

Islam and Multi-Sectoral Partnership in National Cohesion and Integration in Kenya

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Abstract: - This paper was on the study of Islam and her partnership with other players in promotion of national cohesion and integration in Kenya. Social divisions have remained a key challenge in the Country and various players have come in to address the problem. Ethnic tensions which are mostly politically fueled have remained real even on the aftermath of the 2007 Post Election Violence. National cohesion and integration have since therefore become an area of interest both at government and civic levels. Yet owing to the complexity of the task, partnership between various players is critical. From the study it was established that some level of partnership exists between Islam and other actors, including the church and the state organs such as the Provincial Administration. However, this partnership was discovered to be very limited in addition to only being active during crisis.

Key Words: Multi-Sectoral Partnership; Cohesion and Integration; State Actors; Non-State Actors

I. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

National cohesion and integration have been an area of interest both at the government and civic levels in Kenya. This interest was largely rekindled following the 2007/2008 Post Election Violence (PEV). To a certain degree, the effects of violence is still being felt across the country in some ways. It is true that a just and cohesive society is a key ingredient of Kenya Vision 2030 (GoK, 2007). Sessional Paper No. 2 of 2012 on the national policy on cohesion and integration was drafted as a way of showing the centrality of a cohesive and integrated Kenyan society for viable socio-economic development. The purpose of the said policy was to ensure that Kenya becomes an equitable society which is politically, economically and socially cohesive and integrated with the citizens having a shared vision and sense of belonging while appreciating diversity (NCIC, 2014). The Jubilee government that has been in power since March 2013 had one pillar of its manifesto being national cohesion, whereby the coalition would work hard to end ethnic tensions and rivalry and unite all citizens (Jubilee Manifesto, 2013; Masara, 2014). Sadly, there is nothing much which has been achieved in this regard as Kenyans continues to experience division along social lines.

The challenge of social divisions is both a past and a current reality in Kenya. A report on the status of social cohesion in 2013 reported a national cohesion index of 56% with the highest-ranking County being Kiambu with 66% and the lowest ranking County being Wajir with 22% (KIPPR &

NCIC, 2014). This implies that the level of cohesion and integration in Kenya is just above average. In 2015, the chairman of the National Cohesion and Integration Commission, Francis Ole Kaparo was widely quoted in sections of print and electronic media lamenting at the sorry state of social cohesion in the country. He lamented that leaders were dividing the country into ethnic factions for their own selfish political benefits as they prepare to use them for selfish gains in the looming 2017 general elections. Such a view was widely held by the commission through its 2012 report which indicated that ethnic negative stereotypes are used to advance ethnic hatred by politicians (NCIC, 2013). This lament emanating from the chairman and the commission years after 2007/2008 PEV was a clear indication that the challenge is far from being overcome and hence need to be addressed from all possible fronts. Inter-group tensions are still being experienced along cultural, racial, social-economic, religious and ethnic divisions.

Different players have got involved in working towards a cohesive and integrated society in Kenya. Some are government bodies while others are non-governmental organizations. Among the non-governmental bodies are religious bodies including Islam and the Church. It is more fruitful when various non-governmental bodies cooperate with each other as well as with the state organs in working towards a cohesive and integrated Kenyan society.

II. PURPOSE STATEMENT

Islam is the second largest religion in Kenya with about 11% national following. This paper seeks to understand how Islam religion partners with other sectors in promoting cohesion and integration agenda in Kenya. Several bodies have been working towards a cohesive and integrated society in Kenya. Some are government bodies while others are non-governmental organizations. The government bodies to be considered in this study include the provincial administration and the National Cohesion and Integration Commission. The study will also consider religious bodies such as the church and her affiliated organizations as well as Islam and her affiliate bodies.

III. METHODOLOGY

The research used interviews, Focus Group Discussions as well as questionnaires to collect primary data from Nairobi and Mombasa Counties. The two Counties are highly cosmopolitan and have experienced ethnic, political

and religious based conflicts at different times. Furthermore, most of the national bodies affiliated with Islam are mainly housed in the two Counties. The study was largely qualitative, and as a result, the data collected which was mostly made of people's feelings about the phenomenon was organized into themes and sub-themes. However, there was some data which was quantitative in nature and the data emanating from the quantitative aspects will be presented in tables and graphs.

IV. LITERATURE REVIEW

Religion and Social Reconstruction

In Africa, there exist three dominant religions namely: African Traditional Religion, Islam and Christianity (Mbiti, 1992; Davidson, 1994; Nthamburi, 1999). Other religions with fewer followers in the continent are Hinduism, Judaism, Sikhism and Jainism. One certain fact is that religion in its diversity remarkably contributes to the development of a coherent community in the continent (Nthamburi 1999). It was initially anticipated that, the influence of religion would diminish with increased scientific and technological evolution in the world. This has not happened as religion continues to deploy massive influence upon societies in Africa and beyond. Religion in many contexts, both in Africa and elsewhere around the globe continues to reinforce social order by controlling and facilitating change (Kamaara 2004). Kamaara continues to argue that religion on the surface seems to be immaterial and trivial to human life. This is especially when it is viewed in the light of increased scientific and technological advancements of the 21st century. But as already alluded, this is just an appearance, the reality is that religion in its many facets remains an indispensable institution within the society (Kamaara, 2004).

According to the functional theory of religion, society is made up of complex institutions that constitute the social system. One of the major functions of religion is to maintain social order. Religion performs this function either by controlling unnecessary change or by facilitating desirable change (Kamaara 2004). At the same time, religion has been a headspring of division and driver of conflict in various parts of Africa and beyond. People have conducted war in the name of God with the consequence of societies getting disintegrated because of pseudo-religious fundamentalism (Appleby, 2000; McBride, 2002; Wooldridge, 2004). This view is supported by Kamaara (2004) in stating, "At its worst, religion can be a source of social conflict. Northern Ireland with its perpetual conflicts between Protestants and Roman Catholics and Nigeria with conflicts between Muslims and Christians provide examples of dysfunctions of religion" (P. 126).

Some communities in Africa have suffered several cases of religious conflicts, more so between adherents of Christianity and Islam. The religious conflicts have been a major source of civil strife in countries such as Sudan, Nigeria, Central Africa Republic and elsewhere including Kenya. It is therefore evident that religion can works both

positively or negatively for national cohesion and integration depending on the dynamics at a given time in a context.

Religion as severally stated in this work comprises an inextricable part of the African fabric. This is both a historical and a present fact. Religion happened to be one of the key drivers of social transformation in Africa during the colonial period and has been the case in the post-colonial period. Previously, policy makers had hoped that the influence of religion on public matters in Africa and elsewhere around the globe would diminish with the increased levels of modernization. Such a view assumed that modernization thrives properly in the environment of secularization (Tsjeard and Ayse, 2005; Mugambi, 1999). Mugambi further states, "after five decades of secularists 'modernization', it is becoming appreciated that institutionalized religion has to be involved in modernization and democratization" (P. 75). Hence you find that in most parts of Africa, Islam or the Church, which are the major religions, have key role to play on the governance of many countries. Consequently, political and socio-economic aspects of various nation-states are closely invigorated with religious assertions and expressions (Agbiji and Swart, 2015).

Mugambi (1999) suggests that, religion should spearhead the social reconstruction of Africa in the same way that it facilitated the colonization and marginalization of the continent. To many observers, Christianity is a religion that facilitated the colonization of the continent and assisted in sustaining the neo-colonial legacy. This association is founded on the fact that Catholicism and Protestantism were the dominant religions of most European colonial powers (Cleall, 2012). In the present times, religion is expected to provide social reconstruction through intentional rejuvenation of the continent.

Regrettably, despite the strong assertion of religion, the continent continues to be hit by social ills including poor governance, corruption, poverty and social conflicts. According to a recent report of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NAPAD), nine countries in Sub-Saharan Africa rank among the seventeen most corrupt countries in the world (Agbiji and Swart, 2015). This is unfortunate for a region that boast a rich religious heritage. The failure is captured more bluntly by Agbiji and Swart (2015) in stating, "The enormity of corruption in African society in the midst of intense religiosity inevitably raises serious questions about the kind of Christian, Islamic and Traditional religious morality that exists in this predominantly religious continent" (P. 6). The question that then arises is the contribution of African religiosity to the social transformation of the continent- and more specifically the direction such a transformation usually takes-whether positive or negative. In our study context, the issues would be the contribution of religion in building cohesive and integrated nation states. It is common knowledge that, many parts of Africa have been hit by ethnic conflicts which in most cases are politically instigated.

From the foregoing discussion, it is evident that religion has so far played a marginal role in the socio-transformation of the continent. The sorry state has been blamed on the apparent religious complacency across various faiths. At the same time, the resourcefulness of African religiosity to social transformation in the continent should not be viewed as completely lost. The challenge is on how the resource of religion could be regained and engaged for an ongoing and progressive socio-economic transformation of the African society. The next part consider how religion has fared in the social transformation in Kenya.

Religion and Social Reconstruction in Kenya

It has been assumed for a long time that the influence of religion in social reconstruction has been waning over the decades. While this may be the case in some contexts, it is not always the situation everywhere. It is true that, owing to increased secularization of the society, the influence of religion has gone down. But as Mugambi (1999) notes, the influence of religion on the society has not disappeared in entirety. This could be said to be the enduring case in Kenya. According to Chacha (2010),

Religion has played a strong correlate of Kenya's political orientation for more than five decades...Religion is so much part of people's lives and is strongly tied into their cultural identities and their efforts to survive amidst life's contingencies and the political insecurities of the Kenyan state (P. 105,106).

The above statement by Chacha describes the role of religion in the psyche of the Kenyan society. This transcends most of the history of the people of Kenya and it lingers true in all eras of the existence of the nation. It was so during the pre-colonial period, grew more in the colonial times and is even stronger in the post-colonial era. In Kenya, there is no doubt to the fact that religion is invoked and accorded a prominent place in the constitution. The opening words of the constitution attests to this fact. The national anthem obviously points to the intended role of religion in Kenya (Nyaundi, 1999).

Religion played a central role in the society during the colonial period, post-colonial era, during the cold war and in the post-cold war period in the region (Mugambi, 1999). Of paramount importance is that religious institutions, and more so the church was at the center of providing education and healthcare among other social necessities in the country since the colonial era. As things stand for now, the state has taken over most of the social amenities which were initiated by religious institutions. Education and health service were some of the key social services which were offered by religious institution both in the colonial and post-colonial Africa (Mugambi, 1999). Indeed, many top schools in Kenya and a battery of health facilities were started as initiatives of religious institutions and more so the various missionary organizations which worked in Kenya. However, even as things stand today, the role of institutionalized religion has not

vanished completely. The central role of religion may have been suppressed but cannot be abolished in its entirety.

Religious institutions in Kenya and other parts of the continent have maintained an active role in responding to the various social, political and economic issues arising from time to time. One such role is peacebuilding, more so in a continent that has been hit by both intra and inter-state conflicts. It cannot be lost on close observation that, even in instances of high secularization of societies, religion is occasionally evoked for convenience to boast the ego of certain political regimes.

The vibrant and continuing role of religion in socio-political matters seems to have been the case in Kenya over the years. President Moi during his 24 years presidency almost never missed a Sunday service. He contributed financial help to support social projects affiliated with various churches. However, there was a brand of religious leaders who were very critical to President Moi regime and went to the extent of joining forces with political and civic leaders who agitated for a wider democratic space in the 1990s. Kibaki in his 10 years term also recognized the role of religion in smooth governance and occasionally sought the advice of religious leaders on important national matters (Chacha, 2010). Uhuru Kenyatta and his deputy William Ruto had religious leaders play a key role in their first and second inauguration ceremonies. They even went to the extent of having pastors pray specifically for them at the start of their first and second terms. Indeed, it has now become a pattern for religious leaders from different religions to offer prayers during important national events. These prayers are offered by Pastors, Sheikhs and even leaders from ethnically based traditional religions.

Religious organizations may it be those affiliated to the Church or Islam have been urged over the years to mobilize people for the implementation of the government agenda and policies. To a good extent, the response by religious organizations has been positive and constructive. A good example to the positive and constructive response is the existence of church sponsored learning institutions, health facilities, creation of employment opportunities and other social welfare initiatives. Islam has not been left behind as there are numerous social amenities sponsored by the religion in the country (Nyaundi, 1999). But even with this magnitude of cooperation between the state and religious bodies, political leaders still find reasons to fault religious leaders and to advise them to keep off from political and national governance issues. This mostly occurs when religious leaders speak on matters of public concern and more so against the excesses of elected political leaders (Nyaundi, 1999).

Supreme Council of Kenyan Muslims (SUPKEM)

The Supreme Council of Kenya Muslim (SUPKEM) is the umbrella body of all Muslim Organizations, societies, Mosque Committees and groups in Kenya. The entity was formed in May 1973 following a general conference at Quran

House on Mfangano Street in Nairobi (Oded, 2000; Kinyua, 2014). The organization was formed to foster the unity of Muslims and have a more united approach to various aspects of national development (Oded, 2000). But in my evaluation, the organization is more inward looking than it is in promoting the welfare of the general society in Kenya. This could be confirmed by the analysis of Kinyua on the main objective of SUPKEM (Kinyua, 2014).

According to the information gleaned from SUPKEM website, the organization has several directorates. These are education, social services, information, development and planning, relief and disaster mitigation, legal affairs and health services. Suffice to say, the health and education seems to be more active as such programs seems to be in progress (www.supkem.com). Peace building and related activities such as national cohesion and integration would conveniently fit in the social service directorate or in the relief and disaster mitigation. However, there is nothing said in the website about the functions of these directorates. Neither is there a policy framework in view to guide in the undertaking of peace related activities. This study was an attempt to establish the role of Islam through SUPKEM and other Islam institutions in building a cohesive and integrative society.

Council of Imams and Preachers of Kenya (CIPK)

Another Islamic body which deserves mention is Council of Imams and Preachers of Kenya (CIPK). The council brings together respected Islamic Scholars, Imams and Muslim preachers from all over the country. The organization was founded in 1997 and has since grown into a strong Islamic network. The body provides a focal point in which Islamic religious leaders and scholars make vital contributions in addressing pertinent matters and issues affecting the society. The organization continues to grow and has developed into a national umbrella organization committed to encouraging respect for diversity of religion, culture and tribal backgrounds in Kenya and beyond (Danish Embassy Websitekenya.um.dk/en/danida-en/governance/kenya-governance-support-programme-kgsp-2010-2015/psd/).

Among its key objectives, CIPK focuses on the promotion of social justice, human and basic rights, good governance, equitable social economic growth and development for all Kenyans. The organization's vision is also crucial as it more closely address the focus of this study, "CIPK envisions a society that enjoys fulfilled lives, harmoniously co-exists by upholding respect for human dignity and the diversity of culture and religion". The list of the organization's programs and activities mention peace, security and development program (<https://IslamInAfrica.wordpress.com>). Consequently, the role of cohesion and integration may be seen to be implied in the vision and programs. What is not clear just as it is in the case with SUPKEM is the specific mode of partnership with other likeminded organizations, may it be state organs or non-governmental organizations.

The National Council of Churches in Kenya (NCCK)

The National Council of Churches in Kenya (NCCK) is a fellowship of protestant churches and Christian organizations registered in Kenya. The council was founded in 1913 by the four main protestant missionary organizations in Kenya. The NCCK provides a forum for member churches and organizations to act on common issues, to support and sharpen each other in service and Christian witness. Through NCCK, the membership seeks to facilitate the attainment of a united, just, peaceful and sustainable society (Githigaro, 2012). Since a peaceful society is one of the goals of NCCK, it would be good to investigate how the Christian body has contributed towards a cohesive and integrated society. This is in the light of the many social upheavals which have hit the nation in the past.

According to Githigaro (2012), NCCK has an extensive experience in the area of peace building and reconciliation activities. The past intervention by the body includes response to various resource-based conflicts, border conflicts, as well as response to the 1992, 1997 and 2007 politically motivated ethnic conflicts. The council concurs with other observers that peace in Kenya has been much affected by ethnic animosity as a result of various underlying factors including but not limited to land issues and historical injustices (NCCK, 2008). Following the 2007/2008 Post Election Violence, the council has been engaged in various peace building activities at regional levels. Intra and Inter-ethnic dialogue forums have been held in areas identified as hot spots for violence to bring reconciliation among bitterly divided societies (Githigaro, 2012). The dialogue forums were further aimed at promoting forgiveness bringing about healing to enable communities to live together in unity.

In my evaluation, the council has avoided being ambiguous in cohesion and integration agenda as has been the case with most other organizations which have approached it from the general theme of conflict management. Indeed, in comparison to other religious institutions, NCCK seems to be more active in promoting a more cohesive and integrated Kenya. In the list of the council's thematic areas of focus, healing, peace, and security have been listed. But cohesion and integration are more specifically stated in the council's website,

There is recognition that conflict and hatred have in the past been incited and provoked by political and other leaders as means to acquire or cling to power. The council will therefore make interventions aimed at contributing in integration and cohesion among the communities (www.nccck.org).

The council has not only recognized the need for cohesion and integration but has made practical and continuing steps towards the same, either independently or in partnership with other stakeholders. One of the documented meeting of that nature was held in Kitale, Trans Nzoia County. The NCCK had gathered elders from Kalenjin, Luhya, Agikuyu, and Abagusii councils of elders as well as clergies drawn from Trans Nzoia

County (www.nccck.org). Transzoia is one of the counties that have experienced ethnic conflicts especially in times of heightened political activities at the national level. The next section looks at how inter-religious dialogue has contributed towards a cohesive and integrated nation.

Inter-Religious Dialogue

Kenya is a nation of diverse cultures and religions. There are forty-two ethnic groups and two major religions; Christianity and Islam. Though this diversity is a demonstration of God's wisdom, it has occasionally been manipulated to become a source of conflict in the society. The holding of different cultures and profession of different faiths has on many occasions challenged the harmonious co-existence of different religious and ethnic groups. Conflict on religious matters is mostly caused by ignorance on the other religion by the opposing religious camp (Mutahi, 2007; Kahumbi, 1995). As noted earlier in this work, religious tensions have not been absent in Kenya. It is both a historical and present reality (Kahumbi, 1995). While the scenario may not be as severe as it is in other countries such as Nigeria and Central Africa Republic, the problem is a reality in Kenya.

Religious communities have in various ways been involved in the mitigation of real and potential religious conflicts. Both the Christian and Muslim leaders and organizations have come together to dialogue on peaceful co-existence. In September 2015, church leaders visited Jamia Mosque in Nairobi during the Muslim Friday prayers as one way of showing solidarity and fighting intolerance among members of the two faiths. The Muslim leaders were to reciprocate the gesture soon by visiting some churches (Kiplang'at, 2015). The Inter-religious Council of Kenya (IRCK) has been at the center of inter-religious dialogue in Kenya for several years and it is the one that facilitated the visit. It is a coalition of all faith communities in Kenya working together to deepen interfaith dialogue and collaboration for common action. According to the information gleaned from the IRCK website (interreligious-council.or.ke), IRCK exists to promote inter-faith fellowship, inter-religious dialogue and sharing of values for a peaceful and just Kenya society. The organization encourages and supports religious communities in Kenya to discern areas of convergence in their respective faith traditions and moral commitments to build a peaceful Kenyan society (Mutubwa, 2014).

Besides the national forums for inter-religious dialogues, there are grassroots efforts undertaken by local religious leaders and organizations. They have over the years responded to issues of co-existence arising from time to time. Some of the issues addressed in these grass root forums are the occasional negative and erroneous stereotypes expressed by members of religion to those of a different religion (Gecaga, 2007). For example, in 2012 several leaders drawn from Christian denominations came together in Wajir to discuss public rhetoric about Islam and encourage a more

respectful, positive dialogue with Muslims in the District. The leaders had convened the forum in response to the controversial anti-Islam film "Innocence of Muslims" which had sparked violent protests in several Muslim-majority countries (Bosire, 2012).

Another organization working on regional level Inter-religious dialogue is the Coast Inter-faith Council of Clerics (CICC) with its history intertwined with the work of Coast Peace Initiative (CPI). After the 1997 Likoni clashes, Coast Peace Initiative (CPI), a local civil society network was formed to coordinate relief and other support mechanism for the victims. The government efforts were not usually freely appreciated by the local communities as they were perceived to be partisan and the efforts of the civil society on their own could not contain the situation either (CICC website, 2014).

One of the lessons learnt therefore was that the people had strong faith and trust in the voices of their religious leaders. Hence CPI organized consultative meetings with top religious leaders in the region to intervene. The religious leaders intervened through fact finding missions to the clash zones after which their reports were shared with the government and appropriate measures put in place to resolve conflict. As a result of their successful intervention, Coast Peace Initiative appreciated the efforts of religious leaders in promotion of cohesion. This led to the formation of an inter-religious council known as Coast Inter-faith Council of Clerics (CICC) on September 11th, 2001 with the aim of promoting enduring peace in the Coast region (CICC website, 2014). CICC has ever since been in the forefront in bringing better understanding of inter-religious relations among the people living at the Kenya Coast region. The importance of CICC existence in this region was highly felt during the 2007/2008 nationwide tensions which arose due to the disputed presidential election results. CICC was able to preach peace in an organized manner resulting to less tension in the Coast region than that experienced in other parts of Kenya (CICC, 2014).

CICC Trust supports Inter-religious Dialogue and engagement between members of different faiths and is committed to building bridges because they appreciate the fact that, different faith communities can learn from each other. Specifically, CICC is working on educating the common Kenyans about inter-religious dialogue, increase understanding and respect among people of different faiths, and foster cooperation among local faith communities to solve common community problems (CICC, 2014).

The National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC)

The National Cohesion and Integration Commission is a statutory body which was formed under the framework of the National Commission and Integration Act (Act No.12 of 2008). The Commission was established from the precursor work of the National Dialogue and Reconciliation Agreement signed on 1st February 2009 between President Kibaki of Party of National Unity and Raila Odinga of Orange

Democratic Movement. These were the main antagonizing forces following the disputed December 2007 General Elections. The dialogue aimed at providing a peaceful solution to the political standoff that hit the nation leading to loss of life and economic decline for weeks (NCIC Report, 2013). The objective and the purpose of the commission was to foster and promote equality of opportunity to citizens, promote harmony and peaceful co-existence among people of diverse social backgrounds and advice the government of the day on all matters pertaining to the afore mentioned objectives (NCIC Report, 2013).

In 2011, the commission developed a master training manual to help in sensitizing the Kenyan citizenry on matters pertaining to national cohesion and integration. This would partly help the commission achieve her mandate of spearheading the building of a society reflective of harmony and equity through national reconciliation and healing and cohesion and integration (NCIC Training Manual, 2011). In conjunction with the ministry of Public Service, the commission immediately after its formation was able to undertake an ethnic audit to ascertain ethnic composition of the staff in public institutions. The results of audit would be used to advice the government on appropriate remedy measures (NCIC Report 2009-2011).

In the most recent commission report, NCIC restate its general mandate as, “to build national identity and values, mitigate ethno-political competition and ethnically motivated violence, eliminate discrimination on ethnic, racial and religious basis, promote national reconciliation and healing (NCIC Report, 2019: 11). To accomplish the mandate, the report further states that the commission “May enter into association with such other bodies or organizations within or outside Kenya as it may consider desirable or appropriate, and in furtherance of the purpose for which the Commission is established” (NCIC Report, 2019: 11). This means that the commission envisioned some forms of partnership with likeminded organizations.

An earlier report had pointed to a challenge in inter-sectoral coordination and partnership even between the arms of the government. The NCIC report (2009-2010) captures this very clearly,

It was envisaged that the enforcement of National Cohesion and Integration Act would be implemented through collaboration efforts between the commission, the police department through its investigative process, the Attorney General and Director of Public Prosecution. There have been hiccups in this arrangement as regards the extent and manner of collaboration as this was not clearly defined in the Act (NCIC Report 2009-2010).

It then follows that, if there are hiccups in partnerships between various arms of the government with NCIC as noted above, then it is expected that deliberate efforts would need to be applied to have a fruitful collaboration with non-governmental bodies such as Islam. In

the latest report, that is the 2019 report, the commission points to have “exploited strategic partnership and networks to generate technical and financial resources”. However, in the stated technical partnership and in the light of the previous report, there is no mention of the specific partners and the mode of technical partnership undertaken to build a cohesive and integrated society. Therefore, the partnership remains an issue of further probing.

Cooperation of Islam with Other Actors in Cohesion and Integration in Kenya

Cohesion and integration work is a complex task which needs cooperation and coordination between various actors (NCIC, 2013; Ojielo, 2010). The National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) acknowledges that, “The quest for attaining a cohesive and integrated society requires a multi-pronged approach in order to influence all cadres of the Kenya society” (NCIC Training Manual, 2011). This is where multi-sectoral partnerships come in. Various non-state actors such as Islam religion needs to work hand in hand with the state, and more so the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) for better results. Islam also needs to cooperate with other non-state actors such as the church and affiliate bodies for maximum results.

On 14th -16th January 2014, a national conference on security and countering violent extremism was held at Nairobi Safari Club. The theme of the Conference was “*Advancing Shared Responsibility for Peaceful Society*”. Although the key stakeholder of the conference was The National Cohesion and Integration Commission, there were other stakeholders in the event. The Islamic religion was represented by officials from the Supreme Council of Kenyan Muslims (SUPKEM) (www.cohesion.or.ke). During the meeting, the Cabinet Secretary of Interior Affairs and Coordination of National Government pledged the government support to the Supreme Council of Kenyan Muslims in their efforts to enhance dialogue and intellectual debates. The dialogues and debates would be aimed at countering extremist narratives and half-truths perpetuated by pseudo-clerics who do not fully understand Islam (www.cohesion.or.ke). This is an indication that the government recognized and valued the input of the religion in the discussion at hand especially on violent extremism whereby Islamic religion is normally mentioned negatively. This research would seek to understand the later engagements which took place between Islam and the government. No documentation is available so far on the progress and this leaves an academic lacuna which needs to be filled.

The conference mentioned above was followed by the launching of the second phase of the *Pamoja Initiative* on Intra and Inter-Community County dialogues forums on June 2014. The program which would last for three years and mainly focus on national cohesion and integration was launched in Nairobi by the then Interior and Coordination of National Government Cabinet Secretary Mr. Joseph Ole

Lenku (www.ncck.org). During the occasion of the launch, the Cabinet secretary acknowledged that strong partnership and linkages were necessary to address issues of unity in the country. He urged Kenyans to remain united irrespective of ethnic and cultural diversities. During the launch of the said initiative, the then interior Principal Secretary Dr. Monica Juma further underscored the need of cooperation among various stakeholders in stating, “The ministry anticipates harnessing the energies and synergy from other stakeholders in developing a sustained national campaign aimed at fostering cohesion and integration of our society” (www.ncck.org). This was a confirmation that not even the government with its apparatus would single handedly succeed in building a united Kenya without tapping into the role of other stake holders and more so the non-state actors like Islam, the Church and a wide array of non-governmental organizations.

A careful search revealed the presence of officials from the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK) and the umbrella religious forum, the Interreligious Forum Council of Kenya (IRCK). There is no mention of SUPKEM or CIPK officials attending the launch or giving a statement. The Technical committee has two representatives from NCCK among other stakeholders but non-from the two Muslim bodies. This leaves the question whether Islam participation in the initiative was excluded or left out. This research would seek to understand the participation of Islam religion in these forums of networking and collaboration in national cohesion and integration activities. The next section presents the results of data collection from the field and the discussion to help lead to a conclusion on intersectoral partnership between Islam and other players.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

The study was on how Islam had partnered with other sectors in cohesion and integration agenda. Primary data was collected through questionnaires, Interviews and focus group discussions. Islam was reported to have slightly engaged other actors in promoting cohesion and integration in the country. Occasionally, Muslims have initiated joint peace meetings with the church in Mombasa and Nairobi after which joint press statements have been issued to the public. Muslims have also held joint seminars and workshops with other religious groups to campaign for peaceful co-existence in the two counties. Other ways through which Islam has engaged other actors in promoting cohesion and integration includes: Inviting Christians for interreligious dialogues; a common approach in dealing with common challenges such as drug abuse, crime, female genital mutilation etc. In the evaluation of this researcher, the cooperation and engagement does not seem structured, but it is more situational.

Non-State actors involving Islam in Cohesion and Integration.

The following table and graph summarize the respondents’ views on whether other actors beside the government have involved Islam in promoting cohesion and integration in their localities.

	Mombasa		Nairobi		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Yes	48	16.3	27	18.8	75	17.1
No	88	29.9	34	23.6	122	27.9
I don't know	158	53.7	83	57.6	241	55.0
Total	294	100.0	144	100.0	438	100.0

Table 1. Other non-state actors involving Islam in cohesion and integration (Source: Questionnaires)

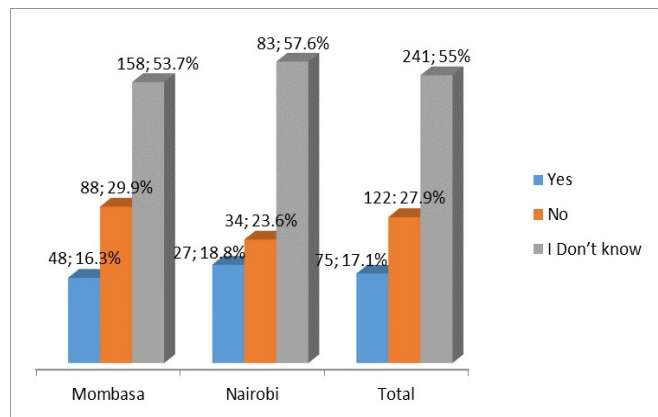


Figure 1. Other non-state actors involving Islam in cohesion and integration (Source: Questionnaires)

From the graph above, 29.9% (88) of respondents from Mombasa County were of the view that other actors have not involved Islam in national cohesion and integration. However, 16.3% (48) affirmed that other actors have indeed involved Islam in national cohesion and integration while an overwhelming number of respondents standing at 53.7% (158) did not know whether there was any involvement or none from other non-state actors with Islam in national cohesion and integration activities. The “I don’t know” would to some extent imply little involvement of Muslims by other non-state actors in cohesion and integration in Mombasa County.

In Nairobi County, only 18.8% (27) people believed that other non-state actors have involved Islam in national cohesion and integration while 23.6% (34) were of the view that other non-state actors had not involved Islam in cohesion and integration exercise. As it was the case of response from Mombasa, majority of respondents did not know of such involvement only that such a response stood at 57.6% (83) compared to Mombasa where “I don’t know” stood at 53.7% (153). As it was the case in Mombasa, the “I don’t know” response would to some extent point to little involvement of Islam by other non-state actors in cohesion and integration work.

From the percentage of those who were aware of other non-state actors involving Islam in cohesion and integration, very few of them answered the follow up question on the names of these bodies and the nature of involvement done. However, a few respondents from both Counties mentioned the church as one of the non-state actors which involved Islam in cohesion and integration activities. Other non-governmental bodies which were remotely mentioned to have involved Islam include: Oslo Centre for Peace; Haki Africa; World Vision; Nubian Right Forum; Red Cross and Council of Elders. Nothing substantial was mentioned on the nature of engagement with the mentioned organizations given that more than 500 respondents had filled the questionnaires. These responses suggestively point to a scenario whereby, other non-state actors rarely involve Muslims in cohesion and integration agenda.

On partnership with other non-state actors in promoting national cohesion and integration, the respondents in FGDs indicated that there is minimal involvement of Islam by non-state actors in national cohesion and integration efforts. Indeed, the church which is the largest religion did not offer great partnership to Islam in national cohesion and integration. In Mombasa, world vision, which is a Christian NGO was said to be working closely with both Muslims and Christians in promoting peaceful and harmonious co-existence. Other non-state actors which were mentioned by a few respondents in the questionnaires include a section of the media (Such as Pamoja FM and IQRA FM).

Interviews were conducted with NCKK officials, denominational leaders of selected churches in Nairobi and Mombasa, national Muslim institutions, which are SUPKEM and CIPK and Sub-County officials to gauge the nature of partnership between Islam and other bodies in national cohesion and integration. The church leaders generally pointed to little cooperation between the church and Islam in both counties in promoting national cohesion and integration. For example, the Catholic Church in Mombasa and Nairobi is active in the task through Peace Justice and Reconciliation Commission (PJRC) and the Small Christian Communities (SCC). However, there is minimal engagement with Muslims and Muslim institutions in the task. Occasionally, there is some partnership with Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM) and Council of Imams and Preachers of Kenya (CIPK) (CLM1 and CLN1)

The same came out in interviews with key officials from the Anglican Church and The National Council of Churches in Kenya (NCKK) in Mombasa and Nairobi Counties. Church institutions seemed to be more comfortable working with other church institutions and denominations. Some church leaders cited lack of grassroots structures in Islam as the cause of minimal co-operation with Muslims. Radicalization activities leading to terrorism and sectarianism among Muslims was cited by church leaders as a key barrier to meaningful partnership between the members of the two religious backgrounds. The religion has been closely

associated with terrorism as most of the people who engage in the vice claims to be executing a religious duty (NCKK N1 and NCKK M1).

The respondents from CIPK and SUPKEM indicated that they have cooperated with civil society groups; Danish Embassy and other religious groups including Christians in promoting peaceful a co-existence. There was also a light mention of direct and occasional partnership with the church or the NCKK especially at the regional and national levels. In Mombasa, there was a general agreement that Islam and the church cooperate through the CICC. Generally, Islam and the church mostly come together to respond to the occurrence of a certain event such as terror attack or social conflicts(CIPK M1; CIPK M2 and CIPK M3). From the views collected through interviews and FGDs, it is abundantly evident that there is little structured and continuous engagement between the two main religious groups in Kenya.

State-Actors involving Islam in Cohesion and Integration

Information used to determine whether the state actors have been involving Islam in efforts towards building a cohesive and integrated nation was sought through questionnaires, FGDs with Muslim faithful and interview with Assistant Sub-County Commissioners and officials from National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC). The following table and graph summarize the questionnaire respondents' views on whether there has been any co-operation between the state actors (government agencies) and Islam in promoting cohesion and integration in their localities.

	Mombasa		Nairobi		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Yes	84	28.4	60	41.7	144	32.7
No	84	28.4	22	15.3	106	24.1
I don't know	128	43.2	62	43.1	190	43.2
Total	296	100.0	144	100.0	440	100.0

Table 2. State actors involving Islam in national cohesion and integration (Source: Questionnaires).

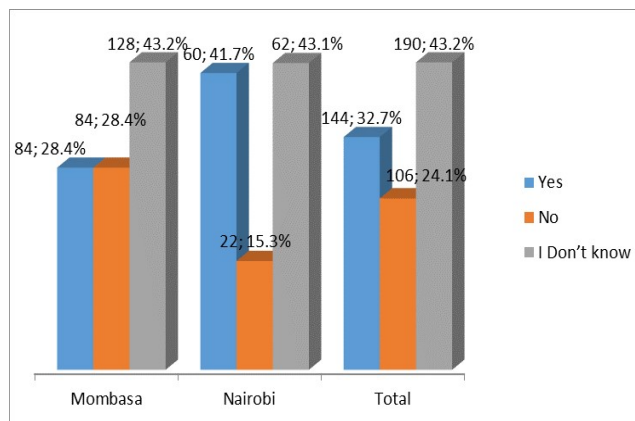


Figure 2. State actors involving Islam in national cohesion and integration (Source: Questionnaires).

From the table and the graph above, the two counties had an average of 43.2% (190) of the respondents who indicated that they did not know whether there was any cooperation between Islam and government actors in cohesion and integration related works. Those who affirmed of cooperation between Islam and the state actors in national cohesion and integration stood at 32.7% (144) while 24.1% (106) asserted that there was no cooperation between the state and Islam in national cohesion and integration. In Mombasa County only 28.4% (84) affirmed that they were aware of cooperation between the state actors and Islam in cohesion and integration while in Nairobi, 41.7% (60) were aware of some form of cooperation between the government and Islam in promoting cohesion and integration.

On partnership with government agencies, some respondents in FGDs stated that Islam was cooperating with the government to fight terror activities which in many occasions causes tension between Muslims and non-Muslims. The government of Kenya has also taken positive steps that make Muslims feel they are accommodated in the country in such ways as accommodation of Islamic Banking principles and allowing for the provision of the Kadhi's Court in the country (FGD M2; MGD N1). Other mode of partnership between Islam and the state includes joint seminars on various matters for common good; key government and political leaders including the president joining Muslims in celebrating their national religious holidays (FGD N3; FGD M1). Nevertheless, the efforts by the state agencies to partner with Muslims were noted to be very minimal. For example, there was no mention of the NCIC partnering with Muslims in a major way in the promotion of national cohesion and integration. Yet Islam is the second largest religion in the country and some Muslim dominated areas such as the Coast and Northeastern regions have been key conflict centers.

Whereas not much details on cooperation with Islam were offered, the Assistant County Commissioners interviewed in Mombasa and Nairobi pointed to some mode of cooperation with Islam in promoting a cohesive and integrated societies in their respective Sub-Counties. In describing the extent of partnership with Islam, an ACC from Mombasa code-named (ACC M2) stated that the government was working with Muslim Youth Alliance (MYA) in teaching the youths while various Muslim leaders have been appointed in various Sub-County Committees. However, some challenges were pointed out in cooperating with Islam in the task. The Assistant Count Commissioner in one of the Sub-Counties in Mombasa stated, "Islam is rigid so getting a middle ground is difficult; challenge of radicalization; Muslims feeling discriminated in the issuance of ID and other documents" (ACC M1). An Assistant County Commissioner in a Sub-County in Nairobi (ACC N2) stated that there is minimal participation by Muslim leaders in the activities and that is a major challenge they encounter in partnering with Islam.

The other strategies used by Islam in Kenya in promoting a cohesive and integrated society is use of dialogues, interfaith forum and inclusivity. Dialogue was quoted across the spectrum of the respondents as a major tool of promoting cohesion and integration in the country. Members of the Muslim religion have attended workshops and seminars aimed at promoting sensitivity and respects for other cultures and religions. More Muslims are open to such forums that discusses common challenges facing the society in our times. St. Paul University has been organizing forums aimed at promoting Christian-Muslim dialogues on an annual basis. In the forum, scholars and members from the two religions are given opportunities to offer their views on various matters. Muslim institutions such as schools and hospitals have part of their staff being Christians as a way of promoting inclusivity.

VI. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The purpose of this paper was to investigate the partnership that exist between Islam and other actors in cohesion and integration agenda in Kenya. The literature review revealed some form of efforts for partnership through the Inter-religious Council of Kenya and Coastal Inter-Council of Clerics. Nevertheless, the partnership noted in the literature review is not vibrant enough as it mostly involves the leaders of various religions and rarely the masses on the grassroots. Furthermore, the partnership seems to be occasional as needs arise as opposed to being on an ongoing basis.

From the field study, the level of cooperation between Islam and other actors was noted to be low, more so at the grassroot levels. There is limited and less structured engagement between Islam and other actors, both state and non-state actors. Most of the cooperation was done during times of emergencies such as terror attacks. It was also noted that the cooperation between Islam and the state actors is slightly higher than the cooperation between Islam and other actors. It can therefore be fair to conclude that, while Islam is making some attempts in promoting national cohesion and integration, the methods and strategies used are not enough to address a challenge of this magnitude. The religious leaders of Islam in Kenya need to partner more with other actors and be more deliberate in using Islam as a resource of promoting a cohesive and integrated society in Kenya.

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