

# The Influence of Economic Hardship On Violent Crimes in Kenya

Shadrack kipkoech sitienei \*, James k. chumba \*\*

\* Holds a BA in political science and public administration, MA in international relations and currently a lecturer and PhD candidate of political science and public administration Moi University.

\*\* Holds BA in Sociology, Currently a MA student in Sociology at Moi University.

DOI: 10.29322/IJSRP.10.04.2020.p10020  
<http://dx.doi.org/10.29322/IJSRP.10.04.2020.p10020>

**Abstract-** Violent crimes are amongst the serious offenses and are characterized by the fact that it entails the use of force or threat of force resulting in an injury to a person(s). This study seeks to unearth the influence of economic hardship on violent crimes in Kenya. In order to answer the objective under the study the researcher used the following income variable: education level, occupation status and house hold income. A purposive sampling technique was used to find the area understudy, the population and the sample. A descriptive analysis was used in the study. The study found that there is a close relationship between economic hardship and violent crimes in Kenya as most of the criminals came from low income households, low education level and low occupational status. Finally the study recommends that the government should provide favorable conditions to create employment opportunities, and education for the entire population.

**Index Terms-** violent crime, criminals, economic hardship, unemployment,

## I. INTRODUCTION

Violent crimes still persists, it has been demonstrated by scholarly writings that criminality has increased significantly in both rural and large cities in the recent past (Goertzel and Khan, 2009). Globally, violent occurrences continue unrestrained and in essence, it is currently a worrying problem in both rural and urban areas of both developed and developing nations (Farrington, 2000). In Brazil, a survey conducted showed that almost 23% of Brazilians cited urban violence as the major social problem they wished tackled, followed by the problem of drugs (21%), and unemployment (19%) in that order (CNT/SENSUS, 2010). In South Africa, the South African Police Service (SAPS, 2012) figures also show an alarming rise in violent crimes with 27% of men indicating they had committed rape (Britto, 2006). Whatever the accuracy of crime statistics, the perception of growing danger has generated widespread anxiety in most African countries. For instance, in Lagos, Nigeria 70% of respondents in a city-wide survey were fearful of being victims of crime caused by a couple of factors one of which is economic hardship (Ogbonnaya, 2013). In Kenya, data and literature on violent crimes are becoming interesting area for many researchers. As violent crimes continue to swell, so is there an array of evidence in the scholarly sources and media that affect the huge allocation of resources in the budget to improve security in the country is made (Statistical Abstracts,

2007). As reported by the Kenya police Annual Crimes Reports, people in the country are faced with violent crimes associated with many factors; this crimes includes robberies, serial and mass murders, child abuse, assaults, terrorism and rape cases among many others (Kenya Police Crime Report, 2011).

Elsewhere scholars have asked; do changes in macroeconomic conditions over time influence the rate of street crime? A common-sense answer is "yes." As economic conditions deteriorate, people are thrown out of work, and their incomes fall, some of them will turn to income-generating criminal activity in response. As conditions improve and incomes rise, the same logic holds that crime rates will fall. So goes a common view. That view is elaborated in well-known economic and sociological theories, but it is far from the consensus position in contemporary social science. Some analysts predict that crime will drop as deteriorating economic conditions reduce the value or availability of crime targets (Rosenfield & Fornango, 2007).

The unemployment rate is by far the economic indicator of choice in research on the impact of economic conditions on crime rates. A generation of research on the impact of unemployment on crime has produced mixed results and has led some researchers to question the validity of the unemployment rate as an indicator of the full range of economic conditions that may influence crime rates. The idea that crime rates rises and falls with changing economic conditions has a long pedigree in criminology. Early studies sought to connect crime rates to the changing prices of staple commodities such as wheat or rye. More recent research has used the unemployment rate to measure economic performance or outcomes (Arvanites & Defina, 2006). The latter effect, rooted in the more traditional sociological notions of legitimate and illegitimate opportunities, is reflected in increased crime when unemployment blocks access to legitimate income-producing opportunities. The results of Cantor and Land's annual time-series analysis offered support for both effects (Cantor & Land, 2001). Kenya's economy (Hall, 2017) has presented volatile yet comparably high growth rates in the last two decades. However, this generally positive macro-economic development has not translated into benefits for its youth. While annual GDP growth of more than 5 percent has been regularly recorded, Kenya's youth unemployment rate has shown little to no positive development and stands at a staggering 22 percent for 2016 (according to ILO estimates). With 500,000 to 800,000 young Kenyans entering the job market each year, its economy has not been able to provide the necessary amount of employment opportunities formal and

informal alike. Economic progress has primarily benefitted the older generation; young females in rural locations constitute the largest share of unemployed Kenyan youth (in absolute numbers), while their counterparts in urban areas are most likely to be unemployed (in relative terms). Gender and living location are defining factors, but youth unemployment is rampant throughout Kenya.

Locally, indeed criminals and crime rate committed in Kenya are dominated by persons coming from the extremely poor and disrupted families, the unemployed and less educated youth (Kasina, 2004). Reports indicate that gender-based violence particularly against women and children is on the rise and having a link with the state of the economy (Brieve and Jordan, 2004). For example, Gender Violence Recovery Centre, (2012) showed that of all the cases reported, 2,532 were sexual and 422 were physical violence whose rise has an associational link to rising in economic hardship of the people. The Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS) 2008-09, points out that about 45% of women aged 15-49 have experienced either physical or sexual violence revealing an increase of 8%, 19%, and 22% in rape, defilement and incest cases respectively.

Globally and Kenya in general, an indication of violent crimes have been on increase in the last ten years, a closer observation attributes this to existing livelihood trends. Many communities in the countryside are becoming more violent today than in the past and yet little is known about why this is happening. Police records indicate that among violent crimes that are swelling include homicide, offenses against persons, robbery, breakings, thefts, in particular theft of vehicles, theft by servants and other thefts, criminal damage, economic crimes, corruption, offenses involving police officers and other penal offenses. The Kenya police connect these crimes in the country to abundance of small arms and light weapons, unequal distribution of resources, extreme poverty among sections of the population, protracted drought in pastoralist areas, organized criminal gangs, a high rate of unemployment and the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to perpetrate criminal activities (Kenya Police Crime Report, 2011).

## II. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The influence of economic hardship on violent crimes among in Kenya is an interesting area to study among sociologists and criminologists as a way of finding solutions to ameliorate the effects. This would need the thorough establishment of the level of violent crimes much more in counties. For this study, prisoners in Uasin Gishu County became a focal point of the study. Data on the correlation between economic hardship and violent crimes are elaborate across jurisdictions, especially on the specific pointers of economic hardship that amplify violent crimes (Fajnzylber, Lederman & Loayza, 2002). In addition, data, in particular, reveal the types of violent crimes that intensify in times of economic hardship. In Kenya, violent crimes have increased in recent days and range from assault to severe cases of murder. This has been impelled by a sharp increase in death and injuries occurring as a result of violent crimes. Traditionally, according to Reid, Herzog, and Patterson; crime has been thought of as a lower-class phenomenon in which the poor who are unable to obtain their desired goods and services through the conventional means resort

to illegal means to obtain them or engage in expressive crimes as a means of articulating their frustrations and annoyance against society (Reid, 2007).

Further, close empirical relationships have been reported between crime and human capital acquisition (Lonnie, 2002), accessibility of firearms (Lafree, 2009), economic inequality (Lafree, 2009), ineffective families, substance abuse and regional values (Siegel, 2007). Vold and Snipes, (2002) emphasized the association between economic hardship which places individuals on various social classes and the likelihood of violent offending. Indeed, levels of violent crimes and levels of development of any nation are linked. Moreover, economic success cannot be realized if the wellbeing of Kenyans and their material goods are in jeopardy. Yet, these relations are complex and vary from country to country and also from one region to another even within the same country. Therefore, there is a need to comprehend why economic hardship boosts violent crimes more than other crime typologies, principally during periods of economic hardship.

Economic prosperity cannot be realized if the safety of Kenyans and their properties are in jeopardy. The causes of crime are as complex as society itself (Neal, 2012). This study found it important in this background a real need to identify types of violent crimes and establish whether they are linked to economic hardship and how they can be addressed. East Africa region as a whole is a region of high crime rates due to a number of factors. Currently, Kenya is rated by the U.S Department of state as critical in terms of both terrorism and crime hence making the U.S Embassy in Nairobi the fourth largest in the world. United Nations (2002) surveys in Kenya revealed that over half of the population worries about crime constantly and roughly 75% feel unsafe while at home (Aronson, 2010).

There is a strong connection between economic inequality and homicide rates (Lafree, 2009, Akers, 2000). In 2011, the Kenya police noted an increase in reported cases of crimes in the following categories; breakings, robbery, homicide, and other offenses at 14%, 15%, 18%, and 1% respectively (Kenya Police Annual Crime Report, 2011). The current economic hardship in Kenya such as difficulties in making ends meet, unemployment and underemployment, low wages and salaries, high cost of living among others may be linked to the many incidences of violent crimes such as murder and non-negligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. These violent crimes are ever-increasing. The Kenya Police Annual Crime Report, (2014) ranks Uasin Gishu County at 12 out of 47 Counties with 1872 incidents (cases) with a 209 crime index per 100,000 people. A few guidelines or frameworks exist to guide policymakers and program managers in developing and implementing the comprehensive response necessary to address criminal justice consequences of violence and to reduce the determinants of violent behavior within communities. Crime plays a negative role as far as the development of a nation is concerned (Cullen, Wright and Belvins, 2006).

## III. JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The study was carried out on the background that economic hardship are realities in many countries given that population census across the world among developing states reveals that a great populace faces survival hardship. The 1990 "wind of

change" (Zorigbaatar, 1995) brought political pluralism and economic liberalization, but it also resulted in an outbreak of social ills such as poverty, unemployment, social disintegration and erosion of societal fabric. Young people had been forced into the web of crime, and becoming street children, school dropouts and illiterates, unemployed and under-employed, and tobacco and alcohol addicts. The Government of Mongolia, in cooperation with relevant non-governmental organizations, was taking energetic measures to redress and improve the situation.

According to Hussain (2014), the economy is one of the most volatile conditions in Asia. What once was thought of being a promising economy has recently been in distress. Vietnam's macro economy was relatively stable in the 1997-2006 period, with low inflation, a 7 to 9 percent total output expansion annually and a moderate level of trade deficit. But Vietnam could not weather the adverse impact from the 1997-98 Asian financial turmoil, which partly curbed the FDI flow into its economy. Starting in late 2006, both public and private sector firms began to experience structural problems, rising inefficiency, and waste of resources. The daunting problem of inflation recurred, peaking at an annualized 23 percent level for that year.

The economic hardship vis a vis its influence is an interesting area for scholars of criminal justice and sociology in different parts of the world. Again, while Kenyans are generally optimistic about the future, they still say a range of development issues pose serious challenges for their country today. At the top of the list, with at least eight-in-ten Kenyans saying each is a very big problem, are government corruption (91%), economic issues such as a lack of employment opportunities (87%) and poverty (86%), and crime (82%) according to (Wike, Simmons, Vice, & Bishop, 2016).

Several studies conducted by various Sociologists and Criminologists such as Vold *et al.*, (2002) and Gould, Mustard and Weinberg, (2002) focused on the impact of economic decline on other factors such as infrastructure, healthcare, education and the overall impact of poverty on citizens, some have linked it to insecurity yet a few have attempted to study its impact on the levels of violent crimes. Violent crime data, particularly in Kenya, is relatively minimal leave alone literature concerning its root causes (Statistical Abstracts, 2007). There is a need to gather information on this since violent crimes continue to take place unexplained as evidenced in the media and the fact that a lot of resources through budgetary allocation are reserved for the safety of the Kenyan people.

#### IV. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study entailed the economic hardship factors that influenced violent crimes in which the respondents were drawn from violent crime offenders at Eldoret G.K. and Ngeria Farm G.K Prisons in Uasin Gishu County. Uasin Gishu County is one of the newly created 47 counties in Kenya (Constitution of Kenya, 2010).

#### V. METHODOLOGY

The descriptive research design was employed in which violent crime offenders formed the basis of analysis. According to Gay *et al.*, (2006), a descriptive research design entails the collection of the quantitative data so as to test the hypothesis or to answer questions regarding the subjects of the study. This design was appropriate because it is used when collecting information about people's attitudes, opinions, habits or any of the variety of social issues (Kombo and Tromp, 2009). The sample technique used in the study to choose respondents was purposive in which a sample of 25 convicts and 25 officers in criminal justice system. The study focused on adult violent crime offenders at Eldoret Main G.K and Ngeria Farm G.K Prisons in Uasin Gishu County of Kenya Key informants including magistrates, prosecutors, and officers in charge of the prison facilities were used to support the responses given by the violent crime offenders. The population was suitable for the study since it comprised of violent offenders who provided the most relevant information for the study. Data analysis in the study relied on descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages presented in tables and cross-tabulations.

#### VI. THE INFLUENCE OF ECONOMIC HARDSHIP ON VIOLENT CRIMES

The study sought to investigate whether difficulties in making ends meet is linked to the types of violent crimes. Difficulties to make ends meet was measured by the educational status, occupation and level of household income. These variables were cross tabulated and tested against types of violent crimes to evaluate their relationships. The study results were presented as follows;

**Table 4.9: Cross tabulation of Education Status and Types of Violent Crimes**

#### Education Level \* Type of Crime Cross tabulation

			Type of Crime					Total
			Murder	Robbery	Rape	Assault	Domestic violence	
<b>Education Level</b>	Primary	Count	41	0	11	37	22	111
		% within Education Level	36.90%	0.00%	9.90%	33.30%	19.80%	100.00%
	Secondary	Count	0	54	0	24	0	78

	% within Education Level	0.00%	69.20%	0.00%	30.80%	0.00%	100.00%
College	Count	0	0	9	10	0	19
	% within Education Level	0.00%	0.00%	47.40%	52.60%	0.00%	100.00%
University	Count	0	0	0	6	1	7
	% within Education Level	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	85.70%	14.30%	100.00%
None	Count	0	0	0	0	2	2
	% within Education Level	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	100.00%
<b>Total</b>	Count	41	54	20	77	25	217
	% within Education Level	18.90%	24.90%	9.20%	35.50%	11.50%	100.00%

The study results on the relationship between education status and type of violent crimes revealed that 100.0% of those who had no education committed domestic violence; majority of those who had primary education committed almost all types of violent crimes. This shows that as the education levels increases, there is

less tendency of an individual to commit violent crimes. This may be attributed to the fact that with better education one might secure a job that might lessen the burden of difficulties in making the ends meet through wages and salaries earned.

**Table 4.10: Relationship between Education Status and Types of Violent Crimes**

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.128E2 <sup>a</sup>	16	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	236.48	16	0.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.667	1	0.031
N of Valid Cases	217		

a. 14 cells (56.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .18.

The study findings indicated that there was a significant relationship between educational status and types of violent crimes (p=0.000). This implies that education is one of the influencers of violent crimes. Economic growth requires a strong social structure where all age groups should have free access to low-cost education to improve their skills and knowledge. Improving skills and

knowledge for all age groups opens doors to employment opportunities; however, employment opportunities should provide a wage rate that is sufficient for individuals to survive (Mulok *et al.*, 2017). Above all, this will help reduce violent crimes within these areas because individuals have few motives to carry out such crimes.

**Table 4.11: Cross tabulation of Occupational Status and Types of Violent Crimes**

Occupation Status * Types of Violent Crimes Cross tabulation			Types of Violent Crimes					Total
			Murder	Robbery	Rape	Assault	Domestic violence	
<b>Occupational Status</b>	Employed	Count	28	34	12	44	18	136
		% within Occupation Status	20.60%	25.00%	8.80%	32.40%	13.20%	100.00%
	Self-employed	Count	13	20	8	33	7	81
		% within Occupation Status	16.00%	24.70%	9.90%	40.70%	8.60%	100.00%
<b>Total</b>		Count	41	54	20	77	25	217
		% within Occupation Status	18.90%	24.90%	9.20%	35.50%	11.50%	100.00%

The study findings on the relationship between occupational status and types of violent crimes indicated that both those who were employed and those who were self-employed committed violent crimes. Cantor and Land, (1985) argued that unemployment creates an economic downturn which increases

motivation for crime through economic hardship and also unemployment decreases crime through a decrease in opportunities associated with economic hardship

**Table 4.12: Relationship between Occupational Status and Types of Violent crimes**

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	2.553 <sup>a</sup>	4	0.004
Likelihood Ratio	2.587	4	0.002
Linear-by-Linear Association	0.205	1	0.001
N of Valid Cases	217		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 7.47.

The study results indicated that there was a significant relationship between occupational status and type of violent crimes (p=0.004). This implies that occupational status influences the types of violent crimes. Employment constitutes the major legitimate opportunity structure for achieving conventional social aims; blocking access to employment will increase economic hardship and frustration and consequently the chances of involvement in crime (Agnew, 2009). High levels of socio-economic inequality including economic hardship may lead some individuals both employed and unemployed to experience strain or frustration which may bring them to greater involvement in

crime. Because employment is perceived as conventional behavior and serves to reinforce social bonds and activate social control, it also acts to reduce involvement in criminal behavior. Unemployment leads to economic hardship which leads to the breakdown of positive social bonds. This, in turn, may increase the probability of people resorting to criminal activity in areas with high rates of economic hardship and unemployment, social and community systems and especially formal and informal normative control systems collapse leading to higher crime rates (Agnew, 2009, Neuman, 2009; Rand, 2007).

**Table 4.13: Cross Tabulation of Household Income and Type of Violent Crime**

Income * Type of Crime Crosstabulation			Type of Crime					Total
			Murder	Robbery	Rape	Assault	Domestic violence	
<b>Income</b>	Less than 10000	Count	41	20	11	41	22	135
		% within Income	30.40%	14.80%	8.10%	30.40%	16.30%	100.00%
	10001-20000	Count	0	34	0	23	0	57
		% within Income	0.00%	59.60%	0.00%	40.40%	0.00%	100.00%
	20001-30000	Count	0	0	8	6	0	14
		% within Income	0.00%	0.00%	57.10%	42.90%	0.00%	100.00%
	30001-40000	Count	0	0	0	4	0	4
		% within Income	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	100.00%	0.00%	100.00%
	40001-50000	Count	0	0	1	1	2	4
		% within Income	0.00%	0.00%	25.00%	25.00%	50.00%	100.00%
	50001-100000	Count	0	0	0	2	1	3
		% within Income	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	66.70%	33.30%	100.00%
<b>Total</b>		Count	41	54	20	77	25	217
		% within Income	18.90%	24.90%	9.20%	35.50%	11.50%	100.00%

Source: Research Data (2015)

The study results revealed that 62.0% of those who earned less than 10,000 committed all types of violent crimes; 26.0% of those who earned between 10,001-20,000 committed violent crimes and that only 6.0% of those who earned between 20,001 and 30,000 committed violent crimes. This indicates that the lower the household income, the higher the chances of committing violent crimes. This is further evident by the fact that with an increase in income, the tendency to commit any crime reduces. These findings imply that economic stress and strain are more likely to increase the levels of violent crimes. Those with lower incomes are more likely to be frustrated and to offend when faced with economic stress. Low incomes increase economic strain and people are likely to resort to any means to survive, such people are likely to steal or rob those who have the needed resources.

These findings confirm that during periods of difficulties in making ends meet, those households whose members loss employment, are poor and whose living standards decline feel more hopeless and strained and are therefore more likely to be

those experiencing difficulties in the purchase of foodstuffs, medical bills and in the payment of school fees. Offenders who experience these difficulties are more likely to be violent and to be imprisoned time and again. Offending may increase in situations in which people are hopeless and have unclear prospects for their future. It also means that regardless of whatever programs, these offenders repeat their offenses if the economic situation in their homes has not improved and their lifestyles have not changed. There is, therefore, need to assess the programs in prisons and also ensure that the economic situation of offenders in their home has changed for the better. For example, some offenders stated that they end up committing murder and robbery as they fight over scarce resources such as land and this happened mostly when the offenders were under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Thus, a positive relationship exists between the level of household income and the likelihood of committing a violent crime.

**Table 4.14: Relationship between Household Income and Types of Violent Crimes**

**Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.313E2 <sup>a</sup>	20	0.000
Likelihood Ratio	134.883	20	0.000

Linear-by-Linear Association	8.758	1	0.003
N of Valid Cases	217		
a. 20 cells (66.7%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .28.			

The study findings indicated that there was a significant relationship between household income and types of violent of crimes ( $p=0.000$ ). This implies that household income influenced the type of violent crime. This implies that there is greater complicatedness in the attainment of basic needs; there is additional frustration, anger, antagonism and consequently further violence in such homes. Members in such homes are therefore more likely to resort to various means including theft and deviant and illegal means to cope with the devastating impact of economic hardship, hopelessness, and despair. But it may be that during periods of economic downturns, others are experiencing intricacies while others may find these as simple. It may be this variation that heightens anger and resentment among those who distress that may be responsible for intensified aggravation, anger and enmity that increase violent offending during adversity. These findings further revealed that worsening economic situation may lead to high-interest rates, unemployment and loss of employment, inflation, all of which may, in turn, erode living standards that may increase difficulties in making ends meet in households. Households that may experience the greatest difficulties are those whose members have lost employment, unemployed or earning low wages. Hence, such households are more likely to experience difficulties in the purchase of foodstuffs, medical bills, school fees, and other expenses. This could be because low household income causes strain on the budget and the people affected could seek other means of raising income or acquiring their basic needs. People with low household income experienced high stress since they have to meet the huge needs with a little income. This may lead people to opt for crimes such as stealing, killing or burglary in order to gain their daily needs. Low-income people could also commit serious crimes because their needs are many and they could be motivated to commit more violent crimes to get high returns. Studies by Farrington, (2000) found that income inequality has a significant and positive effect on the incidence of crime and that violent crime rates decrease when economic growth improves. Brookman, (2005) concur with the findings that income levels positively affects the probability of committing the crime. Overall, the results suggest that relative income affects criminal behavior.

Fajnzylber *et al.*, (2002) assert that income inequality is an important factor that drives violent crime rates across countries and overtime and that there is an important correlation between the incidence of crime and the rate of poverty alleviation. According to him, the level of poverty in a country is measured as the percentage of the population that receives income below the threshold level and it is usually determined by the necessary calorific intake and the local monetary cost of purchasing the corresponding food basket. On inequality and violent crime, he found that violent crime rates decrease when economic growth improves. Since violent crime is jointly determined by the pattern of income distribution and by the rate of change of the national income then faster poverty reduction leads to a decline in national crime rates (Block & Block, 2003).

## VII. FINDINGS

The study endeavored to find out the influence of economic hardship on the types of violent crimes in Uasin Gishu County by identifying and investigated whether economic hardship is linked violent crimes. The objectives of the study included; to investigate whether difficulties in making ends meet is linked to violent crimes, in order to adequately answer this objective the following sources of income variables were used: education level, occupation status and household income.

The violent crimes committed by the offenders in both prisons were found to be robbery, stealing, assault, grievous harm, housebreaking, murder, rape, manslaughter, stock theft among others. These findings indicated a similarity with those collected by the interview schedules from the inmates. This could be interpreted to mean that a number of violent crimes are committed and most of them involve injuries to other persons. Indicators of economic hardship included unemployment and underemployment, inflation and low household incomes. Respondents also revealed having received high economic support from close relatives, their spouses, and religious denominations. Study findings further indicated that those who had less household income had been sentenced for a long period of time while those with high household income were serving the current sentence for a short period of time. The level of household income had an effect on the types of violent crimes committed by the offenders.

Chi-square test of hypothesis revealed that there was a significant relationship between difficulties in making ends meet and the types of violent crimes. Difficulties in making ends meet included the inability to provide food, clothing, housing, settling of medical bills, school fees, and other basic commodities. These difficulties compounded with drug and alcohol abuse triggered most of the violent crimes. According to the officers In charge of Eldoret Main and Ngeria Farm G.K prisons, other difficulties in making ends meet that could have led to commission of violent crimes were noted as unemployment, scarce economic resources that could be used to foster economic growth, limited entrepreneurial skills among the youths, poor government policies which do not underscore the youths economic empowerment and complete reliance on cash crops at the expense of food crops which spark lack of basic necessities particularly food. This concurred well with the sentiments of the magistrate and prosecutor at the Eldoret law courts who noted that there were other factors that contributed to difficulties in making the ends meet hence triggered violent crimes among the offenders. These factors included drug abuse, peer pressure, societal stratification where property ownership gives a class, cultural factors where a particular community believes in certain ways of earning a living for example cattle rustling, political party affiliations, and religious extremism. This implies that besides the economic hardship other factors contribute to the levels of violent crimes in the County.

## VIII. CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that economic hardship leads to violence and crime. Economic hardship creates feelings of hopelessness and anger, which may increase aggression and hostility. Economic deprivation also reduces social trust and facilitates frustration- aggression, which in turn leads to violence and crime. The above indicates that economic deprivation may affect community and family processes in such a way that violence increases.

Economic hardship and the associated socio economic inequalities may lead some individuals both employed and unemployed to experience strain or frustration which may bring them to greater involvement in violent crimes. Because employment is perceived as conventional behavior and serves to reinforce social bonds and activate social control, it also acts to reduce involvement in criminal behavior. Unemployment leads to economic hardship which leads to the breakdown of positive social bonds. This, in turn, may increase the probability of people resorting to criminal activity due to difficulties in making the ends meet.

## IX. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study found out that there are mechanisms that can be put in place to help minimize the number of violent crimes among offenders. These include compulsory education for children and youths, creation of job opportunities by the government and private sectors, expansion of economic activities and guidance and counseling services to the youths. Others include enactment of strict laws on drug peddling and use, improving the rehabilitation skills among correctional officers through capacity building and setting up of rehabilitation centers within the penal institutions. Specifically, the following recommendations were made;

The government through its agencies should focus on improving the economy and create more job opportunities for the youths to enable them to meet their needs and abstain from criminal related activities. The government could do this by establishing community projects which can take in youths as workers that can enable them to earn their daily living.

The youths and the unemployed population need skills in entrepreneurship and other income-generating activities through community groups such as self-help groups to enable them to support themselves and find means of earning their daily living.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Arvanites, Thomas M., and Robert H. Defina (2006). Business cycles and street crime. *Criminology* 44:139-64.
- [2] Aronson, S. L. (2010). Crime and Development in Kenya: Emerging Trends and the Transnational Implications of Political, Economic and Social Instability, *Pulse Submissions* vol.2. No.09. pg 2.
- [3] Brookman, F. (2005). *Understanding Homicide*. London: Sage.
- [4] Cantor, David, and Kenneth C. Land (2001). Unemployment and crime rate fluctuations: A comment on Greenberg. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology* 17:329-42.

- [5] Cullen, F. T., Wright, J. P., & Belvins, K.R. (Eds.) (2006). *Taking Stock: The status of Criminological Theory*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers.
- [6] Fajnyzber, P., Lederman, D. and Loayza, M. (2000) (2002) "What Causes Violent Crime?" *European Economic Review* 46(2002):1323-57.
- [7] Gould, E., Mustard, D. and Weinberg, B. (2002). "Crime Rates and Local Labour Market Opportunities in the United States, 1979-97", *Review of Economics and Statistics* 84 45-61.
- [8] Farrington, D. P. (2000). The causes and prevention of violence, in J. Sherperd (Ed), *Violence in Health Care*. Oxford University Press.
- [9] Hall, Samuel (2017). *Youth Employment in Kenya*. British Council.
- [10] Hussain, Zahid (2014). Can political stability hurt economic growth? June 01, World Bank Kenya Police, (2011). *Crime Statistics; 2010*, Nairobi, Government Printer, (2012). *Crime Statistics; 2011*, Nairobi, Government Printer.
- [11] Kombo, K. D., & Tromp, L. A. D. (2009). *Proposal and Thesis Writing: An Introduction*. Nairobi, Paulines Publications Africa Lafree, G. (2009). *Rape and Criminal Justice: The Social Construction of Sexual Assault*, Wadsworth, Calif Belmont.
- [12] Lafree, G. (2009). *Rape and Criminal Justice: The Social Construction of Sexual Assault*, Wadsworth, Calif Belmont.
- [13] Neal, Q. R. (2012). *Crime and Social Inequality, From the Lower Class to Prison* Pearson Learning Solutions.
- [14] Lonnie, A. (2002). *The creation of Dangerous Violent Criminals*, University of Illinois Press.
- [15] Reid, S. T. (2007). *Crime and Criminology, (7th Ed.)*, Brown & Benchmark Publishers.
- [16] Rosenfeld, Richard and Fornango, Robert (2007). The Impact of Economic Conditions on Robbery and Property Crime: the Role of Consumer Sentiment. \\server05\productm\C\CRY\45-4\CRY405.txt, 12:26.
- [17] Republic of Kenya, (2010). *The Constitution of Kenya*. Nairobi, Kenya: Government Printer.
- [18] Siegel, L. (2007). *Criminology, 7th Edition, Instructors Edition*, Thomson Wadsworth. Washington, D.C. US. Government printing office
- [19] United Nations, (2005). *Poverty and Economic Growth: Challenges to Human rights*. Economic and Social council
- [20] Wike, R., Simmons, K., Vice, M., and Bishop, C. (2016). Kenyans worried about economy and corruption, but optimistic for the future: In *Key African Nations, Widespread Discontent with Economy, Corruption*. Pew Research Cente, *Global Attitudes & Trends*. www.pewresearch.org/global, Accessed on 20th Nov.
- [21] Zorigbaatar, Tserenchimidiin (1995). Problems of Young People in Developing Countries Need Greater Attention, General Assembly Told. General Assembly Plenary - 6 - Press Release GA/8976 43rd Meeting (AM) 27 October. www.un.org/press, Accessed on 20th Nov.
- [22] Zorigbaatar, Tserenchimidiin (1995). Problems of Young People in Developing Countries Need Greater Attention, General Assembly Told. General Assembly Plenary - 6 - Press Release GA/8976 43rd Meeting (AM) 27 October. www.un.org/press, Accessed on 20th Nov.

## AUTHORS

**First Author** – Shadrack kipkoech sitienei; Holds a BA in political science and public administration, MA in international relations and currently a lecturer and PhD candidate of political science and public administration Moi University.  
Email: shadraksitienei@yahoo.com

**Second Author** – James k. chumba; Holds BA in Sociology, Currently a MA student in Sociology at Moi University.  
Email: chumbasj@gmail.com



