Kenya

EXPLORING PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE IN NAIROBI'S URBAN SETTLEMENTS
Eastleigh, Majengo, Mlango Kubwa

LPI / CCMRE

EXPLORING PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE IN NAIROBI'S URBAN SETTLEMENTS
Eastleigh, Majengo, Mlango Kubwa

Life & Peace Institute

Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations in Eastleigh

Foreword Kamukunji

Rapid and large-scale urbanisation has been changing the face of urban landscapes on the African continent. Despite emerging opportunities – such as increasing access to education, health and transport infrastructures – entrenched urban socio-economic challenges related to (amongst others) high levels of poverty, unemployment and high population density, have yet to be overcome. Rapid urban development has concomitantly led to the formation of increasingly diverse urban settlements, confined geographical locations, hosting populations from multiple socio-cultural, religious, ethnic and national backgrounds. The two areas of Kenya's capital that were targeted by this pilot research – two sub-administration units of Kamukunji Sub-County and one sub-administration of Mathare Sub-County of Nairobi, illustrate these prominent dynamics.

For this research, the Life & Peace Institute (LPI) and the Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations in Eastleigh (CCMRE) engaged a wide range of community and state actors and adopted a refined analytical framework to enable the identification of community priorities and pressing needs that go beyond dealing with "harder" security issues, and put emphasis on the importance of strengthening existing community resilience and capacities for peace. One strong recommendation from the participants for instance, has been that religious leaders should be encouraged and facilitated to take a much more proactive role in promoting cohesion across religious communities. Youth were identified as a group that is insufficiently supported and empowered by their communities and the state and therefore at risk of being negatively influenced, or mobilised.

LPI is currently supporting two change processes in collaboration with Kenyan civil society organisations CCMRE and the Eastleighwood Youth Forum (EYF). Earlier this year, LPI in partnership with EYF launched an urban youth dialogue to action project entitled, "Tubonge Mtaani" (translated as "Let's talk in the 'hood"), where youth moderators have been trained to facilitate groups comprising diverse young women and men to meet regularly and engage in transformational dialogue over time. This Sustained Dialogue approach goes beyond discussion and exchange; further along into the process, the dialogue groups will engage in scenario-building to identify proactive steps and positive solutions for the pressing issues that have been discussed, as well as taking action together to move forward with the implementation of tailored solutions.

This publication and the initiatives building on its findings would not have been possible without the facilitation and participation of the communities in Eastleigh, Majengo and Mlango Kubwa. My sincere appreciation is therefore directed to these actors, for past and future efforts to promote peaceful coexistence in their areas, and in Kenya at large.

Charlotte Booth
Programme Director

Table of contents

Acknowledgments

Eastleighwood Youth Forum

Executive summary

"Exploring Peaceful Coexistence in Nairobi's Urban Settlements" was a nine-month pilot project designed and conducted as a qualitative research project through a partnership between the Life & Peace Institute (LPI) and the Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations in Eastleigh (CCMRE) of St. Paul's University.

The aim of this research project was to increase CCMRE's and LPI's understanding of the complex web of mechanisms affecting (strengthening or weakening) communal coexistence and social cohesion in two sub-administration units of Kamukunji Sub-County and one sub-administration of Mathare Sub-County of Nairobi. By exploring, analysing and documenting connectors and dividers in the area, the research – conducted from July to December 2015 – aimed to substantively inform LPI's future strategic programmatic engagement in Kamukunji and Mathare Sub-Counties and in the wider Kenya.

While increasing pressure from systems of structural violence was emphasised by the participants, a strong commitment to contributing to change was expressed, and light was shed on community coping mechanisms and existing sources of resilience. Therefore, not only has the research project contributed to increasing CCMRE, LPI and the participants' knowledge of the project sites and their dynamics but has also enabled CCMRE and LPI to identify windows of opportunity for sustainable action towards fostering peaceful coexistence in the three areas.

The uniqueness of this research project owes to the fact it was inherently designed and implemented as a peacebuilding process in itself by creating space for dialogue between individuals from different backgrounds (ethnic, religious, geographical, gender and age). The process provided a safe and alternative space for participants to share their perceptions, experiences, solutions and strategies, while listening to others' perceptions. Thereby the process contributed to a positive and constructive change in attitudes within and between community groups reached through the pilot project.

Summary of key findings

The findings of 22 focus group discussions (FGDs) and 7 key informant interviews (KIIs) elucidate a wide range of interrelated social, political, cultural and economic underlying factors and drivers of violence that have interacted in negatively affecting peaceful coexistence in two sub-administrations of Kamukunji Sub-County, Eastleigh and Majengo, and neighbouring Mlango Kubwa in Mathare Sub-County.

Overall, the FGDs – or "dialogues" for the space they provided – around community perspectives on connectors and dividers in these areas reveal a significant increase in the feeling of insecurity and tensions on community level. The participants described the project sites as characterised by heightened suspicion and strained relations between social groups, dating back to 2011 when, in the wake of Kenyan Defence Forces' incursion in Somalia, deadly attacks attributed to al-Shabab occurred in Kamukunji Sub-County and other parts of the country. The growing hostility has created potential points of conflict between Kenyan Somalis and ethnic Somalis, on the one hand, and Kenyan Somalis and non-Somalis, on the other, as well as more broadly among Christians and Muslims.

The key findings fall under three interrelated themes and are summarised below:

- **Socio-economic challenges:** Most participants emphasised the role of a vast array of socio-economic challenges, such as the high level of unemployment, poverty and lack of education, which contribute to increase insecurity and tensions, therefore undermining peaceful coexistence in the area. A sense of 'urban disenchantment' and loss of hope were observed across groups, related dominantly to a lack of trust in the capacity of policymakers to bring about positive changes in the short term.

- **Governance-related challenges at the local level:** A majority of the participants expressed concern and frustration regarding the current devolution process, particularly around the lack of transparency and clarity about the roles and responsibilities of the newly elected county governments and the national government An entrenched culture of impunity and increasingly tense community-security force relationships were also emphasised by a majority of participants as reasons to explain the high levels of suspicion and lack of trust within the communities in the sub-county.

- **Radicalisation and violent extremism[1]:** The growing threat of violent extremism was highlighted by most participants across both geographical areas and religious backgrounds. Dialogues focused on drivers of radicalisation, such as systemic marginalisation, pervasive discriminative practices and persisting prejudices between religious and ethnic groups, as well as the role of alleged places of radicalisation. The analysis of the discussions also reveals divergent gender perspectives on the matter.

1 LPI and CCMRE are aware that the terms *violent extremism* and *radicalisation* constitute evolving and non-consensual concepts that have to be cautiously used and referred to. The team understands and defines *violent extremism* as "the willingness to use or support the use of violence to further particular beliefs, including those of a political, social or ideological nature". Nasser-Eddine, M., Garnham, B., Agostino, K., & Caluya, G. (2011). *Countering Violent Extremism Literature Review* Counter Terrorism and Security Technology Centre, p. 9. *Radicalisation* is understood by the team as a context-bound process that leads to a change in perceptions towards polarising and absolute definitions of a given situation. LPI and the project team also consider that there is no systematic causal relationship between radical ideas and extremist violence.

Recommendations from the participants

- **Reform the Nyumba Kumi initiative:** Different views were presented regarding the relevance and effectiveness of Nyumba Kumi (government-initiated community policing). Participants from Mlango Kubwa suggested that this institution was not effective in enhancing security. In Eastleigh and Majengo, participants indicated that the initiative lacked clarity and was corrupt (with allegations of members colluding with criminals and the police). Participants proposed better vetting procedures, and that the relevant government agencies clearly outline the functions of the different security structures at the community level.

- **Set up dialogue structures and civic education centres for addressing community challenges**: Participants proposed the need for a safe space to discuss sensitive issues, and that success stories should be shared as inspiring examples to promote peaceful coexistence. They also recommended the development of a community-based approach where community members take the lead in addressing their challenges, such as civic education on citizen rights and responsibilities, information centres/desks in the community.

- **Improve police and community relations through legitimate and effective enforcement of the law**: Participants emphasised that regular implementation of the criminal justice system that avoids ethnic and religious profiling and discriminatory operations, and ensures compliance with procedures for arrest and sentencing were critical to building trust between communities and law enforcement agencies. This may include supporting trust-building and integrative activities between police and youth through dialogue and sports tournaments. Participants also suggested that the police account for arrests through an Occurrence Book that is open for public review, and police personnel should show their police identity card when carrying out arrests. Procedures for arrest should also be made clear, and arrested persons should be taken to court rather than be remanded at police stations.

- **Foster youth empowerment initiatives:** Civil society actors should adopt interventions that mitigate ethnic and religious strife through civic education, sports, cultural festivals, and promote solidarity including opening up educational opportunities that develop employable skills. In addition to supporting initiatives for talent development, scholarships for academically promising students, training on life skills and entrepreneurship and opportunities for youth entrepreneurship in the formal and informal economy should be supported. Targeted initiatives to fight drug and substance abuse and radicalisation are also needed.

- **Promote religious tolerance through open dialogue and economic integration:** Interreligious dialogue forums for open deliberation between leaders of different religious communities and civil society actors are needed to strengthen

mutual respect and also to address negative stereotypes/attitudes that lead to stigmatisation and marginalisation. Participants also recommended the standardisation of the religious curriculum for Islamic religious teaching. Constructive dialogue between Muslim and Christian communities – through knowledge exchange and the preaching of peace and unity rather than division may also promote religious tolerance.

Introduction

LPI, in partnership with CCMRE, undertook a community-based research from July to December 2015 in two sub-administration units of Nairobi's Kamukunji Sub-County, Eastleigh and Majengo, and neighbouring Mlango Kubwa in Mathare Sub-County. This research represents the pilot phase of LPI's Kenya programme and sought to increase CCMRE's and LPI's understanding and knowledge of the complex web of issues affecting or strengthening communal coexistence and social cohesion in the project sites, by exploring, analysing and documenting connectors and dividers in the area. The pilot research was also geared towards informing LPI's future programmatic engagement in Kamukunji and Mathara Sub-Counties.

Recently scholars such as Brislen have been focusing on the general deterioration of community relations within the sub-county, notably the implications of state-led security operations on relations between different social groups, in particular on the basis of religious and ethnic identities. Some scholars argue that it is not just the nature of differences, but uncertainty and intense competition that have largely undermined the normative functions of social coexistence.[2] Furthermore, in instances where social development is uneven – such as inadequate, restricted or uneven access to public services – achieving the conditions necessary for social coexistence is undermined by an environment of mutual distrust that hinders the establishment of community bonds.

The current dominant narrative in Kenya is that the relationship between Christians and Muslims – although rarely a violent conflict – has been characterised by a longstanding conflict, fuelled and triggered by fierce competition for symbolic power and access to resources, thereby weakening the social fabric in the country.[3] Most recently, the emergence of violent extremism linked to a particular religious ideology has increased the focus on the question of peaceful interreligious coexistence in the country. In order to better understand the reality as compared to this narrative, CCMRE and LPI initially focused their research scope on religious tolerance and interfaith conflicts in the target areas. However, when engaging with communities around local relationships and perceptions it became clear that those living coexistence situated community relations in a much wider web of issues linked not only to religious dimensions but also socio-economic, socio-cultural and

2 Lianos, M., 2016. "Dangerous Others, Insecure Societies: Fear and Social Division" (Ashgate Publishing), p. 72

3 Brislen M., 2015, "Images in a cracked mirror – Muslim and Christian perceptions of each other in Kenya". *Horn of Africa Bulletin*, Vol. 26, Issue 2, p. 9

Picture by Nothando Maphalala

governance-related dimensions. Thus, it was decided to challenge the mainstream assumption of understanding community relations from the narrow view of inter-religious aspects and instead comprehensively capture all the divisive aspects undermining peaceful coexistence in these urban areas.

Based on the postulate that communities and social groups are not monolithic, CCMRE and LPI designed this research project in order to get accurate and more refined insights into community members' perceptions and experiences of connectors and dividers in their areas – perceptions of one another which exist within and between religious and ethnic groups. This project was thus exploratory, qualitative and context-tailored, in order to adapt to a changing political and social dynamics, as well as capture the complex pattern of underlying factors and root causes of tensions and identify windows of opportunity for strengthening social cohesion. The research was carried out by convening a series of intra- and inter-group dialogues at the local level in the form of focus group discussions led by community facilitators, thus gathering and compiling evidence-based data from the communities and other key stakeholders, while offering spaces for exchange of perceptions and learning.

Key to this research is positioning Kamukunji and Mathare within wider political and socio-economic developments in Kenya (see appendix 2, "Overview of conflicts in Kenya"), as well as detailing its unique characteristics that require a distinct approach.

Kamukunji and Mathare Sub-Counties: "Microcosms" of Urban Kenya

The decision to target the urban hubs of Kamukunji and Mathare Sub-Counties was based on the rationale that it represents a 'microcosm' of the wider Kenya – with the three selected areas reflecting the political, socio-cultural, religious and economic dynamics observed across the country. Kamukunji and Mathare therefore provides instructive case studies for exploring the interplay between peaceful communal coexistence and drivers of violence – whether criminal, political, cultural or structural – thereby informing and laying the foundations for LPI's wider peace building strategy in Kenya.

Eastleigh, Majengo and Mlango Kubwa are located in the north-east of the Nairobi Central Business District, formerly often described as the backbone of the Kenyan economy.[4] Kamukunji especially is characterised by ethnic and socio-economic diversity, inhabited by Somalis, Borana, Burji, Rendille, Kikuyu, Luo, Luhya and Kamba, as well as hosting a large refugee population from Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Tanzania. While residents of these areas face similar issues, there are several critical nuances to be taken into account while analysing the communities' perceptions in each location.

Due to a high number of residents without national identification papers, in all the three project sites, inhabitants are easy targets for police raids and security crackdowns. Majengo, like Mlango Kubwa, experiences high levels of drug and trade-related criminality (as a point of transit for *khat*[5] coming from Meru)[6], as well as high levels of corruption (with police and high officials reportedly benefitting from both illicit undertakings in these areas).

Moreover, suspicions on the area being a breeding ground for support to al-Shabab have grown over recent years. In Eastleigh, the systemic and lopsided crackdown by security forces on Somali business owners, mass arrests and ethnic profiling targeting undocumented Somali refugees have affected business, economic and social development in the neighbourhood.[7] These dynamics were observed in particular following Operation Usalama Watch in April 2014,[8] launched in response to the Westgate attack in 2013 and earlier sporadic attacks in other parts of Kenya.

Across all three sub-districts, there have been reports of heavy-handed state security approaches that have negatively impacted communal relations, fuelling deep-seated mistrust and overarching narratives of conflicts based on ethnic and religious identities. These approaches are placing sources of community resilience, socio-economic integration and religious tolerance under considerable strain.

Many peacebuilding projects have begun targeting Kamukunji, including Kamukunji Community-Based Organisations Network, UWIANO Platform for Peace (in coordination with the UN and PeaceNet), and Hekima Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations in partnership with Peace at Heart Initiative Network. The LPI-CCMRE pilot project contributes to this body of work through its undertaking of a grassroots, multi-unit approach to understanding cross-cutting systemic challenges and opportunities for peaceful coexistence across Kamukunji Sub-County and neighbouring areas.

4 Nielson 2012; Crowe 2014

5 For more information on khat culture in Meru County and its implications on the economic and social dynamics, please see Baariu S. N. and Mulaku G. C. (2015) "Mapping Khat (Miraa) by Remote Sensing in Meru County, Kenya", *International Journal of Remote Sensing Applications (IJRSA)*, Volume 5.

6 Wario, 2013

7 Shackle (2015) reports on the plight of Somali refugees living in Kenya's Eastleigh area, be it through the frequency of bribery, or the recurrent confrontation with police forces (who often claim not to recognise their documents).

8 Operation Usalama Watch was launched in April 2014 following an attack in Mombasa and explosions in Eastleigh in March 2014. Kenyan security forces described this crack-down on terror as "an operation to detect illegal immigrants, arrest and prosecute people suspected of engaging in terrorist activities, identify places harbouring criminals and prevent acts of crime and lawlessness in general". ("Kenya's current probe on terror: why Operation Usalama Watch won't cut it", Peter Aling'o, ISS, 2 May 2014. Accessible at https://www.issafrica.org/iss-today/kenyas-current-probe-on-terror-why-operation-usulama-watch-wont-cut-it). This operation has been criticised by Kenyan and international civil society organisations for its counter productive and stigmatisation effects on Somali communities in Kenya.

Methodology

Participatory Action Research – a genuine peace process in motion

The uniqueness of this research project owes to the participatory action research (PAR) methodology adopted by the research team. By systematically and consistently engaging the communities in primary data collection, analysis, discussion and validation meetings, this approach constitutes a collaborative research method that aims to circumvent usual power dynamics observed between the researcher and the subjects of the research in more conventional research approaches. Key community stakeholders are thus brought together, mobilised and consulted in a conflict-sensitive manner to share accurate and experience-based perspectives, knowledge and expectations about the causes of conflict and sources of resilience in their areas, as well as exchange innovative ideas for possible solutions to the identified pressing challenges. Communities thus become the drivers of knowledge production, as well as the source of solutions to the identified issues.

In the present study, CCMRE and LPI undertook research with a range of different key community actors working, or residing, in Eastleigh, Majengo and Mlango Kubwa. The project participants included opinion leaders, civil society actors, state representatives and security agencies and ensured inclusivity and representation of women, men and religious leaders across generations and religious denominations. Community members were brought together in a range of dialogues – mostly through FGDs – and KIIs were led in order to capture relevant data related to connectors and dividers in the areas, with the purpose of informing broader programming options for peacebuilding dialogue and action.The research was designed as a peacebuilding process in itself – which is another key ingredient of PAR – by bringing together first single identity groups (youth, women leaders, religious leaders, among others) and then cross-identity groups in dialogue, with the aim of increasing levels of trust between community members from different backgrounds. Indeed, those who participated in the research – facilitators or focus group discussants and interviewees – found the process 'therapeutic', to the extent that it gave them an opportunity to reflect together on their community across ethnic and religious lines. The process also gave them a chance to discuss fact-based perceptions and experiences, rather than promoting dominant narratives.

COMMUNITY BUY-IN

Community support was ensured at every stage of the process through a series of community buy-in meetings aimed to foster accountability, ownership and understanding, as well as inform community-driven and sustainable programming. Twenty buy-in meetings were held prior to the launch of the research, with a wide range of key stakeholders from the target areas, including community and religious leaders, representatives of police forces and District Peace Committees, community policing groups, local administration chiefs, and local and internal CSOs.

Data collection and analysis

Process, scope and research participants

- Five preliminary inception meetings in each of the project sites were carried out in order to brief the community opinion leaders on the project and to identify community facilitators.

- Identification of twelve community facilitators – five women and seven men – were selected by the project team based on the following criteria: experience engaging with communities on data collection, entry points into the community, ability to probe participants on sensitive issues, and capacity to mobilise focus group discussants.

- The facilitators were then trained in the PAR methodology, as well as data collection skills.

- 392 focus group discussants, 222 men and 170 women; out of this number 53 were male youth and 38 female youth.

- Over the research period, 22 FGDs were carried out in Eastleigh sections 1, 2 and 3, Majengo and Mlango Kubwa, and 7 KIIs. Each FGD brought together a maximum of 15 participants, grouped as follows: 5 FGDs for youth, 6 FGDs for men, 6 FGDs for women and 5 FGDs for mixed groups.

- Inclusivity of the FGDs: each FGD was organised to reflect the diversity of the community on site, in terms of ethnicity, profession/trade, socio-economic background, and religion. Opinion leaders, in particular, were targeted as focus group discussants and community members who have understanding and knowledge of everyday experiences and strategies of social cohesion in general. Participants were thus as diverse as religious leaders, community policing committees and refugees.

- FGDs were held for special interest groups, including refugees, youth and police, religious leaders, and Nyumba Kumi[9] representatives.

- CCMRE and LPI saw it as critical to organise FGDs with marginalised/minority groups separately, in order to foster trust-building with the research team and open sharing.

Data analysis

The research relied on tailored open-ended questions that gave participants the opportunity and space to respond in a semi-structured environment. FGDs were conducted to allow process-tracing, probing of responses in order to get more elaborate and factual explanations, while KIIs offered further detail as the interviewees spoke on more sensitive topics.

The following broad-based questions were used to guide the FGDs and KIIs:

- What are the positive aspects of life in your community?

- What challenges do you face in your community? What are the causes?

- What do you think should be done to address the challenges? Who should address the challenges?

9 Nyumba Kumi refers to "a strategy of anchoring community policing at the household level or any other generic cluster". Community policing is defined as "a policing philosophy that promotes organisational strategies which support the systematic use of partnerships between communities and government policing agencies. The rationale of these initiatives is based on the idea that communities undertake policing. For more information, please see "Draft Guidelines for Implementation of Community Policing – Nyumba Kumi", Republic of Kenya, 30 March 2015 [online] http://www.syokimau.or.ke/sra/Draft_guidelines_for_implementation_of_NYUMBA_KUMI.pdf

- What kind of change do you want to see?
- What needs to be done to bring about the desired change?
- Why is it important that things change?
- What part could you play in bringing about the desired change?

The data was then coded around five guiding questions which framed the analysis process:

- Which trends or common themes emerge?
- Are there deviations from the trends, and if so, what factors can be attributed to the deviations?
- Which interesting stories emerge from the data and how do they shed light on the broader research questions?
- Do any of the patterns/emergent themes suggest that additional data needs to be collected?
- Do the observed trends support other findings?

CCMRE and LPI carried out a joint data analysis process in order to identify key connectors and dividers within and between the target areas. Key findings from the data analysis are presented in the next section.

VALIDATION WORKSHOPS

CCMRE and LPI held three validation workshops to present the research findings and get feedback on the analysis from community facilitators, participants and other community members in the project sites as well civil society actors, state representatives and academics.

Overall, the workshops' participants drawn from the three project sites confirmed that the data was a consistent and faithful reflection of the perceptions shared in the FGDs and KIIs.

Limitations, challenges and mitigation measures

- Given the sensitive nature of the topics addressed, and concerns about the safety of participants and facilitators, the researchers took relevant mitigation measures – such as choosing a venue where participants felt safe and convenient, as well as informing the local administration and community leaders that the discussions were taking place. Participants were also assured that the information would be kept anonymous and confidential. It should be noted in particular that given the sensitivity connected to the issue of violent extremism in context of state security responses, participants were perceived as exercising a certain level of restraint when discussing those issues.
- As often as possible, efforts were made to triangulate the findings. Nevertheless, the key aim of the research was not to trace particular events but to identify and highlight trends in perceptions, attitudes and behaviours related to social

cohesion. In this regard, given the complexity of issues affecting peaceful coexistence, it was sometimes difficult to discern causes and effects.

- The research scope was also reviewed and the project team realised that focusing on religious tolerance and interfaith conflicts alone would not capture all the divisive aspects in these communities that contribute to the emergence of conflicts that at times result in violence. Indeed, religious tolerance and interfaith conflicts are only part of the bigger picture that contains a myriad of complex social issues feeding into the broader religious conflicts' narrative.

Eastleighwood Youth Forum

Key findings

The views and perceptions of participants revealed a broad and complex spectrum of challenges, limitations and dynamics which have influenced and threatened peaceful coexistence in the three areas. Based on the analysis of the qualitative data collected among the participants the team clustered drivers and challenges around three key interrelated themes, namely socio-economic challenges, devolution and governance, and radicalisation and violent extremism. There was a consensus among the participants on the negative impact of these drivers, across geographical, religious and ethnic backgrounds. Interestingly, in all three clusters, micro and macro-level dynamics tend to bolster each other, to the extent that personal/individual-level challenges are fuelled and triggered by community and society-level dynamics, themselves reinforced by community members' perceptions, experiences and strategies.

> There is no social problem that one cannot find in these areas.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES

Cross-cutting and interrelated socio-economic challenges: A majority of participants from the three project sites identified a vast array of socio-economic challenges as the main drivers of tensions and insecurity and therefore main challenges to a peaceful coexistence in Kamukunji and Mathare Sub-Counties. They include high levels of poverty and illiteracy, circulation of illegal firearms, drugs sale and abuse, gender-based violence embodied in high levels of domestic violence, entrenched prostitution, persistence of early marriages and a high number of unwanted pregnancies. Participants also deplored the high level of unemployment, particularly among the youth, making them vulnerable to political mobilisation (where cash incentives are frequently used to mobilise them), as well as other forms of violence including religious extremism and criminal gangs. These challenges seem to affect the areas at large, including men and women and across age ranges. Most participants were of the opinion that these challenges have their root causes in past historical injustices, underdevelopment, systemic marginalisation and poor governance structures, which are deeply interlinked and mutually reinforcing, in concordance with the analysis given by Charles Hornsby.[10]

Nuances between the three project sites: With slight differences across the three areas, these socio-economic challenges seem to be present and prominent in each neighbourhood. Indeed, some of the participants likened parts of Mlango Kubwa to 'Nigeria' where the sale of illegal drugs continues unabated, and prostitution and illicit brew dens operate without any interference by authorities in Majengo. The participants also detailed how the conversion of residential spaces into commercial areas has driven out residents in Majengo and parts of Eastleigh from their homes. This was also mentioned in the case of the Gikomba market in Majengo, which was burnt by deliberate large-scale fires in 2015 which many participants saw as an attempt to push out the residents.

Urban disenchantment, a breeding-ground for further fragile social cohesion and lack of trust in government efforts: The participants indicated a sense of fatigue, loss of hope and resignation – that things are unlikely to improve in the near

10 See Charles Hornsby, Kenya: A History Since Independence (I. B Tauris & Co. Ltd), 2013.

future – owing to what they perceive as a lack of political willingness and capacity to overcome the complexity of the pattern created by these interlinked and mutually reinforced issues in the three areas. A participant thus stated, *"In Eastleigh, the state has marginalised and discriminated us, we don't get social services, we are unemployed, harassed by the police, a ready target for radicalisation and violent business rivalry*. (Youth FGD, Eastleigh, male).

According to most of the participants, there are deep causal linkages between these diverse and interlinked socio-economic challenges embedded in the three target areas and an entrenched corruption that has permeated Kenyan society and governance system at different levels.

DEVOLVED POLITICS AND GOVERNANCE

The 2010 Kenyan constitution provides for a devolved, decentralised system of governance and expands the mandate of local governments to bring public services closer to local communities, as well as increase the direct involvement of local communities in policy matters. Since its official launch in 2013, the devolution process has been questioned and faces many challenges, in particular owing to the persisting confusion regarding the roles of the national government vis-à-vis county governments.

Much frustration and lack of understanding were thus voiced by the participants, who complained of poor civic education, as well as low level of communication and information on the mandate, roles and responsibilities of the newly-elected officials. As an Eastleigh resident said: *"Things have changed, some for good (there are good shopping malls), some for bad (high rents, forced displacement, and communal relations have worsened due to xenophobia, and organised crime). Some buildings can only be accessed by specific ethnic or religious communities"* (FGD, Eastleigh, female). Some participants also reported that county-level decision-makers would release themselves from key responsibilities regarding development and security-related policies, by defining these responsibilities as being in the responsibility of the national government, which likely stems from county officials' own confusion about their role.

Participants argued that another direct result of the devolution process is that ethnic politics has become more pronounced at the local level, as communities want to elect 'their own', so that they can benefit through cash handouts and favours in terms of employment or work tenders. As explained by one of the participants, *'the sense of clientelism is widespread in these areas – supporters of elected leaders are favoured, most elected leaders do not represent community interests'* (FGD, Mlango Kubwa, male).

Culture of impunity

A majority of participants denounced widespread and entrenched impunity in Eastleigh, Majengo and Mlango Kubwa areas.

Without the necessary oversight at the local level, due to previously highlighted political confusion and lack of transparency, participants argued that corruption has become more pervasive. They mentioned, among others, the increasing frequency and scope of bribes to police officers for release of an arrested suspect, or to county

> In Eastleigh, the State has marginalised and discriminated us---we don't get social services, we are unemployed, harassed by the police, a ready target for radicalisation and violent business rivalry.
>
> …
>
> The sense of clientelism is widespread in these areas –supporters of elected leaders are favoured, most elected leaders do not represent community interests.

government officials to evade taxes and operate illegal businesses like sale of contraband, illicit drugs and prostitution.

The participants in Eastleigh also indicated that such corruption fuels discrimination against the Somali population, given their reputation as successful and thus exploitable businessmen. As one female participant stated: *"We, the Somali community, are not an ATM for the Kenya Police and this extortion needs to stop"* (FGD, Eastleigh, female). The participants provided a number of examples of individuals being arrested and jailed for weeks because they failed to pay a bribe of KES 500, while others would be set-free after payment of bribes.

Overall, the participants showed low levels of trust in the justice system which was seen as complicit by not pressing charges against those guilty of corruption.

Relations between communities and security forces

A majority of participants reported a social distance between communities and the police, and relationships characterised by tensions and a lack of trust. This gap is perceived as not having decreased despite security sector reform initiatives and the much-celebrated police conduct and restraint during the 2013 elections. Harassment and profiling by the police were widely reported by the participants during the discussions. In Eastleigh, Majengo and Mlango Kubwa, under the mandate of Usalama Watch Operation, police raids were frequent but the purpose often unclear with young people and foreign nationals of minority ethnic and

> We, the Somali community, are not an ATM for the Kenya police and this extortion needs to stop
>
> ...
>
> I felt like a second-class Kenyan citizen that day.

LPI

religious communities being arrested randomly without any legitimate explanation. As a participant explained: *"The Usalama Watch Operation exacerbated an already existing problem and soured our relationship with security agencies further. It changed the trust between communities since only Muslim houses were being targeted"* (FGD in Eastleigh, male).

These operations, supported in many parts of the country by special units of the security forces, such as the Anti-Terrorism Police Unit, have in turn led to increased intra- and inter-communal tensions among Somalis, between Somalis and other Muslims, as well as between Muslims (ethnic Somali and Kenya Muslims) and other Kenyan communities.

One participant testified: *"I was arrested, I showed the policemen my Kenyan ID. They still insisted I was a refugee from Somalia and that my identification document was fake, they took it away and took me to the police station where family and friends had to pay a hefty bribe for me to be released. I felt like a second-class Kenyan citizen that day"* (Youth FGD in Eastleigh, male). Another participant observed: *"Here in Eastleigh, police are harassing and extorting only the Somali community, we have become their ATM and this is increasing frustration and encouraging youths to join extremist groups"* (FGD, Eastleigh, female). Another participant explained: *"When I do my monthly budget, I include a certain amount for the police, since it has become a norm for a member of the Somali community to be arbitrarily arrested. Community members thereafter contribute to get the person released with no official charge made against the person"* (FGD, Eastleigh, female).

A deep and longstanding lack of trust in the justice system was reported by the participants, with people not reporting or denouncing police harassment. Strained relations with police have further compounded the security situation as police are viewed as enemies, and communities have put more faith in community policing efforts, such as the Nyumba Kumi, one of the most recent community policing initiatives in Kenya.

RADICALISATION AND VIOLENT EXTREMISM

A majority of participants identified radicalisation and violent extremism as primary spoilers but also symptoms of the fragile social cohesion in the three target areas. Interestingly, none of the participants put emphasis on defining radicalisation and violent extremism, and no specific distinction was made between the two concepts. Conversations related to radicalisation and violent extremism focused mostly on root causes/drivers of radicalisation, as well as on supposed places where radicalisation may happen.

Causes and drivers of radicalisation and violent extremism: Most participants across the three areas perceived radicalisation as a genuine threat to peaceful coexistence, but also argued that the underlying factors and dynamics are misunderstood.

According to their perspectives, the socio-economic vulnerabilities – in particular high levels of poverty, lack of education and the symptomatic illiteracy, as well as high rates of unemployment – are the push factors for radicalisation and violent

> The Usalama Watch Operation exacerbated an already existing problem and soured our relationship with security agencies further. It changed the trust between communities since only Muslim houses were being targeted.
>
> …
>
> It has become a norm for a member of the Somali community to be arbitrarily arrested.
>
> …
>
> Here in Eastleigh, police are harassing only the Somali community [...] this is increasing frustration. and encouraging youths to join extremist groups.

> If you put on skinny jeans and a cap, you are seen as al-Shabab. If you put on a kanzu, you are seen as al-Shabab. Should we walk naked?
>
> …
>
> Sadly, most people cannot differentiate between Islam and terrorism.

extremism, in particular among the youth. The dominant driver, according to a majority of participants across religious and ethnic backgrounds, is the socio-cultural factors related to systemic marginalisation and discriminatory practices, which sometimes translate into radicalisation and violent responses to grievances. The profiling and targeting of one particular ethnic group and religious community and the perception of further marginalisation has added to a sense of helplessness among the youth and was described as one of the main causes of radicalisation.

Participants argued that the connection between radicalised individuals and Somalia is much less prominent than the dominant narrative may suggest, with participants only reporting a few instances where youth have been enticed to go to Somalia for economic or religious reasons. Participants thus suggested that despite the reality and complexity of the domestic terror threat, the prejudiced and misled perception that the Somali community are posing a threat to national security is used to justify targeted profiling and discriminative practices at the local level.

There was a consensus among the participants that such prejudiced and polarising narratives – and the linked discriminatory security responses – have had negative consequences on relationships between Muslim and Christian communities, especially in Eastleigh and Majengo. As an FGD participant observed: *"Sadly, most people cannot differentiate between Islam and terrorism, they see it as one and the same thing"* (FGD, Majengo, male). In these three project sites, participants reported that neighbours that have lived well together for decades have started viewing each other suspiciously as informants or radicalised individuals. This lack of trust has increased tensions along ethnic and religious lines and weakened the social fabric, while jeopardising the patterns of social cohesion. As stated by a participant in a FGD in Majengo, '*Previously we did not define ourselves in terms of our religions. Now we are seriously divided – we cannot pretend – we interact based on our religions"* (FGD, Majengo, female).

The profiling of certain communities has given rise to anger and strong resentment among community members, with those being profiled questioning why their neighbours did not stand up for them. Participants also saw as insufficient the efforts made by religious leaders to play a connecting factor in preaching peace and tolerance across religious lines.

These drivers of violent action, socio-economic vulnerabilities, systemic marginalisation and entrenched discriminatory security practices, seem to be inextricably linked. However, participants did not specify how these underlying factors inter-related, or whether some factors create conditions that are more conducive for radicalisation than others. This restraint on the part of participants to discuss matters related to counterterrorism and extremist groups may be attributable to the sensitivity of the subject which is seen as a state-security matter and is handled by authorities as such.

Persisting narratives around places of radicalisation: Participants argued that places of radicalisation included schools, *madrasas*, mosques, video dens and social media platforms. These perceptions seem to have been forged and shaped through

mainstream media. For instance, participants in Majengo mentioned unverified media reports that linked the Riyadh Mosque to radicalisation of youth. These perceptions reveal that radicalisation processes and narratives are not always evident to the participants, in particular owing to the fact there is no universally defined profile of individuals more prone to be radicalised – and there are a multitude of reasons why an individual might choose to join an extremist group. Future work in this area should explore the role of social media more in-depth, among youth in particular.

Building-blocks for peaceful coexistence

CCMRE and LPI undertook an in-depth analysis of the local perspectives on peaceful coexistence and the dynamics affecting them, in order to identify windows of opportunity to foster peaceful coexistence in the target areas and therefore seek options to address the challenges and drivers of divisions and tensions.

As described above, Kamukunji is characterised by a socio-political vacuum stemming from perceived state marginalisation, lack of delivery of the necessary social services, a high number of unemployed youth, among other socio-economic and socio-cultural challenges. Despite these persistent and longstanding challenges, communities in Eastleigh, Majengo and Mlango Kubwa have devised ways to build and strengthen their capacity to be resilient and promote cohesion across cultural, religious and ethnic lines. Diverse sources of resilience – whose common point is to create spaces for interactions between communities – were emphasised by the participants. Importantly, the critical role women can play in preventing violent extremism in particular, and in promoting social cohesion in general, was highlighted by the participants and affirmed by the research team based on a gender analysis of responses. The upcoming 2017 general elections, as well as the devolution process, were also mentioned as critical events to seize as a window of opportunity for positive change in the target areas.

Existing spaces for interactions
Community participants in Eastleigh, Majengo and Mlango Kubwa emphasised commonalities and common spaces that bring them together, as key sources of resilience to drivers of tensions and violent action.

The most dominant ones were sporting activities, shared community resources like schools and other public spaces, common marketplaces and elders' public meetings (known as *barazas)*. Certain cultural practices were also emphasised as fostering social cohesion, such as interethnic and interreligious marriages. As noted by one Majengo youth participant, '*I was born here and I have lived with Muslims. We played football together and our parents knew one another through us. We would join in their celebrations, like Eid'.* Interestingly, socio-economic integration, reinforced by a strong local entrepreneurial spirit, was emphasised as a key step in bolstering social cohesion and common interests among and between communities.

I was born here and I have lived with Muslims. We played football together and our parents knew one another through us. We would join in their celebrations.

LPI

Overall, these spaces constitute building-blocks for resilience to the extent that they encourage contact, prevent community marginalisation and stigmatisation, as well as contribute to the acceptance and normalisation of differences across ethnic and religious groups. To this regard, religious leaders notably proposed to foster inter-religious dialogues in order to decrease suspicion between religious groups.

The emphasis of these positive foundations at different levels and by different stakeholders, such as mainstream Kenyan media or policymakers, could contribute to celebrate and exemplify them in order to strengthen social cohesion in these communities, as well as countering the negative impact of security-related concerns and challenges and criminal violence, at a larger scale.

Therefore further assistance should be provided with the aim of strengthening relationships between community and police/justice system, towards increased transparency, legitimacy, trust and understanding, through for instance the creation of inclusive and safe spaces for the sharing of conflict-sensitive issues and challenges.

Increasing pivotal roles of women in preventing violent extremism

Policymakers seeking to counter violent extremism have increasingly focused on the role of women as critical actors for change. As emphasised by the Global Study on the implementation of Security Council resolution 1325, "women are not only victims, but have long been involved with groups engaged in violent extremism".[11] Women can thus be involved at different levels and degrees in violent action, as sympathisers, mobilisers or direct participants in such action. At the same time, it has been acknowledged that not only are women disproportionately affected by violent extremism, with their rights seriously impacted by all forms of extremism, they are also on the front line to engage in counter-messaging and preventing violent extremism.[12]

In line with these analyses, discussions during the different FGDs revealed that women were eager to get involved in the prevention of violent extremism. Interestingly, they were generally more open to share their experiences and to propose

11 UN Women, 2015, Global Study "Preventing Conflict, Transforming Justice, Securing the Peace", Chapter 9, p. 225.

12 Fred Strasser, "Women and Violent Extremism: A Growing Threat Demands Concerted Action", United States Institute for Peace (USIP), 3 August 2015.

recommendations, while male participants were more resistant and reluctant (often viewing it as a sensitive security issue not to be discussed, fearing reprisals). For instance, the female participants spoke freely and from an emotive space about sons, brothers and other close relatives that were enrolled in extremist groups with promises of remuneration, and who were then alienated upon their return.[13]

In the current context – where men may experience the bulk of backlash from what participants expressed to be heavy-handed security responses or 'police brutality' – women may actually have more room for manoeuver to engage in their communities in order to address the issues that drive individuals to engage in or support violence. Due to their specific roles in the households and communities, they are well-placed to detect early signs of mobilisation, as attested by the successful familial interventions which have proven to be one of the most effective means for preventing extremism in the Somali context.[14] Consequently, key steps towards ensuring broader emancipation for women should be prioritised as part of "Preventing Violent Extremism" programming in all affected areas, in order to capitalise on this effectiveness.[15] As female participants themselves proposed, in addition to encouraging youth involvement in churches and mosques for guidance to strengthen community unity, increasing efforts should be made to empower women through income generation activities and through peace processes in the communities.

2017 General elections and devolution

Participants repeatedly highlighted that the 2017 general elections provide both a clear risk as well as an opportunity for the communities of Eastleigh, Majengo and Mlango Kubwa to choose leaders that will represent their interests, towards balancing competing interests for fair and progressive development, and the selection of leaders that will not polarise citizens along ethnic and religious lines. As one of the participants shared, '*My desired change is to see responsible and action-oriented leadership that is not corrupt and that gives people the freedom to enjoy their citizenship*'.

According to a majority of participants, the devolution of powers, as outlined in the 2010 Kenyan constitution, has in the short-term in many counties, reinforced feelings of inequality and marginalisation (historical narratives of the periphery and uneven development) among certain groups. Heightened political competition, as well as nepotistic and patrimonial politics at the local and national levels, have further reinforced issues relating to structural violence, i.e. poor governance, increased corruption and low transparency. Tensions are already visible in Kamukunji where the Kamba and Kikuyu communities are allegedly strategising on how to best position themselves to ensure that 'one of their own' gets a position in the elections. Without a greater focus on bottom-up community engagement and support for devolution, uncertainty and aggravation at the local level – deteriorating community relationships, corruption and heightened political agitation – risks reinvigorating conflict that lay dormant, for the most part, during the 2013 elections. Given the raised stakes for 2017, and the ongoing propensity for corruption, contestation around county elections is likely to be fierce.

> Things have changed, some for good (there are good shopping malls), some for bad (high rents, forced displacement, and communal relations have worsened due to xenophobia, and organized crime). Some buildings can only be accessed by specific ethnic or religious communities.

13 Under such circumstances, the parents had to either take them to their rural homes or move out and settle in a different locality.

14 Informal meeting, AIWA forum, April 2015.

15 Strasser, USIP, 3 August 2015

It is therefore crucial that peace actors engage on this issue and propose ways in which the implementation of devolution can be improved so as to minimise the risk of conflict and even more capitalise on the structural changes to start overcoming the socio-economical and socio-cultural challenges mentioned above. This should be done in collaboration with other state and non-state actors.

... no corruption, youth who are meaningfully engaged, anti-radicalization programs, rehabilitation of returnees from Somalia, an end to tribalism, children going to school, religious tolerance, responsible leadership, action-oriented dialogue, freedom to enjoy citizenship, safe space to report crime or illegal activities.

Ways forward

Participants' visions for the future

In all three project sites, participants expressed a keen desire for positive and sustainable change that would lead to a reinforced and sustainable peaceful coexistence. Although the participants may not have clearly defined how the desired change should be achieved, they were able to articulate the nature of change they would like to see. As Mlango Kubwa residents said: "*No drugs in Mathare, no destroyed families, no corruption, youth who are meaningfully engaged, anti-radicalisation programmes, rehabilitation of returnees from Somalia, an end to tribalism, children going to school, religious tolerance, responsible leadership, action-oriented dialogue, freedom to enjoy citizenship, safe space to report crime or illegal activities.*" Overall, participants would like to see the development and maturation of a pro-social narrative oriented towards social cohesion beyond differences across ethnic and religious lines, in addition to genuine alternatives to current socio-economic challenges and socio-cultural narratives that would undermine the current breeding-ground for violence.

The majority of participants recognised their own individual responsibility in addressing these challenges, captured here by a participant who shared: "*I will report crime. I will not bribe the police, instead stand for what is right. I will access information. I will remove fear and build confidence ... promote discussions on peaceful coexistence ... be a good role model ... provide mentorship. I will be a peace ambassador.*"

Future steps towards sustainable peaceful coexistence

In terms of concrete steps, participants insisted on the necessity to develop a multi-sector approach to effectively overcome cross-cutting and interrelated issues. Propositions on how the challenges to peaceful coexistence should be dealt with include multi-faceted approaches to generating employment, reducing impunity but through the application of the rule of law, as well as facilitating intra and inter-community dialogues that would contribute to increasing the quality of relationships (e.g. in terms of trust, collaboration, interaction and understanding) and therefore restore the foundations for a sustainable social cohesion. In particular, peacebuilding interventions need to focus on deconstructing and countering narratives that propagate suspicions, stereotypes and negative perceptions within diverse communities. Religious leaders were in particular identified as key leaders able to assist in rebuilding trust and conviviality within the target areas.

Interestingly, recommendations from the participants took on a clear gendered dimension. Male participants focused on the need to strengthen community

leadership by, for example, supporting and enhancing the powers of elected officials, while women placed a greater focus on bottom-up processes, such as the need for broader engagement in formal decision-making processes, and informal discussions. In Majengo, women emphasised the importance of sharing success stories with other communities and the need for a safe space to address more sensitive issues outside the elders' *bazaras*, while in Eastleigh, female discussants suggested setting up of hotlines to enable reporting on harassment, setting up a group that can present the residents' grievances to the authorities, and strengthening Nyumba Kumi. In Mlango Kubwa, women also indicated the need to strengthen Nyumba Kumi, support the use of religious teachings to promote 'good neighbourliness', as well as initiate local dispute resolution mechanisms for addressing ethnic insults and hate speech.

In conclusion, the process and findings of this project challenge the overarching narrative of an intrinsic conflict between people with different religious identities and ethnic origin. The promotion and prevalence of religious stereotypes in the media and in policy debates is in contrast with the realities on the ground, especially in the diverse urban centres of Kenya.[16] The openness expressed by participants to this research to actively engage dialogue and interaction between communities and within communities having diverse ethnic and religious composition provides the fertile ground to create conditions conducive for peaceful coexistence and productive social relations in urban centres.

We should be peacemakers and stop instigating violence.

Picture by Nothando Maphalala

16 For more information about the role of media in propagating stereotypes between religious groups, Jamah A., 2015, "Kenya's Print Media Coverage of Religious Communities in the Mandera and Garissa Terrorist Attacks", University of Nairobi, and Media Council of Kenya "Deconstructing Terror. Assessing Media's Role in Religious Intolerance and Radicalisation", 2014.

Appendix 1 – Research ethics

At the beginning of the research process, oral informed consent was obtained from all interviewees and focus group participants. Obtaining this informed consent involved explaining in a transparent and comprehensive way the project's objectives and the data collection procedures. The voluntary nature of participating in the research was emphasised throughout the whole project.

The dignity of participants was respected, and values and interests of the community members in the research were considered central throughout the data collection, validation and analysis processes.

Eastleighwood Youth Forum

Appendix 2 – Overview of conflicts in Kenya

Kenya is a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country, with over 40 different ethnic groups and numerous religious denominations of the major religions like Islam and Christianity.[17] Since 1991, the country has been going through a difficult – at times, violent – transition from one-party rule to a multiparty democracy. Varying degrees of ethnic and political violence has marred every election since then. However, it was only after the 2007-08 electoral violence, when almost 1,300 people were killed and half a million displaced, that these issues of ethnic conflict gained international attention. Brokered by the international community and facilitated by the former UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, a power-sharing agreement was concluded between rival ethnic and political factions in 2008.[18] Among other things, the agreement led to the promulgation of a new constitution in 2010 that provides for a secular and decentralised system of governance with decision-making, in theory, devolved to the 47 counties.

In addition to electoral and political conflicts, the rise of the radical religious movements, represented by the Somalia-based al-Shabab and exacerbated by Kenya's military intervention in Somalia in 2011, has become the major source of peace and security concerns. With a significant Somali-Muslim population in the north-eastern regions, a Muslim-dominated coast, and diverse urban centres like Nairobi, the phenomenon of radicalisation has led to inter-communal and interreligious discord, threatening not only state security and regional peace but also grassroots community-level relations among the Kenyan people of different ethnic and religious backgrounds. The incidence, gravity and intensity of violence have increased in recent years and can be attributed to the following broad categories of sources:[19]

- Ethnic intolerance (within the major Kenyan tribes)
- Border conflicts (especially, cross-border populations of Somalis and other ethnic groups)
- Political party zoning (mostly along ethnic, tribal lines)
- Competition over land and other resources, stemming from land distribution since independence in 1963 and pastoral land issues
- Proliferation of small arms
- Weak security and justice system
- Poverty, underdevelopment, and marginalisation, particularly of ethnic minorities

While inter-ethnic and inter-communal conflicts have been fanned by competition during the devolution process and political manipulation of local communities across Kenya, violent Islamist activity has tended to be clustered in the North Eastern province which borders Somalia, the Coast province in the southeast, and in big urban centres like Nairobi.

17 Kenya is a large multi-ethnic country, with over 40 different ethnic groups. The largest ethnic group are the Kikuyu, who make up about 17 per cent of the population (6,622,576). Other large ethnic groups include the Luhya (5,338,666), Kalenjin (4,967,328), Luo (4,044,440), Kamba (3,893,157), Kenyan Somali (2,385,572), Kisii (2,205,669), Mijikenda (1,960,574), and Meru (1,658,108). The country is majority Christian, with a substantial Muslim population (4,304,798). Source: Census 2009, Kenya Bureau of Statistics. http://www.knbs.or.ke/

18 Jeremy Horowitz, "Power-sharing in Kenya", PRIO Policy Brief, 3. (2008) Oslo: PRIO.

19 Brigitte Rohwerder, "Conflict Analysis of Kenya". Birmingham, UK: GSDRC, University of Birmingham., May 2015

As security-related discussions have become more pronounced, they have assumed a specific counter-extremist dimension, that has led to frequent and excessive state interventions in more marginalised peripheral areas with significant Somali and/or Muslim populations, especially those hosting refugees like Kamukunji Sub-County, the main project site for LPI's programmes in Kenya. This security-oriented response to radicalisation has brought some critical trends to the fore and more research is needed to understand the ways in which police and state practice, motivated by a specific counterterrorism lens, has aggravated difference and posed serious challenges to social harmony in urban communities.

Previous research indicates that the majority of intra- and inter-communal conflicts in the Horn of Africa in general, and in Kenya in particular, are resource-based, for instance, conflicts among pastoral communities in the peripheral and cross-border areas with Somalia, Ethiopia, South Sudan and Uganda, as much as among urban dwellers.[20] Such conflicts over scarce resources have been exacerbated, at least in the short-term, by the recent devolution process.[21] The creation of new districts and new political positions has been met with renewed concerns about resource allocation and social (in)equality. The underlying conflict drivers that triggered violence during the 2007/08 elections, in particular heavily centralised ethnic politics, horizontal inequality and unresolved issues regarding land/resettlement, have still not been addressed.[22] The ineffectiveness and failure of nation-wide reconciliation efforts and the lack of more large-scale local reconciliation efforts leave clear fault-lines, and the risk of conflict outbreak remains high.

Thus, despite the relative peace observed during the March 2013 elections and high local expectations from the devolution process, progress towards realising a devolved structure of governance has been hampered by a number of factors, not least due to low capacity at the local level and the absence of genuine political will as well as the subsequent competition between rival ethnic communities. Understanding how this plays out in everyday power and conflict dynamics, and the extent to which security procedures have worsened relationships between the state and community, rather than rebuilding trust, raises concerns about elections in 2017.[23]

Given the gap between constitutional provisions and implementation, widespread corruption and delays in fiscal and administrative decentralisation are seen at all levels of subaltern governance and have brought greater frustration in the short-term, raising perennial resource-based tensions and conflicts that increases the risk of renewed electoral violence.[24]

Similar trends are reflected in more urban areas, like Kamukunji and Mathare, where issues of unemployment, inequality and ethnic tensions converge in a way that is uniquely urban, as well as transnational and cross-border. As microcosms of the political, social, security and conflict dynamics observed across Kenya, Kamukunji and Mathare therefore provides interesting case studies for exploring the interplay between peaceful coexistence and criminal, political and extremist violence, and lays the foundations for LPI's choice of wider programme target areas.

20 Ken Menkhaus, 'Conflict Assessment: 2014 Northern Kenya and Somaliland', Danish Demining Group.

21 Ibid.

22 Claire Elder, Susan Stigant and Jonas Claes, "Elections and Violent Conflict in Kenya: Making Prevention Stick", United States Institute for Peace, Peaceworks report, No 101, 2014, p. 10.

23 "Kenya After the Elections". International Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°94, 15 May 2013.

24 Nic Cheeseman, Gabrielle Lynch and Justin Willis, "Democracy and its discontents: understanding Kenya's 2013 elections", Journal of Eastern African Studies 8 (1), 2014.

Exploring Peaceful Coexistence in Nairobi's Urban Settlements
was a nine-month qualitative research project designed and
conducted through a partnership between the Life & Peace Institute
and the Centre for Christian-Muslim Relations in Eastleigh of
St. Paul's University. While participants emphasised increasing
pressure from systems of structural violence, a strong commitment
to contributing to change was expressed, and light was shed on
community coping mechanisms and existing sources of resilience.
The uniqueness of this research project owes to the fact that it was
inherently designed and implemented as a peacebuilding process
in itself by creating space for dialogue between individuals from
different ethnic, religious, geographical, gender and age backgrounds.
The process provided a safe and alternative space for participants to
share their perceptions, experiences, solutions and strategies, while
listening to others' perceptions, thereby contributing to a positive
and constructive change in attitudes within and between community
groups reached.

Centre for Christian Muslim Relations in Eastleigh (CCMRE)

Mission:
Bringing together practice and theory for
interreligious relations

Vision:
Providing a platform for interreligious
engagement

30 YEARS OF BUILDING PEACE 1985 – 2015

Life & Peace INSTITUTE