KSR | Kenya Studies Review

Summer 2023

Volume 11 Number 1

KENYA STUDIES REVIEW

GUEST EDITOR

Wanjala S. Nasong'o
Rhodes College

EDITOR

Imali J. Abala
Ohio Dominican University

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Peter K. Kimosop
Youngstown State University

EDITORIAL BOARD

STATEMENT OF EDITORIAL POLICY

Kenya Studies Review is published by the Kenya Scholars and Studies Association. We welcome articles on topics relating to Kenya from all academic disciplines. Authors are encouraged to write to the interdisciplinary audience of the journal.

Cover and graphic design by Peter K. Kimosop, *Youngstown State University*

Research Articles

Poetry

Book Review

Football as a Medium for Minority Identity Expression and Political Platform in Kenya

Njororai, Wycliffe W. Simiyu

Stephen F. Austin State University, Department of Kinesiology & Health, Nacogdoches, TX 75965, USA

Abstract

Association football was introduced by the colonialists in Kenya and has grown to become the national sport. The sport developed along regional and ethnic lines thereby growing deeper roots among the Luhya, Luo and Mijikenda. Introduction of taxes by colonial authorities forced the males to move to cities, and their vicinities, in search of employment. People, especially the Luhya and Luo, relocated to cities where they embraced football as a recreational and later as a competitive sport. The encouragement by the colonial government for communities to form welfare associations ironically opened doors for ethnic-based team formation as well as an avenue for political expression. It is also clear that the various post-independent governments have in a way utilized politicians to intervene in football matters and in the process encouraged others with political ambitions to seek leadership at club and federation levels. It is also apparent that unlike other presidents, Arap Moi, whose background was that of a primary school teacher, seemed to have recognized, embraced and weaponized the popularity of soccer to advance and promote his political ideology. It is arguable that throughout the postcolonial period, football has been used as a political tool for Kenyan political leaders to strive towards building a sense of Kenyan identity on the back of the national team and the popularity of the sport.

Keywords: association football, ethnicity, minority, national identity, political platform, Kenya

Introduction

Kenya is a country that has a good reputation earned through her sportsmen and women, especially the athletes in middle- and long-distance running (Njororai, 2004, 2009, 2010, 2012, 2016). However, it is association football (soccer) that is considered the favorite national sport (Nasong'o, 2022; Njororai 2003, 2009, 2016, 2017, 2019; Siegelman, 2018). Although the game's popularity cuts across the various ethnic and social classes, the level of development has varied according to geographical and therefore ethnic spaces. The country's ethnic composition, geographical/ regional distribution and colonization combined to influence the establishment and development of the sport. Regarding ethnicity, Kenya's estimated population of 56,435,996 (Worldometer, 2022) comprises 42 ethnic groups with the dominant ones being Kikuyu 17.1%, Luhya 14.3%, Kalenjin 13.4%, Luo 10.7%, Kamba 9.8%, Somali 5.8%, Kisii 5.7%, Mijikenda 5.2%, Meru 4.2%, Maasai 2.5%, Turkana 2.1%, other Africans 8.2%, non-African 1% (Asian, European and Arab) (Kamer, 2022). Nearly all Kenyans are black Africans, divided into about 42 ethnic groups belonging to three linguistic families: the Bantu, the Cushitic and the Nilotic. Language is a major characteristic of ethnic identity in Kenya as it influences the socio-political environment especially in terms of political and economic power. In a country that is divided on ethnic lines and constantly politically charged in pursuit of political power, language via ethnicity can mean access to a job or an opportunity (Bloomfield, 2010). It is also through language that one's closeness to power is determined. Bantu-speaking Kenyans are divided into three different groups: the western group (Luhya, Kisii and Kuria); the central or highlands group (including the Kikuyu, the Kamba and other subgroups), and the coastal Bantu (Mijikenda). Among Kenya's Nilotic speakers, the major groups are the River-Lake or Western group (Luo), the Highlands or Southern group (Kalenjin), and the Plains or Eastern group (Maasai). The Cushitic-speaking groups include the Oromo and the Somali. The Kikuyu are Kenya's largest ethnic group and have utilized their numeric advantage to dominate the political and economic life in the country (Bloomfield, 2010; Njororai, 2009; Sobania, 2003).

The fragmentation of Kenya into different ethnic, as well as geographical blocks, was accentuated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as the British moved in to colonize the country. Their strategy of divide and rule was evident as they solidified ethnic identities among Kenya's people (Njororai, 2009). Colonial administrators associated ethnic groups with specific areas of the country by designating zones where only people with a particular ethnic identity could reside. This pattern of ethnically based settlement and regionalism continued to persist in Kenya post-independence in 1963, even though economic and political development increased mobility and urbanization among the country's inhabitants. The majority of Kikuyu live in the central highlands previously called Central province as well as central parts of the Rift Valley; the majority of Luhya live in western region with others in northwestern parts of the former Rift Valley province; the Luo live in what was Nyanza province which is to the southwestern part of Kenya; the majority of Kamba live on the lower side of the former eastern province, and the majority of Kalenjin reside in what was the Rift Valley province of the country. Ethnicity was a vital instrument of divide and rule over the indigenous people by the colonial power and the same tactics were an important factor in Kenyan politics as well as the evolution of the sport of football and its management in the country. Although Kenya's official languages are English and Swahili, sport can indeed be considered as one of the languages used extensively to promote national unity and identity (Siegelman, 2018). The love of sport in Kenya, especially football, transcends the ethnic divisions and language differences. Apart from English and Kiswahili, many Kenyans also speak an ethnic language, making for considerable linguistic diversity within the country. It is therefore common for many Kenyans to show mastery of at least three languages: the language of their ethnic group, Swahili and English, and in their daily conversations, they switch from one language to the other with ease. According to Njororai (2009), the social structure that evolved in Kenya during the colonial time emphasized race and class. Colonialism entailed White people dominating Blacks given the power differential and social structure. This unequal relationship was reinforced through segregation of the races and, within the Black African population, through various ethnic groups. Within each ethnic group, status was determined largely by wealth, gender and age. After Kenya gained independence in 1963, race ceased to be an important indicator of social status, but wealth, gender and ethnic identity remained significant (Njororai, 2009). Today, several of Kenya's problems result from disparities in wealth. These problems include pervasive urban and rural poverty, overcrowded and substandard housing in urban areas, and a relatively high rate of unemployment. In the 1990s and in the 2007 post-election violence, the country witnessed clashes between ethnic groups, particularly between Kalenjin and Kikuyu peoples in the then Rift Valley province of Kenya. These two ethnic groups are to date the only ones to have produced a president for the country including Jomo Kenyatta, Mwai Kibaki, Uhuru Kenyatta (Kikuyu); Daniel Arap Moi and William Ruto (Kalenjin). Hence the clashes between them have had a lot to do with political incitement and repossession of land (Bloomfield, 2010).

The foregoing discussion on colonialism, ethnic diversity and political leadership in Kenya provides a background to delve into football as a medium for minority identity expression as well as a platform for political rivalry and aspirations in Kenya.

Regionalization, football and identity

The development of football in Kenya reflects the minority and regional orientation versus the dominant political class who had no time for the sport in its formative years (Njororai, 2009). However, association football has an enduring mass appeal that cuts across ethnic, regional as well as class lines. This passion for the sport, which is not unique to Kenya, makes it an attractive asset not just for the players and fans, but also the aspiring as well as the established political class. Football scholars have pointed to the widespread and popular nature of football across the globe (Alegi, 2004, 2010; Ben-Porat, 2001; Bloomfield, 2010; Darby, 2000, 2002, 2005; Foer, 2006; Hawkey, 2009; Murray, 1998; Njororai, 2009, 2014, 2019). It is this mass appeal to the people especially in Africa that upon gaining independence, each state rushed to affiliate with the Federation of International Football Associations (FIFA).

According to Darby (2002), since FIFA's inception in 1904, the game of association football has taken on a universal significance and appeal. He argues that FIFA has more affiliates than the United Nations and most of the world's population takes a greater interest in the former than the latter. This demonstrates that football is a universal sport that is followed passionately by people from diverse backgrounds, nationalities and social classes. Unlike other sports like golf, rugby, cricket, polo, swimming, tennis, etc., that were also introduced by the colonialists, association football gained much popularity in Kenya because it appealed to people of all socio-economic classes and cultures (Mazrui, 1986). Kenyan fans are known to be very passionate about international football as well as their favorite local teams especially the national team, Harambee Stars. Important matches involving the national team always attract crowds of close to 60,000, with millions more watching on television (Bloomfield, 2010). In the villages and urban areas, children can be seen playing with bundles of rags (fondly referred to as 'Lifundo' in Luhya and 'Ajwala' in Dholuo). These are improvised balls made from clothing, paper and wrapped tightly in a polythene paper and reinforced by a sisal string all around to form a mesh like appearance. When nicely done, the improvised ball can bounce and can withstand different weather conditions. The improvised ball is slightly larger than a tennis ball and is useful in the initial mastery of dribbling, juggling, control and kicking skills, which are fundamental in the technical evolution of a football player. People in the villages monitor association football via radios to know the latest football news nationally and across the globe (Njororai, 2019).

Since inception, the Football Kenya Federation Premier League drew most teams from Nairobi (the capital city), Nyanza, western, central, central rift valley and coast provinces and is played all year round. The premier division consisted of 20 teams for a long time, but FIFA insisted that the country reduce the teams to 16 to enhance competitiveness, scheduling and marketability. However, the local administrators, out of political prudence, settled on 18 teams to date. Each year two teams are promoted from the Nationwide League to the Premier League while the two teams with the worst record in the premier league

are relegated. The 2021/22 Premier League teams and their geographical locations include: AFC Leopards, Nairobi; Bandari, Mombasa; Bidco United, Thika; Gor Mahia, Nairobi; Homeboyz, Kakamega; Kariobangi Sharks, Nairobi; KCB, Nairobi; Mathare United, Nairobi; Nairobi City Stars, Nairobi; Nzoia Sugar, Bungoma; Posta Rangers, Nairobi; Sofapaka, Nairobi; Tusker FC, Nairobi; Ulinzi Stars, Nakuru (based in Nairobi but play home matches in Nakuru); Vihiga United, Vihiga; Wazito FC, Nairobi; Police, Nairobi; and Talanta, Nairobi. The geographical locations for the teams show that 12 teams (13 if Ulinzi is included) are based in Nairobi, and one each in Bungoma, Kakamega, Mombasa, Nakuru, Thika, and Vihiga. This shows that 66.7 percent of Premier league football is played in Nairobi only (National Football Teams, 2022).

The League winners from the inception of the league to the present reveal the dominance by teams whose player identity is rooted in Luhya (AFC Leopards formerly Abaluhya United FC) and Luo (Gor Mahia) ethnic groups. The latter has won 19 league titles, while AFC Leopards has won 12. Other winners are Tusker (13), Ulinzi (4), Luo Union (2), Oserian (2), Nakuru All Stars (2), Sony (1), Utalii (1), Feisal (1), Sony Sugar (1), Sofapaka (1), and Mathare United (1) (Kenya League Winners, 2022; Stokkermans, 2023). Gor Mahia and AFC Leopards are traditionally Kenya's most popular club teams. Matches pitting the two regularly draw huge crowds. Supporters of both teams are among the most passionate in the world. The rivalry is so vicious that violence is a regular feature during and after their contests leading to loss of lives and property (Njororai, 2017, 2020). This passion for football and ethnic identity has its roots in colonial times when there was huge rivalry between Elgon or North Nyanza and Central Nyanza regions (Odinga, 2015). Elgon/North Nyanza comprised the Luhya, who eventually formed AFC Leopards, and Central and South Nyanza were occupied by the Luo who formed Gor Mahia. The passion for these two teams is therefore rooted in the long history of ethnic and nationalist football cultures in the country, where even old men reminisce about the days of their youth, when they were players themselves or ardent supporters of teams that may have long faded from the public imagination now,

either in terms of actual existence or, as is the case with some of the leading teams in the Kenya Premier League, remain only in name (Siundu, 2011). According to Waliaula and Okong'o (2009, 2014, 2020) and Njororai (2009, 2017), AFC Leopards, popularly called 'Ingwe' (Leopard) in many Luhya dialects, and Gor Mahia, or K'Ogalo, to its many fans, were formed to provide opportunities for socialization, and to harness ethnic Luhya and Luo identities and sensibilities, and indeed for a long time defined the ethnic pride of these communities. This trend continued into the 21st Century as local players hailing from the Luhya and Luo communities ventured into professional leagues in Europe including Dennis Oliech, Michael Olunga (Luo), McDonald Mariga and Victor Wanyama (Luhya) and became established fan favorites in the country (Otieno, 2020).

The passion for association football among the Luhya, Luo and Mijikenda is traced back to when the British settlers introduced the game at the beginning of the twentieth century (Njororai, 2009, 2017; Odinga, 2015). Kenyans naturally took to the sport due to the simplicity of its nature. The game was introduced by missionaries, administrators, teachers and farmers (Versi, 1986). The game of football, which is simple to follow and easy to play, was a vital instrument used by the British in their efforts to assert imperial hegemony and racist discrimination. The British often imposed over-arching constraints on the organization and control of the game in the country and elsewhere in the colonial territories with the aim of instilling western morals, values and discipline (Hokkanen, 2005; Njororai, 2009; Siegelman, 2018). The appropriation of football by the colonialists for political purposes seem to have continued into post-independent Kenya (Nasong'o, 2022; Siegelman, 2018). From the game's introduction, it was enthusiastically adapted by Kenyans of Luhya, Mijikenda and Luo origins (Odinga, 2015) even as the dominant Kikuyu ethnic group shunned the sport (Njororai, 2009, 2017). Competitive football, however, started in 1923 with the formation of the Arab and African Sports Association. This marked a major departure by the indigenous people to assert their authority in the management of sport. Regardless of the British motive for introducing football, the indigenous people enthusiastically appropriated the

game to promote not only their nationalistic identity but also engendered a regional and ethnic orientation by the time of independence (Njororai, 2009, 2017). One of the characteristic features of modernization which compelled the indigenous people, especially males, to move from villages to urban centers was the issue of taxation. The introduction of taxes, especially poll tax and hut tax, forced men to migrate to urban areas and plantation farms, owned by the settlers in the central highlands in search of jobs (Sobania, 2003). While away from their rural homes, the male youth found plenty of free time to engage in the exotic pastime of playing football leading to the formation of teams based on regional and ethnic origins as they had a common language. Football provided a medium that brought out the free expression of the working-class indigenous people. It was a freedom they found curtailed elsewhere including work and, in the community, where the colonial rules were strict (Straker, 2005). The difference in approach between the Whites and Blacks towards the game was captured by Straker (2005), who argued that Africans played the game for fun and were unwilling to be regimented by whites in training sessions. The Europeans, on the other hand, emphasized inculcation of values such as team spirit, perseverance and fair play. It is interesting to note that the approach to the game by Africans in the colonial period has persisted to the modern day where African players are accused of being naive tactically and playing to entertain rather than to win. To the African player, therefore, the joy of the game was, and continues to be, in the self-expression as opposed to the instrumental role of imposing discipline desired by the Europeans. Straker (2005) elaborates on this struggle over whether football constituted a vehicle for the extension of colonial power or whether it was a space where that very power would be revised, subverted or altogether suspended. According to him, the more practice of football generated distance and difference from the rhythms and clearly restrictive and more ambiguous laws of the colonial order, the more pleasure it could return to the African players and spectators. This was indeed a fascinating aspect of football in the colonial period and to some extent continues to play out in stadiums where unpopular politicians in government are jeered and opposition leaders given standing ovations. In Kenya,

Opposition leader, Raila Odinga has been a beneficiary of such recognition (Bloomfield, 2010). Thus, it is interesting that a rule, which governed sport, created and imported by Europeans became a means for Africans to create spaces in which the onerous powers of European imperialism were deflected (Straker, 2005).

Stadium as a medium for political dissent and political activism

The soccer stadium is a vital medium for expressing dissent and displeasure against the political class, administrative control and power (Bloomfield, 2010). Football is, therefore, the medium and symbol of resistance as well as freedom. The stadium remains the ideal site as there are no restrictions on self-expression. The large gatherings at the stadium are an alternative to the political rallies which are subject to intense security restrictions and vetting by agents of the state and the political class. Due to the emigration of the labor force into urban areas and the coffee plantations around Nairobi, a lot of the Luhya and Luo people found themselves playing the game in their free time. They formed teams based on their ethnic and even sub-ethnic groupings including Maragoli, Samia, Bukusu Brotherhood, among others. In the cities, football provided an avenue for freedom and identity. The balkanization of the teams on ethnic and sub-ethnic lines was tacitly supported and encouraged by the colonial government. The tacit colonial support was consistent with their imperialist strategy of divide, conquer and rule (Odinga, 2007). This meant that it was easier for the colonial government and her agents to govern when the indigenous people were divided rather than united. However, most local trade union leaders and emerging politicians identified with the teams by providing material support. For the indigenous politicians, such an association was critical in articulating not only their ethnic nationalism but also political activism against the imperialist Government and her discriminatory policies and practices.

Additionally, the colonial government, which did not encourage political parties, supported formation of ethnic-welfare associations such as Abaluhya and Luo Union of East Africa. These welfare associations eventually found space for expression through the football clubs they sponsored. By the end of the colonial period in 1963 when the country gained independence, Kenya had already established a formal football structure at the national level. Kenya Football Association was formed in 1946 and actively promoted local competitions including the Remingtone Cup and participation by the national team in the Gossage Cup at the regional level (Nasong'o, 2022; Njororai, 2009). The formation of the national federation was the result of a joint initiative by the local football leaders and colonial settlers. This was in line with the goal of using football to help bridge the gaps between the English and their African subjects, and to bring Africans into line with English moral standards and social practices (Siegelman, 2018). Thus, it can be argued that the British introduced football as a medium of strategic cultural imperialism, which elicited enthusiastic acceptance by a wide majority of youth in school and urban areas and at the same time fostered newfound ethnic identity via team formations and nationalistic feeling towards the national team by the ordinary citizenry. Through the colonial policy and practice of divide and rule, and the political suppression of the day, football became an alternative avenue for ethnic identity, nationalism and resistance especially for the Luo and Luhya, who were encouraged by the colonialists. This colonial political strategy was therefore capitalized upon by prospective politicians to voice resistance and cement ethnic loyalty through football club formation (Njororai, 2009, 2017).

The minority question and football at independence

This essay approaches the definition of minority from an American dictionary's perspective. The dictionary meaning is: 'an ethnic, racial, religious or other group having a distinctive presence within a society; a group having little power or representation relative to other groups within a society'. The Penguin English Dictionary further defines 'minority' as the state of being the smaller of the two groups constituting a whole or a group of people who share common characteristics or interests, differing from those of most of a population. Related to the concept of minority is that of ethnicity. Kenya, as already pointed out, is a nation of many ethnic groupings each with a

distinct language and cultural practices. Ben-Porat (2001) has extensively explained the place of ethnicity in football. This article borrows heavily from Ben-Porat to illustrate the place of ethnicity and the perceived notion of minority in Kenyan football. Ben-Porat argues that the entire debate on ethnicity is epitomized by the demarcation of inter-ethnic borders or by an ongoing struggle between at least two ethnic groups to specify their social territory. There is thus a clear distinction between 'us' and 'them'.

Ben-Porat (2001) advances a four-point clarification of the concept of ethnicity. It is quite reasonable to suggest that the struggle on ethnic boundaries may, in a certain historical context, be intertwined with elements of nationality. Ethnicity exists in a state of competition. This is an essential element in any definition of ethnicity. In practice, this competition occurs between definite ethnic categories over issues such as neighborhoods, economic resources and political hegemony. Competition can be of consensual or conflictual mode. Also, inter-ethnic relationship is made concrete by dependency relations behind which lurks a tension that is a constant potential for conflict. In this set up, there is a persistent process of consensus-construction by compliance or exploitation. There is also a situation where inter-ethnic boundaries are marked by distinctive identification of each group marked by a whole set of symbols, signs and practices. In the context of Kenyan football, the point of departure that is relevant is that of ethnicity in the face of competition and inter-ethnic boundaries marked by administrative identification of each group, which again is marked by a set of symbols, signs and practices. For a long time, the Luhya and Luo have competed as to who ranks next to the dominant Kikuyu as the most populous group. Additionally, the fact that the dominating club sides are either Luhya or Luo in ethnic affiliation brings out the obvious contest as to who is the dominant force in football. Thus, to further assert themselves, there is the added distinctive trait of belonging and identifying with either AFC Leopards for the Abaluhya or that of Gor Mahia which represents the Luo ethnic group (Njororai, 2009, 2017; Waliaula & Okong'o, 2014, 2020).

The struggle for football dominance has sociological significance. Indeed, sport is considered by many as an arena of inter-cultural struggle. Sports competition pits 'us' against 'them' and participates in the reproduction of boundary demarcations based on factors such as ethnicity, religion, nationality and even color. Through sports competition, certain collective identities are reinforced. According to Ben-Porat (2001) soccer is the most popular spectator sport in the world and it incorporates some characteristics that can be used for purposes other than mere sport, such as, maintaining and reproducing ethnic-national identification within a society in which ethnicity, nationalism and citizenship do not fully converge. Some key assumptions include that of adaptation and assimilation on the one hand and that of protest and conflict on the other. According to the adaptation and assimilation assumption, ethnic minorities are highly willing to integrate by adopting the society's values and certain practices which symbolize nativity. The assimilation adaptation assumption allows for both the togetherness and the loneliness. By participating and proving their excellence in football, the Luhya and Luo became assimilated and adapted to the colonial modernization strategy. However, through the formation of ethnic football clubs, they managed to sustain their autonomy. The second assumption relates to protest and conflict. Football is an instrument for protest and for maintaining a particular ethnic identity. According to Ben-Porat (2001), ethnic based soccer clubs are an effective means of maintaining a voluntary seclusion which keeps the ethnic group together. Being a worldwide phenomenon, the existence of such clubs represents something profound in the social system such as class structure or ethnic division of labor. Thus, one can argue that ethnic soccer clubs are a symptom of a cultural or political division of labor. Furthermore, this division reproduces the inter-ethnic boundaries; different social identities are formulated and reproduced on the opposite sides of these boundaries.

Given the above scenario which conceptualizes ethnic football teams as a medium of identity and integration, football in Kenya took on a different dimension by the early 1960s. The formation of the teams was rooted in ethnic identity and even when each sub-ethnic group could not bring about the desired impact, a merger of sub-ethnic groupings was instigated to form one solid team especially in the case

of Luhya and Luo ethnic groups. The Luhya, Luo and the Mijikenda share characteristics that place them in the minority class. These characteristics include the following:

- They all hail from the outlying parts of the country far removed from the capital city and the seat of political and economic power which is dominated by the Kikuyu ethnic group and foreign-owned industries.

- They are less in numbers compared to the numerically strong Kikuyu.

- They have not held the reins of power and therefore perceive themselves to be marginalized politically and economically during the colonial period as well as in the successive independent governments of Jomo Kenyatta, Daniel Arap Moi, Mwai Kibaki, Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto.

- They all had dynamic and vigorous physical activity-based recreational lifestyle before the onset of colonization and hence were best suited for the athleticism demanded by the game of soccer which explains their adoption and subsequent dominance of the game (Njororai, 2017).

Whereas the Luhya and the Mijikenda originally belonged to the Kenya African Democratic Union, which was a party for minority ethnic groups just before and immediately after independence, the Luo teamed up with the Kikuyu in Kenya African National Union which formed the first government but the Luo were soon marginalized when the Vice President, Oginga Odinga, a Luo, resigned from the government over ideological differences with President Jomo Kenyatta and formed a new political party but was subsequently put under house arrest.

Post-independent association football and politics

Thabet (2022) avers that football, the beautiful game, is for many supporters a source of joy and happiness and an escape from social and economic challenges. She asserts that football managers, players, and even workers in sports media tend to welcome the intervention of political leaders in the game for their own purposes. For most political leaders, they use the major achievements of the football teams to raise the spirit of national pride and to glorify or protest the

reigning political regime. In a country like Egypt, the football fans have used football to fuel opposition against the political system by leading popular demonstrations in the streets against corruption and bad governance and spreading violence, instability, and political unrest in the country. In the Kenyan context, politicians and political aspirants have often used football and the clubs to build and assert themselves in the national politics of the day. At the Pan-African level, Kwame Nkrumah, harnessed the power of football to push for the boycott of the 1966 world cup by African countries in order to bring about change in FIFA (Darby, 2002; Njororai, 2019, 2023). At the domestic level, Nkrumah recognized the capacity of sport to help imbue the local population with a sense of nationhood that could potentially transcend parochial ethnic loyalties and bind them to common social, economic, and political objectives (Darby, 2002; Njororai, 2019, 2023). For Nkrumah, football had a central role in mobilizing the youth of the country around a common identity, and he recognized its potential as a barometer of international standing for newly independent African nations. Taking on FIFA and by extension UEFA's hardliners therefore gave Africa an opportunity to rally together for a common cause against the former colonizers (Njororai, 2023).

The association between football and politics in Kenya was demonstrated at the celebration of independence when Jomo Kenyatta, Kenya's first president, used soccer as a nation-building tool, to create a pan-ethnic Kenyan national identity. On December 7, 1963, five days before Kenya was officially declared an independent state, Kenyatta organized the Kenya Independence Tournament, also known as the Uhuru (Freedom) Cup where Kenya beat Tanganyika, tied Uganda, and beat Scotland Amateurs, a team composed of Scottish expatriates, to finish first in the tournament, and set up what was supposed to be a great future for Kenyan football (Cruickshank & Morrison, 2013; Siegelman, 2018). In this tournament, Kenyan nationhood was tied directly to Kenyan soccer and the national team. The tournament celebrated political freedom, yes, but also allowed citizens to come together around a sense of 'Kenyan-ness' as the team played and beat some of their key local rivals, and even a team composed of

citizens of the very nation that had colonized them. Of significance was the naming of the national team as "Harambee" Stars. Harambee, which was Jomo Kenyatta's favorite slogan for rallying Kenyans together is a Swahili word meaning, "pulling together". The apt naming of the national team using the national slogan was a clear manifestation of using football, and the national team, to build national solidarity and identity. It was apparent to Kenyatta that sports play an important role in bringing together all ethnicities and races. The more people are brought together in such common pursuits, the more they would feel they are members of a single nation (Siegelman, 2018). Interestingly and reflective of the diversity of the ethnic make-up of the new nation, Kenya's team had white players in it, as well as others from the Luo, Luhya and Mijikenda communities (Cruickshank & Morrison, 2013). The desire to form a national team that is diverse, and representative of the whole nation continues to plague the national team selection to date as merit is at times compromised to accommodate representation. In the 1970s and 1980s, when Gor Mahia and AFC Leopards' rivalry was at its peak, the national coaches had to balance the Luo and Luhya ethnic representation carefully to avoid public disapproval. Utilization of sport to promote national unity and identity filtered down to all government units such as the army, police, prisons, financial institutions, sugar companies, firms and corporations as they were encouraged to form sports teams including sponsoring football clubs. This was a colonial legacy that had used football to bridge the gaps between European workers and the indigenous people especially in the uniformed forces such as the Kenya African Rifles. These institutions, corporations and companies were the ones that offered jobs to players who otherwise played for AFC Leopards and Gor Mahia or unless they themselves had competitive teams in the league.

The enthusiasm over Kenya's victory during the Independence celebrations and the positive prospects of the new nation and its football, was tainted two years later when Ghana's national team, Black Stars, the African champions at the time, hammered the hosts 13-2 in a match to mark Independence Day. The historic match was graced by the presence of President Jomo Kenyatta. By halftime,

the Black Stars were leading by six goals to one for Harambee Stars. A disappointed President Kenyatta left the stadium at halftime and is reported to never have watched another soccer game until his passing in August 1978 (Kenyapagenet, 2023; Nasong'o, 2022). The massive loss by Harambee Stars could be attributed to the relative inexperience of Kenyan players in international football, poor team selection, injuries to key players and the haphazard preparations leading to the match including a change in the coaching ranks (Nene, 2015).

Unlike Kenyatta, whose association with football was at the national team level albeit briefly, the political rivalry between Jaramogi Oginga Odinga and Tom Mboya in the mid-1960s revolved around ethnic loyalty among the Luo. The clash between two football teams, Luo Union and Luo Sports, for access to the best Luo players reflected a bigger clash between Kenyatta's first vice president, Odinga, and a rising political rival, Tom Mboya, over representation of Luo voters (Nasong'o, 2022; Nyanjom, 2010). Odinga backed Luo Union, while Mboya backed Luo Sports Club, and while the two clubs eventually merged to form Gor Mahia in 1968, this conflict is emblematic of a broader trend in Kenyan soccer towards politicization and the translation of political rivalries into sports contests (Siegelman, 2018). This pattern of politicians dipping their hands into football continued with Daniel Arap Moi, the second president of Kenya. In order to prevent divisions within the Kenyan identity and KANU itself, and as a policy of ethnic unity, Moi forced Gor Mahia and the then Abaluhya Football Club (representing Luhya ethnic group) to change their names, becoming Gulf Olympic Rangers (GOR) and AFC Leopards, respectively. Not only were such ethnic divisions problematic, but soccer supporters provided a deep base of support that could have allowed politicians from such popular teams to resist and contest Moi's hold on power (Siegelman, 2018). While the AFC Leopards' name-change stuck, Gor Mahia retained its original name through the intercession of a prominent Luo minister, the late Robert Ouko (Nyanjom, 2010).

The political tussling at club level and its national political implications filtered into the leadership of the Football Association and the management of football affairs in the country.

Bloomfield (2010) quotes a veteran sports Journalist, Gishinga Njoroge, who said thus: "There is more intrigue and more politics and more problems in Kenyan soccer than there is in Kenyan politics" (p.107) and these sentiments may not be completely off the mark. The naming of the federation has changed over the years due to the political feuds between rival groups and the political support from the Government of the time. For example, Kenya Football Association (KFA), registered in 1946, remained the soccer governing body in Kenya until 1975 when it was replaced by Kenya Football Federation (KFF) formed by Kenneth Matiba. KFF lasted until 2007 when it was replaced by Football Kenya Limited (FKL), which was disbanded in 2011 when it ceased being a limited liability company. It was replaced by the current Football Kenya Federation (FKF) (Bloomfield, 2010; Nasong'o, 2022; Nyanjom, 2010). Political rivalry and competition have characterized this constant change of name and the formation of rival bodies. Having been defeated by Williams Ngaah in the KFA elections of 1973, Kenneth Matiba decided to form KFF to which many of the teams subscribed and became the governing body in 1975. In 2007, a group of soccer administrators in the country decided to form a rival body to KFF. This is how FKL was formed and was immediately recognized by FIFA as the soccer governing body in Kenya. For some time, the two organizations operated simultaneously with KFF going to court against FKL but lost the case and the courts asked FIFA to continue recognizing FKL, which was disbanded in 2011 to pave way for the current FKF (Nasong'o, 2022; Nyanjom, 2010). However, the marriage of politics and football management in Kenya happened right at the birth of the nation of Kenya and the launching of a revamped nationwide Kenya Football Association. The first national Chairman of the KFA was Isaac Lugonzo who quit in 1964 to enter politics and became Nairobi mayor. This set the stage for ensuing political rivalry for football administration to be used as a steppingstone to political office (Nyanjom, 2010). Lugonzo was replaced by Jonathan Kasyoka from 1964 to 1968. Kasyoka's committee was disbanded in 1968 by the then Minister for Cooperatives and Social Services, Ronald Ngala, who appointed a caretaker committee led by a politician, Limuru Member of

Parliament, Jonathan Njenga, which remained in charge till 1970. In 1970, Martin Shikuku, an incumbent Member of Parliament for Butere, was elected Chairman of KFA. However, during his tenure, the politics of ethnic rivalry emerged as he was accused of favoring Abaluhya FC, from his Luhya ethnic group, and being overly punitive against Gor Mahia, dominated by the Luo. At one point, Shikuku expelled four Gor Mahia players from soccer as well as renowned referee, Ben Mwangi. With questions being raised in parliament about Shikuku's alleged favoritism of Abaluhya FC (later renamed AFC Leopards SC), the Minister for Cooperatives and Social Services, Masinde Muliro dissolved Shikuku's committee and appointed a caretaker committee led by Bill Martin as Chair, Joab Omino as Secretary, and H.Z. Ramogo as Treasurer. Note that Joab Omino was a retired Gor Mahia and national team player and later Chairman of KFF as well as Member of Parliament on an opposition FORD Kenya ticket when multiparty politics were restored in Kenya. Similarly, Kenneth Matiba, Chris Obure, Clement Gachanja, Peter Kenneth, and Alfred Sambu moved from FKF leadership into national competitive politics successfully as shown in Table 1 (Nasong'o, 2022; Nyanjom, 2010).

The list in Table 1 shows that most of the chairmen who have presided over the Football affairs in Kenya have either been in politics before they assumed their role or were first elected in FA before eventually contesting, be it successfully or unsuccessfully, for national political seats except for Nick Mwendwa, Mohamed Hatimy and Julius Ringera. It is also interesting that except in 2004 and 2021, whenever the Government dissolved the elected Football Federation officials, the new Caretaker office was often headed by a politician including Jonathan Njenga, Chris Obure, and Adams Karauri.

The presidency and football

Out of all the five presidents of Kenya including Jomo Kenyatta, Daniel Arap Moi, Mwai Kibaki, Uhuru Kenyatta and William Ruto, the one who really recognized and tried to harness the power of sport, including football, was Arap Moi. It is worth pointing out that his reign was the longest relative to other presidents and therefore his legacy was more

Table 1: Names and nature of appointment of Chairmen of Football Kenya Federation 1963 - 2022

Isaac Lugonzo Elected (founding member) 1963-1964	John Kasyoka Elected 1964-1968	Jonathan Njenga Appointed (Caretaker) 1968-1970
Martin Shikuku Elected 1970-1973	Bill Martin Appointed (Caretaker) 1973	Williams Ngaah Elected 1973-1974
Dan Owino Elected 1974-1975	Kenneth Matiba Elected (KFF not KFA) 1975-1978	Dan Owino Elected 1978-1979
Chris Obure Appointed (Caretaker) 1979-1980	Clement Gachanja Elected 1980-1984	Joab Omino Elected and dissolved, 1984-1991
Adams Karauri Appointed (Caretaker) 1992-1993	Joab Omino Elected 1993-1996	Peter Kenneth Elected 1996-2000
Maina Kariuki Elected 2001-2004	Prof. Mike Boit (Stakeholder's Transition Committee and Kipchoge Keino's Normalization Interim Committee (both appointed) 2004	Alfred Sambu Elected and dissolved, 2005-2006
Mohamed Hatimy FIFA appointed and elected (FKL) 2006-2011	Sam Nyamweya Elected (FKF) 2011-2015	Nick Mwendwa Elected 2016-2021, 2022 - Current
Justice Julius Ringera, Appointed 2021-2022		

Source: Nasong'o, 2022 and other sources by the author

solidified. During his regime (1978 – 2002), Kenya experienced both the peak and the low moments of football in the country. The major successes were in the East and Central African competitions where the national team and club sides won several titles; at the Pan-African level where Gor Mahia won the Africa Cup of Cup Winners tournament in 1989 and were runners-up in 1979; Harambee Stars were runners-up to Egypt in the 1987 4th All Africa Games football tournament, and Tusker were losing finalists in the 1994 Africa CAF competition tournament.

Other signature moments that reveal the commitment of Arap Moi to the value and power of sport including football include his directive that physical education be made a compulsory teaching subject in all teacher education programs in 1980; the directive to establish the position of Commissioner of Sport in 1989; and his single handed push for Kenya to host the 4th All Africa Games in Nairobi; and during his time, he invested in the construction of Nyayo National and the Moi International Sports Center, Kasarani Sports Complexes in Nairobi. He also hosted

national and club sides at State house, whenever they won competitions and even rewarded teams monetarily. On several occasions he allocated land to Gor Mahia and AFC Leopards to construct club headquarters and training facilities, but this initiative did not yield fruits due to inexplicable government bureaucracy and sheer corruption. To date no one knows what happened to those allocations. It appears that football in Kenya, like other African countries as well as public sectors, is riddled with corruption and none of the Kenyan Presidents found a solution to it hence the frequent dissolution of the elected football associations. Other African countries have also suffered under the weight of corruption as FIFA, the parent organization, is also not immune from it (Njororai, 2019; Nyanjom, 2010). Despite the prevalence of corruption in the football sector in Kenya, and Africa as a whole, various African leaders tend to focus more on the popularity of the sport, which they use as a medium to enhance national cohesion.

Like Kwame Nkrumah, Arap Moi recognized

that football had a central role in mobilizing the citizens of the country around a common identity, and he recognized its potential as a barometer of international standing for an African nation (Darby, 2002; Njororai, 2023; Siegelman, 2018). Arap Moi, whose Nyayo philosophy emphasized the values of peace, love and unity, found football to be a great medium to propagate his ideology. Indeed, he rarely missed international matches hosted in Nairobi. He also left a legacy by building the Nyayo National Stadium and the Moi International Sports Center whose names are directly related to him personally and to his role as the President of Kenya.

To further consolidate his commitment to football, Moi personally sponsored the historic football association knock-out tournament which was re-christened Moi Golden Cup in the 1980s and it ran all the way until he exited from political power in 2002. The tournament is now renamed the President's Cup. On the other hand, other Presidents, including Jomo Kenyatta after the 1965 humiliation by Ghana, Mwai Kibaki and Uhuru Kenyatta, were relatively lukewarm towards football, whereas William Ruto has shown glimpses of harnessing the power of sport to promote a political agenda. Collectively, their rhetoric still pointed towards promoting the game. For example, Mwai Kibaki is quoted by Nyanjom (2010) to have asserted that:

> My government also plans to take sports more seriously. Not only is it an important pastime but Kenyans are good at it. Success in sports changes the lives of many Kenyans every year. It gives us something to be proud of as a nation. It promotes healthy lifestyles. My government plans to deal with corruption and mismanagement in this sector. These trends negatively affect our athletes. They have undermined the standards of key sports like soccer. (p. 6)

Structurally, during Kibaki's reign the long-awaited Sports Act was discussed and approved in 2013 and he also went ahead and created a Ministry specifically for Sports. During Uhuru Kenyatta's time, this Sports Act had problematic implementation. Apart from the erratic implementation of the Sports Act, Uhuru Kenyatta will also go down on record as having presided at a time when Kenya was suspended from FIFA and CAF in 2021 leading to the country missing out on qualifying for major tournaments including the 2022 African Woman's Cup of Nations and the 2023

African Cup of Nations for the men. Previously, suspensions, such as 2006, led to quick resolution without the teams missing out on participation in international competitions. A President who realizes the significance of football in rallying a nation together would not allow such a suspension to remain unresolved for so long at the expense of the nation's players and citizenry. This lack of appreciation for football by Uhuru, compared to Arap Moi, could be due to the vast differences in their upbringing. The former, as a son of a President, and the latter as a peasant who rose from the ranks of a primary school teacher, have contrasting attitudes towards football and its significance in society.

President Moi also to some extent weaponized football to discredit his perceived political adversaries in the 1980s and 1990s. It was not lost on Moi that the Luhya, Luo, Kisii and Mijikenda were dominant in football at club and national federation levels. Coincidentally, the push for multiparty politics was fronted by a group of leaders from the Luhya, Luo and Mijikenda communities including formation of the first opposition grouping named Forum for the Restoration of Democracy (FORD) in 1991. This national umbrella forum was led by Jaramogi Oginga Odinga, Phillip Gachoka, Ahmed Bamahariz, Salim Ndamwe, Masinde Muliro, George Nthenge and Martin Shikuku. At the same time, the FKF leadership was in the hands of a Luo (Joab Omino), Sammy Obingo (Luhya) and Nordin Taib (Coastal ancestry) and had successfully bid to host the 1996 Africa Cup of Nations for the first time in East and Central Africa. However, with political temperatures at their peak, President Moi's Government dragged its feet in upgrading the Mombasa Municipal Stadium to host some of the games forcing CAF to move the tournament to South Africa earning the country a two-year suspension from continental activities. This was a low moment in the history of Kenyan football. To many football lovers, the loss of hosting rights for AFCON were down to political reasons and not the lack of resources.

According to Siegelman (2018), association football is a political language, but also a political tool used by politicians like Odinga who want to use it to "employ many of our young people locally and abroad," (Odinga, 2015, p. viii) and others like former

star the late Joe Kadenge see it as a way to promote "social change in order to impart key values and principles that will help us achieve prosperity in general for this nation" (Nene, 2015, p. 300). Political leaders often hold rallies in football stadiums before games and elections as the game provides an open and ready base of supporters, essentially a captive audience. It allows politicians to associate themselves with a good in their life, with something their constituents are passionate about (Siegelman, 2018). Other trends that reveal the utilization of football for political purposes is routinely witnessed at national holidays when the highlight of the day, right from sub-counties to the national level, is a football match. All around the country aspiring and incumbent politicians routinely sponsor teams with balls, uniforms and provide trophies to be contested for in tournaments named after them during school holidays. It is also apparent that major political rallies are often held in stadia where the incumbents can proclaim their policies, while the opposition would use the same platform to voice their dissent against those in power.

Conclusion

Association football was introduced by the colonialists in Kenya where the game found an enthusiastic indigenous people of mostly Luhya, Luo and Mijikenda origins who quickly turned the sport into their own. The game found easy acceptance as it demands athletic abilities and movements, which found resonance with a well-established pattern of rigorous indigenous physical activity (Njororai, 2009). Additionally, the introduction of taxes by colonial authorities instigated a new migration pattern with males moving to cities to find employment. Within the cities, the need for social cohesion found football as an appropriate medium for people from varied ethnic groups to come together and play the game. The encouragement by the colonial government for communities to form welfare associations enabled prospective politicians to use the clubs and stadiums as avenues to express political dissent and voice their political aspirations. The freedom to form welfare associations encouraged ethnic-based team formation which characterized post-independent Kenya till the 1970s when corporate sponsored teams surfaced. The football success and dominance of the politically marginalized Luhya and Luo in terms of political authority and geographical distance from the seat of power in Nairobi can therefore be analyzed in the light of a multiplicity of colonial legacies such as regionalization and urbanization, divide and rule as well as political and demographic status as minorities. Football was therefore an imperialist tool that the indigenous people adopted and appropriated to solidify their ethnic and national orientation. The social cohesion and identity that coalesced around the ethnic-based teams also provided a fertile ground for people with political aspirations to harness the passion in pursuit of elected leadership positions at national level. It is also clear that the various post-independent governments have in a way utilized politicians to intervene in football matters and in the process encouraged others with political ambitions to seek leadership at club and federation levels. It is also apparent that unlike other presidents, Arap Moi, whose background was that of a primary school teacher, seemed to have recognized, embraced and weaponized the popularity of association football to advance and promote his political ideology. President Ruto, who rose to political prominence by sponsoring grassroots football tournaments in his rural Uasin Gishu County, seems to prioritize football development by recommending the launch of an intercounty national tournament as well as mobilizing the East African countries of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania to bid as joint hosts of the 2027 AFCON tournament.

References

Alegi, P. (2004). *Laduma!: Soccer, politics, and society in South Africa*. Scottsville: University of Kwazulu-Natal Press.

Alegi, P. (2010). *African Soccerscapes: How a continent changed the world's game*. Athens: Ohio University Press.

Ben-Porat, A. (2001). 'Biladi, Biladi': Ethnic and nationalistic conflict in the soccer stadium in Israel'. *Soccer and Society*, 2(1), 19–38.

Bloomfield, S. (2010). *Africa United: Soccer, passion, politics, and the first World Cup in Africa*. New York: Harper Perennial.

Cruickshank, M. and Morrison, N. (2013, January 17). Kenya independence tournament (Uhuru Cup) 1963. https://www.rsssf.org/tablesk/kenya-ind63.html

Darby, P. (2000). Africa's place in FIFA's global order: A theoretical frame. *Soccer and Society*, *1*(2), 36–61.

Darby, P. (2002). *Africa, football and FIFA: Politics, colonialism and resistance*. London and Portland, OR: Frank Cass.

Darby, P. (2005). Africa and the "World" Cup: FIFA politics, eurocentrism and resistance. *The International Journal of the History of Sport, 22*(5), 883–905.

Foer, F. (2006). *How soccer explains the world: An unlikely theory of globalization*. New York: Harper Perennial.

Hawkey, I. (2009). *Feet of the chameleon: The story of African Football*. London: Portico.

Hokkanen, M. (2005). Christ and the imperial games fields' in South-Central Africa-Sport and the Scottish missionaries in Malawi, 1880–1914: Utilitarian Compromise. *The International Journal of the History of Sport, 22*(4), 745–769. https://doi.org/10.1080/09523360500123176

Kamer, L. (2022, August 1). Ethnic groups in Kenya 2019. *Statista*. https://www.statista.com/statistics/1199555/share-of-ethnic-groups-in-kenya/

Kenyapagenet, 2023. Kenya football in the 1960s. https://kenyapage.net/football/history/60s.html

Kenya League Winners (2021). Kenya football page. https://kenyapage.net/football/league.html

Mazrui, A.A. (1986). *The Africans: A triple heritage*. London: BBC Publications.

Murray, B. (1998). *The world's game: A history of soccer*. Chicago: University of Illinois press.

Nasong'o, S. W. (2022). The Politics of soccer management in Kenya: The rise and decline popular sport. In: A. E. Ayuk (Ed.), *Football (Soccer) in Africa*, Global Culture and Sport Series. (pp. 189-212). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-94866-5_9

National Football Teams (2022). Leagues of Kenya. https://www.national-football-teams.com/leagues/97/2021_1/Kenya.html

Nene, J. (2015). *Joe Kadenge: The life of a football legend*. Nairobi: Phoenix Publishers.

Njororai, W.W.S. (2003). The diversity of sport in Kenya. In: L. Amusa and A. L. Toriola (Eds.). *Sport in Contemporary African Society: An Anthology* (pp. 199-229). Mokapane, South Africa: AFAHPER-S.D.

Njororai, W.W.S. (2004). Analysis of Kenya's performance in middle and distance races at the olympic games, 1956–2000. *Nigerian Journal of Emotional Psychology and Sport Ethics* 6: 102–7.

Njororai, W.W.S. (2009). Colonial legacy, minorities, and association football in Kenya. *Soccer & Society*, *10*(6), 866–882.

Njororai, W. W. S. (2010). Global inequality and athlete labour migration from Kenya. *Leisure/ Loisir*, *34*(4), 443–461.

Njororai, W.W.S. (2012). Distance running in Kenya: Athletics labour migration and its consequences. *Leisure/Loisir 36*(2), 187–209.

Njororai, W. W. S. (2014). History and identity of East African football within the African context. In: C. Onwumechili & G. Akindes (Eds.). *Identity and Nation in African Football: Fans, Community, and Clubs* (pp. 67 - 80). Palgrave Macmillan.

Njororai, W. W. S. (2016). Kenya at 50: Contextualization of post-independence sporting success. In M. M. Koster, M. M. Kithinji, & J. P. Rotich (Eds.), *Kenya after 50: Reconfiguring education, gender, and policy* (pp. 125–146). Palgrave Macmillan.

Njororai, W. W. S. (2017): AFC Leopards and Gor Mahia: Footballing rivalry and shared political underdog status in Kenya. *Soccer & Society*, *19*(5-6), 811-828. https://doi.org/10.1080/14660970.2017.1399619

Njororai, W. W. S. (2019). Organizational factors influencing football development in East African Countries. *Soccer & Society*, 20, 168–188.

Njororai, W. W. S. (2020). Culture of magic and sorcery in African football. In: C. Onwumechili (Ed). *Africa's elite football: Structure, Politics, and Everyday Challenges* (pp. 99-116). Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group: London.

Njororai, W. W. S. (2023). Contextualization of Africa's historic boycott of the 1966 World Cup and its legacy. In: M. J. Gennaro & B. M. McGowan (Eds.). *Sport and Protest in the Black Atlantic* (pp. 105-127). Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group: London. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003320364-6

Nyanjom, O. (2010). Foul play! The crisis of football management in Kenya. *Africa Centre for Open Governance*, 6–43. https://africog.org//wp-content/uploads/2010/07/The20crisis20of20football20management20in20Kenya1.pdf

Odinga, R. (2007, September 12). What role does ethnicity play in Africa's elective politics? http://africanpress.wordpress.com

Odinga, R. (2015). Foreword. *Joe Kadenge: The life of a football legend* (V – IX). Nairobi: Phoenix Publishers Ltd.

Otieno, P. N. (2020). Revolutionizing Kenya's football:

Football commercialization in Kenya. https://www.academia.edu/43195616/Revolutionizing_Kenyas_Football_Football_Commercialization_in_Kenya

Siegelman, D. (2018). Political goals: Soccer as a language of politics in Kenya. *History91*. https://scholarship.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/handle/10066/21509

Siundu, G. (2011). European football worlds and youth identifications in Kenya. *African Identities*, *9*(3), 337- 348. https://doi.org/10.1080/14725843.2011.591233

Sobania, N. (2003). *Culture and customs of Africa: Culture and customs of Kenya*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Stokkermans, K (2023, June 23). Kenya - List of Champions. http://www.rsssf.com/tablesk/kenyachamp.html

Straker, J. (2005). Popular culture as critical process in colonial Africa: A study of Brazzaville football. *Impumelelo: The Interdisciplinary Electronic Journal of African Sports, 1*.

Thabet, H. (2022). Football in Egypt: Between joy and politics. In: A. E. Ayuk (ed.), *Football (Soccer) in Africa*, Global Culture and Sport Series (pp. 147-163). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-94866-5_9

Versi, A. (1986). *Football in Africa*. London: Collins.

Waliaula, S. and Okong'o, J. B. (2009). Fostering peace in Kenya today through football cultures. *Maarifa*, *3*(1), 41-48.

Waliaula, S. and Okong'o, J. B. (2014). Performing Luo identity in Kenya: Songs of Gor Mahia. In: C. Onwumechili & G. Akindes (Eds.). *Identity and nation in African football: Fans, community, and clubs* (pp. 83-98). Palgrave Macmillan.

Waliaula, S. and Okong'o, J. B. (2020). From ethnic community to a popular culture. In: C. Onwumechili (Ed.). *Africa's elite football: Structure, politics, and everyday challenges* (pp. 135-146). Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group: London.

Worldometer (2022). Kenya population (Live). https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/kenya-population/

Political Violence in 21st Century Kenya: A Case Study of Non-State Terrorism

Jeremiah Ogonda Asaka

Sam Houston State University, Department of Security Studies, Huntsville, TX 77340, USA
Email: asakajo@gmail.com

Abstract

Political violence is a growing global security concern. Terrorism is a type of political violence that is perpetrated either by a state or non-state actor. Political violence literature often frames terrorism as either domestic or international. However, influenced in part by post-9/11 U.S.-led global war on terror, the same literature has tended to focus more on non-state terrorism than state terrorism. But even more, non-state terrorism literature on Kenya has primarily been focused on international non-state terrorism than domestic non-state terrorism with implications for human security in the country. This case study explores non-state terrorism in Kenya and aims to contribute to knowledge on the same. The case study employs a mixed methods research design involving juxtaposition of descriptive statistical analysis of terrorism data on Kenya extracted from Global Terrorism Database (GTD) and qualitative content analysis of 39 scholarly publications on terrorism in Kenya sourced using Google Scholar. The case study accomplishes at least three things: (1) It identifies trends and patterns in domestic and international non-state terrorism in Kenya, (2) it identifies perpetrators of domestic and international non-state terrorism in Kenya, and (3) identifies drivers and enablers of domestic and international non-state terrorism in Kenya. This article documents the case study findings and recommendations for future research.

Keywords: Political violence, terrorism, domestic terrorism, international terrorism, non-state terrorism, extremism, Kenya

1. Introduction

Political violence including violent extremism and terrorism is a growing global security concern. Writing in the foreword of a recent United Nations Development Program (UNDP) report entitled *Journey to Extremism in Africa: Pathways to Recruitment and Disengagement*, Achim Steiner – the UNDP Administrator – points out that, "Insecurity arising from extremism has led to the highest levels of population displacement – both Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs) and refugees since the Second World War; a large proportion of that displacement is taking place in Africa" (UNDP, 2023, p. 7). Moreover, analysis of global terrorist attack data establish that terrorism has been on the rise at least since 1970 as shown in figure 1.

The purpose of this case study is two-fold. First, the case study seeks to identify and document trends and patterns in Global Terrorism Database (GTD) data on terrorism in Kenya. Second, the case study aims to identify and document drivers and

enablers of non-state terrorism that are referenced in scholarly publications on terrorism in Kenya. Kenya was purposely selected as the study area for at least two reasons: (1) Kenya's status as an anchor state within the context of U.S. led global antiterrorism and counter-terrorism efforts (Prestholdt, 2011), and (2) the country's long history (Sharamo & Mohamed, 2020; Shinn, 2007) with political violence including, but not limited to, the *Mau Mau* uprising, Shifta war, infamous 1998 Al-Qaeda terrorist attack on the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi, 2007/2008 Post-Election Violence (PEV), 2013 Al-Shabaab terrorist attack on Westgate Mall, and 2015 Al-Shabaab terrorist attack on Garissa University (Blanchard, 2013; Kamau, 2021; Kanyinga, 2009; Kanogo, 1987; Mogire & Agade, 2011; Ogot & Ochieng', 1995; Simon, 2015). The case study employed a mixed methods case study research design and was guided by two broad questions as follows. What are the trends and patterns in GTD data on terrorism in Kenya for the period 2000-2019? What are the drivers and enablers of terrorism referenced in scholarly publications on

Figure 1: Global trend in terrorist attacks, 1970-2020
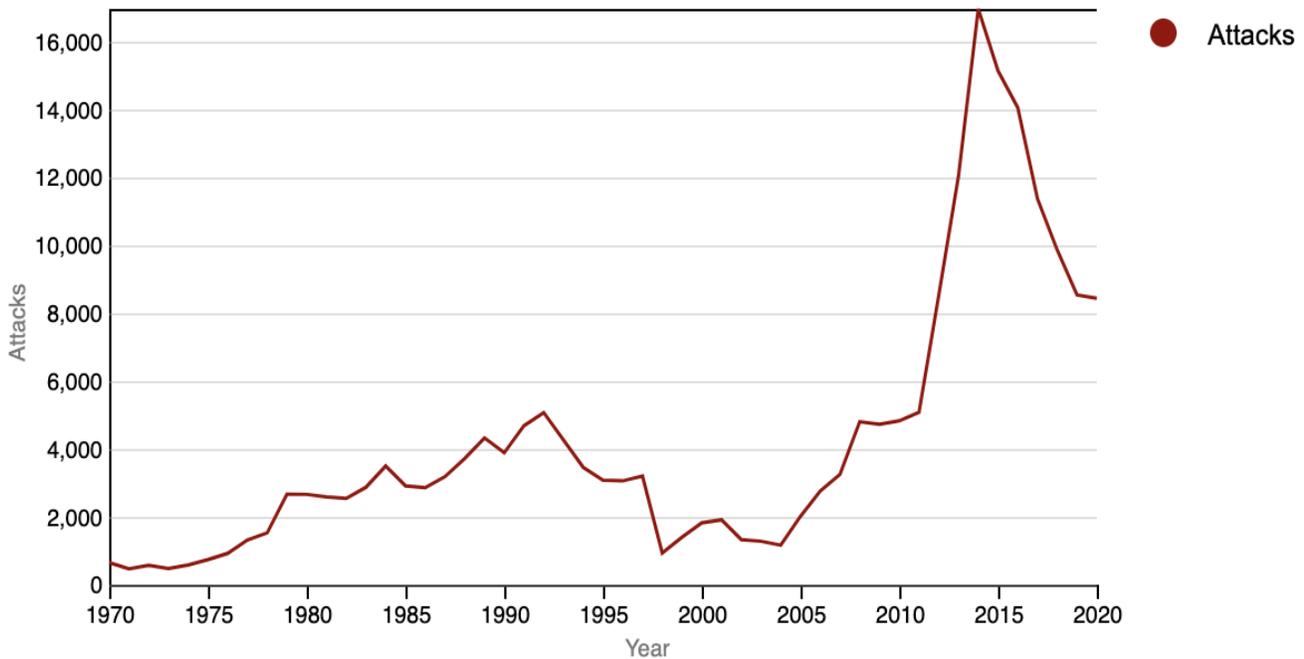
Source: Global Terrorism Database

Note: This figure shows that terrorism has been on rise globally since 1970. The figure also establishes that the greatest increase in terrorist attacks happened in the 21st Century.

terrorism in Kenya published between 2000 and 2021?

This article is organized into six sections as follows. First, this brief introduction section has provided the purpose and scope of the case study. Second, a literature review section that, among other things, situates the case study within existing literature and provides a working definition of terrorism. Third, a methods section, which describes the research design and methods employed in the case study. Fourth, a findings section, which details results of both quantitative and qualitative analyses. Fifth, a discussion section where the case study findings are discussed in detail. Finally, the article ends with a conclusion section, which also offers recommendations for future research.

2. Literature review

2.1. Definition of terrorism

Terrorism, like security (Asaka, 2022), is a contested concept (Schmid, 2021a; Otiso, 2009). Political violence scholars have debated the definition of terrorism for years but are yet to come to an agreement

on a single universally accepted definition (Martin, 2016). This is the case, in part, because different entities have over time defined terrorism differently. Moreover, as Gus points out, "another complication is that most definitions focus on political violence perpetrated by dissident groups, even though many governments have practiced terrorism as both domestic and foreign policy" (Martin, 2016, p. 27). A few examples would suffice here. First, while acknowledging that terrorism can be "committed by whomever" (United Nations General Assembly, 2006, p. 1), the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (UNGCTS) nevertheless frames terrorism as a primarily non-state actor driven problem. Second, Kenya's Prevention of Terrorism Act No. 3 of 2012 (as amended by State Law (Miscellaneous Amendment) Act, 2019) – the law that governs counter-terrorism efforts in the country – frames terrorism as an act committed by a person (i.e., a non-state actor) (Government of Kenya, 2012; Government of Kenya, 2019). This despite the reality of terror associated with state operatives in the country (Kenya National Commission on Human Rights, 2015; Kivoi,

of the following factors:

> Globalization; rapid modernization; Western alliances with Middle Eastern dictatorships; foreign intervention and/or occupation; unjust world order; failed or weak states; lack of freedom and democracy; oppression and repression; illegitimate or corrupt governments; violation of basic human rights; growing racial or social inequality; ethnic or religious discrimination; ethnic diversity; social polarization; feelings of injustice; extremist ideology; mental illness; radicalization in prisons or refugee camps; alienation; grievances; political discontent; frustration about absolute or relative deprivation (e.g., poverty); unemployment; youth bulge; ideological radicalization; desire for revenge, retribution, punishment; desire to (re-)gain sense of significance; desire to dramatize injustices and create impetus for reform; Alienation from, and discrimination in, host country; rage in response to humiliation; feelings of powerlessness and deprivation; feelings of marginalization and exclusion; disillusionment over impossibility of bringing about change by other means; bitter hopelessness and desperation, with terrorism being weapon of last resort; ideological radicalization to extremist ideology; desire for national self-determination; instrument to accelerate "history"; tool to reinstate, reinforce supremacy of own group; no other choice (weapon of the weak); absence of alternative channels of influence; to obtain access to mass media (propaganda of the deed); to unblock blocked society (no democratic change possible); to press for solution in unresolved conflict; tactic of provocation to trigger repression that will bring new recruits; easy availability of targets and weapons in open democratic societies; shortcomings in preventive measures; weak border/perimeter controls allowing access to targets; mimetic urge to do likewise (contagion); outcome of a learning process; fanaticism; religious duty rewarded by place in paradise; defense of the community (Ummah); defense of the prophet; divine command. (Schmid, 2021a, pp. 35-36)

The foregoing discussion establishes terrorism as a complex phenomenon with multiple causes, drivers, and enablers, and that is amenable to context. Terrorism has been studied from a variety of theoretical perspectives (e.g., critical and non-critical), contexts of analysis (e.g., spatial and temporal), scale of analysis (e.g., small *n* and large *N* studies), and levels of analysis (e.g., individual, group, society, sub-national, national, international, regional, transnational, and global) (Cannon & Pkalya, 2019; Haynes, 2005; Lind, Mutahi, & Oosterom, 2017; Mogire & Agade, 2011; Simon, 2015). However, writing in 2009, Ignacio Sanchez and Luis de la Calle cautioned that "we know more about international terrorism than we do about domestic terrorism"

(Sánchez-Cuenca & de la Calle, 2009, p. 32). Moreover, as correctly noted by Ajide and Alimi, "Concerning policy relevance, it seems plausible that understanding the key drivers of terrorism could enable more effective counterterrorism measures than grounding such decisions on baseless criteria" (Ajide & Alimi, 2021, p. 344). Taking cue from them, this case study sets out to (hopefully) contribute to knowledge on domestic and international terrorism in Kenya.

2.4 Political violence and terrorism in Kenya

Political violence in Kenya dates back, at least, to the pre-independence period. For instance, during the British colonial era, *Mau Mau* freedom fighters and other natives took on the British colonists who ruled pre-independent Kenya from around late 1800s to early 1960s (Kanogo, 1987; Ogot & Ochieng', 1995). The Colony of Kenya ultimately gave way to the Dominion of Kenya in 1963, which in turn gave way to the Republic of Kenya in 1964 (Ogot & Ochieng', 1995). Post-independence, political violence in Kenya has taken on a variety of forms including but not limited to secessionist conflict (e.g., Shifta war), armed resistance (e.g., Sabaot Lands Defence Forces), coup d'état (e.g., 1982 coup), post-election violence (e.g., 2007/2008 PEV), international terrorism (e.g., 2002 Paradise hotel bombing), and domestic terrorism (e.g., 1975 OTC bus blast).

Because of the long history of political violence (including terrorism) in Kenya, there is an extensive and growing body of literature on the same (Kamau, 2021; Krause & Otenyo, 2005; Mogire & Agade, 2011; Morumbasi & Amuhaya, 2016; Oando & Achieng', 2021; Otenyo, 2004; Otiso, 2009; Prestholdt, 2011; Sharamo & Mohamed, 2020). With regards to terrorism specifically, the existing literature has focused on a variety of aspects including, but not limited to, the causes and/or drivers of terrorism (Cannon & Pkalya, 2019; Chacha, 2004; Otenyo, 2004; Otiso, 2009), impacts of terrorism (Akanyisi, 2016; Blanchard, 2013; Ide, 2017), public perception of terrorism (Krause & Otenyo, 2005), radicalization and recruitment into terrorist groups (Badurdeen, 2021; Mkutu & Opondo, 2021), terrorism-related legislation (Kamau, 2006), counterterrorism practices (Breidlid, 2021; Kamau, 2021; Mwangi, 2019; Lind,

Mutahi, & Oosterom, 2017; Mogire & Agade, 2011; Njuguna, 2018; Oando & Achieng', 2021; Prestholdt, 2011; Rosand, Millar, & Ipe, 2009), and, to a lesser degree, terrorism actors (Buluma, 2014). However, of particular interest to the current study is the knowledge that existing literature on terrorism in Kenya predominantly associates terrorism with Islamic fundamentalism (Haynes, 2005; Ide, 2017; Otenyo, 2004; Shinn, 2007). Moreover, the same literature overwhelmingly conceptualizes terrorism as a non-state actor problem thereby reinforcing a state-centric understanding of terrorism, which dominates much of the mainstream academic discourse on the subject as well as public policy debates on the same.

As noted in the previous section, critical terrorism studies literature provides that terrorism can be perpetrated by a state and/or non-state actor. Therefore, a perspective that discounts the actual or potential role of either actor in terrorism in any context cannot provide a nuanced understanding of the terrorism problem in that context or anywhere else. For instance, because of predominant focus on Islamic fundamentalism related terrorism and a state-centered understanding of terrorism among terrorism scholars studying Kenya, existing terrorism literature on the country is predominantly focused on international non-state terrorism (Otenyo, 2004). In other words, at best, there is a dearth of literature on domestic non-state terrorism that is specifically focused on the Kenyan context (Bellinger & Kattelman, 2021). It is within this niche area that this case study hopes to contribute to knowledge. The case study specifically aims to contribute to knowledge on both domestic and international non-state terrorism in Kenya. In the next section, I present the research methods used in the case study.

3. Methods

This study is based on a case study research design and employs mixed methods. Baxter offers a succinct and useful definition of case study as "the study of a single instance or small number of instances of a phenomenon in order to explore in-depth nuances of the phenomenon and the contextual influences on and explanations of that phenomenon" (Baxter, 2010, p. 81). While Creswell argues that "there is more insight

to be gained from the combination of both qualitative and quantitative research than either form by itself. Their combined use provides an expanded understanding of research problems" (Creswell, 2009, p. 203). On one hand, this case study relies on descriptive statistical analysis to identify trends and patterns in GTD data on terrorism in Kenya. On the other hand, the case study relies on qualitative content analysis to identify and document drivers and enablers of terrorism that are referenced in scholarly publications on terrorism in Kenya.

3.1. Descriptive statistical analysis

Alan and Finlay note that the "main purpose of descriptive statistics is to explore the data and to reduce them to simpler and more understandable terms without distorting or losing much of the available information" (Agresti & Finlay, 1997, p. 4). This case study relies on terrorism data sourced from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) in 2020. The GTD is an open-source database, which provides information on domestic and international terrorist attacks around the world since 1970 (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, 2021). At the time of data collection, the database only contained data for the period from 1970 to 2019. The GTD web platform's advanced search function was deployed to find relevant data. Because of the study's focus on 21st Century Kenya, the search timeframe was limited to 2000-2019 and incident location set to Kenya to retrieve only Kenya-specific data. The resultant data was then transferred to an Excel spreadsheet for descriptive statistical analysis (Agresti & Finlay, 1997). Data analysis was conducted with the aid of Excel. I specifically used Excel to compute totals and percentages and visualize trends in the data. Results of the statistical analysis are presented in the first portion of the findings section.

3.2. Qualitative content analysis

As Hsieh and Shannon point out, qualitative content analysis is "a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1278). Documents were sourced from the Internet using Google Scholar search tool. Document

search was conducted in 2021 using two sets of search phrases: 'drivers of terrorism' AND 'Kenya,' and 'enablers of terrorism' AND 'Kenya'. The searches were limited to the period between 2000 and 2021. And both searches also excluded patents and citations. The searches were conducted sequentially, and in turns, with the second happening only after the first has been completed. In the end, both searches returned a combined total of 112 documents. Table 1 provides a breakdown of the search results by each search operation.

Table 1: Summary of search results

Search operation	Search results (Number of documents)
"Drivers of terrorism" AND "Kenya"	98
"Enablers of terrorism" AND "Kenya"	14

Source: Compiled by author

With the searches completed and documents gathered, an initial review of the 112 documents was conducted to ascertain their relevance to the study. Initial review was also crucial for avoiding duplication. The initial review process involved perusing through the documents and looking out for: Year of publication (i.e., document must have been published between 2000 and 2021), subject matter (i.e., content of the document must be relevant to the study topic), type of publication (i.e., inclusion in the study is limited to scholarly publications only), and geographical scope (i.e., geographical scope of the document must be aligned with that of the case study). A total of 39 documents met the initial review criteria and were selected for further analysis. The selected documents were then grouped into three categories to facilitate final phase of the qualitative content analysis. The three categories were: Journal articles, book chapters, and theses/dissertations. Table 2 provides a breakdown of the number of documents analyzed in each category.

Table 2: Number of documents analyzed by type

Type	Quantity
Journal articles	12
Book chapters	6
Theses/Dissertations	21
Total	*39*

Source: Compiled by author

After sorting the selected documents into relevant groups, a qualitative content analysis was conducted on each document. Qualitative content analysis specifically involved analytical reading, manual coding, and analytic memo writing (Saldaña, 2016). In qualitative analysis, coding is the process by which a qualitative researcher organizes gathered qualitative data into "chunks or segments before bringing meaning to information" (Creswell, 2009, p. 186). It involves the use of codes, which in qualitative research refers to words or phrases "that symbolically assign summative, salient, essence capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 4). Codes can either emerge from data, be pre-determined by the qualitative researcher, or result from a combination of both (Creswell, 2009). In this study, I relied on both predetermined codes (also known as *a priori* codes) and codes that emerged from the data during the manual coding process particularly *in vivo* codes. Saldaña defines an *in vivo* code as "a word or short phrase from the actual language found in the qualitative data record" (Saldaña, 2016, p. 105). The findings of qualitative content analysis are detailed in the next section.

4. Findings

4.1. Trends in domestic and international non-state terrorism in Kenya, 2000-2019

This sub-section presents trend analysis results pertaining to quantitative aspect of the study.

1. **Total number of perpetrators by perpetrator category**

Perpetrators listed in the GTD fall into three categories namely: those that are clearly identifiable (recorded by

name in the database), those that cannot be clearly identified but are suspected to be one of the clearly identifiable perpetrators (recorded as suspected in the database), and those whose identity is completely hidden (recorded as unknown in the database). For purposes of analysis, these three perpetrator categories are hereafter referred to simply as 'known', 'suspected', and 'unknown'. However, since the focus of the quantitative component of the study is on non-state terrorism, perpetrators in the 'unknown' category are included in this and subsequent analysis for context purposes only. There were thirty-eight perpetrator records spread across the three perpetrator categories for the period under study (Figure 2). Table 3 shows a breakdown of the number of perpetrators by perpetrator category.

Table 3: Number of perpetrators by perpetrator category

Perpetrator category	Recorded number
Known	14
Suspected	8
Unknown	16

2. Change in number of perpetrators by perpetrator category over time

Figure 2: Number of perpetrators over time
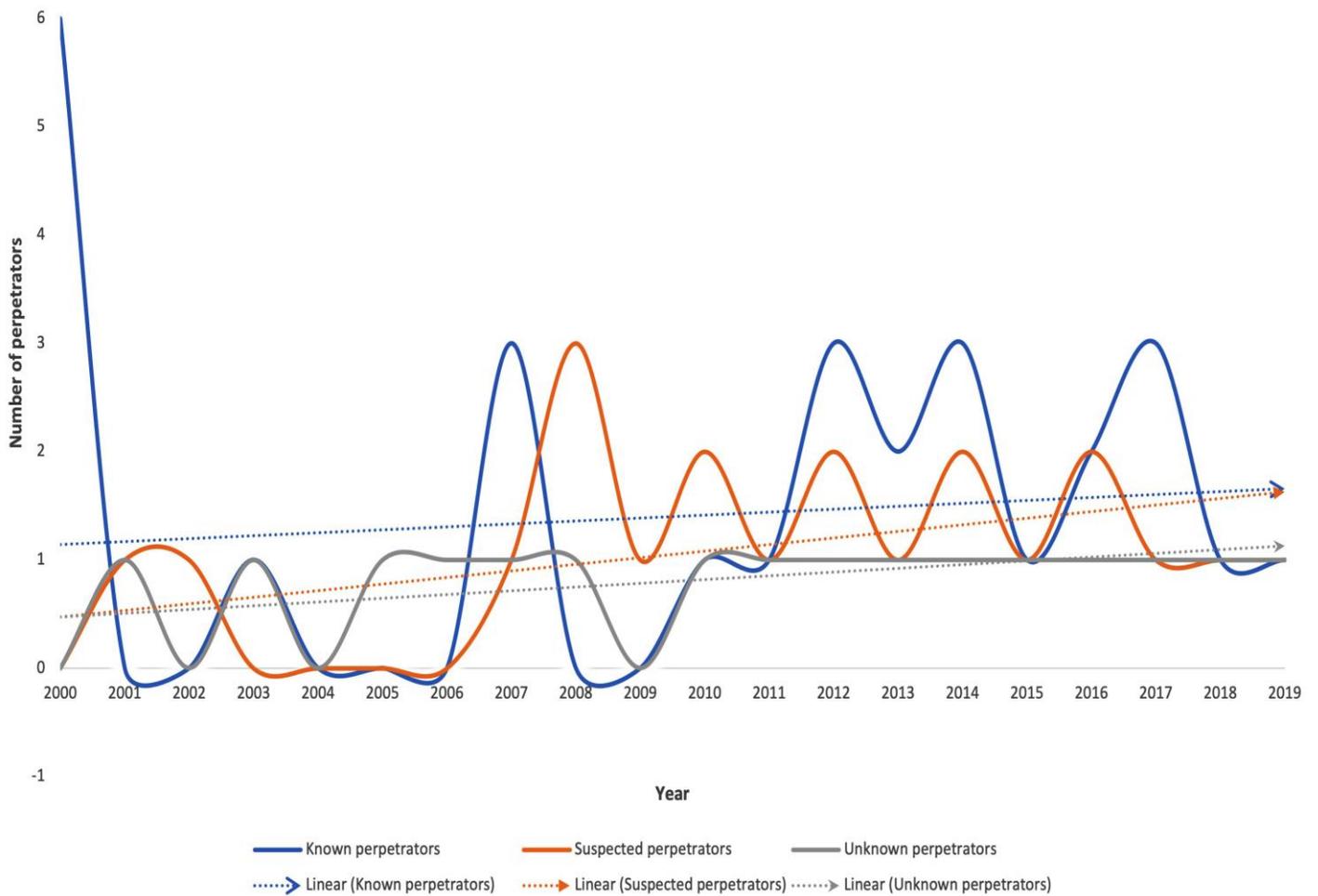
3. Perpetrators of international non-state terrorism

Table 4: Perpetrators of international non-state terrorism in Kenya, 2000-2019

Perpetrator category	Identified perpetrator
Known	Al-Shabaab, Jabha East Africa, and Oromo Liberation Front
Suspected	Al-Shabaab (suspected), Oromo Liberation Front (suspected), and Al Qaeda (suspected)

4. Perpetrators of domestic non-state terrorism

Table 5: Perpetrators of domestic non-state terrorism in Kenya, 2000-2019

Perpetrator category	Identified perpetrator
Known	Sabaot Land Defense Force, Pokot Extremists, Mombasa Republican Council, Merille militia, Mungiki sect, Sungu Sungu, and Borana bandits.
Suspected	Sabaot Land Defense Force (suspected), Mombasa Republican Council (suspected), Merille militia (suspected), and Mungiki sect (suspected)
Indeterminate	Bandits, Militia members, Muslim extremists, Tribesmen, and Youths (suspected).

5. Number of non-state terrorism incidents

Figure 3: Number of terrorism incidents by perpetrator category
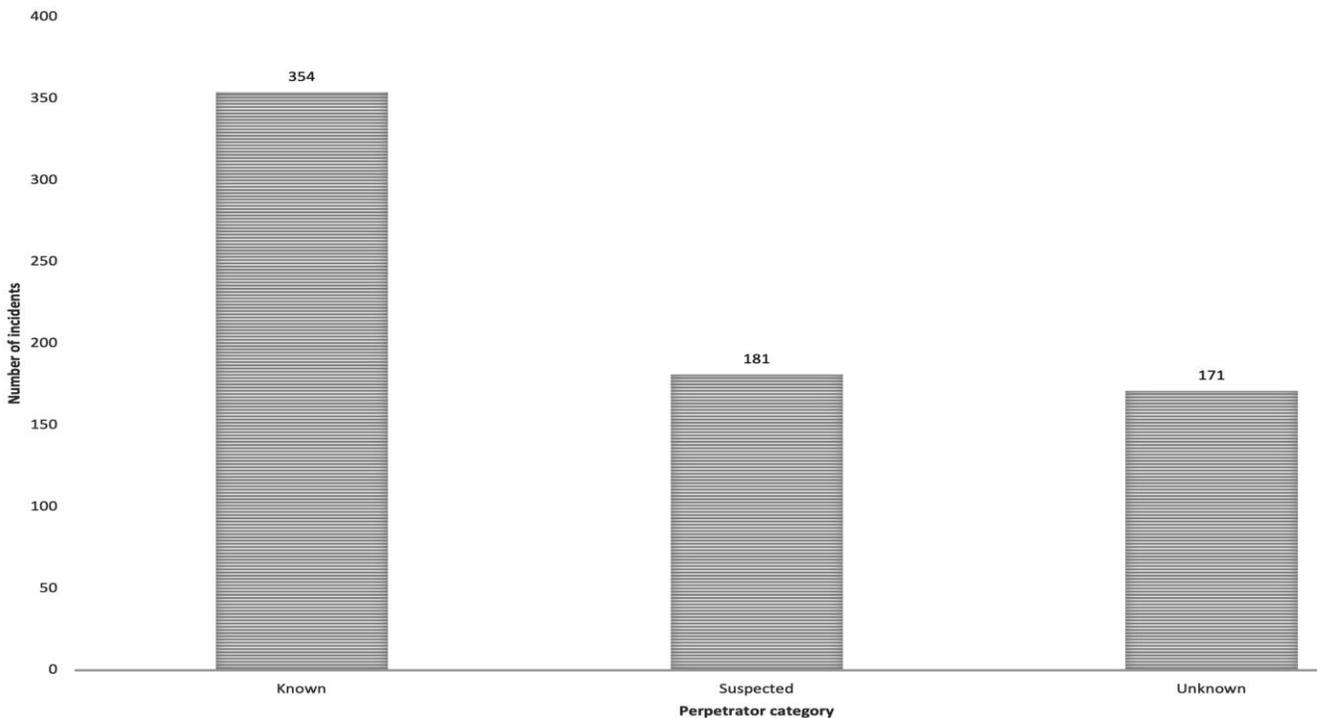
Figure 4: Number of incidents by individual perpetrator
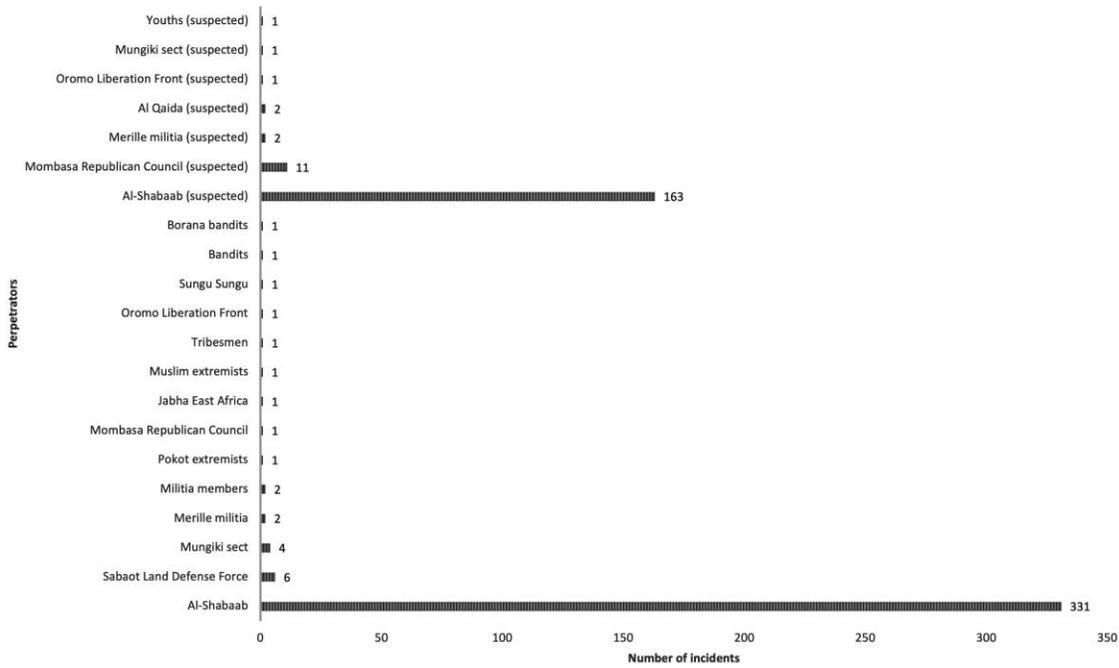
6. Number of non-state terrorism related incidents, injuries, and fatalities over time

Figure 5: Number of incidents, fatalities, and injuries over time
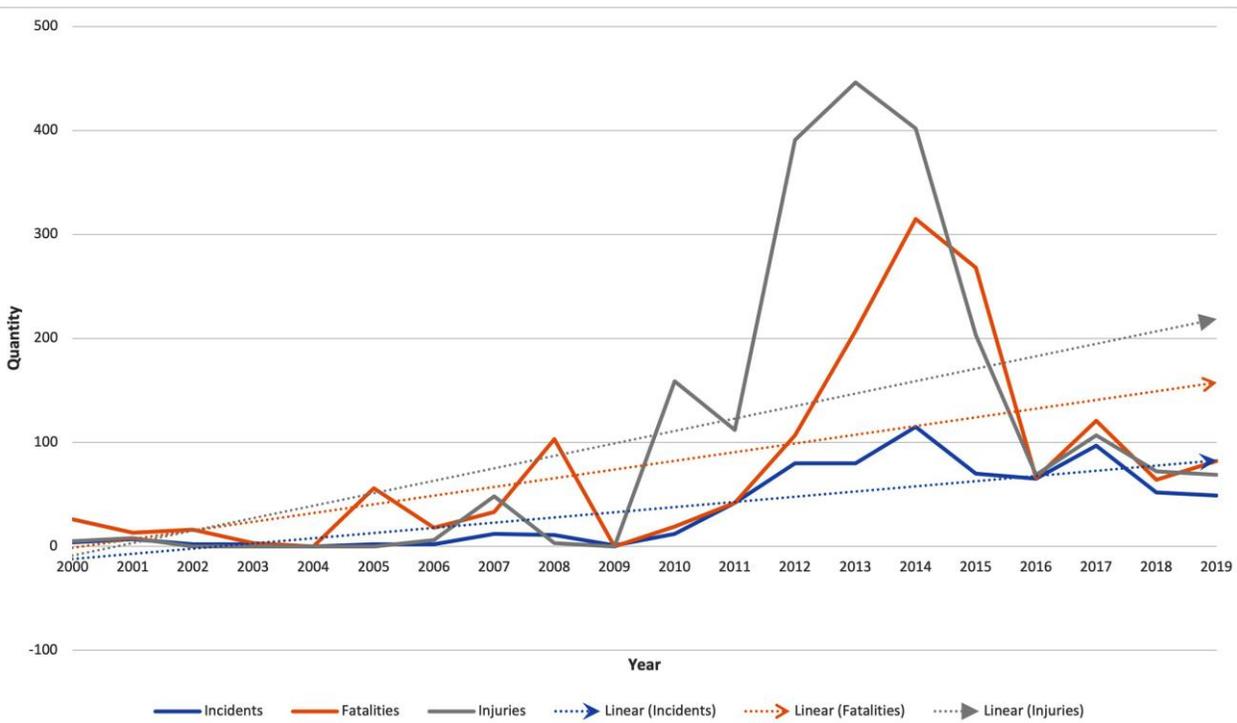
7. Domestic and international non-state terrorism attack targets

A total of twenty-one attack targets – including three attack targets recorded as 'unknown' – were identified. However, for consistency, the three 'unknown' attack targets are excluded from the current study. Thus, only eighteen attack targets form part of the current study. The eighteen attack targets include: 'Government (general)', 'private citizens and property', 'police', 'non-governmental organization (NGO)', 'business', 'military', 'religious

figures/institution', 'transportation', 'airports and aircrafts', 'utilities', 'educational institutions', 'telecommunication', 'food and water supply', 'government (diplomatic)', 'tourists', 'maritime', terrorist/non-state militia', and 'journalists and media'. Tables 6 and 7 maps out attack targets by perpetrator category and type of non-state terrorism respectively.

Table 6: Domestic and international non-state terrorism attack targets by perpetrator category

Perpetrator category	Attack target	
Known	⇒ Government (general) ⇒ Private citizens & property ⇒ Police ⇒ NGO ⇒ Business ⇒ Military ⇒ Religious figures/institution	⇒ Airports and aircraft ⇒ Utilities ⇒ Educational institution ⇒ Telecommunication ⇒ Food and water supply ⇒ Maritime ⇒ Transportation
Suspected	◊ Police ◊ NGO ◊ Military ◊ Business ◊ Private citizens & property ◊ Religious figures/institution ◊ Telecommunication	◊ Transportation ◊ Government (general) ◊ Government (diplomatic) ◊ Tourists ◊ Airports ◊ Aircraft
Unknown	▪ Government (general) ▪ Government (diplomatic) ▪ Private citizens & property ▪ Educational institution ▪ Religious figures/institution ▪ Terrorists/non-state militia ▪ Telecommunication ▪ Police	▪ Transportation ▪ Journalists & media ▪ NGO ▪ Business ▪ Military ▪ Airports and aircraft

Source: Compiled by author

Note: This table documents attack targets by perpetrator category. The table reveals a striking similarity in attack targets between the 'known', 'suspected', and 'unknown' perpetrator categories.

Table 7: Domestic and international non-state terrorism attack targets in Kenya, 2000-2019

Type of non-state terrorism	Attack target
Domestic	Religious figures/institution, private citizens & property, business, police, military, religious figures/institution, maritime, transportation, and government (general)
International	Government (general), private citizens & property, police, NGO, business, military, religious figures/institution, transportation, airports, aircraft, utilities, educational institution, telecommunication, food and water supply, government (diplomatic), and tourists

Mapping of attack targets by perpetrator category and/or type of non-state terrorism is insightful in and of itself. However, for a nuanced understanding of the dynamics between perpetrators and attack targets, an analysis of the number of perpetrators exploiting each attack target is necessary. Figure 6 shows the number of individual perpetrators exploiting each of the eighteen identified attack targets.

Figure 6: Number of perpetrators exploiting identified attack targets
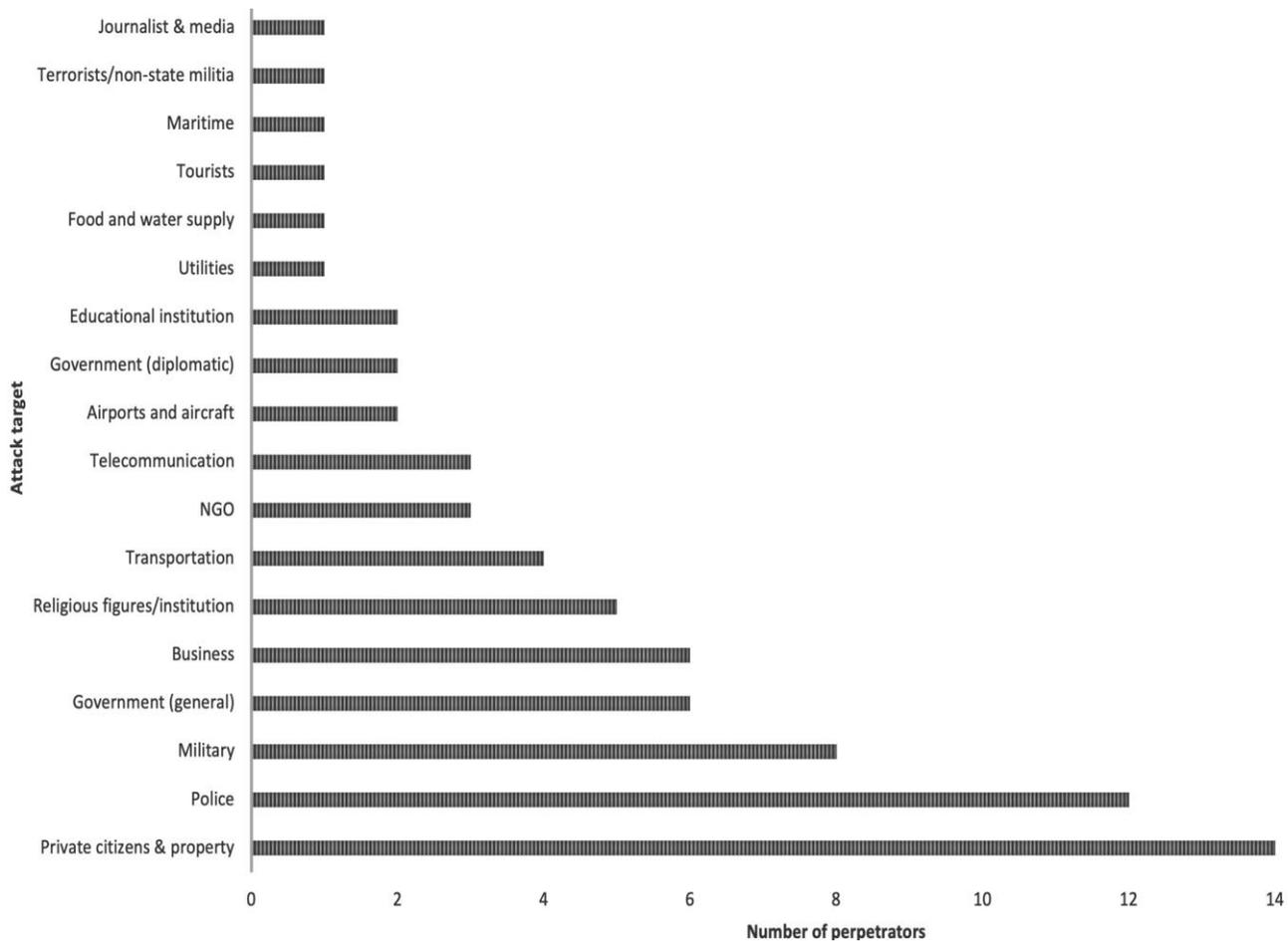
Figure 7: Drivers and enablers of domestic and international non-state terrorism in Kenya
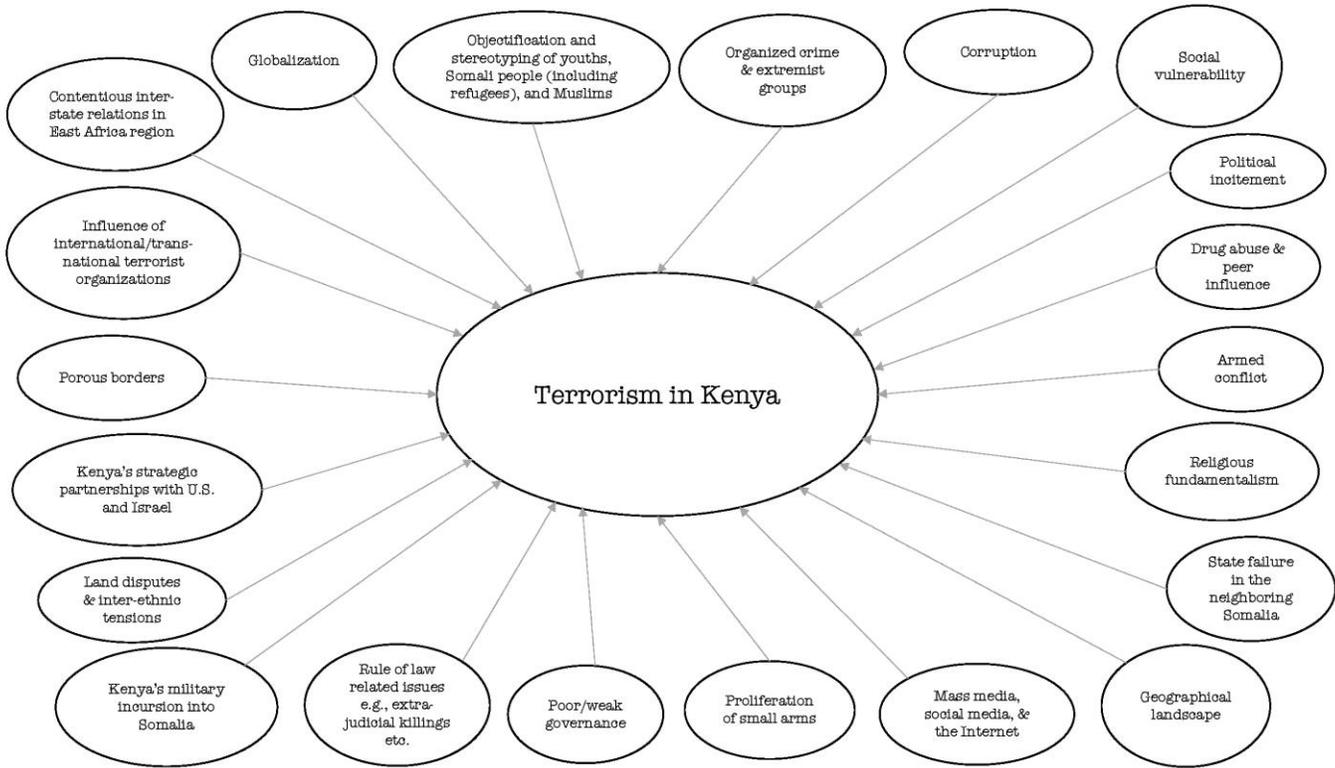
Source: Compiled by author

Note: This figure shows the identified drivers and enablers of domestic and international non-state terrorism in Kenya. Some of the factors have been put together in one text box due to space limitation. Causal analysis is outside the scope of the current case study. Therefore, arrows do not depict or imply causation.

4.2. Drivers and enablers of domestic and international non-state terrorism in Kenya

This subsection details findings of qualitative content analysis aspect of the case study. Figure 7 summarizes identified drivers and enablers of domestic and international non-state terrorism in Kenya.

5. Discussion

As with much of the rest of the world, terrorism is a defining feature of 21st Century Kenya. The case study has established that, except for 2004, the country experienced at least one terrorism incident every year for the period under study. The case study has also established that Kenya experiences both international and domestic non-state terrorism. For instance, during the period under study, international non-state terrorism in the country was primarily committed by

Al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab also accounted for 94% of all terrorism incidents attributed to perpetrators in the 'known' perpetrator category consisting of non-state actors. The foregoing lends credence to the case study's qualitative content analysis finding that KDF's foray into Somalia and continued presence in the country are significant drivers of international non-state terrorism in Kenya.

On the other hand, domestic non-state terrorism, while comparatively less significant at least in terms of its relative contribution to terrorism incidents and associated fatalities and injuries, accounts for the highest number of identified perpetrators. In other words, there were more perpetrators of domestic non-state terrorism than perpetrators of international non-state terrorism as shown in tables 4 and 5, but the latter accounted for more terrorism incidents than the former as clearly

captured in figure 4. Considering that qualitative content analysis identified organized crime and extremist groups as both a driver and enabler of terrorism in Kenya, the significance of domestic non-state terrorism in the country cannot be downplayed as it feeds into international non-state terrorism making the latter worse, complex, and difficult to tackle.

An important aspect of this case study involved identifying trends in domestic and international non-state terrorism attack targets. In this regard, the case study establishes that 'private citizens and property' is the top target for non-state terrorists in Kenya. While this finding simply corroborates existing knowledge on terrorism attack targets, it is nevertheless significant considering the vulnerability of ordinary Kenyans to other sources of human insecurity including poverty, disease, natural hazards, poor governance, police brutality, and illiteracy among others. Therefore, efforts aimed at countering terrorism in the country should leverage on existing knowledge and good practice to prioritize protection and cushioning of private citizens and their properties against deleterious effects of domestic and international non-state terrorism.

Still on terrorism trends, a curious descriptive statistical analysis finding that 'unknown' perpetrator category accounts for about a quarter of the total recorded terrorism incidents in the period under study raises at least one major question as follows. Why would a terrorist group with such high success rate in terms of associated terrorism incidents choose to remain anonymous when the common trend among most terrorist groups is to publicly claim successful attacks? Because, if 'unknown' were a single perpetrator it would account for more terrorism incidents than any other identified perpetrator except Al-Shabaab. I provide at least three possible explanations of this phenomenon as follows.

First, Al-Shabaab could be employing a multipronged strategy that, among other things, involves claiming certain attacks while ignoring (or not claiming) others to avoid being known and getting decimated. In other words, it is possible that 'unknown' is simply Al-Shabaab masquerading as something else especially considering the glaring similarity in attack targets between perpetrators in the

'known', 'suspected' and 'unknown' perpetrator categories (Refer to table 5). As Cannon and Pkalya point out, "Al-Shabaab's goal is to surprise, subvert and most importantly survive" (Cannon & Pkalya, 2019, p. 840). Therefore, in its quest to survive, Al-Shabaab could be relying on all sorts of strategies including staging successful attacks and laying no claim to them. These incidents then get recorded as 'unknown' in the GTD as when in fact 'unknown' and Al-Shabaab are possibly one and the same thing.

Second, it is possible that there exists a higher power (i.e., above Al-Shabaab on the international terrorist groups' pecking order), which for whatever reason does not wish to be identified yet. Hence, it is operating clandestinely. The success of 'unknown' in launching attacks aimed at various targets that are significantly consistent with Al-Shabaab's attack targets only add credence to the notion that 'unknown' could be a higher power possibly headquartered outside Kenya. The number of terrorism incidents associated with 'unknown' reveal that 'unknown' has considerable capacity and/or ability to successfully stage attacks on Kenyan soil even though 'unknown' may or may not necessarily be based in the country as is common practice with most amorphous international terrorist cells such as Al Qaeda.

Third, considering that terrorist groups do cooperate with each other and that such cooperation does take many different forms (Moghadam, 2017; Morumbasi & Amuhaya, 2016), 'unknown' could also simply be in a sort of cooperation agreement with Al-Shabaab, which allows it to operate in Al-Shabaab's area of influence (i.e., Eastern Africa including Kenya) but not take credit publicly for any success. A case in point is Al-Hijra, which Morumbasi and Amuhaya identify as one of the terrorist groups that employ this kind of tactic (Morumbasi & Amuhaya, 2016). They note in part that, "the Al-Shabaab in Kenya has succeeded in establishing strong ties with the Al-Hijra terrorist group, which has kept its operations secret. Despite being suspected to have taken part in the Westgate Mall attack in the Kenyan capital Nairobi, the group has desisted from taking responsibility of attacks publicly. This introduces yet another complex dimension of the group where it remains underground while avoiding publicity" (Morumbasi & Amuhaya, 2016, p. 270). Whatever the

case may be, it is not in doubt that 'unknown' is a significant actor that deserves further scrutiny to unravel its real identity and *modus operandi*.

Finally, in the remainder of this section, I will discuss a select number of identified drivers and enablers of non-state terrorism in Kenya that are detailed in figure 7. The selection and ordering of the factors should not be construed as imputing any value judgement on them or those that were not selected for discussion. The enablers and drivers are as follows.

i) Kenya's strategic partnerships

Kenya's strategic partnership(s) – particularly with the United States and Israel – in countering trans/international terrorism has/have been cited by Al Qaeda and its affiliates as the main reason for attacks on Kenya (Kamau, 2021). In other words, terrorist attacks target U.S. and/or Israeli interests in Kenya with devastating impacts on Kenya and Kenyans (Haynes, 2005; Kamau, 2021; Mogire & Agade, 2011). For example, the 1998 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi killed/injured more Kenyans than Americans even though the attack was primarily targeting U.S. interests including Embassy, diplomats, and citizens.

ii) Kenya's military incursion into Somalia

Kenya's military incursion into Somalia in 2011 is yet another driver of international non-state terrorism in the country. Kenya Defense Forces (KDF) military offensive dubbed 'Operation Linda Nchi' has been cited by Al Shabab as a key reason for its direct attacks on Kenya, Kenyans, and Kenya's strategic interests across East Africa. Al Shabab is a Somalia-based Al Qaeda affiliate, which operates across the East African sub-region specifically in Somalia, Kenya, Uganda, and Ethiopia (Anderson & McKnight, 2014; Buluma, 2014; Kamau, 2021).

iii) Continued presence of Kenyan troops in Somalia

Related to the second point, continued presence of Kenya's military in Somalia is another driver of mainly Al-Shabaab terrorism in Kenya. Whereas Operation Linda Nchi officially ended in 2012 after seven months of military combat pitting Kenyan forces and their allies in Somalia (i.e., Transitional

Federal Government of Somalia, Raskamboni Front/Movement, Ahlu Sunna Waljama'a, and Jubaland/Azania) on one side and Al-Shabaab on the other, Kenya's military did not leave Somalia. Instead, Kenya Defense Forces (KDF) joined the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) – an active United Nations Security Council approved peacekeeping force operating under aegis of the African Union – alongside other troop contributing countries including, but not limited to, two immediate neighbors of Kenya namely Ethiopia and Uganda. Al-Shabaab views Kenya's participation in AMISOM as a continuation of the 2011 military incursion and has attributed its continued attacks on the country to this very fact. As Botha points out, "In the case of Kenya, the presence of its defense force in Somalia as part of the African Union Mission to Somalia (AMISOM) increased the likelihood of attacks in Kenya" (Botha, 2021, p. 846). In the past, the group has stated that it will "stop at nothing to avenge the death of (their) Muslim brothers" until and unless the Kenyan government "cease its operations" – likely referring to the Kenyan army's participation in the African Union's mission in Somalia against the group" (Samuel, 2021, p. 168).

iv) Kenya's heavy-handed counterterrorism practices

Kenya's heavy-handed counterterrorism practice and its associated rule of law related issues (e.g., state perpetrated human rights abuses including torture, extra-judicial killing, and forced disappearance) both drive and enables terrorism in the country. Heavy-handed counterterrorism practice contributes to anger among profiled demographic, which in turn drives radicalization and the urge to get revenge. As an enabler of terrorism, Kenya's heavy-handed counterterrorism practice leads, on one hand, to stereotyping of the country's security officers (i.e., military and police) as "punishment machines" by locals who in turn become reluctant to engage in information sharing for fear of falling victim to torture, extra-judicial killing and forced disappearance (Njuguna, 2018, p. 67), and on the other hand, profiling and stereotyping of Somali people (including refugees), Muslims, and youths – especially young men – as terrorists or problematic demographic has

similar effect and possibly worse. Sharing of information between locals and security agencies is integral to countering terrorism. Thus, Kenya's heavy-handed counterterrorism practice is effectively counterproductive and contributes to stigmatization and radicalization both of which are also drivers and enablers of terrorism (Kamau, 2021).

v) Poor governance

Poor governance, or "administrative ineptitude" as Otenyo calls it, is yet another enabler of non-state terrorism in Kenya (Otenyo, 2004, p. 76). Poor governance enables non-state terrorism by creating conditions that are favorable for its emergence and/or spread. As such, poor governance is linked to other enablers/drivers such as corruption, weak security intelligence, state failure/collapse, and social vulnerability (including poverty, socio-political and economic marginalization), among others.

vi) Weak security intelligence and planning

Another related enabler of terrorism is weak security intelligence and planning. Weak security intelligence and planning stands in the way of early detection and prevention of attacks. This, in part, explains the relative ease with which Pokot bandits and Al-Shabaab among other identified perpetrators have been able to successfully stage their attacks in various parts of the country including several Al-Shabaab associated attacks in the country's capital – Nairobi – and at a public university in Garissa town among others.

vii) Favorable geographical landscape

Favorable geographical landscape also enables non-state terrorism in Kenya. For example, the vast, expansive, arid, and sparsely populated northeastern part of Kenya, which shares an international border with Somalia is difficult terrain for government security officers but provides a perfect conduit for Al-Shabaab operatives to gain access into the country. Another case in point is Boni forest, which is located on the southeastern part of the country near the Kenya-Somalia border. In the recent past, Boni forest has endured several military incursions dubbed "Operation *Linda* Boni Forest" and aimed at driving

out Al-Shabaab terrorists believed to be hiding in the forest (Kamau, 2021, p. 14).

viii) Porous borders

Kenya's porous borders enable terrorism by providing a conduit through which terrorists and weapons are smuggled into the country. For example, Al-Shabaab terrorists are known to exploit the porous border between Kenya and Somalia to move between the two countries with relative ease (Cengiz, 2021). Porous borders – especially the border region between Kenya, Uganda, South Sudan, and Ethiopia – also contribute to proliferation of small arms (Asaka, 2020; Daher et al., 2018), which is yet another important enabler of terrorism identified in the literature.

ix) Proliferation of small arms

Proliferation of small arms enables terrorism in Kenya by making arms and ammunitions easily accessible to bandits and extremists who in turn use the same to terrorize people. For instance, the continued terroristic activities of extremist groups such as the Pokot extremists that terrorize villages in the northwestern region of Kenya has been attributed, in part, to the proliferation of small arms facilitated by Kenya's porous border with South Sudan, Uganda, and Ethiopia (Asaka, 2020). Thus, proliferation of small arms feeds into violent extremist group dynamics reinforcing the practice of violent extremism in the process.

x) Corruption

As noted in the previous discussion on poor governance, corruption is yet another factor that enables terrorism in Kenya. Corruption coupled with what Morumbasi and Amuhaya refer to as a "lack of nationalism or patriotism" (Morumbasi & Amuhaya, 2016, p. 272) translates to disregard for the rule of law by a section of citizens and leaders and provides a weak point that terrorist can and have been known to exploit (Cannon & Pkalya, 2019; Mkutu & Opondo, 2021). For instance, corruption facilitates "movements of arms from one region to another and also movement of people across borders even without travel documents" (Morumbasi & Amuhaya, 2016, p. 272). As is the case with most drivers and enablers of non-

state terrorism, corruption works in concert with other factors such as porous borders to enable non-state terrorism as these two excerpts reveal.

> The porous border between Kenya and Somalia allows Al-Shabaab to target Kenya. In one incident in 2014, two Al-Shabaab affiliated guards bribed Kenyan border guards and transferred 50kgs of ammunition from Kenya to Somalia. (Cengiz, 2021, p. 513)

> The proliferation of small illicit arms and the increasingly porous nature of national borders, institutional weaknesses especially on the guarding of entry control points coupled with endemic corruption have enabled terrorist elements to execute their acts with little hindrance. (Akanyisi, 2016, p. 32)

xi) Internet and mass media

The Internet and mass media including social media "are major structural factors that facilitate terrorism" (Schmid, 2021a, p. 19). A 2005 study of public perception of terrorism in Kenya found, in part, that media reports of terroristic activities reinforce/intensify both feelings of fear and revenge (Krause & Otenyo, 2005). Terrorist groups are increasingly relying on the Internet and social media to spread/broadcast their messages and/or activities and recruit new members among other things. Like most terrorist groups today, Al-Shabaab has been known to exploit communication and networking opportunities presented by the Internet and social media to its advantage as the following excerpt confirms.

> From the beginning, Al-Shabaab has used the Internet and social media (Twitter in particular), as an integral part of its operations. As a result of the use of these platforms, the group created a recruiting network and disseminated videos online, getting recruits as far as the United Kingdom (UK) and the US [...]. The new media was exploited by this group for propaganda purposes, using the English language to appeal to the Somali diaspora in the US and the UK. It also produced a magazine, *Gaidi Mtaani* (Street Terrorist) in Kiswahili, to attract Somalis, especially in East Africa [...]. YouTube is also widely used by Al-Shabaab to publicize videos. Its media production group, Al-Kataib, employs professional production values to produce quality jihadist videos. Some of Al-Shabaab's YouTube posts are videos of interviews with American, British, and other foreign fighters discussing why they decided to join the group and seeking to glorify their experience. Many of the videos target the youth, who usually find such undertakings interesting. [...] Al-Shabaab also uses

Twitter to influence the public opinion in the countries of governments that may be opposed to its operations by demonstrating that it is the better devil while the AU, Federal Government, the US, Ethiopia, and Kenya Defense Forces are the violent oppressors. (Mutanda, 2017, pp. 30-31)

xii) Organized crime

Organized crime is both an enabler and driver of non-state terrorism in Kenya. For example, organized crime facilitates the movement of terrorists and illicit firearms and ammunitions across the country's porous borders and inside the country itself in effect enabling/driving terrorism. In the Kenyan context, organized crime itself is driven by a host of factors including culpability on the part of the country's police and financial institutions as the following excerpt shows.

> For instance, after the February 2019 Dusit D2 Hotel attack, financial institutions and the police were accused by the Office of Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP) as enablers of terrorism, as a typology of organized of organized crime. Security pundits have further associated organized crime in Kenya with weak or dysfunctional institutions, permeable borders and weak policing systems... (Abdullah, 2020, p. 19)

xiii) State failure in Somalia

The failure/collapse of the Somalia state in the early 1990s created a conducive environment for Al-Shabaab to emerge and thrive (Mutanda, 2017). State failure/collapse means that a state is incapacitated and its government – if at all any is in existence – cannot perform essential functions such as protecting its citizens and borders. This in turn creates room for non-state actors including undesirable ones like extremist groups to emerge and flex their muscles as the following excerpt confirms.

> …failed states by their very nature are both attractive to and likely to serve as viable sanctuaries for non-state actors such as terrorists and warlords among others. (Kyalo, 2017, Chapter 2)

xiv) Armed conflict

Armed conflict (in particular, civil war) reduces state capacity significantly and often produces a refugee crisis, which terrorist groups like Al-Shabaab have long been suspected of exploiting either to recruit members and/or camouflage themselves. Armed

conflict is arguably the single most important contributor to state failure/collapse in the East African sub-region. The failure/collapse of Somalia state can be traced to the ongoing Somali civil war, which began in the early 1990s and has morphed considerably over time. And as noted earlier, Somalia's collapse/failure contributed significantly to the emergence of Al-Shabaab terrorist group, which is the main perpetrator of terrorism in Kenya today.

xv) Contentious inter-state relations in the Eastern African region

Still at the regional level, contentious inter-state relations among East African states enables non-state terrorism in the sub-region and, by extension, Kenya. As the following excerpt notes, deficient sub-regional security cooperation – occasioned by contentious relations between some countries in the subregion – stands in the way of effectively dealing with the growing problem of violent extremism and terrorism.

> Another significant challenge in eastern Africa is overcoming the serious intra-regional rivalries which have circumscribed the potential for effective sub-regional security cooperation. Although the contentious state of relations between certain countries in eastern Africa does complicate sub-regional counterterrorism cooperation, it is precisely because those underlying tensions and conflicts are some of the main drivers of terrorism in eastern Africa that it is essential to stimulate efforts at the regional and sub-regional level. (Rosand, Millar, & Ipe, 2009, p. 97)

xiv) Social vulnerability

Social vulnerability attributable to poverty, unemployment, conflict, historical socio-political and economic marginalization, and resultant inequality among others has also been identified as a major enabler of terrorism particularly with regards to recruitment of new members (Badurdeen, 2021; Bellinger & Kattelman, 2021; Mkutu & Opondo, 2021; Morumbasi & Amuhaya, 2016). For example, Morumbasi and Amuhaya note that poverty makes it easy for terrorist groups to recruit new members by enticing them with promises of better economic prospects for themselves and their family members (Morumbasi & Amuhaya, 2016).

6. Conclusion

This case study has identified trends and patterns in GTD data on Kenya for the period 2000-2019. While much of the existing literature on terrorism in Kenya is focused on international terrorism associated with Islamic fundamentalism as noted in the literature review section of this article, the case study has established that Kenya experiences both domestic and international forms of non-state terrorism. This article has documented perpetrators of both forms of non-state terrorism in Kenya for the period under study. In this regard, the article contributes to knowledge on terrorism in Kenya at least by: (1) distinguishing between domestic and international non-state terrorism in Kenya – a distinction that is seldom recognized in the existing literature, and (2) identifying perpetrators of domestic non-state terrorism in Kenya based on GTD data thereby setting the stage for future inquiry including but not limited to research into the motivation(s) and operation(s) of such perpetrators on which currently there is a dearth of knowledge at best. Moreover, the case study found that, during the period under study, non-state terrorism was a significant threat to human security in Kenya with Al Shabaab accounting for the greatest number of attacks, injuries, and fatalities. This finding is consistent with existing knowledge on the subject.

Finally, the article has also documented drivers and enablers of non-state terrorism in Kenya that are referenced in scholarly publications published between 2000 and 2021. Of particular note is that, among the identified drivers is climate change – one of the greatest global security concerns of the 21st Century. With Kenya (and the larger East African region) being significantly vulnerable to climate change (Asaka & Oluoko-Odingo, 2022), and climate change already negatively impacting known drivers and enablers of non-state terrorism such as social vulnerability (Asaka, 2021; Bourekba, 2021; Stuart, 2019), it is crucial to have a context-specific knowledge of how the climate-terrorism nexus plays out in Kenya for better policy and practice. Therefore, future research in this specific area should focus on: (1) understanding the interplay between climate change and terrorism in Kenya, and (2) how best to leverage on existing knowledge to aid in fast-tracking climate action in the country.

Acknowledgement

The author is grateful to the editorial team and anonymous group of experts for their invaluable feedback.

References

Abdullah, A. I. (2020). *Implications of organized crime on urban areas of Kenya: A case of Kayole estate in Nairobi City County.* Nairobi: University of Nairobi.

Agresti, A., & Finlay, B. (1997). *Statistical Methods for the Social Sciences.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, Inc.

Ajide, K. B., & Alimi, O. Y. (2021). Does disparity in income and consumption ever incite terrorism in Africa? *World Affairs*, 339-380.

Akanyisi, J. M. (2016). *Terrorism in Africa: Its social and economic impacts in Kenya.* Nairobi: University of Nairobi.

Anderson, D. M., & McKnight, J. (2014). Kenya at war: Al-Shabaab and its enemies in Eastern Africa. *African Affairs, 114*(454), 1-27.

Asaka, J. O. (2020). Water-energy-food nexus and human security in northwestern Kenya. In A. Koulouri, & N. Mouraviev (Eds.), *Policy and governance in the water-energy-food nexus: A relational equity approach* (pp. 77-94). New York: Routledge.

Asaka, J. O. (2021). Climate change - terrorism nexus? A preliminary review/analysis of the literature. *Perspectives on Terrorism, 15*(1), 81-92.

Asaka, J. O. (2022). Human security. In J. O. Asaka, & A. A. Oluoko-Odingo (Eds.), *Human security and sustainable development in East Africa* (pp. 27-40). New York: Routledge.

Asaka, J. O., & Oluoko-Odingo, A. A. (2022). Introduction: Human security and sustainable development in East Africa. In J. O. Asaka, & A. A. Oluoko-Odingo (Eds.), *Human security and sustainable development in East Africa* (pp. 1-26). New York: Routledge.

Badurdeen, F. A. (2021). How do individuals join the Al-Shabaab? An ethnographic insight into recruitment models for the Al-Shabaab network in Kenya. *African Security*, 1-23.

Baxter, J. (2010). Case Studies in Qualitative Research. In I. Hay (Ed.), *Qualitative Research Methods in Human Geography* (pp. 81-97). Ontario: Oxford University Press.

Bellinger, N., & Kattelman, K. T. (2021). Domestic terrorism in the developing world: Role of food security. *Journal of International Relations and Development, 24*, 306-332.

Blanchard, L. P. (2013). *The September 2013 terrorist attack in Kenya: In brief.* Washington DC: Congressional Research Service.

Botha, A. (2021). Prevention of Terrorist Attacks on Critical Infrastructure. In A. P. Schmid (Ed.), *Handbook of terrorism prevention and preparedness* (pp. 841-870). The Hague: ICCT Press.

Bourekba, M. (2021). *Climate change and violent extremism in north Africa.* Barcelona: Barcelona Center for International Affairs.

Breidlid, T. (2021). Countering or contributing to radicalisation and violent extremism in Kenya? A critical case study. *Critical Studies on Terrorism, 14*(2), 225-246.

Buluma, G. (2014). *Al-Shabaab: The threat to Kenya and the horn of Africa.* Carlisle Barracks, PA: U.S. Army War College.

Cannon, B. J., & Pkalya, D. R. (2019). Why al-Shabaab attacks Kenya: Questioning the narrative paradigm. *Terrorism and Political Violence, 31*(4), 836-852.

Cengiz, M. (2021). Prevention of the procurement of arms and explosives by terrorists. In A. P. Schmid (Ed.), *Handbook of terrorism prevention and preparedness* (pp. 508-530). The Hague: ICCT Press.

Chacha, B. K. (2004). From Local Conflicts to Global Terrorism: Can Refugees and Regional Security Problems Jeopardise the Renewal of Kenya? *African Journal of International Affairs, 7*(1&2), 57-79.

Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Daher, B., Lee, S., Mohtar, R. H., Asaka, J. O., & VanDeveer, S. D. (2018). Security, climate change and the nexus. In R. Bleischwitz, H. Hoff, C. Spataru, E. v. Voet, & S. D. VanDeveer, *Routledge handbook of the resource nexus* (pp. 45-63). New York: Routledge.

Government of Kenya. (2012). Prevention of Terrorism ACT No. 30 of 2012. *Kenya Law*, 6-7. Nairobi, Nairobi, Kenya: National Council for Law Reporting.

Government of Kenya. (2019, September 03). The Statute Law (Miscellaneous Amendments) Act, 2019. *Kenya Gazette*. Nairobi, Nairobi, Kenya: The Government Printer.

Haynes, J. (2005). Islamic militancy in East Africa. *Third World Quarterly, 26*(8), 1321-1339.

Hsieh, H.-F., & Shannon, S. E. (2005). Three approaches to qualitative content analysis. *Qualitative Health Research, 15*(9), 1277-1288.

Ide, T. (2017). Terrorism in the textbook: A comparative analysis of terrorism discourses in Germany, India, Kenya and the United States based on school textbooks. *Cambridge Review of International Affairs, 30*(1), 44-66.

Kamau, J. W. (2021). Is counter-terrorism counterproductive? A case study of Kenya's response to terrorism, 1998-2020. *South African Journal of International Affairs*, 1-29.

Kamau, W. C. (2006). Kenya & the War on Terrorism. *Review of African Political Economy, 33*(107), 133-141.

Kanogo, T. (1987). *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau.* Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.

Kanyinga, K. (2009). The legacy of the white highlands: Land rights, ethnicity and the post-2007 election violence in Kenya. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies, 27*(3), 325-344.

Kenya National Commission on Human Rights. (2015). *The error of fighting terror with terror: Preliminary report of KNCHR investigations on human rights abuses in the ongoing crackdown against terrorism.* Nairobi: Kenya National Commission on Human Rights.

Kivoi, D. L. (2020, June 8). *Why violence is a hallmark of Kenyan policing. And what needs to change.* Mail & Guardian. https://mg.co.za/africa/2020-06-08-why-violence-is-a-hallmark-of-kenyan-policing-and-what-needs-to-change/

Krause , V., & Otenyo, E. E. (2005). Terrorism and the Kenyan public. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, 28*, 99-112.

Kyalo, W. A. (2017). *The impact of failed states on the growth and spread of international terrorism: A case study of Somalia.* Nairobi: University of Nairobi.

Lind, J., Mutahi, P., & Oosterom, M. (2017). 'Killing a mosquito with a hammer': Al-Shabaab violence and state security responses in Kenya. *Peacebuilding, 5*(2), 118-135.

Martin, G. (2016). *Understanding terrorism: Challenges, perspectives, and issues.* Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc.

Meyer, C. B. (2001). A case in case study methodology. *Field Methods, 13*(4), 329-352.

Missing Voices. (2022, April 23). *Statistics.* Missing Voices. https://missingvoices.or.ke/statistics/

Mkutu, K., & Opondo, V. (2021). The complexity of radicalization and recruitment in Kwale, Kenya. *Terrorism and political violence, 33*(1), 26-48.

Moghadam, A. (2017). *Nexus of global Jihad: Understanding Cooperation Among Terrorist Actors.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Mogire, E., & Agade, K. M. (2011). Counter-terrorism in Kenya. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies, 29*(4), 473-491.

Morumbasi, K., & Amuhaya, C. (2016). A networks analysis of terrorism in Africa: Implications for Kenya. *Vestnik RUDN. International Relations, 16*(2), 265-273.

Mutanda, D. (2017). What makes terrorists tick in Africa? Evidence from Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram. *Jadavpur Journal of International Relations, 21*(1), 20-40.

Mwangi, O. G. (2019). The "Somalinisation" of Terrorism and Counterterrorism in Kenya: The Case of Refoulement. *Critical Studies on Terrorism, 12*(2), 298-316.

National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism. (2021). *About START.* START. https://www.start.umd.edu/about/about-start

Njuguna, E. M. (2018). *Countering violent extremism in Lamu County: An analysis of the fear factor in the messaging and oral narratives.* Nairobi: University of Nairobi.

Nyadera, I. N., Wandwkha, B., & Agwanda, B. (2021). Not the time to take chances: Why African governments' response to COVID 19 matters. *Global Social Welfare, 8*, 137–140.

Oando, S., & Achieng', S. (2021). An indigenous African framework for counterterrorism: decolonising Kenya's approach to countering "Al-Shabaab-ism". *Critical Studies on Terrorism, 14*(3), 354-377.

Ogot, B. A., & Ochieng', W. R. (1995). *Decolonization and Independence in Kenya, 1940-93.* Athens, OH: Ohio University Press.

Otenyo, E. E. (2004). New terrorism: Towards an explanation of cases in Kenya. *African Security Studies, 13*(3), 75-84.

Otiso, K. M. (2009). Kenya in the Crosshairs of Global Terrorism: Fighting Terrorism at the Periphery. *Kenya Studies Review, 1*(1), 107-132.

Prestholdt, J. (2011). Kenya, United States, and counterterrorism. *Africa Today, 57*(4), 3-27.

Rosand, E., Millar, A., & Ipe, J. (2009). Enhancing counterterrorism cooperation in eastern Africa. *African Security Review, 18*(2), 93-106.

Saldaña, J. (2016). *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers.* Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Pubications Inc.

Samuel, T. K. (2021). At the crossroads: Rethinking the role of education in preventing and countering violent extremism. In A. P. Schmid (Ed.), *Handbook of terrorism prevention and prepareness* (pp. 165-205). The Hague: ICCT Press.

Sánchez-Cuenca, I., & de la Calle, L. (2009). Domestic terrorism: The hidden side of political violence. *Annual Review of Political Science, 12*, 31-49.

Schädel, A., & Giessmann, H. J. (2021). De-exceptionalizing the terrorist phenomenon: Lessons and concepts from conflict prevention and transformation. In A. P. Schmid (Ed.), *Handbook of terrorism prevention and preparedness* (pp. 75-108). The Hague: ICCT Press.

Schmid, A. P. (2021a). Terrorism prevention: Conceptual issues (definitions, typologies and theories). In A. P. Schmid (Ed.), *Handbook of terrorism prevention and preparedness* (pp. 13-48). The Hague: ICCT Press.

Schmid, A. P. (2021b). Conclusions: Terrorism Prevention - The UN Plan of Action (2015) and Beyond. In A. P. Schmid (Ed.), *Handbook of terrorism prevention and preparedness* (pp. 1103-1158). The Hague: ICCT Press.

Sharamo, R. D., & Mohamed, A. A. (2020). *Countering violent extremism in Kenya: Experiences and innovations.* Nairobi: Institute for Security Studies.

Shinn, D. H. (2007). Al-Qaeda in East Africa and the Horn. *Journal of Conflict Studies, 27*(1), 47-75.

Simon, M. (2015). The April 15 attack in Garissa by al Shabaab: A basic human needs and structural-cultural-direct violence analysis. *Foreign Policy Journal*, 1-11.

Stuart, J. W. (2019). Climate change and violent extremism in Africa: A contested link. In A. Tschudin, C. Moffat, S. Buchanan-Clarke, S. Russell, & L. Coutts (Eds.), *Extremisms in Africa (volume 2)* (pp. 175-200). Bryanston, Johannesburg: Tracey McDonald Publishers.

U.S. Department of Homeland Security. (2019). *Strategic framework for countering terrorism and targeted violence.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

UNDP. (2023). *Journey to extremism in Africa: Pathways to recruitment and disengagement.* United Nations Development Program.

United Nations General Assembly. (2006). *United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy.* United Nations. United Nations.

Zarkov, D. (2020). On economy, health and politics of the Covid19 pandemic. *European Journal of Women's Studies, 27*(3), 213-2017.

Food Insecurity in Kenya: Policy or Politics?

Christine W. Mathenge

Austin Peay State University, Department of Earth and Environmental Science. Clarksville, TN 37044, USA
Email: mathengec@apsu.edu

Abstract

The occurrence of food shortages and famines seems to be more common in the 21st century, even though there have been significant improvements in overall agricultural productivity. Despite the development of more advanced soil fertility management techniques, better-yielding crops, drought- and disease-resistant crop varieties, increased food diversity, improved animal husbandry, and biotechnological solutions to stabilize food supplies, the number of people who cannot feed themselves has steadily increased since the 1960s. This research examines the worsening food insecurity scenario, first globally and then in Kenya. Food insecurity is analyzed from three perspectives: food availability, access to food, and vulnerability to future hunger and famine. Each perspective highlights the progress made through various national policy initiatives. In recent years, these policy efforts have spanned three to five years and are now incorporated into larger development goals. While successful strategies for coping with food insecurity have been enumerated in other parts of the globe, these efforts in Kenya have become increasingly politicized.

Keywords: food shortages, famine, food insecurity, food policy

Introduction

The dilemma of food insecurity is not new, yet the challenge of addressing it continues to be relevant to scholars and policy makers. Historically, the dialogue on food insecurity dwelt on inadequacies of food supply in relation to food requirements at national, regional and global levels (Maxwell, 1996). A recent shift in the debate brought the level of focus to the micro level; local, household, and individual (Maxwell & Frankenberger, 1992). More recent developments have broadened the scope of food insecurity to incorporate Amartya Sen's work on elements of access to food; of vulnerability to hunger and famine and the perception of sustainability of practices by vulnerable groups in a given population as viewed by outsiders (Chambers, 1989; Sen, 1981; Watts & Bohle, 1993).

This article is divided into four parts. It begins by defining the terminology used, before moving on to a detailed examination of Kenya's food policy efforts from the 1980s to the present day. The third section uses Amartya Sen's perspectives on addressing hunger as a framework to evaluate Kenya's effort towards becoming more food secure. The fourth section reflects on the failures and loopholes of recent national food policies, programs and efforts and the opportunities it has created for politics.

Although the terms "food insecurity" and "famine" are often used interchangeably in popular media, they have distinct technical meanings that reflect different levels of severity of hunger. A person is considered to be food secure when they have reliable access to sufficient food for a healthy life (Maxwell & Frankenberger, 1992). This secure state includes the following aspects of access to food: (i) sufficiency in quantities and nutritional content, (ii) security or the absence of vulnerability to hunger, and (iii) sustainability of existing practices that allow continued access to food. Food insecurity, therefore, is the absence of such certainty. The term "famine" as used here refers a situation where a significant portion of the population is unable to access enough food to meet their basic nutritional needs (Swift, 1989). In a famine situation, there is a severe and prolonged shortage of food, often resulting in widespread hunger. Famine may result from the absence of adequate precipitation (drought) or disruptions in rainfall patterns that are likely to lead to widespread crop

failure and therefore cause severe food shortage. The devastation of an entire crop from pest infestation may also lead to widespread food shortage and famine.

Food insecurity in Kenya over seven decades

Agriculture has historically been viewed as the mainstay of Kenya's economy. The agricultural sector continues to play a significant role in the country's economic development, supporting nearly 80% of the population's livelihoods and contributing approximately 20% (one fifth) of the Gross Domestic Product in 2022 (KIPPRA, 2022). The prospects of a food secure Kenya, where every person has assured access to food at all times required for a healthy and productive life remains bleak. Maize, beans and wheat are viewed as staples in the Kenyan national diet, contributing a significant proportion to the daily calorie supply for rural and urban residents. According to the Ministry and Planning and National Development (currently the Ministry of Devolution and Planning), this diet composition has remained virtually unchanged since the 1960s.

Beginning from the first decade of independence, the bulk of the production of agricultural commodities came from small scale farms. Most of these small-scale farmers were organized under cooperative societies which handled the procurement of farm inputs and marketed the agricultural commodities produced by their members. These organizations handled both procurement of farm inputs and marketing of produce on behalf of the small-scale farmers. The very large, small-farmer organizations were state-run. Examples include the National Cereals and Produce Board and the National Irrigation Board Authority. Many of these state-run boards were reorganized and reconstituted through revisions in the legislature in the wake of the 2010 constitutional review (Goverment of Kenya, 2010).

Food production in Kenya fell sharply in 1979 and 1980 due to a major drought (Actionaid International, 2005; Nyangito et al., 2006). The decline in food production continued over the next three years, even as the population increased steadily. The combination of declining food production, a rapidly growing population, and massive crop failures due to drought conditions, culminated in a catastrophic

famine in Kenya in 1983-1984.

Several policy failures also precipitated this crisis. For instance, pricing policies protected food consumers at the expense of the farmers while research and development were focused on production of cash crops (e.g., tea, coffee, sisal, and pyrethrum) instead of food crops. Although significant efforts were made by research and development programs to develop high yielding technologies for farmers, there were significant shortcomings in their transfer to farmers. Agricultural research and development were dominated by the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) which was established as a parastatal in 1979. In its early years, KARI's strength was on agricultural research. Over time, the advances made in agricultural research did not translate to increased yields on small-scale farms. There were significant weaknesses in the transfer of technology from laboratories and test fields to small farmers' fields. These weaknesses were partly due to reduced government spending associated with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund's Structural Adjustment Programs in the 1980s and 1990s. As such, the Ministry of Agriculture's extension services became less efficient and effective, severely hindering the transfer of technology to farmers.

Kenya's first National Food Policy, which is contained in Sessional Paper no. 4 of 1981, was produced in the wake of that first major famine 1979-80 (Goverment of Kenya, 1981). An overproduction of maize in 1976-77 had left the stores at the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) full and therefore unable to buy future surpluses from farmers. A combination of a fertilizer shortage and a discontinuation of credit for farmers resulted in a significant decline in maize production in 1978. The slow response to exporting maize surpluses discouraged farmers. Poor growing conditions in early 1979 further reduced maize production, leading to a food shortage and famine in 1979-80. The first national food policy was produced in a hope to correct the problem. The policy sought to maintain broad self-sufficiency in major food items and achieve equitable distribution of food to all citizens mainly through state monopoly of input distribution, provision of subsidies on fertilizers, and setting grain prices.

A second National Food Policy (contained in Sessional Paper no. 2 of 1994) was produced after the 1992-93 famine (Goverment of Kenya, 1994). The policy reflected on the succession of the earlier food policy with increased food production in years of "good weather" and acknowledged the problems experienced in 1984-85 and 1992-93 when failed rains had caused widespread crop failures. This second food policy shifted focus away from food production and instead towards spurring on agricultural production (including the much-celebrated coffee, tea and horticultural exports). This second national food policy heavily promoted a market-driven approach to addressing food insecurity concerns through the involvement of multiple sectors including the health, education, agriculture, and private sectors. As was the trend across every sector of the economy in the 1990s, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund's Structural Adjustment Programs undermined national goals of self-sufficiency by reducing national budgets intended for agricultural support. As a result, this second National Food Policy was crippled by lack of funding for implementing planned activities and had no clear coordination mechanism to increase food production. The economic reforms implemented from 1993 devalued the Kenyan shilling; thus, the problematic balance of payments greatly undermined efforts to import fertilizers targeted for increased maize production for much of the 1990s (Nyangito et al., 2004). The NCPB used to bridge food deficits and help guard against food insecurity. However, after it was restructured, its monopoly was dismantled and it became a commercial buyer and seller of last resort. It aimed to maintain strategic food reserves with the support of foreign exchange reserves (initially pegged at US$60 million) (Nyangito et al., 2006). The reliance on balance of payments to import fertilizers had a significant negative impact on food production after that.

Subsequent national food policies were incorporated into the five-year national development plans. In 2008, the Kenyan government launched a national, long-term economic policy called Kenya Vision 2030. This policy incorporated the five-year development plans (referred to as medium plans). Kenya Vision 2030 identifies four key areas that the government will focus on continuously and incrementally, known as the Big 4 Agenda. Food security is one of these areas. Kenya Vision 2030 has implemented three medium-term plans so far, and a fourth plan is expected to be launched soon.

The first medium term plan (2008-2012) included a modest amount of attention on agriculture (Republic of Kenya, 2008). This initial plan introduced the government's first 12 flagship projects. Of these flagship projects, only one directly aimed to increase food production. This was the fertilizer cost reduction strategy, which in its early stages explored ways to import fertilizers in bulk and ultimately set up distribution mechanisms for farmers to access them.

The social unrest that followed the 2007-2008 Kenyan post-election violence led to a significant decrease in food production. (Rutten & Leliveld, 2008). During this period of unrest, many farmers and entire communities were displaced from their land. As a result, a severe maize shortage occurred later in 2008, after large numbers of farmers were displaced and unable to tend their crops. The situation was exacerbated by the destruction of maize fields in many parts of Rift Valley and Western Provinces, the country's largest producers of maize, during the post-election violence (Schlein, 2009). Wheat and beans were also affected by the civil unrest, which led to disruptions in production areas around the country (Rutten & Leliveld, 2008). In addition, disrupted rainfall patterns experienced in most of 2007 and 2008 (Wesangula, 2009) extended the period of reduced food production in both urban and rural areas until the end of 2008. Similarly, reports of food shortages were widespread across the country during the first half of 2009. (Andenje, 2009; Bii & Okwembah, 2009; Githaiga & Nyassy, 2009; Mathenge, 2009; Otieno, 2009; Rutten & Leliveld, 2008). The initial medium-term plan was well-received and was expected to address the prolonged food shortages.

The second medium-term plan had a dedicated agriculture sector plan that identified 13 flagship projects, including the previous 12 and one additional new one (Republic of Kenya, 2013). The larger and more nuanced agriculture sector plan demonstrated the national commitment to the sector. Of the 13 flagship projects, two directly focused on food production: (i) the newly added irrigated agriculture program, and (ii)

the fertilizer cost reduction strategy. The irrigated agriculture program recognized that most food production in Kenya is rainfed agriculture, which is constrained by weather patterns. The program therefore focused on horticultural production, as indicated by its stated objective of constructing 300 small-holder water harvesting structures and increasing the irrigated acreage from 650,000 acres in 2013 to 1 million acres by 2017. As part of its fertilizer cost reduction strategy, the government purchased 615,121 metric tons of fertilizer in bulk and implemented plans to use the private sector to supply and distribute it. This led to a 31% reduction in the price of DAP fertilizer and a 17% reduction in the price of CAN top dressing fertilizer (Republic of Kenya, 2013). The corresponding increase in maize production from 40.7 million bags in 2013 to 42.5 million bags in 2015 may be attributed to these efforts. However, a significant drop in maize production occurred in 2017, with only 35.4 million bags produced. This was due to insufficient rains during the growing seasons in 2017, as well as post-election violence in late 2017, which also contributed to the decline in production. The reduced rains in 2017 led to a sharp decline in food production across the board, including wheat production. In 2016, 214,700 tons of wheat were produced, but this number dropped to 165,000 tons in 2017. Further momentum was demonstrated when one investor was identified from a shortlist of investors to establish a local fertilizer plant. Toyota Tsusho Corporation was selected as the strategic partner for the fertilizer blending facility. However, these two initiatives have yet to be implemented, as the fourth medium-term plan is awaited (Republic of Kenya, 2013).

The third medium-term plan, which ran from 2018 to 2022, focused on increasing agricultural output and processing, with a particular emphasis on increasing livestock output (Republic of Kenya, 2018). This plan had 21 flagship programs and projects, an increase from 13 in the second medium-term plan. This was in addition to the shift in focus towards livestock production. The fertilizer subsidy program was continued in the third medium-term plan, with the addition of a soil analysis component and a monitoring and evaluation of impact component. A new food and nutrition security project was initiated in

the third medium-term plan. The project targeted increased maize production, as well as increased rice and Irish potato production. These new initiatives also indicate a slight shift in focus towards expanding production areas, enhancing access to seed and fertilizers, irrigation, mechanization, and post-harvest management.

A fourth medium-term plan for 2023-2027 is being developed and is available for public scrutiny in the form of a concept note. As a result, missing data limits the assessment of the success of the third medium-term plan. The assessment of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on food production is also not possible at this point.

Evidence of progress towards a more food secure future

In this section, Kenya's national food policy efforts are evaluated using Amartya Sen's framework for addressing hunger (Sen, 1981). This framework is used in this paper to assess progress towards a more food-secure future. The following three perspectives are used: (i) food availability/production, (ii) access to food /entitlements, and (iii) vulnerability to hunger.

i. Food availability and production

Kenya's agriculture sector contributes 27% to the country's gross domestic product (GDP). Although the economy is becoming more diversified and robust, agriculture remains the largest contributor to the GDP. The sector contributes 75% of raw industrial materials, 65% of export earnings, and about 60% of total employment (KIPPRA, 2022). Agriculture remains a significant part of the economy and a key driver of future development. Remarkable technological advancements have been made in recent years to increase Kenya's food production. Traditional and genetic engineering techniques have been used to produce higher-yielding, disease-resistant, and drought-tolerant varieties of numerous food crops. The Ministry of Devolution and Planning (formerly Ministry of Planning and National Development) acknowledges that there is still significant room for improvement in addressing the food production deficit, particularly in the staples of maize, wheat, and beans. These gaps have been routinely met by

importing food to supplement domestic production, as indicated by the self-sufficiency ratio and import dependency ratio. The self-sufficiency ratio for grains ranged from 69.1% in 2000 to 79.1% in 2005. The desired target is 100%. The self-sufficiency ratio[1] for grains ranged from 69.1% in 2000 to 79.1% in 2005. The desired target is 100% (Kenya Central Bureau of Statistics, 2006). The country's import dependency ratio[2] for wheat ranged from 50% to 80% between 2000 and 2005 (Kenya Central Bureau of Statistics, 2006).

Kenya has a disproportionate number of organizations working to advance agricultural productivity compared to its neighboring countries. These organizations vary in size and scope, from local and international to non-governmental and non-profit. They work with individual households and communities to implement agricultural development projects. Some organizations, such as international relief agencies, work in remote districts, while others, such as government ministries and departments, work countrywide. Despite their differences, all of these organizations share the common goal of increasing food production. There has been a significant increase in the variety of seeds available for staple crops such as wheat, maize, and beans since the 1960s. For example, the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI), in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture, has consistently contributed to improving crop varieties through scientific research over the years. KARI has collaborated with a variety of European partners, including individual governments and European Union agencies. The projects have ranged from multimillion-dollar projects involving multiple countries to smaller microfinance programs targeting women's self-help groups.

According to KARI, the country's extensive network of field extension centers and workers have disseminated research findings and new seed varieties to farmers at the grassroots. These varieties respond to the country's various farming community needs, preferences, and consumer demands (KARI, 2008). There has been a renewed interest in traditional grains like millet, which has led to the development of new varieties that are more productive, disease-resistant, and nutritious. These traditional grains are being used to supplement maize and wheat, Kenya's staple crops. Additionally, biogenetic innovations have increased the nutritional content of these crops. Significant progress has also been made in irrigation and water conservation, as well as soil fertility management in various parts of the country. These advancements have been acknowledged in the country's medium-term economic plans.

Most efforts to support food production have been focused on small-scale farmers. A more coordinated effort would likely result in greater food production. For example, if organizations involved in agricultural production, such as private, public, non-governmental, non-profit, and relief agencies, focused on staples such as maize, wheat, and beans, they could achieve a larger impact. This would require that the national food policy consistently articulate this focus and that the national and county government budgets reiterate it.

ii. Access to food and entitlements

A person's access to food is hinged on his/her entitlement set, as Sen argues (Sen & Dreze, 1999). That entitlement set consists of a person's endowment comprising of their land, their labor, and the few other resources that they may have and, the exchange entitlement involving the set of alternatives that correspond to each endowment.

A person's access to food is determined by their entitlement set, as argued by Sen (Sen & Dreze, 1999). This entitlement set consists of a person's endowment, which comprises their land, labor, and other assets, and the exchange entitlement, involving

---

[1] The Self Sufficiency Ratio (SSR) indicates the extent to which a country relies on its production resources. A higher SSR indicates a greater degree of self-sufficiency. SSR is calculated by dividing the overall national food production by the sum of production and the difference between imports and exports. The result is then converted into a percentage. It is calculated for groups of commodities (e.g. cereals) or for individual

commodities (e.g. rice).

[2] The Import Dependency Ratio (IDR) indicates how much a country is dependent on imported food stuffs for domestic consumption. IDR is calculated by dividing the imports by the sum of production and the difference between imports and exports, and then converting the result into a percentage.

the alternatives that correspond to each endowment.

Land is a key endowment that can be used to grow/produce food. Land can also be mortgaged, pledged, or disposed of in exchange for food and thereby prevent starvation. Kenya has seen a sharp increase in landlessness since the 1990s. The amount of arable land is fixed and the pressure for arable land has increased as the population has grown steadily. Declining soil fertility, increasing soil erosion, soil contamination from industrial use and from mining activities as well as general environmental degradation have simultaneously effectively reduced the amount of land that is available for food production.

Although difficult to achieve, reducing landlessness and increasing land tenure security are important components of economic development for agricultural economies in Sub-Saharan Africa. Land tenure security can be assessed using proxy measures, such as increased long-term investment in agriculture. This is because studies in Sub-Saharan Africa have shown that land tenure security is strongly correlated with long-term investment in agricultural productivity (Holden et al., 2009; Meinzen-Dick, 2002; Otsuka & Place, 2001). In Kenya, efforts towards tenure security has been closely linked to land titling. However, land titles are not a reliable indicator of land tenure security and do not necessarily lead to increased investment in agricultural productivity (Barrows & Roth, 1990; Bruce & Migot-Adholla, 1994; Odhiambo & Nyangito, 2002; Place & Migot-Adholla, 1998). Thus, while there has been significant progress in land titling and registration across Sub-Saharan Africa, agricultural productivity has not necessarily increased. For most farmers, family members are the main source of labor. Everyone's labor can always be exchanged for food. This is especially true in Kenya, like across Sub-Saharan Africa, where much of the agricultural labor force consists of women. However, women rarely have control of the land they till, thus affecting long term investment and overall productivity.

Kenya is one of the Sub-Saharan African countries that has had significant success in increased land titling and registration, particularly in Central Province (now Nyeri, Kirinyaga, Embu, Tharaka Nithi and Meru counties) and the areas around Nairobi (now Murang'a, Kiambu and Machakos counties) (Atwood,

1990; Odhiambo & Nyangito, 2002). Yet, land disputes are vastly common in the country. Kenya has witnessed sporadic land-related violence in recent years, including 1992 (Atwood, 1990; Green, 1987), 1997, 2002, 2008, and 2017. Much of the land-related violence has been politically motivated, especially in the multi-ethnic Rift Valley region. This is because the political party that loses power in each region often contests the land ownership of the people who supported the opposing political party. Regardless, these 'land clashes' have led to displacement of many people from their homes, loss of tenure security, increased landlessness, and reduced productivity of the contested land. Alarmingly widespread post-election violence occurred in early 2008, displacing the largest number of farmers in Kenya's history. Unsurprisingly, this unprecedented displacement was a major factor in disrupting access to and exchange of entitlements in late 2008 and early 2009. It is important to note that land clashes in Kenya are also a result of the country's checkered history of land reform (Rutten & Leliveld, 2008). Similarly, politically motivated 'land clashes' occurred following the 2017 national elections. Once again, the election-related violence disrupted people's access to their entitlements, including land, labor, and exchange entitlements.

Besides land and labor, other resources that can be considered part of the entitlement set for many Kenyans include household items such as furniture, farm implements, and livestock. When households' entitlements (land and labor) collapse or are rendered unproductive due to natural or man-made factors, and households are faced with the risk of starvation, they may be forced to trade such assets for food. The order in which assets are traded off, either initially or in subsequent waves, has been a subject of debate among scholars. Corbett found that households will strategically plan to minimize their impacts through short-term responses, such as borrowing from merchants, rationing current food consumption, collecting wild fruits to supplement food supplies, borrowing food from kin, breaking up households and sending children to live with distant relatives, selling productive assets including livestock, and pledging land in exchange for food or cash (Corbett, 1988). The specific strategy chosen and how it is used varies

widely by household and region. According to de Waal, the sale of livestock was the last resort for groups facing starvation in Sudan (de Waal, 1989, 1993). Similarly, Devereux found that the disposal of livestock, such as goats, was the final strategy for groups facing starvation in northeastern Ghana (Devereux, 1993). In extreme cases, land may be sold outright in exchange for short-term food returns. In Kenya's 2008-2009 drought, affected populations in Eastern and Northeastern provinces and northern Rift Valley (including Mandera, Wajir, Isiolo, Turkana, Marsabit and Samburu counties) used a variety of coping strategies, as reported in the country's press (Andenje, 2009; Bii & Okwembah, 2009; Githaiga & Nyassy, 2009; Mathenge, 2009; Otieno, 2009; Schlein, 2009; Walt, 2008).

As we analyze the growing numbers of Kenyans who are unable to feed themselves in the 21st first century, it is important to understand the complex factors that affect access to food and the entitlements' endowments that are available to the population. For instance, each person is endowed with their own labor, which they can exchange for food or use to grow their own food. However, ill health can affect a person's ability to grow or trade their labor for food. This endowment collapses when impacted by a disease like HIV/AIDS, which is now widespread in Kenya. In 2002, an estimated 2.5 million people between the ages 15 and 49 years were infected with HIV (Actionaid International, 2005). Infection rates in the rural areas were estimated at 11-12% of the working-age population. The disease renders those afflicted unable to use their labor to grow their own food, let alone trade it for food. This further increases the number of people likely to be food insecure in the future. The loss of labor attributed to HIV/AIDS translates to declining productivity, especially for small-scale farmers who rely heavily on household labor. The collapse of endowments for segments of the population leaves individual households vulnerable to hunger, regardless of progress made in increasing food productivity in other parts of the country. Underuse of labor due to declining access to productive assets like land is a more significant challenge to Kenya's agricultural productivity than HIV/AIDS.

As we continue to understand the complex ways in which the COVID-19 pandemic has affected Kenyans, we can draw on our knowledge of the HIV/AIDS pandemic to make inferences. Although COVID-19 illness had a much shorter timeline than HIV/AIDS, it still impacted access to labor entitlements in affected households. As we continue to learn more about the impact of COVID-19 on food production in 2020-2021, some early indicators suggest that food production may have increased in some parts of the country. The national and worldwide lockdown undoubtedly redirected labor entitlements from other economic sectors towards household food production. However, this entitlement exchange was only available to households that had access to land. Therefore, further investigation into the impact of COVID-19 on food production is needed.

iii. Vulnerability to future hunger

The severity of hunger can weaken a group's ability to resist future hunger events. Corbett (1988) identifies three distinct stages of famine. The first stage is characterized by the widespread use of short-term coping strategies, as discussed in the previous section. The second stage is marked by the gradual disposal of key productive assets, such as ploughs and oxen (Corbett, 1988; Devereux, 1993). The third stage involves destitution and distress migration, often to roadsides or relief camps (Corbett, 1988; Sen, 1981). Studies have shown powerful prioritization in an effort to protect households' longer term viability by hanging on to the most productive resources like large livestock, ploughs or land (Devereux, 1993; Watts & Bohle, 1993). The sequencing of short-term coping strategies reflects a keen desire to avoid making irreversible changes to domestic resources. However, as starvation becomes more severe, households may be forced to make irreversible changes, such as disposing of productive assets like ploughs, oxen, and even family land (Watts & Bohle, 1993).

In regions where households depend on rain-fed agriculture, the risk of crop failure is always high, leading to increased vulnerability to future hunger events, especially when the resource base has been greatly reduced through the disposal of productive assets (Devereux, 1993). Post-famine recovery therefore depends on the stage that households had reached before recovery begun. From this perspective,

famine is an economic crisis, above all else.

Small-scale farmers in Kenya account for a significant share of the country's agricultural production. An estimated 4 million small-scale farmers produce 75% of the total maize crop, and half of this produce is marketed (Actionaid International, 2005). This means that these farmers play a vital role in Kenya's food security and economy. Increasingly, many small-scale farmers depend on markets to meet their food consumption needs as a result of declining yields and post-harvest losses (Actionaid International, 2005). Thus, an estimated 70% of the food consumed in households is purchased from both rural and urban markets. Poverty, therefore, impacts the vulnerability of households and significantly shapes their prospects for recovery. (Sen & Dreze, 1999). To effectively tackle vulnerability to hunger, it is essential to address the underlying components of poverty and implement economic and social policies and strategies that enhance the economic well-being of vulnerable segments of society. Poverty eradication is therefore essential to Kenya's efforts to reduce hunger and vulnerability.

Regional and local instability and conflict are major contributors to food insecurity and poverty. Conflict can significantly undermine a society's ability to feed itself, and there is a growing body of research that suggests a link between poverty, food insecurity, resource degradation, and prolonged instability and conflict. (Pinstrup-Anderson et al., 1997). While not all poor, food insecure societies experience conflict, the likelihood of conflict increases as people's ability to meet their basic needs declines. While the body of knowledge on this topic is still evolving, the link between widespread poverty and increased vulnerability to hunger remains evident. Addressing hunger and vulnerability is a major step towards achieving food security, which is an essential long-term economic goal. Evaluating Kenya's efforts to address food insecurity from this perspective is essentially evaluating the country's efforts to reduce poverty, as vulnerability to hunger is tackled by short-term coping strategies that involve disposal of assets. Lowering vulnerability to hunger is a true indicator of poverty reduction, and vice versa.

Reflections on policies and politics of addressing food insecurities

The three perspectives on addressing hunger provide evidence that Kenya's efforts to address food insecurity have not been successful. First, the government's response has been remarkably slow. It took more than two decades for Kenya to develop its first national food policy. The initial food policy documents, which were annual government goals, were essentially short-term responses to the food crisis experienced in the 1980s. For instance, the stop-gap measure of importing grains to bridge the gaps has been heavily politicized. The companies awarded import permits have consistently been a small circle of elites, including sitting politicians and their close associates. In some cases, the imported grains have been sold on the domestic market without the promised significant price reduction. In other cases, the imported grains have driven down the prices of domestically produced grains so much that local farmers have been unable to cover their modest production costs. In any event, food imports have not addressed the underlying causes of food insecurity and are instead short-term fixes. Like many other developing economies, attempts to fill food deficits with imports of large quantities of grains do not address the root causes of declining domestic food production.

Subsequent food policies were incorporated into broader agricultural sector policies and initiatives as part of five-year development plans. The incorporation of current efforts into the longer-term vision of Kenya Vision 2030 demonstrates a significant improvement in the government's commitment to addressing food insecurity. As mentioned earlier, the one or two flagship projects and programs are focused on increasing the production of staple foods, such as maize, wheat, and beans. One commendable effort is the fertilizer cost reduction program, which has been consistently included in all three previous medium-term economic plans (2008-2012, 2013-2017, and 2018-2022) (Republic of Kenya, 2008, 2013, 2018). However, there is a striking lack of well-defined implementation strategies and action steps at both the central government and county government levels. Instead, the distribution of bulk-purchased imported fertilizers has been delegated

to the private sector. This created opportunities for a small elite group to obtain subsidized fertilizers and use them for large-scale maize farming. The private sector distribution mechanisms consistently resulted in the same elite group becoming fertilizer retailers. As a result, only a limited amount of the subsidized fertilizer reached the intended small-scale farmers at the prescribed lower cost. Reports have emerged that imported fertilizer, in the same bags it was imported in, has been found on store shelves and is being sold at much higher prices than the subsidized price. Small-scale farmers across the country have expressed outrage at the lack of oversight of the fertilizer reduction program and the multiple bulk importation events.

Land ownership conflicts have long hindered food production in Kenya. Some of these conflicts arise from the country's dual land tenure system, which combines common law and customary law (Odhiambo & Nyangito, 2002). In some cases, land disputes have been tied up in court for decades, preventing the land from being used productively. To improve land tenure security and agricultural performance, the legal system needs to be strengthened and the overlapping responsibilities of land enforcement agencies need to be clarified. KIPPRA estimates that it takes at least 18 to 20 months to resolve a land preservation order (Odhiambo & Nyangito, 2002). To improve the efficiency of the land enforcement system, it needs to be streamlined and made more transparent. Additionally, although it may be unpopular, the political causes of land disputes need to be addressed.

Many Kenyans are at risk of hunger due to high levels of poverty. In 2000, 60% of the rural population was classified as poor (Nyangito et al., 2006). Poverty is most prevalent in low-potential areas[3] and in overexploited high-potential areas. High incidence of rural poverty in Kenya can be attributed to low agricultural productivity, poor marketing, unemployment and low wages, high dependency, inaccessibility to productive assets, and high HIV/AIDS prevalence rates. One lasting solution to poverty in Kenya is to target poverty alleviation strategies to high-poverty areas. One effective strategy is for the government to subsidize fertilizer use for staple food production over a prolonged period, until affected populations can grow their own food. The Kenyan government could potentially implement food-for-work programs, in which citizens would work on infrastructure projects in exchange for food. Although food-for-work programs are not popular with governments due to their high costs, they have been shown to be effective in other developing countries in providing food security in the short and medium term.

In conclusion, the prospects of a food secure Kenya, where every person has assured access to food at all times required to lead a healthy and productive life unfortunately remain bleak.

References

Actionaid International. (2005). *The Right to Food: A Critical Analysis of Kenya's Policy in the Fight Against Hunger*.

Andenje, H. (2009). Six Districts Face Starvation as Shortage Bites. *Daily Nation*.

Atwood, D. A. (1990). Land Registration in Africa: The Impact on Agricultural Production. *World Development*, *18*(5), 659-671.

Barrows, R., & Roth, M. (1990). Land Tenure and Investment in African Agriculture: Theory and Evidence. *Journal of Modern Africa Studies*, *28*(2), 265-297.

Bii, B., & Okwembah, D. (2009, May 9). Farmers Hang Tools as Rains Fail. *Daily Nation*. *https://nation.africa/kenya/news/farmers-hang-tools-as-rains-fail--591634*

Bruce, J. W., & Migot-Adholla, S. E. (1994). *Searching for Land Tenure Security in Africa*. The World Bank.

Chambers, R. (1989). Editorial Introduction: Vulnerability, Coping and Policy. *IDS Bulletin*, *20*(2), 1-7.

Corbett, J. (1988). Famine and Household Coping Strategies. *World Development*, *16*(9), 1099-1112.

de Waal, A. (1989). Is Famine Relief Irrelevant to Rural People. *IDS Bulletin*, *20*(2), 59-62.

de Waal, A. (1993). War and Famine. *IDS Bulletin*, *24*(4), 33-40.

---

[3] Land is classified into three categories based on precipitation received: high potential areas with the highest amounts of rainfall followed by medium potential areas and then low potential areas. High and medium potential areas are suitable for rain-fed agriculture. Low potential areas are referred to as Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL).

Devereux, S. (1993). Goats Before Ploughs: Dilemmas of Household Response Sequencing During Food Shortages. *IDS Bulletin*, *24*(4), 52-59.

Githaiga, P., & Nyassy, D. (2009, July 10). Tough Times for Herder and Ranchers Put Them to Pasture. *Daily Nation*. https://nation.africa/kenya/news/tough-times-for-herders-as-ranchers-put-them-to-pasture--597916

Goverment of Kenya. (1981). *Sessional Paper No. 4 of 1981 on National Food Policy*. Nairobi: Government of Kenya

Goverment of Kenya. (1994). *Sessional Paper No. 2 of 1994 on National Food Policy*. Nairobi: Government of Kenya

Goverment of Kenya. (2010). *The Constitution of Kenya*. Nairobi: National Council for Law Reporting

Green, J. (1987). Evaluating the Impact of Consolidation of Holdings, Individualization of Tenure and Registration of Titles: Lessons from Kenya. In L. T. Center (Ed.), *Land Tenure Center Papers* (Vol. Paper No. 129). University of Wisconsin.

Holden, S. T., Otsuka, K., & Place, F. (Eds.). (2009). *The Emergence of Land Markets in Africa: Assessing the Impacts on Poverty, Equity and Efficiency*. Resources for the Future.

KARI. (2008). In Focus. *In Focus*(6).

Kenya Central Bureau of Statistics. (2006). *National Food Balance Sheets 2000-2005*. Nairobi: Kenya National Bureau of Statistics

Kenya, G. o. (2011). *National Food and Nutrition Security Policy Draft Sessional Paper*. ((...) of 2011). Nairobi: Government of Kenya

KIPPRA. (2022). *Kenya Economic Report: Building Resilience and Sustainable Economic Development in Kenya*.

Mathenge, O. (2009, May 27). In Turkana, They Live at the Mercy of the Elephants. *Daily Nation*. https://nation.africa/kenya/news/provincial/in-turkana-they-live-at-the-mercy-of-the-elements--593784

Maxwell, D. G. (1996). Measuring Food Insecurity: the Frequency and Severity of 'Coping Strategies'. *Food Policy*, *21*(3), 291-303.

Maxwell, D. G., & Frankenberger, T. R. (1992). *Household Food Security: Concepts, Indicators, Measurements: A Technical Review*.

Meinzen-Dick, R. S. (2002). *Innovation in Natural Resource Management: The Role of Property Rights and Collective Action in Developing Countries*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Nyangito, H., Nzuma, J., Ommeh, H., & Mbithi, M. (2004). *Impact of Agricultural Trade and Related Policy Reforms on Food Security in Kenya* (KIPPRA Discussion Papers, Issue.

Nyangito, H., Nzuma, J., Ommeh, H., & Mbithi, M. (2006). Kenya. In T. Harmon & J. Morrison (Eds.), *Trade Reforms and Food Security: Country Studies and Synthesis* (pp. 365-397). Food and Agricure Organization of the United Nations.

Odhiambo, W., & Nyangito, H. (2002). *Land Laws and Land Use in Kenya*.

Otieno, D. (2009). Grim Outlook on Kenya Food Shortage. *Daily Nation*.

Otsuka, K., & Place, F. (2001). *Land Tenure and Natural Resources Management: A Comparative Study of Agrarian Communities in Asia and Africa*. Johns Hopkins University Press.

Pinstrup-Anderson, P., Rajul, P.-L., & Rosegrant, M. (1997). *The World Food Situation: Recent Development, Emerging Issues, and Long Term Prospects*. International Food Policy Research Institute.

Place, F., & Migot-Adholla, S. E. (1998). The Economic Effects of Land Registration on Small Holder Farms in Kenya: Evidence from Nyeri and Kakamega Districts. *Land Economics*, *74*(3), 360-373.

Republic of Kenya. (2008). *First Medium Term Plan, 2008-2012*. Nairobi: Government of Kenya

Republic of Kenya. (2013). *Second Medium Term Plan (2013-2017): Transforming Kenya: Pathway to Devolution, Socio-Economic Development, Equity and National Unity*. Nairobi: Government of Kenya

Republic of Kenya. (2018). *Third Medium Plan 2018-2022*. Nairobi: Government of Kenya

Rutten, M., & Leliveld, A. (2008). Introduction: Inside Poverty and Development in Africa. In M. Rutten, A. Leliveld, & D. Foeken (Eds.), *Inside Poverty and Development in Africa*. Koninklijke Brill NV.

Schlein, L. (2009, November 2). Kenya Facing Catastrophic Food Shortages. *VOA News*. https://www.voanews.com/a/a-13-2009-01-24-voa12-68810257/412735.html

Sen, A. (1981). *Poverty and Famines: An Essay on Entitlements and Deprivation*. Oxford University Press.

Sen, A., & Dreze, J. (1999). *The Amartya Sen and Jean Dreze Omnibus: Comprising Poverty and Famines, Hunger and Public Action, India: Economic Development and Social Opportunity*. Oxford University Press.

Swift, J. (1989). Why Are Rural People Vulnerable to Famine. *IDS Bulletin*, *20*(2), 8-15.

Walt, V. (2008, February 27). The World's Growing Food-Price Crisis. *Time*. https://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1717572,00.html

Watts, M. J., & Bohle, H. G. (1993). The Space of Vulnerability: The Causal Structuure of Hunger and Famine. *Progress in Human Geography*, *17*(1), 43-67.

Wesangula, D. (2009, May 16). Food Crisis Warningas Rains Misbehave. *Daily Nation*. https://nation.africa/kenya/news/provincial/food-crisis-warning-as-rains-misbehave--592504

Poetry

Denis Waswa

Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803, USA
E-mail: dwaswa1@lsu.edu

Haunted City

I

why did you send me to the city, mother?
didn't you know the men in blue will beat me
and blind my eyes with *tear gas*, mother?

they beat me with *rungus*, mother
they burnt down your store

there is a word when a boy kills himself, mother
it is called *suicide*
and there is a word when faulty fire burns down the
gheto, mother
it is called accident
but there is no word when the police burn down
property, mother!

why do you let them beat me, mother?
why do you let them shoot me, mother?
why do you let them arrest me, mother?

they came home yesterday, mother
i covered you
i protected you when they came to arrest you, mother

they knocked at the door, mother
i did not open
they broke into the house
and asked my name, mother
i said am called Kizito, mother
but they asked for more names

they asked for your name
they asked where to find you, mother
they wanted to compare a photo they had, mother
they forced me to tell them, mother
and they set our house on fire!

II

bodies on the street keep dying and the demos are
over, but the bodies aren't dead

the IG keeps saying the bodies were looting and the
broken bodies speak silently, they walk slowly on a
street across the city, into a *fire hanging over the city*,
in the central business unit of a city full of tear gas

a city that eats her own children, a city where Os and
Ws deems you criminal,

i don't know the name of the police officer who beats
me, i don't know the *mkubwa* who orders the police
to beat me, i don't know the name of the CS who
ordered the police to shoot me, i don't know the name
of the governor who distributes cocaine in the city

international observers say the demos were illegal,
they tell me i had no right to express my freedom,
they ask me if i know the 07-08 *PEV*, they ask me if i
remember the Kiamba fire, they say we are protecting
lives

i walk on the street and hear voices, i hear voices in
the passing wind, i hear guilt and shame in the voice
of the CS on radio

i have my body when others are missing, i have my
legs and my hands when others have been broken, i
hear the school children singing, *politicians are
dancing on our graves!*

III

there were 18 of us in front of the *inspector's office*,
asking questions about the baby who was shot 5
times

there were 18 of us in front of the cabinet secretary's
office, screaming about the video of the shooting that
went viral, but it was silenced

for the politicians to be reelected

and the inspector said there was looting down there
on the streets, so the police went after the looters

you should be protesting the looting, that group of youths looted public property, why aren't you protesting the looting?

why are you only protesting this shooting?

the inspector also wanted to know why we were protesting this shooting, when the previous day, there was a shooting in Dandora, where two criminals were shot and both died

we didn't answer; instead, we did a lie-in in front of the inspector's office, and journalists stood with cameras above us, as we lay stiff and motionless on the cold wet pavement

they pulled the video down after it went viral, they even said it was a faked propagandist narrative, meant to tarnish the name of the military

a police officer pulled one of us out, from the front of the banana republic, and asked us why we weren't protesting the other bodies, shot by bodies that were not police officers

it was a strange line of questioning, but it kept happening

the inspector general kept asking, why the body the police shot was more important to us, than the bodies shot by others

because they took an oath to protect lives, not to kill them; because they are paid to protect people not to shoot them

then they chased the journalists, and we appeared on prime bulletin that evening, lying-in on the cold wet pavements

and the CS called us anti-capitalists, not any different from terrorists chasing away city investors

then the country forgot about the baby they shot 5 times, but the echo of our voices kept hounding them

Po(tus)wer

his former coming was a triumph
every business in the capital halted,
citizens cautioned off major roads,
the awaited messaiah was about to land,
and the tumbocrats waited
at the airport to receive him

see his second coming without power
no one cautioned off the express way,
mpigs have gone to russia to cheer France,
the street urgins are busy begging, picking pockets,
who will tell them the messiah is coming home?

jayden cares nomore,
that the black son is visiting again,
no shared pulpits erected,
isn't he planning a national address with ally?
maybe they share no class anymore

no media camped the airport,
i wonder if they will cover him in K'ogelo,
how will he feel this time?
that he came home, an ordinary man,
and was given a cold shoulder
for lacking state power

Book Review
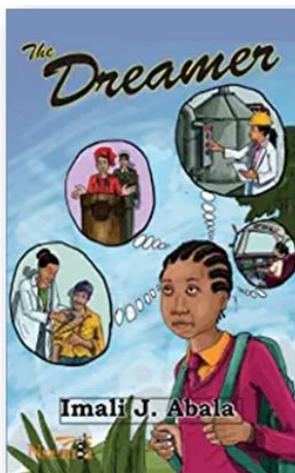
The Dreamer

By Abala J. Imali

Nsemia Inc. Publishers, (www. nsemia.com), 2017. iii, 103 pp. $20 US (paper)

Review by Denis Waswa

Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803, USA
E-mail: dwaswa1@lsu.edu

The Dreamer is a poetic novella about gender-based violence and female agency in Kenya and, by extension, Africa. The novella narrates the plight of women and the female postcolonial condition in developing worlds. While the novella mirrors the abuse of women in contemporary Africa, the narrative is a bildungsroman story that chronicles through the journey of a young girl, a dreamer, who is determined to overcome the obstacles placed before her by a patriarchal society. To navigate the male chauvinism that rules the social, political, economic, and religious institutions in her society, the Dreamer must embrace courage, perseverance, patience, and determination. The novella is divided into seven chapters each unravelling what it means to be a woman in postcolonial Africa and life lessons that women must learn enroute to achieving their dreams and ambitions, that is, breaching the gap between their dreams and reality on the ground.

Chapter one, "The Dreamer" narrates gender-based violence within various institutions, namely, family, church, politics, and the medical profession. The chapter highlights the dreamer's predicaments within these institutions showing how they choke female agency. In the family setup, the dreamer's father and sister discourage her from dreaming to be anything other than a home keeper. Her father notes that "girls don't need to dream nor think, they do as they are told . . . they don't need to study because they have no brain like boys to absorb knowledge and rule the world" (p. 1, 3). Women in the dreamer's world belong to the kitchen and "work on their backs." Men believes that education and occupying leadership positions makes women "grow horns" (p. 2, 4). Such men are confined in a past that looks down on women as objects of pleasure. The dreamer's sister quitted her dreams to "work on her back" and she is now enjoying the fruits of her work. For the dreamer's father and sister, women's dreams only materialize in their mind, but not in reality. The dreamer believes that change is inevitable even when men like her father think she has gone mad. Her ambitions have driven her father and sister insane and dead to the reality of the present. Besides even with education, women are not welcome in the political arena. Male politicians take advantage of their position to look down upon them. While questioning the space of women in politics, the chapter challenges politician who shun women from occupying leadership positions because they "are meant for the home" (p. 11). This chapter contests closure on women's social and economic mobility and views such advances as possible and real, and not pure madness as voiced by their male counterparts.

In addition, chapter one exposes the cultural clash between traditional and western colonial perspectives regarding gender-based violence in Africa. Whereas traditional divinity views a girl child's dreams and ambition as a sign of rebirth and regeneration of all African women, the church believes that such dreams would lead to her death. The dreamer asks the priest to help her discern her dreams, but he does not support her. The priest curses and rebukes her as a "dead, soulless creature who will burn in hell" because of her insane dreams (p. 8). Determined to reach her goals, her dreams lead her to Andigo—the traditional seer whom she begs to unravel her future. The seer encourages the dreamer that she is the fulcrum between her dreams and reality because the dreams of all women reside in her. The seer challenges her to chase her dreams and never give up regardless of the cost (p. 17). The seer notes that the girl's dreams would transition womenfolk from an old status quo to resurrection of new realities and new generation of women who wouldn't settle for the less that the society offers them. The dreamer never stops dreaming big, she keeps working hard to be a doctor, an engineer or a politician, which were taboo careers for women in her society.

In the second chapter, "The Dreamer's Dream," the novella unfolds violence that women

undergo within the marriage institution in the dreamer's world. Young girls bear forceful and early marriages, rape from old age forced-on husbands, physical violence, and in other cases, they forced to have children. The dreamer is presumed crazy by her husband and her doctor conclude that only a lobotomy would treat her illness. She yearns for freedom from her marriage, but the doctor and nurse hold her hostage in the hospital determined to remove the tumor that ails her (p. 26-30). The dreamer's cry of agency to do what she wants with her body and chase her dreams fell on deaf ears.

Chapter three, "The Dreamer's Reality and Dreams Fused," continues the Dreamer's predicaments in the hands of the doctor and nurse. Having diagnosed her hysterical, the doctor wants to "tame the Jezebel inside her" (p. 39). To the doctor, all women were prostitutes that needed to be uprooted, and silenced (p. 43). Reality dawns on the dreamer that the chauvinistic doctor is never going to listen to her freedom calls, and neither will the nurse because she is a prisoner of the system. The doctor who was supposed to save the Dreamer turns out to be her tormentor. Could the nurse join hands with the Dreamer to free themselves from this imprisonment? The Dreamer notes that although unwilling, the nurse has no choice, but to prepare her for lobotomy. In hunger for freedom, the only thought on the Dreamer's mind is how to escape the malady that is about to happen to her (p. 41).

In chapter four, "The Dreamer's Unveiling," Abala challenges African women to forge a united front in combating issues that affect them. The nurse becomes woke and begins to understand the Dreamer's pain and the dehumanization subjected to her by the doctor. She got tired of her muteness and doing what she was told without any resistance (p. 48-50). The nurse's inner voice becomes activated and reformed. Her awakening continues in chapter five, "The Dreamer's Awakening and Death," and the mummified mute in her begins to speak. The nurse's attitude change arises from her realization of the doctor's ultimate plan to "make the dreamer multiply" the same way he had made her multiply. She realizes that the Dreamer's womanhood was now on trial in the hands of the doctor (p. 63). The nurse, formerly enslaved to her job, doctor and husband breaks her

shackles and stands up for the rights of the Dreamer. It becomes clearer to her that women have for so long suffered and surrendered their dreams and ambitions to the oppression of men like her husband, the Dreamer's father, and the doctor. For so long, these men objectified women and treated them as tools of pleasure (p. 62). Women tried to resist this brutality, but in isolation, there is nothing much they could do to overcome it. Therefore, men continued to kill women dreams, spirits, and voice (p. 65). It was now time for women to join hands and say enough is enough. The doctor, like other men, had crossed the line now and the nurse ceases to take the brutality and oppression in muteness. It was now time to claim equality for both men and women. Faced with this wokeness, the doctor escaped leaving the nurse and the dreamer, free at last!

Chapter six, "The Lioness's Dream and Protest," is a continuation of the nurse's awakening and resistance to the brutality and oppression that the Dreamer, herself, and other women have endured at the hands of the doctor. The nurse opens to the Dreamer, explaining that she, too, had a dream to become a doctor and save lives, but her dream was killed by the doctor when she fell into his grand scheme of things just like the Dreamer was about to become his victim. The nurse sired three daughters from the doctor because she had no strength to resist. Unfortunately, the nurse couldn't save her daughters from the doctor. They "flounder[ed] to their destruction… [b]uoyed to the tidal waves of the Doc's unforgiving sea of deception…he suffocated their senses and killed their resolve… [t]ill they lost all their marbles and perished" (p. 79). She secretly contacts authorities and vows to free the Dreamer at all costs, including losing her job, verbally abused by the doctor, and roughed by guards out of the hospital (p. 82-83). The police do not believe the nurse when she reports the Dreamer's "abduction" by the doctor for he was a respected man in the society. The police call her crazy, but she vows to come back again if they will not save her. Left in the hands of the doctor, what had seemed liked hope and freedom for the Dreamer becomes yet another deferred dream. Nevertheless, she pledges to humanity and herself that she will keep fighting for her dreams to the very end of the struggle.

The seventh chapter, "Lucifer Crucified for his Treachery," sums up the novella with a triumphant

freedom for the dreamer, nurse, and all womenfolk. The nurse returns to the doctor's hospital with the police and the doctor is arrested for the committed crimes. The Dreamer celebrates in jubilation, not just for her freedom, but to all women, justice is served because "[t]he rat has finally been cornered … [g]uilty as charged … [the] unequivocal verdict: castration…the god of entrapment, caged" (p. 97-98). Shackled in unfixed captivity, the doctor becomes muted as justice diminishes his manhood. He is now the prisoner, not the women whose dreams he had crushed. As the legend finally falls into the chasm of justice, the Dreamer and the nurse bear witness to this momentous exchange of prisoners. Thus, the Dreamer's dream—freedom—becomes a looming reality. But is the doctor's fall just another of the Dreamer's dreams? Was it true that she was free at last? The novella ends in suspense as the dreamer reflects on the reality of her acquired freedom. To her, her dreams and reality were "both cojoined and disjoined" (p. 102).

In conclusion, "The Dreamer" offers a thought-provoking reality into the plight of women in contemporary post/colonial Kenya and Africa by extension. The novella exposes to the reader the brutality and oppression that womenfolk face at the hands of chauvinistic men in various social, religious, economic, and political setups. While unraveling this malice, the narrative challenges the reader to question what real freedom means for women in the post/colonial world. The novella's strengths lie in the first-person narrative point of view. The author's decision to let the dreamer narrate the oppression, brutality, and the fight for agency as it happened to her makes the story relatable and believable to the reader. The first-person narration also gives the Dreamer the agency and voice that society has denied African women for so long, hence adding authenticity to the story. For teenage readers, the pictures add to the visual effect and not only connects, but also helps them to comprehend the story. The language used is simple and can be understood clearly by upper primary school children and high school students. This novella can be a great asset to all readers interested in African gender studies, but specifically teenage boys and girls, teachers, and scholars who want to understand the plight of women in Africa and the challenges that women go through to overcome the brutality of oppression they face in the hands of patriarchal men in the society. It is an engaging and moving story that strikes a connection between women struggle for freedom and the reality that such freedom comes with. I would recommend the novella to children and teachers across all primary and high schools in Kenya, human rights activists, and literary scholars interested in gender equity in Africa.

Kenya Scholars and Studies Association

Executive Committee

Jerono P. Rotich, *North Carolina Central University – President*

Patrick Mose, *Ohio University – Vice President*

Penina Kamina, *State University of New York – Treasurer*

Janet Mmbaha-Zarnesky, *Alabama A&M University – Secretary*

Membership Information

For an annual membership in Kenya Scholars and Studies Association, which includes subscription to *KSR Journal*, dues are: $50 for a professional and $25 for a student member.

A Call for Submissions

The *Kenya Studies Review (KSR)* editor invites submissions of original, previously unpublished article-length manuscripts between 6000 and 7000 words (not exceeding 30 pages in length) from a wide range of disciplines with a special focus on Kenya. Thought-provoking essays, critical reviews of current scholarly books, opinion pieces, and narrative writing (prose and poetry) will be accepted for consideration and possible publication. Articles that have been published elsewhere in any form cannot be considered for publication, including those available on the Internet, nor will we consider multiple submissions by the same author. For complete submission details and guidelines, visit our website http://kessa.org/ksr-journal/**.** Submissions should be made via email to editor-in-chief@kessa.org or our online website http://kessa.org/ksr-journal.

Deadline: August 31, 2023