/sudden incidents e.g. skirmishes/PEV/road accidents</td>
<td>Social support-Rescue/Protection/provision/strength/peace etc. from God and church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme #16: Social support</td>
<td>Hopeful in life</td>
<td>Accepting the reality of trauma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme #17: Acceptance</td>
<td>Living with Forgiveness and zealously Giving Talks on Forgiveness and Reconciliation-&quot;Forgiveness is the key thing in life&quot;</td>
<td>Social support-From well-wishers/neighbors etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme #18: Spirituality</td>
<td>Successful outcomes from trauma</td>
<td>Social support-From Red Cross/other International Agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme #19: Courage</td>
<td>Built strong relationships with neighbors/other tribes</td>
<td>Social support-From government (public aid)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme #20: Exercising Compassion</td>
<td>Forgiveness – Forgave the perpetrators</td>
<td>Counseling services received/or informal sharing with others/exchange visits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme #21: Gained Courage and Motivation for Peaceful Co-existence</td>
<td>Living in Peace and Passionately Offering Peace Building Advice/Services/ Talks - &quot;Peace is just like Oxygen!&quot;</td>
<td>Spirituality, (personal characteristic)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme #22: Increased or New Spiritual Faith</td>
<td>Collaborating Well and Building Strong Friendship Foundations with everyone - &quot;It looks like this brought us closer together more than....&quot;</td>
<td>Cherishes peace and unity: Loves peaceful and harmonious co-existence with everybody everywhere</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme #23: Being Appreciative</td>
<td>Striving on in Life and Trusting in God Each Day, Life Must Continue - God has a Purpose for me to Live!</td>
<td>Ex. compassion-Zealously help/empathize with affected/serve community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme #24: Life must continue</td>
<td>Investing on Children’s Education and General Well-being - As ‘What am I saving for?’</td>
<td>Highly values life: Life must continue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme #25: Prioritizes on children’s well-being/education/careers over business/property which perish instantly</td>
<td>Loss of property/ achieved valuables: Life changed completely!</td>
<td>Gained courage, strength, high motivation and property/development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme #26: Sustained physical injuries</td>
<td>Struggled with socio-economic challenges</td>
<td>Living a life of complete forgiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme #27: Acute psychological stress reactions to trauma</td>
<td>Lack of support - Protection, public aid</td>
<td>More trust in God/gained strength/or conversion to a new faith in Him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theme #28: Chronic health problems-Chronic stress reaction to trauma events</td>
<td>Worried - Children's unpleasant well-being - exposure to trauma/difficulties in</td>
<td>Prioritizes on children’s well-being/education/careers over business/property which perish instantly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Theme #29: Chronic physical stress reactions to trauma</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase 3: Subthemes</td>
<td>Chronic stress-Difficulty trusting/sense of betrayal by familiar perpetrators</td>
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<td>2007 PEV was nasty/horrible/severe/painful</td>
<td>2007 PEV was nasty/horrible/severe/painful</td>
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<td>Acts of Satan - Religious interpretation or superstitious beliefs</td>
<td>Acts of Satan - Religious interpretation or superstitious beliefs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acute stress-Accelerated heart palpitation</td>
<td>Acute stress-Accelerated heart palpitation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acute s.-Avoided being alone</td>
<td>Acute s.-Avoided being alone</td>
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<td>Acute s.-Experienced confusion</td>
<td>Acute s.-Experienced confusion</td>
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<td>Acute s.-Experienced dissociation/memory lapse/emotional numbing</td>
<td>Acute s.-Experienced dissociation/memory lapse/emotional numbing</td>
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<td>Acute s.-Experienced dizziness</td>
<td>Acute s.-Experienced dizziness</td>
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<td>Acute s.-Experienced overwhelming stress</td>
<td>Acute s.-Experienced overwhelming stress</td>
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<td>Acute s.-Experienced physical fatigue/exhaustion</td>
<td>Acute s.-Experienced physical fatigue/exhaustion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acute s.-Experienced sleeplessness and muscle tension</td>
<td>Acute s.-Experienced sleeplessness and muscle tension</td>
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<td>Acute s.-Experienced the world as unreal or dreamlike</td>
<td>Acute s.-Experienced the world as unreal or dreamlike</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acute s.-Feelings of self-blame and/or survivor guilt</td>
<td>Acute s.-Feelings of self-blame and/or survivor guilt</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acute s.-Loss of strength</td>
<td>Acute s.-Loss of strength</td>
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<td>Acute s.-Prayed endless prayer</td>
<td>Acute s.-Prayed endless prayer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acute s.-Re-experienced intense psychological distress at exposure to external cues</td>
<td>Acute s.-Re-experienced intense psychological distress at exposure to external cues</td>
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<td>Acute s.-Re-experienced intrusive images</td>
<td>Acute s.-Re-experienced intrusive images</td>
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<td>Acute s.-Sweating-Experienced physical hotness</td>
<td>Acute s.-Sweating-Experienced physical hotness</td>
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<td>Always devoted to her medical service as a calling</td>
<td>Always devoted to her medical service as a calling</td>
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<td>Anxiously lived separately from others/family</td>
<td>Anxiously lived separately from others/family</td>
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<td>Appreciative of the support</td>
<td>Appreciative of the support</td>
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<td>Attempted suicide</td>
<td>Attempted suicide</td>
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<td>Being courageous and an encouragement to self/others</td>
<td>Being courageous and an encouragement to self/others</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being there for the children</td>
<td>Being there for the children</td>
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<td>Blessings in disguise</td>
<td>Blessings in disguise</td>
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<td>Chronic stress-Accelerated heart palpitation</td>
<td>Chronic stress-Accelerated heart palpitation</td>
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<td>Chronic s.-Developed blood pressure</td>
<td>Chronic s.-Developed blood pressure</td>
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<td>Chronic s.-Difficulty trusting/sense of betrayal</td>
<td>Chronic s.-Difficulty trusting/sense of betrayal</td>
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<td>Chronic s.-Exaggerated startle response</td>
<td>Chronic s.-Exaggerated startle response</td>
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<td>Chronic s.-Experienced</td>
<td>Chronic s.-Experienced</td>
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<td>Irritability/outburst of anger</td>
<td>Irritability/outburst of anger</td>
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<td>Chronic s.-Experienced loss of weight</td>
<td>Chronic s.-Experienced loss of weight</td>
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<td>Chronic s.-Experienced physical fatigue/disbelief</td>
<td>Chronic s.-Experienced physical fatigue/disbelief</td>
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<td>Chronic s.-Experienced shock and disbelief</td>
<td>Chronic s.-Experienced shock and disbelief</td>
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<td>Chronic s.-Experienced sleeplessness</td>
<td>Chronic s.-Experienced sleeplessness</td>
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<td>Hind.-Frequent relocation - due to skirmishes and PEV</td>
<td>Hind.-Frequent relocation - due to skirmishes and PEV</td>
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<td>Hind.-Lack of compensation or age and lost property value-based compensation</td>
<td>Hind.-Lack of compensation or age and lost property value-based compensation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hind.-Lack of help from other victims of skirmishes/PEV</td>
<td>Hind.-Lack of help from other victims of skirmishes/PEV</td>
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<td>Hind.-Lack of social support (public aid) from government/police officers</td>
<td>Hind.-Lack of social support (public aid) from government/police officers</td>
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<td>Hind.-Lack of support-Unkind family/relatives or tribesmen</td>
<td>Hind.-Lack of support-Unkind family/relatives or tribesmen</td>
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<td>Hind.-Lack of support - from sister</td>
<td>Hind.-Lack of support - from sister</td>
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<td>Hind.-Lack of support (perceived)-unavailable counseling services</td>
<td>Hind.-Lack of support (perceived)-unavailable counseling services</td>
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<td>Hind.-Lack of support (protection)-Government (police officers)</td>
<td>Hind.-Lack of support (protection)-Government (police officers)</td>
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<td>Hind.-Lack of support (protection)-neighbor</td>
<td>Hind.-Lack of support (protection)-neighbor</td>
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<td>Hind.-Politicians' disunity affects common man</td>
<td>Hind.-Politicians' disunity affects common man</td>
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<td>Hind.-Resistance against rebalance dialogue/other tribe in camp</td>
<td>Hind.-Resistance against rebalance dialogue/other tribe in camp</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hind.-Sense of discrimination/leaders' tribalism-based distribution of relief support/community services</td>
<td>Hind.-Sense of discrimination/leaders' tribalism-based distribution of relief support/community services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hind.-Sense of tribalism</td>
<td>Hind.-Sense of tribalism</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hind.-Struggled with socio-economic challenges/low socio-economic status</td>
<td>Hind.-Struggled with socio-economic challenges/low socio-economic status</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hind.-Transport challenges during and after the skirmishes/PEV/trauma incident</td>
<td>Hind.-Transport challenges during and after the skirmishes/PEV/trauma incident</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hind.-Vulnerability to attacks</td>
<td>Hind.-Vulnerability to attacks</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hind.-Worried of health condition</td>
<td>Hind.-Worried of health condition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hopeful-Hope for the children</td>
<td>Hopeful-Hope for the children</td>
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<td>Hopeful-The dream property</td>
<td>Hopeful-The dream property</td>
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<td>Hopelessness</td>
<td>Hopelessness</td>
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<td>Insecure environment</td>
<td>Insecure environment</td>
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<td>Insecure environment - worried of safety</td>
<td>Insecure environment - worried of safety</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation- Saw - something comes and pass, to move forward one need not to look back.</td>
<td>Interpretation- Saw - something comes and pass, to move forward one need not to look back.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation-Bad land politics caused violence</td>
<td>Interpretation-Bad land politics caused violence</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Chronic s.-Experiences increased arousal
Chronic s.-Experiences mental sufferings
Chronic s.-Experiences sleeplessness
Chronic s.-Fear- avoids danger associated places/people/time
Chronic s.-Fear of fire
Chronic s.-Grieving the husband's loss of physical health
Chronic s.-Grieving the loss of loved ones
Chronic s.-Hypervigilance
Chronic s.-Intense fear (Time ~2 yrs.)
Chronic s.-Loss of memory
Chronic s.-Loss of sense of fairness in the world
Chronic s.-Panic attack
Chronic s.-Re-experiences intense distressing thoughts - skirmishes/PEV associated loss of property
Chronic s.-Re-experiences intrusive memories
Chronic s.-Sensitivity to loud noise
Chronic s.-Severe tension headaches
Chronic s.-Shortness of breath
Chronic s.-Struggles with sexual dysfunction or urges due to PEV associated losses
Chronic s.-Unpleasant past memories resurfaces
Clinical-spiritual interpretation of 'What can separate us from the love of God'
Clinical - spiritual interpretation of 'Thankful to God'
Cohabiting with women is shameful
Confidence faded away
Considers multiparty political to have caused violence
Considers politics to have caused major socio-economic problems
Courageous-In the steps of their family heroes/heroines
Cultural-expected of elder son-being courageous and an encouragement to family/children
Cultural-Grieving loss of a young son
Cultural - cannot leave the elderly alone and run for safety
Cultural - Grieving loss of first born son
Current sense of security
Destruction of property
Determined to die with the children
Diminished interest in everyday activities
Doubts on warning signs
Interpretation-Bankruptcy isolates one with family/relatives
Interpretation-Violence brings separation and enmity - Broken relationships/enmity
Interpretation-Cause of violence-Unfulfilled promises of job employment to young men
Interpretation-Challenges are not the end of but part of life
Interpretation-Children's well-being is meaningful
Interpretation-Complete healing from trauma is a process
Interpretation-Considered her tribal group to be murderers
Interpretation-Considers peace as key medicine to all violent experiences
Interpretation-Education prevents violence and destruction of property
Interpretation-Election votes caused violence
Interpretation-experience have taught us to live in unity
Interpretation-Good neighborliness sustains livelihood
Interpretation-Have known violence is violence, it gives a scar
Interpretation-It was a passing bad spirit
Interpretation-Keeping the mind busy
Interpretation-Lack of education contributes to arrogance and violence
Interpretation-Leaders benefit - common men suffer
Interpretation-Learnt-hard work facilitates quick recovery
Interpretation-Life is losing meaning to the young ones not to the old ones
Interpretation-Looting property makes you the poorest in the world
Interpretation-Most difficult experience in life is loss of loved ones
Interpretation-Nowhere is completely safe
Interpretation-Patience is fundamental thing in life
Interpretation-Peace is of great significance than food or wealth
Interpretation-Peace is the best riches
New respons.-Coordinator/
Mobilizer/ or organizer of dialogue meetings/peace stalls
New respons.-Counselor/ counseling traumatized/ or HIV + clients
New respons.-Leader/ leads community peacefully
New respons.-Volunteer peace builder/ or training for peace building
Oil tanker explosion was a disaster in the entire community
Opinion-Expressed that peace and reconciliation be done by common men
Other struggling common men may not help you
Overwhelmed with child raising responsibilities
P. charact-Being patient
P. charact-Good hearted
P. charact-Living happily
P. charact- Available better economic resources-farmland/ farm produce/bank loan etc.
P. charact.-Easily lets go of it
P. charact.-Embraces self-reliance
P. charact.-Good judgement
P. charact.-Hard worker - works for oneself to recover, to self-sustain
P. charact.-Pastor
P. charact.-Preexisting good relationship
P. charact.-Self-reliance - reduces hopelessness
P. charact.-Sociable personality
P. charact.-Spiritual-Faith in God
P. characteristics-Socio-economically stable- Available resources
P. factor-Children - available sign of comfort and hope
Peace-Appeciates current peace and unity in neighborhood and countrywide
Peace-Hate violence
Peace-Peace and reconciliation talks/ strategies
Persevered until they reached a safe place
Predetermined life plan
Protection of livestock
Protective factors-Accepting the reality
R. factor (cultural)-No child(ren) - Left as sign of comfort and hope
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drunk alcohol first time - to relax oneself</td>
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<td>Education - kept busy with academics</td>
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<td>Emotional disturbance</td>
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<td>Emphasized on education on impact of violence and supporting the youth</td>
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<td>Even the perpetrators - Did not benefit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Even the perpetrators got affected/suffered</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ex. compassion-Zealously help/empathize with affected/serve community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Existential questioning-cognitive-Questioning God-Why - still alive or face all these</td>
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<td>Experience of sexual urges - a must when a spouse dies</td>
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<td>Experienced healing/progressive healing from the loss/ peace of heart</td>
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<td>Experienced increased sense of tribal identity</td>
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<td>Experienced intense anxiety-Tireless search for loved ones during violence season</td>
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<td>Experienced major loss in life</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experienced overwhelming pain about /PEV/ con men associated (recurrent) entire loss of property</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experienced overwhelming pain about recurrent/or multiple loss of loved ones</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experienced overwhelming pain about skirmishes/PEV associated (recurrent) loss of property</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experienced overwhelming pain about skirmishes/PEV associated loss of property</td>
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<td>Experienced psychological disturbances</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experienced recurrent trauma associated with PEV and oil tanker explosion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experienced recurrent trauma associated with skirmishes, PEV, and oil tanker explosion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Experienced recurrent/ or multiple trauma</td>
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<td>Experienced resilience-Endured the anxiety, pain, and sufferings</td>
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<td>Experienced shock-Sudden unexpected eruption of violence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation-Political violence makes people be economically equal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation-Skirmishes/PEV cause loss of freedom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation-Some things recur</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation-Source of protection - permanent houses</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation-Survivors are good role models/encouragers to newly affected</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation-There is a time for everything</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation-Too many worries kill</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation-Use of mobile phone media facilitated severe PEV</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation-Violence brings a lot of diseases</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation-Violence brings about a lot of theft of property</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation-Violence brings about death</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation-Violence comes with great loss and poverty</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation-Violence does not consider age, gender or disability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation-Violence is so traumatizing</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation-Violence was both profitable and loss</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation-You expect good from someone you are doing good to.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation - Challenges that come are short-lived</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation - hard work brings good things and idleness bring bad things</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation - the old men would not go for fights that long</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation - violence erupted due to many jobless young men</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Interpretation - women and children get traumatized most</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation -Harvests of life recur</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation/understanding - women and children suffer most during violence</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Keeping busy helps in recovery</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lead warning messenger/signs</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Learnt-Difficult to regain lost property</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Learnt-Reconciliation is a process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learnt-Reconciliation work is a struggle</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Re-experiences overwhelming pain about skirmishes/PEV associated loss of property</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realized impact of historical injustices</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Recurrent experience of skirmishes and PEV trauma</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Recurrent traumatic losses changed thoughts</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Respond to regular duties</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scope of the PEV impact</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-sacrifice for the sake of disabled child</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sense of insecurity</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social support-Community Based Organizations (CBO)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social support-From counselors</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social support-From government (public aid)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social support-From Red Cross/other International Agencies</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social support-From well-wishers/neighbors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social support-Medical doctors/service officers from all tribes</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social support-Rescue/ protection/social support from Church/religious leaders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social support-Rescue/protection-family/relatives</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social support-Rescue/protection-From well-wisher neighbor(s)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social support-Rescue/protection-Well-wisher vehicle drivers</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social support-Rescue/protection from government law enforcement officers/equipment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social support-Rescue/Protection/provision/ strength/ peace etc. from God and church</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social support-Rewards/ govs for tireless service to victims or from victims was a motivator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social support -From family/relatives or tribesmen</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social support -Informal sharing with individuals/ support groups/ exchange visits</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social support/ hopeful-Allocation of land to some IDPs by government (Source of hope)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socio-economic status-Business woman</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced sufferings-</td>
<td>Source of support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Starvation/overcrowding in places of refuge (tents/ IDP camp)</td>
<td>Good dialogue meetings between fighting communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced sufferings and torture during PEV</td>
<td>Spies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced threatened destruction of property</td>
<td>Spiritual development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear-Children's well-being-children's exposure to PEV trauma</td>
<td>Takes psychotropic medication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear-Experienced overwhelming fears</td>
<td>Thankful to God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear-Experienced danger and shock</td>
<td>The last lunch - 'the best food never eaten before'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear-Experiences fear of recurrence of skirmishes/PEV</td>
<td>The place exactly where I stood.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear-Frightening scenario</td>
<td>Time - sadly ended the year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear-Frightening scenario - armed perpetrators</td>
<td>Trust in God-Meaningful to trust in God/ His word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear-Shocked by unusual armed perpetrators</td>
<td>Trust in God-Meaningful to trust in God/His word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear response-Expectation of doom and fear of the future</td>
<td>Trust in God-Prayed to God/sought for protection/provision/ healing/peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings of anxiety</td>
<td>Unity and fairness among members of all communities is significant in life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feels/felt bad about familiar perpetrators</td>
<td>Valuables-Entire loss of property achievements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt emotionally relieved</td>
<td>Valuables-Rescued family documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgiven - Forgive the government</td>
<td>Valuables - Loss of family documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgiven - Forgive the perpetrators</td>
<td>Wish for regular/ or extensive counseling services to affected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent relocation</td>
<td>Worried-About their (adult child survivor) well-being-difficult in education/career of children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustration-Experienced feelings of frustration</td>
<td>Worried-Children's well-being-children's stress reactions to the trauma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gained courage, strength, high motivation and property/ development</td>
<td>Worried-Children's unpleasant well-being-exposure to trauma/difficulties in education/career/ future: A big blow! Big!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gained increased ability to communicate emotional responses/express situational reactions</td>
<td>Worried of age and socio-economic instability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>God is great/ good</td>
<td>Worried of the future</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having forgiving spirit</td>
<td>Phase 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having wisdom is very important, it helped</td>
<td>2007 PEV was nasty/horrible</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High rate of stealing property</td>
<td>Acts of Satan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hindrances-Anger on con men robbing or taking advantage of them</td>
<td>Acute stress-Avoided being alone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hind.-Contributor of insecurity - mixed marriage</td>
<td>Acute stress- Experienced confusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hind.-Exper. physical /or verbal abuse</td>
<td>Gained courage to approach the attackers - familiar people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hind.-Experienced skirmishes/PEV associated loss of friendships/ relationships</td>
<td>Gets great urge to talk to the traumatized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hind.-Financial struggles -for personal/family upkeep</td>
<td>God's Word gave me a lot of hope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learnt-that when dead comes closer to you even your brother cannot help you</td>
<td>Person. characteristics-Being patient</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learnt - challenges are never permanent</td>
<td>Person. charact.-Easily lets go of it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life can be difficult</td>
<td>Person. characteristics-Embraces self-reliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life changed completely</td>
<td>Person. charact.-Good hearted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life is difficult</td>
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<tr>
<td>Life is full of challenges</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Life is useless</td>
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<tr>
<td>Life is valuable - Appreciative of self/family/others being alive</td>
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<tr>
<td>L. body-Assertiveness-Zealously fights for/speaks peace</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>L. body-Experienced early menopause due to trauma</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>L. body-Experienced overwhelming pain associated skirmishes/PEV</td>
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<td>L. body-Experiences agony for lack of government support</td>
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<td>L. body-Fear-Saw and heard signs of danger</td>
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<tr>
<td>L. body-Itching from inside the scars and tiredness</td>
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<tr>
<td>L. body-Struggled with physical illness associated with PEV sustained injuries</td>
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<tr>
<td>L. body-Struggled with sustained physical injuries associated with skirmishes/PEV</td>
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<tr>
<td>L. body-Struggles with physical illness due to sustained injuries/health problems developed</td>
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<td>L. body-Sustained physical injuries</td>
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<td>Lived relationship-Anger on family/relatives or tribesmen</td>
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<td>Source of support</td>
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<td>The graph has been drawn.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Person. charact.-Good hearted</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Acute stress-Experienced

dissociation/emotional numbing

Acute stress-Experienced

overwhelming stress

Acute stress-Experienced physical

fatigue/exhaustion

Acute stress-Loss of strength

Acute stress-Prayed endless prayer

Acute stress-Re-experienced intense

psycho. distress at exposure to external

cues

Adviser, shares/talks on impact of

violence/prevention

Advocates that conflict resolution be

done by common men

After math results

Age and lost property value-based

support

All tribes inclusive group projects

Always devoted to her medical service

as a calling

And you see it like there is something

following you, now....

Anger-on government

Anger - on family/relatives or tribesmen

Anger - on other tribe(s)

Anger - on the cause of violence

Anger - tribalism driven lack of

understanding

Anxiously lived separately from

others/Family

Appreciates peace in the country

Appreciative-of self/family/others being

alive

Appreciative of God's blessings

Appreciative of God's protection and

blessings

Appreciative of self/family/others being

alive

Appreciative of the support

Appreciative to God for the support

Assertiveness-Zealously fights

for/speaks peace

Attempted suicide

Be ready for consequences

Became a strong woman

Became mad and screamed

Became strong in the faith

Being alive to mentor/guide

Being there for the children

Benefit/interpret-experience have taught

us live in unity

Benefit/interpret-PEV created job

opportunities

Bitten by safari ants

Blessings in disguise

God blessed me

God blesses people

God has a purpose for me to live

God helped me to recover

God helped us

God is good

God is great

God, “What is it that we wronged

you?"

Good dialogue between tribes

Good judgement

Good wishes, bright future

Good wishes, but financial struggles

Got hurt by tribalism-based

distribution of relief support

‘I got traumatized’

Got understanding - women and

children suffer most during violence

Great meaning in life

Great plans, bright future

Had courage to go back and check

on destroyed property

Had dialogue between tribes

Had plenty of food prior to violence

Had to accept the reality

Hard worker - works for oneself to

recover, to self-sustain in life

Has been praying for reconciliation

Hate violence

Have been able to work well

Have to move on with life

Having forgiving spirit

Rewards from place of work was a

motivator

Rescue/protection from government

law enforcement officers/equipment

Helped in taking the victims to the

hospital

Helpful to each other - neighbors

Hid in maize plantation

High level of tribalism - tribalism

based securement of job

opportunities

High rate of stealing property

Hindrances-Chronic re-experience

of trauma through Triggers

Hindrances-Discrimination - leaders'

tribalism-based offer of community

services

Hindrances-Lack of help from other

victims of PEV

Hindrances-Lack of sign of comfort

and hope (cultural)

Hindrances-Lack of social support

from government/police officers

Person. charact.-Good socio-

economic background

Person. charact.-Living happily

Person. charact.-Preexisting good

relationship

Persevered until they reached a safe

place

PEV and other problems bring

poverty in the community

PEV has helped to equally value all

human beings

Physical health problems in family

(non-skirmishes/PEV related)

Physical injuries/health problems

Pleased in education of others on

violence

Politicians’ disunity affects common

man

Poor economy

Positive attitude-experienced change

of attitude

Positive change-assertively face the

challenges head on/speak out boldly

Positive change-change of personal

values in life

Positive change-experienced

increased tolerance of personal

difference with others

Positive change-gained increased

ability to communicate emotional

responses/situational reactions

Post-election violence was a bad

experience

Pray-seek God's help

Pray for understanding among

leaders

Pray that it (violence) does not recur

Prayed to God

Prayed to God for emotional healing

Prayed to God for protection against

armed perpetrators

Prayed-‘wished God could eradicate

us all’

Praying against recurrence of

violence

Praying for peace in country

Praying for sustained unity in the

community

Praying God for help

Prays for everyone including

perpetrators

Prays for God's blessings

Prays for God's help to love each

other

Prays to God against the spirit of

violence
Blocked her mind
Business woman
‘By the end of the journey, it will I succeed’
Care for the physically challenged
Challenges build individual's strength
Challenges that come are short-lived
Characteristics—Encouraged one-self based on past major achievements
Children's well-being is meaningful
Chronic stress—Accelerated heart palpitation
Chronic stress—Difficulty trusting/sense of betrayal
Chronic stress—Exaggerated startle response
Chronic stress—Experienced loss of weight
Chronic stress—Experienced physical fatigue
Chronic stress—Experienced shock and disbelief
Chronic stress—Experienced sleeplessness
Chronic stress—Experiences sleeplessness
Chronic stress—Fear—avoids danger associated places/people/time
Chronic stress—fire phobia
Chronic stress—from itching from inside the scars
Chronic stress—grieving the husband's loss of physical health
Chronic stress—grieving the loss of loved ones
Chronic stress—hypervigilance
Chronic stress—intense fear (Time —2 yrs.)
Chronic stress—Irritability/outburst of anger
Chronic stress—Loss of memory
Chronic stress—Loss of sense of fairness in the world
Chronic stress—Panic attack
Chronic stress—Re-experiences intense distressing thoughts - skirmishes/PEV associated loss of property
Chronic stress—Re-experiences intrusive memories
Chronic stress—Sensitivity to loud noise
Chronic stress—Severe tension headaches
Chronic stress—Shortness of breath
Cohabiting with women is shameful
Committed in helping the traumatized

Hindrances—Lack of support—Unkind family/relatives or tribesmen
Hindrances—Lack of support - other people
Hindrances—Lack of support (perceived)—No medicine in health facilities
Hindrances—Lack of support (perceived) - unavailable counseling services
Hindrances—Lack of transport - no vehicles
Vehicle hit her and ran – recurrent trauma
Hope for the children
Hope is very meaningful
Hopefulness
Hopelessness
Hopelessness - "What am I going there for again?"
Hopelessness and pain - "And us oh God what did we do to You?"
I am peace builder
I don't have any bitterness
I have achieved in life
I pled, I pled until I screamed..
I ran and ran
I saw I have problems twice
I will overcome
IDP registration struggles
If it finished or remain, let God help me
Impact of PEV and skirmishes on the children
Important - living with hope and faith
Important - self-reliance reduces hopelessness
Important most - understanding and finding the rout cause of the cause
Inner voice - gives you hope to move on
Insecure environment - worried of safety
Interpret- Saw - something comes and pass, to move forward one need not to look back.
Interpret-Bad land politics caused violence
Interpret-Bankruptcy isolates one with family/relatives
Prays to God for life
Prays to God for mum's physical healing
Predetermined life plan
Protection of livestock
Questioning God
Ran away from danger
Re-experienced intrusive images
Re-experiences overwhelming pain about skirmishes/PEV associated loss of property
Realized impact of historical injustices
Realized life is not always smooth
Realized there is a way out in life challenges
Reconciled communities - role
Reconciled with community members
Reconciliation has resumed
Reconciliation talks
Reconciliation talks in service to God
Recurrent experience of PEV trauma
Recurrent experience of skirmishes and PEV trauma
Recurrent experience of trauma – PEV and family attacked by thugs
Recurrent experience of violence trauma
Recurrent losses - restarted life 3-4 times
Recurrent trauma – husband hit by thugs
Recurrent traumatic losses changed thoughts
Reflection of the past experiences
Relationship-Built strong relationships/with neighbors/perpetrators/other tribes
Relationship-Experienced skirmishes/PEV associated loss of friendships/relationships
Religious leaders
Resilience
Resilience - endured it
Resistance from other tribe in camp
Resolved to live peacefully
Respond to regular duties
Rewards for tireless service to victims was a motivator
Risk factors-Transport challenges during adjustment after skirmishes/PEV
Risk factors-Transport challenges during traumatic incident
Committed to volunteer peace work and counseling services received
Communicate well
Compassion-Zealously help/empathize with affected/serve community
Confidence faded away
Confused identity
Consider - women and children get traumatized most
Considered a traitor
Considered as a spy
Considers multiparty politics to have caused violence
Considers politics to have caused major socio-economic problems
Continues to recover
Contributor of insecurity - Branded car
Contributor of insecurity - mixed marriage
Coordinator
Courage-In the steps of their family heroes/heroines
Courage helped
Cried for her disabled child
Cried for her hurt husband
Cultural-Desire for continued connection
Cultural-Grieving loss of a young son
Cultural - cannot leave the elderly alone and run for safety
Cultural - grieving loss of first born son
Current sense of security -
Currently lives harmoniously with previous rival tribes
Currently lives peacefully in unity
Currently struggles with poor harvest
Declined warning messages
Desired/returned to see trauma cite/burnt/destroyed property
Desires for peace and harmony
Destitution of property
Determined to die with children
Determined to reconcile communities
Determined to stand her ground
Determined to work hard to succeed in life
Determined to work hard whole heartedly
Developed blood pressure
Diminished interest in everyday activities
Do not see good things, life is all the same
Does not anticipate for anything good in life other than what is passed
Interpret-Complete healing from trauma is a process
Interpret-Considered her tribal group to be murderers
Interpret-Considers peace as key medicine to all violent experiences
Interpret-Education prevents violence and destruction of property
Interpret-Election votes caused violence
Interpret-Good neighborliness sustains livelihood
Interpret-Have known violence is violence, it gives a scar
Interpret-It was a passing bad spirit
Interpret-It was worst
Interpret-Keeping the mind busy
Interpret-Lack of education contributes to arrogance and violence
Interpret-Leaders benefit - common men suffer
Interpret-Learnt-hard work facilitates quick recovery
Interpret-Life is losing meaning to the young ones not to the old ones
Interpret-Looting property makes you the poorest in the world
Interpret-Most difficult experience in life is loss of loved ones
Interpret-Nowhere is completely safe
Interpret-Only victim knows impact of violence
Interpret-Other struggling common men may not help you
Interpret-Patience is fundamental thing in life
Interpret-Peace is of great significance than food or wealth
Interpret-Peace is the best riches
Interpret-Political violence makes people be economically equal
Interpret-Skirmishes/PEV cause loss of freedom
Interpret-Skirmishes/PEV cause loss of friendships
Interpret-Some things recur
Interpret-Source of protection - permanent houses
Interpret-Survivors are good role models/encouragers to newly affected
Interpret-There is a time for everything
Interpret-Too many worries kill
Scope of the PEV impact
Search for rescue
Seeing that: 'I am still alive'
Seek for rescue
Seek God's help
Seek God's protection
Sees no difference in life - the same
Selective perpetration-Based on role/disability/preexisting strong relationship
Selective perpetration of the attacks
Self-sacrifice for the sake of disabled child
Self-sacrificed for higher calling
Sense of ownership of the land
Sense of hopelessness
Sense of insecurity
Sensed a need to work harder
Sensed that may repress their hurt feelings
Sensed tribalism in victim relief distribution
Severely affected by 1997 PEV
Severely burnt
Severely hit by PEV.
Shocked by unusual armed perpetrators
Sign of comfort and hope - children
Small Christian community empathized with her
Social support-Community Based Organizations (CBO)
Social support-Encouragement from mission office
Social support-From Church
Social support-From counselors
Social support-From government (public aid)
Social support-From well-wishers
Social support-Medical doctors/service officers from all tribes
Social support-Rescue/protection-family/relatives
Social support-Rescue/protection-From well-wisher neighbor(s)
Social support-Rescue/protection-Well-wisher vehicle drivers
Social support -From family/relatives or tribesmen
Social support -From Red Cross/other International Agencies
Social support -Informal sharing with individuals/support groups
Socio-economic challenges
Doing odd jobs helped generate family income.

Doubts on warning signs

Dragged documents box

Drunk alcohol to relax oneself

Economic support - Available

Education - kept busy with academics

Emotional disturbance

Emotionally requests for counseling services to all the affected

Emphasized on prayer of gratitude to God

Emphasized on praying to God

Encouragement from others

Encourager/preacher - preaches, gives people hope, helps the needy

Encourages non-partisan attitude among all tribes

Encourages oneself

Encourages oneself to move on

Even my small Christian community accepted my stay away

Even the perpetrators - Did not benefit

Even the perpetrators got affected/suffered

Every 5yrs violence erupt

Experience of sexual urges - a must when a spouse dies

Experience the world as unreal or dreamlike

Exper. a lot of hardships over a long period

Exper. Anger - on con men - recurrent loss

Exper. change of attitude

Exper. dizziness

Exper. early menopause due to trauma

Exper. hardships at the showground

Exper. healing/progressive healing

Exper. heat on her head

Exper. increased sense of tribalism

Exper. intense anxiety - Tireless search for loved ones during violence season

Exper. loss of a child

Exper. lost freedom: violence associated loss of freedom

Exper. major loss in life

Exper. marital problems - health issues/matrimonial challenges

Exper. mental sufferings

Interpret - Use of mobile phone media facilitated severe PEV

Interpret - Violence does not consider age, gender or disability

Interpret - Violence was both profitable and loss

Interpret - You expect good from someone you are doing good to.

Interpret - hard work brings good things and idleness bring bad things

Interpret - the old men would not go for fights that long

Interpret - violence erupted due to many jobless young men

Interpret - Harvests of life recur

It is God alone

It is so traumatizing

It makes you feel like you do….

It was devastating

It was so painful….

Joined church

Land as sign of hope

Lead warning messenger/signs

Learned to take things as they are

Learned about forgiveness

Learned - Difficult to regain lost property

Learned - Difficulties taught us to forgive each other, to live with forgiveness

Learned - Forgiveness as a day to day activity

Learned - Forgiveness as significant thing in life

Learned - Live in cohesion with neighbors

Learned - Reconciliation is a process

Learned - Reconciliation work is a struggle

Learned - that when dead comes closer to you even your brother cannot help you

Learned - that when the mother has little children, the children become the mother’s

Learned - Tribalism brings a lot of hatred

Learned - challenges are never permanent

Learned - by the time you hear the gun sound coming already the bullets are out

Learned - to spread peace despite PEV challenges experienced

Leave tribalism to God

Left food behind run for their lives

Something tells me stand! – urge to speak against/confront/create awareness

Source of help - life itself

Source of help - Resources/mobile phones

Source of protection - God

Source of protection - mum spared for the sake of disabled son

Source of protection - open shoes

Source of protection – men from her perpetrators’ tribe in the car – security plan

Source of protection – some perpetrators

Spilted oil considered as an opportunity to resolve poverty challenges

Spirituality

Spiritual interpret. - Thankful to God

Spiritual interpret. “What can separate us from the love of God?”

Standing firm help things change

Started reconciliation talks

Started working for peace

Stress burnout - headache/exhaustion at work

Stress reaction to trauma event - experiences increased arousal

Stressful life

Stressful scenario - overcrowding at the IDP camp

Strived to reconcile with others

Striving on for the best in life

Struggled for children’s education

Struggled with food shortage

Struggled with socio-economic challenges/low socio-economic status

Struggled in IDP Camps

Struggles with physical illness associated with PEV sustained injuries

Sustained physical injuries associated with PEV

Takes psychotropic medication

Talks with determination on the impact of violence
Exper. overwhelming pain about recurrent/or multiple loss of loved ones
Exper. overwhelming pain about skirmishes/PEV associated (recurrent) loss of property
Exper. overwhelming pain about skirmishes/PEV associated entire loss of property
Exper. overwhelming pain about skirmishes/PEV associated recurrent loss of property
Exper. overwhelming pain about traumatic/sudden loss of loved ones
Exper. overwhelming pain associated with loss of friends to oil tanker tragedy
Exper. pain of being displaced
Exper. PEV associated severe tortures
Exper. physical/ or verbal abuse
Exper. psychological disturbances
Exper. recurrent attacks
Exper. recurrent trauma
Exper. recurrent trauma associated with PEV and oil tanker explosion
Experienced salvation from God
Exper. sense of mockery
Exper. starvation
Exper. sufferings during burial preparations
Exper. sufferings during PEV
Exper. sufferings in church compound
Exper. sufferings in places of refuge (tents/ IDP camp
Exper. sufferings in police station camp
Exper. sufferings in rental apartment
Exper. sufferings living in makeshift houses
Exper. threatened destruction of property
Experiences sufferings at home
Expressed the PEV sufferings experienced
Faces financial and economic challenges
Faced financial and economic challenges
Faced socio-economic challenges
Faced the reality of the tragedy
Faced transport challenge - no public means of transport
Faced transport challenge - no vehicles on road/blocked
Faith in God facilitated healing
Falling victim of con men
Fear-Children's well-being-children's exposure to PEV trauma
Fear-Children's well-being-children's stress reactions to the trauma
Let God know her sufferings
Let me remain a Kenyan
Life can be difficult
Life changed completely
Life is controlled by God
Life is difficult
Life is full of challenges
Life is good - I have that hope
Life is not bad
Life is valuable-Values everyone's life
Lives stressful life
Live worry free and healthy life
Experiences agony for lack of government support
Violence broke out when election results were announced
Living has great significance
Living in peaceful co-existence is very important
Living well as a family
Lost hope of doing business
Lost memory of the incident
Lost parents a year before PEV attacks
Lost value of living in permanent house
Love is merciful
 Loves her perpetrators
Challenges are not the end of but part of life
Realized that challenges are part of life
May God forgive them
Being faithful to God, courageous, and hopeful in life
 Meaning-Gained courage, strength, high motivation and property/development
There is great meaning in life
Life must/has to continue
Life/living is meaningful
Meaningless-Life is useless
Purpose Senses a reason/purpose for having survived recurrent tragedies
Meaningful to trust in God/His word
Memorabilia/evidence of loss of loved ones
Mental health problems in extended family
Minimizing traumatic event-passing spirit
Missed where to pray to thank God
Missing family members
Mobile phones made the PEV spread like wild fire
Thankful to God
The aftermath results -senses a reason/purpose for having survived recurrent tragedies
The best place is where you are
The dream property
The graph has been drawn.
The last lunch - 'the best food never eaten before’
‘The place exactly where I stood…'
There is a future
Therefore, when you have wisdom...
Thought - life has to move on despite all challenges
Odd hours are dangerous
Violence broke out when politics intensified
Violence broke out when election results were announced
Time elapsed - 4 months of anxiety
Tragic accident
Training as peace builder
Tribalism begun in 1992
Tribalism caused post-election violence
Tribalism driven skirmishes/PEV
Trust in God for the future
Trusted in God for security
Unexpected eruption of violence
Unfulfilled promises - job employment to young men
United efforts - good neighborhood
Unity and fairness among members of all communities is significant in life
Unpleasant living environment
Unpleasant past memories resurfaces
Valuables-Entire loss of property achievements - painful
Valuables - Loss of family documents
Valuables - rescued family documents
Very bad experience
Violence brings a lot of diseases
Violence brings about a lot of theft
Violence brings about death
Violence brings separation and enmity
Violence brought a lot of cohesion
Violence brought psychological and physical trauma
Violence brought unhappiness
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fear-Experienced overwhelming fears</th>
<th>Mobilizer/organizer of dialogue meetings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fear-Experienced shock</td>
<td>Most of those who burnt house were jobless youth who had nothing to do</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear - of recurrence of skirmishes/PEV</td>
<td>Motivated by resilient neighbors moving on in life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear-Frightening scenario</td>
<td>Multiple traumatic experiences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fear-Frightening scenario - armed perpetrators</td>
<td>My blood rush</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fear-Saw and heard signs of danger</td>
<td>My Christianity is my motivator</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fear-of the future/expectation of doom</td>
<td>Need to understand each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings of anxiety</td>
<td>Negative traditional perception of IDP Camp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings of frustration</td>
<td>New Respons.-Peace/reconcil. talks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings of frustration - emotional heaviness and staying strong</td>
<td>New respons. - counseling clinical patients</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings of frustration - mixed marriage</td>
<td>No complete assurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings of humiliation and shame</td>
<td>Not listened to by affected people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feelings - Painful feelings of rejection</td>
<td>Not recovered financially and economically</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feelings of self-blame or survivor guilt</td>
<td>Oil tanker explosion was a disaster in the entire community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feels bad about unhygienic environment</td>
<td>Overwhelmed with child raising responsibilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Felt emotional pain - the in-law's loss</td>
<td>Overwhelming socio-economic challenges</td>
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<tr>
<td>Felt appreciated by patients</td>
<td>P. factor-Accepting the reality</td>
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<tr>
<td>Felt as if the world was coming to end</td>
<td>Painful recollection of the trauma</td>
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<tr>
<td>Felt so bad about familiar perpetrators</td>
<td>Painfully faced the reality of being a refugee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt emotional pain re: the cut alive cow</td>
<td>Patience is important</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt emotionally relieved</td>
<td>Past experiences many and bigger than what to come</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Felt for the hurt husband</td>
<td>Peace meeting turned violent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frustration - Feelings of frustration</td>
<td>Persevered being in the tent</td>
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<tr>
<td>Felt helpless so asked God for help</td>
<td>Violence comes with great loss and poverty</td>
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<tr>
<td>Felt so hot</td>
<td>Violence is bad!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fight or flight - we ran away</td>
<td>Violence trauma made me humble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial capab. - Moved family earlier</td>
<td>Violence was a painful experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial struggles e.g. for family upkeep</td>
<td>Vulnerability to attacks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgiveness - Forgive the government</td>
<td>Vulnerable, poor, and beggars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgiveness - Forgive the perpetrators</td>
<td>Waiting for land Title deed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent relocation-due to skirmishes/PEV</td>
<td>Want 1 Kenya from bottom to top</td>
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<tr>
<td>Frequent travels</td>
<td>Wanted to witness the burial</td>
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<td>Fully self-disclosed her experiences</td>
<td>We must continue living</td>
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<td></td>
<td>We must seek peace</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wisdom - helped spiritually not to retaliate and to accept the reality</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wisdom is very important</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wish for extensive counseling services to all affected</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wish for financial support</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wish for regular and intensive counseling services to affected</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wish others know impact of violence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wish politicians would not bring hatred between ethnic groups</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Wishes for a training of people against tribalism and violence</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Worried - About children's well-being-difficulties in education/career of children</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Worried of age and instability</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Worried of health condition</td>
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<td>Worried of the family members' whereabouts</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Worried of the future</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Wrestled with reality of being a refugee</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Phase 1: Initial Codes
Appendix H: Code Categories – Participants’ Interpretations of Trauma/Violence

HU: POST-ELECTION VIOLENCE (2007-08), SKIRMISHES, & FIRE etc. SURVIVORS’ Transcripts Atlas.ti 11-06-2016
Edited by: LangatJ
Date/Time: 2016-11-24 15:56:39

Created: 2016-11-17 23:00:31 (LangatJ)
Codes (70):
[Interpretation-2007 PEV was nasty/ horrible/ severe/painful]
[Acts of Satan-violence, safari ants - Religious interpretation or superstitious beliefs]
[Interpretation-Violence was a blessing in disguise]
[Clinical-spiritual interpretation of 'What can separate us from the love of God']
[Clinical - spiritual interpretation of 'Thankful to God']
[Interpretation-Cohabiting with women is shameful]
[Considers multiparty politics to have caused violence]
[Cultural-Elder son's wife/being courageous and an encouragement to family/children]
[Emphasized on educating community on the impact of violence and supporting the youth]
[Even the perpetrators - Did not benefit] [Even the perpetrators got affected/suffered]
[Experience of sexual urges - a must when a spouse dies]
[Hindrances-Politicians' disunity affects common man]
[Interpretation- Saw/understood - something comes and pass, to move forward one need not to look back.]
[Interpretation-Bad land politics caused violence]
[Interpretation-Bankruptcy isolates one with family/relatives]
[Interpretation-Cause of violence-Unfulfilled promises of job employment to young men]
[Interpretation-Challenges are not the end of but part of life]
[Interpretation-Children's well-being is meaningful]
[Interpretation-Complete healing from trauma is a process]
[Interpretation-Considered her tribal group to be murderers]
[Interpretation-Considers peace as key medicine to all violent experiences]
[Interpretation-Education prevents violence and destruction of property]
[Interpretation-Election votes caused violence]
[Interpretation-experience have taught us to live in unity]
[Interpretation-Good neighborliness sustains livelihood]
[Interpretation-Have known violence is violence, it gives a scar]
[Interpretation-It was a passing bad spirit]
[Interpretation-Keeping the mind busy helps in healing]
[Interpretation-Lack of education contributes to arrogance and violence]
[Interpretation-Leaders benefit - common men suffer]
[Interpretation-Leartnt-hard work facilitates quick recovery]
[Interpretation-Life is difficult]
[Interpretation-Life is losing meaning to the young ones not to the old ones]
[Interpretation-Looting property makes you the poorest in the world]
[Interpretation-Most difficult experience in life is loss of loved ones]
[Interpretation-Nowhere is completely safe]
[Interpretation-Patience is fundamental thing in life]
[Interpretation-Peace is of great significance than food or wealth]
[Interpretation-Peace is the best riches]
[Interpretation-Political violence makes people be economically equal]
[Interpretation-Skirmishes/PEV cause loss of freedom]
[Interpretation-Skirmishes/PEV cause loss of friendships]
[Interpretation-Some things recur]
[Interpretation-Source of protection -permanent houses]
[Interpretation-Survivors are good role models/encouragers to newly affected]
[Interpretation-There is a time for everything]
[Interpretation-Too many worries kill]
[Interpretation-Use of mobile phone media facilitated severe PEV]
[Interpretation-Violence brings a lot of diseases]
[Interpretation-Violence brings about a lot of theft of property]
[Interpretation-Violence brings about death]
[Interpretation-Violence brings separation and enmity - Broken relationships/enmity]  
[Interpretation-Violence comes with great loss and poverty]
[Interpretation-Violence does not consider age, gender or disability]
[Interpretation-Violence is so traumatizing]
[Interpretation-Violence was both profitable and loss]
[Interpretation-You expect good from someone you are doing good to.]
[Interpretation - Challenges that come are short-lived]
[Interpretation - hard work brings good things and idleness bring bad things]
[Interpretation - The old men would not have gone for fights that long]
[Interpretation - violence erupted due to many jobless young men]
[Interpretation - women and children get traumatized most]
[Interpretation –Harvests of life recur]
[Interpretation/understanding - women and children suffer most during violence]
[Learnnt-That when the mother has little children, the children become the mother’s during violence.]
[Life is full of challenges]
[Lived relationship-Forgiveness is significant thing in life]
[Personal charact.-Self-reliance - reduces hopelessness]
[Predetermined life plan]
[Realized impact of historical injustices]
Quotation(s): 138