

**Deteriorating Human Security in Kenya:
Domestic, Regional and Global Dimensions**

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6 Deteriorating Human Security in Kenya: Domestic, Regional and Global Dimensions

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Introduction

Since 1990, Kenya has experienced a marked decay in human security, from ballooning petty crime to the advent of ethnic cleansing. The local and international press often mentions the phenomenon of ‘rising ... crime and insecurity’ (*Africa Confidential*, 11 January 2002). This chapter seeks to explain this unfortunate trend through the lens of the new regionalism/regionalisms approach (NRA) under consideration in this volume. To do so, it disaggregates various forms and locations of violence, all the while recognizing the dynamics that link them.

In a recent article on regionalism, Breslin and Higgot (2000: 347) state that, ‘while the old regionalism simply focused on state actors, the new regionalism adds interactions with inter-state and global institutions and incorporates the role of non-state actors (especially multinational corporations, emerging civil society organizations and other non-governmental organizations [NGOs])’. The new regionalism thus considers ‘global, regional, national and local interactions’ and the state’s relationship with ‘non-state, market and society actors’ (Schulz *et al*, 2001: 5). This case study addresses these two key aspects of ‘new regionalism’ theorizing and their relationship to human security. First, the NRA provides empirical evidence for and insights into the benefits of adopting and linking various levels of analysis. Doing so draws attention to, among others, the oft-ignored effects of Western donors’ policies and practices, including efforts to open up the African continent to the forces of economic globalization and how, rather paradoxically, donor-sponsored political liberalization indirectly resulted in the rise of ‘ethnic clashes’ in Kenya. Second, the NRA emphasizes the importance of getting ‘inside’ the state and understanding its complex relations with ‘civil society’. This is particularly important in neo-patrimonial systems, such as Kenya. Problematizing state-society relations goes beyond underlining the state’s failure to maintain public security and provides a critical look at its role in facilitating and sometimes actively instigating much of the violence

Below, I establish how human security has suffered from 1990 to 2002, during which time Kenya was ruled by President Daniel arap Moi and his party, the Kenya African National Union (KANU).¹ Then, I analyze each of the three dimensions – domestic, regional and global – and conclude with this case study’s insights from and contributions to the NRA.

Deteriorating Human Security

As made clear in this volume's introduction, human security is a term that encompasses many facets, including 'economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community, and political considerations' (Grant and Söderbaum, this volume: [tba]). In Kenya, many indicators – often already low, even by sub-Saharan African standards – illustrate a decline during the 1990s. For instance, per capita gross domestic product (GDP) *shrank* by an annual average of 0.5 per cent in the period from 1990 to 2000, whereas per capita gross national product (GNP) had grown at an average annual rate of 3.1 per cent between 1965 and 1980 (UNDP, 2002: 192; UNDP, 1996: 187). After decades of improvement, life expectancy is now falling dramatically. It dropped from 55 years in 1996 to 49 years in 2000, in part due to the AIDS pandemic (UN Economic Commission for Africa figures cited in the *Daily Nation*, 22 July 2002). Though in some areas, such as political freedom, there has been a net improvement since 1990, on the whole the problems associated with poverty show few signs of being alleviated.

In its discussion of human security, this chapter focuses mainly on physical security or freedom from violence. Though reliable figures are not available, this component has witnessed a particularly prominent deterioration since 1990 in three main areas. First, petty crime, often violent, has increased dramatically, especially in urban areas. Second, the northern part of the country has witnessed a large escalation of armed violence. Third, 'ethnic clashes' have resulted in some two thousand deaths and displaced hundreds of thousands of people since 1991.

Urban Areas

The Kenyan government does not release official statistics on homicides and other violent crimes. However, anecdotal evidence and almost daily press reports suggest a ballooning rate of petty crime in urban areas over the past decade. Armed theft, assault and carjacking are commonplace in cities and towns across the country, from slums to well-to-do neighborhoods (Nairobi, the capital, is often half-jokingly referred to as 'Nairobbery'). A United Nations street/household survey found that 37 per cent of over 10,000 respondents in Nairobi had been mugged in 2000, 29 per cent had been burgled and 18 per cent assaulted – figures worse than in notoriously dangerous central Johannesburg (*Economist*, 10 August 2002). Moreover, violent confrontations between members of certain ethnic groups have recently taken place in poor areas of Nairobi. Much of the violence is perpetrated by members of various private militias or of an underground religious sect known as *Mungiki*.

Northern Kenya

Though encompassing about two-thirds of the country's surface area, the north is home to only about 20 per cent of Kenya's population, mainly traditionally pastoralist communities such as the Samburu, Turkana, Pokot, Marakwet and Somali (Musambayi, 1998: 22-3). It is much poorer than the southern part of the country, with a severe lack of fertile land and infrastructure. Reports from the media and human rights NGOs clearly point to a worsening security situation in the region, including a dramatic rise in murder rates. For example, 10,000 Turkana people were reported killed in 1991-94, about three per cent of the ethnic group's total population (*Economist*, 16 July 1994). In early September 2002, a surge in Borana attacks against the Turkana in Isiolo District, killing at least 11 people and causing 5,000 to flee their homes, provoked calls for government intervention (*Daily Nation*, 6-13 September 2002).

Cattle-rustling, an established practice in northern Kenya, used to be governed by commonly understood rules that prevented excessive violence. Sometimes elders would negotiate a truce and the return of some stolen cattle (Musambayi, 1998: 24; *EastAfrican*, 14 January 2002). However, recent years have seen a significant transformation. No longer are relatively small numbers of cattle seized at a time; they can number in the thousands. Raiders now often torch local dwellings in the process and, in another unprecedented practice, use automatic weapons to target people, including women, children and the elderly. Over 1,200 people are believed to have been killed and over 300,000 heads of cattle stolen in raids in the latter half of the 1990s (Human Rights Watch, 2002: 14). Since the early 1990s, livestock are very often sold on the market in Nairobi or other urban centers, as well as in Southern Sudan and the Middle East, and therefore are not recoverable, as they had been in the past (Musambayi, 1998: 27; Juma, 2000: 53). Much of the northern region is under the control of bandits and local warlords – to the extent that the state's actual sovereignty over the region is sometimes questioned – causing most communities to arm themselves in self-defense.

'Clash Zones'

In October 1991, a new phenomenon erupted onto the Kenya scene: 'ethnic clashes'.² In the Rift Valley province and several adjoining districts in neighboring provinces, members of Kalenjin and sometimes Maasai communities forced members of other ethnic groups – Luo, Luhya, Kisii and especially Kikuyu – to abandon their land, livestock and belongings. Those who resisted were physically attacked, raped or killed. In 1993, a Human Rights Watch/Africa Watch report (1993: 1 and 90) stated that at least 300,000 people had fled and that over 1,500 had been killed.

Raids subsided by 1994, but continue on a lower scale to this date. In late 1997, similar violent attacks took place in the Likoni-Kwale area of the Coast Province, resulting in hundreds of deaths, perhaps over one thousand, and displacing 100,000-200,000 people (Grignon and Maupeu, 1998: 15; Tostensen *et al*, 1998: 43-4). Renewed ethnic cleansing took place in parts of the Rift Valley in January 1998, causing over 100 deaths and displacing several thousand (Apollos, n.d. [2001]: 9), while flare-ups have more recently occurred in the Tana River District (Coast Province), Wajir District (North-Eastern Province) and along the Gucha/Trans Mara border (Western Kenya). In 2001, an estimated 50 to 75 people were killed per month in attacks (US Department of State, 2002: 19). The sites of these violent attacks are collectively known as ‘clash zones’.

The Domestic Dimension

Part of the problem is the state’s failure to ensure public security, police borders, prevent smuggling and catch criminals. However, senior KANU officials also encouraged violence for political gain. The grafting of a multi-party system on a fundamentally neo-patrimonial state altered some political practices without modifying the underlying nature of neo-patrimonial rule. The former single party elaborated new strategies to generate the resources required to maintain patron-client relations, while adopting other methods to maximize support and minimize opposition in key constituencies, including the sponsoring of different forms of violence (see a detailed analysis in Klopp, 2001a). KANU developed an effective technique for ‘rationing’ this violence, using enough to reach its goals, but not enough to galvanize sufficient protest from Kenyans or donors to threaten regime survival (Kibwana, 2001). International NGOs, such as Human Rights Watch, as well as domestic ‘civil society’ and church organizations played an important role in documenting and publicizing the mechanisms that made senior politicians in large part responsible for the decline in security in northern Kenya, urban areas and especially the ‘clash zones’.

Ethnic Cleansing

The appearance of ‘clashes’ in 1991, the first incidence of large-scale inter-ethnic conflict, closely followed political rallies at which high-level KANU officials incited violence. A number of cabinet ministers openly encouraged the expulsion of opposition supporters and ethnic minorities from the areas dominated by KANU. In addition, government and party officials trained, armed and paid militias composed of Kalenjin and Maasai ‘warriors’ to attack members

of these ethnic groups, destroy their property and even kill them (see National Council of Churches of Kenya, 1992; Republic of Kenya, 1992: 8-10, 75; Human Rights Watch/Africa Watch, 1993: 28-32; Médard, 1996: 69). In the case of the 1997 coastal violence, KANU was similarly linked to the violent attacks on minority ethnic groups that generally supported the opposition (see Mazrui, 1997, 1998; Kagwanja, 1998: 56-73; African Rights, 1997; Law Society of Kenya, 1997; Human Rights Watch, 2002).

The Moi government deliberately portrayed the ‘clashes’ as evidence that multi-partyism foments ethnic conflict. An assumption of longstanding ethnic antagonism is often implicit or explicit, especially in the international media and among other outside observers. For instance, a Finnish academic recently ascribed popular motivation to ‘traditional animosity between groups’ (Kivimäki, 2002: 133), ignoring the fact that Kenya’s 40-odd ethnic groups had previously coexisted peacefully since pre-colonial times, often trading and inter-marrying (Lonsdale, 1992: 19-20; Haugerud, 1995: 43). At other times, the conflict is presented as being over scarce land resources (Kahl, 1998). Patterns of land tenure in the Rift Valley and Coast provinces are widely perceived as favoring ‘non-indigenous’ ethnic groups, who migrated to these regions starting in the 1920s, responding to various political and economic factors, including colonial and post-colonial policies (see Holmquist *et al*, 1994; Leach 1997; Bertrand, 1994). Though used as mobilizing tools, these grievances should not be considered the root cause of the ‘clashes’, not least because this interpretation does not explain the timing of their emergence. Moreover, the extensive landholdings of ‘indigenous’ KANU élites, accumulated as extra-legal perquisites of power, have not generated any such level of antagonism (Brown, 2003).

Two varieties of citizenship currently co-exist in Kenya; one national, the other based on ethno-regional identification (see Ndegwa, 1997). Micro-regionalism (regionalism at the sub-national level) and ‘new ways of thinking about nationality, regionality and territoriality’ have been identified as important features of post-Cold War regionalism (Lähteenmäki and Käkönen, 1999: 209 and 217). Indeed, since 1991, ethno-regional identities in Kenya have sharpened, paralleled by an increase in some groups’ demands for greater provincial autonomy. *Majimboism* – as this quasi-federal system is known – is closely linked with ethnic chauvinism and the principle that certain regions ‘belong’ to ethnic groups with historical claims. The corollary is that those who arrived more recently should have fewer rights or even be forcibly expelled. The latter is a key difference from the kind of regionalism usually explored in the literature, based on cases in Western Europe and North America (see Keating and Loughlin, 1997), which is usually assumed to be ‘positive’ or ‘good’ (Schulz *et al*, 2001: 6). Also in contrast with the micro-regionalism in industrialized countries is the fact that in Kenya the *majimbo* movement has been largely from ‘from above’, led by national-level politicians who sought to strengthen their hold on KANU-supporting zones and ensure a solid power base should KANU lose national elections.

In Kenya and elsewhere in Africa, micro-regionalism has a complex and mutually reinforcing relationship with ‘ethnic’ violence. Since localized ethnic cleansing erupted in Kenya in 1991, immediately following KANU-sponsored *majimbo* rallies in the Rift Valley, at which senior politicians incited violence, micro-regionalism and the shifting of (already weak) identification away from the state have arguably been more of a cause than an effect of violence. However, if ‘ethnic clashes’ spread in the future, they will also increasingly strengthen ethno-regional identities and cause micro-regionalism to be largely ‘from below’.

Other Forms of Violence

The government and the media usually depict violence in the north as banditry and ‘traditional’ cattle-rustling. As in the ‘clash zones’, however, there are important indications that KANU facilitated and even actively incited violence. For example, the Moi government reportedly armed and trained a number of Pokot and encouraged them to attack the neighboring Marakwet, who were seen as hostile to KANU (Kagwanja, 2001: 41-2). In March 2001, for instance, a prominent Pokot politician and KANU member of parliament declared that the Pokot would recover the lands that were ‘historically’ theirs (*Daily Nation*, 13 May 2001). Soon afterwards, as many as 1,000 Pokot raiders, aided by mercenaries from President Moi’s Tugen ethnic subgroup, using AK-47 assault rifles, grenades, rocket launchers and bazookas, killed at least 58 Marakwet villagers, burnt over 600 houses and forced thousands of inhabitants to flee (Kagwanja, 2001: 5-6; Kenya Human Rights Commission, 2000).

Some crime and violence in urban areas can also be indirectly and even directly linked to the Moi government. According to a report commissioned by a German foundation, private militias originally formed by KANU politicians to carry out ‘ethnic clashes’ have turned to urban crime for hire or of their own accord (Sana and Odago, 2000). Violence in Nairobi’s Kibera slum in 2001 – which killed over a dozen people and displaced thousands – immediately followed statements by President Moi and a senior (Luo) cabinet minister that (mainly Nubian) landlords were overcharging their (mainly Luo) tenants and that the latter should no longer tolerate this (*Daily Nation* and *EastAfrican*, 10 December 2001; *Economist*, 29 June 2002). In some instances, links have also been traced, especially in 2002, between some KANU politicians and the leadership of the *Mungiki* cult and other ‘vigilante groups’, whose members are responsible for significant violence and criminal activities in Nairobi shantytowns; though a few members of parliament from other parties are reported to have ties with militias, as well (Anderson, 2002; Kagwanja, 2003).³ Moreover, there have been reports of the KANU youth wing taking over some slums, preparing for future violent confrontations (Aina, 2001).

Crime without Punishment

In all these cases of organized violence, the KANU government failed to provide protection for victims, often disarming them while arming their attackers. There has been complete impunity for those responsible. Very few perpetrators have been arrested and no official has ever been convicted of instigation or complicity, despite detailed reports submitted by a parliamentary committee in 1992 and a presidential commission of enquiry in 1999.

KANU and its senior officials were the major beneficiaries of the violence. Though a few revenge attacks took place, the victims overwhelmingly belonged to ethnic groups that were associated with the opposition but lived in KANU strongholds. The violence intimidated and/or punished opposition supporters, forcing them to flee and thus preventing them from registering or voting. The resources they left behind were often distributed to reward KANU supporters (Klopp, 2001b). The commercialization of stolen cattle that began in the 1990s also provided funds to purchase weapons or otherwise finance KANU re-election strategies, including supporting pro-KANU warlords in the north. It is no coincidence that ‘ethnic clashes’ emerged in 1991 as Kenya moved to a multi-party system, forcing KANU to compete for power. The cycles of violence closely follow the five-year electoral calendar, with the worst incidents occurring in the period preceding or immediately following the December 1992 and December 1997 elections. The fact that no large-scale ‘clashes’ occurred around the December 2002 elections illustrates how, far from being a ‘natural’ or spontaneous by-product of multi-party competition, violence can be deliberately deployed or withheld by politicians, depending on political circumstances.⁴

The Regional Dimension

The regionalization of domestic conflict that has come to characterize Africa in the past decade has affected Kenya as well. Armed conflict in neighboring countries has destabilized Kenya through cross-border incursions and trade in small arms, often related to kinship ties that traverse international frontiers. In addition, the situation in Kenya has had an impact, albeit lesser, on its neighbors.

Foreign Incursions

Fighting in Ethiopia has spilled into Kenya. Ethiopian security forces have crossed the border and attacked the Borana people, believed to support the Oromo Liberation Front (OLF), which is fighting for greater autonomy from the Ethiopian government (Musambayi, 1998: 31). Members of the OLF are reported to have placed landmines in Kenyan territory and attacked local ethnic Somalis (US Department of State, 2002: 3; Muggah and Berman, 2001: 16). Over 25,000 people were reported displaced in December 2000, after militiamen from Ethiopia crossed into Kenya's Wajir District (*People* [Nairobi], 5 December 2000, cited in Norwegian Refugee Council, 2002: 13). The Turkana are targeted as well. For instance, in September 2002, Ethiopian raiders killed 16 Kenyans in Turkana District (*Daily Nation*, 18 September 2002).

Militias from Somalia have also entered Kenya, attacking Somali refugees and Kenyan ethnic Somalis, effectively rendering the border area unsafe. General Mohamed Farah Aidid's forces carried out a number of raids in retaliation for the Kenyan government's support of his rival Mohamed Hirsi 'Morgan', who has important links to ethnic Somali clans in Kenya (*Africa Confidential*, 9 November 2001). The Sudanese government has used allied local warriors in Southern Sudan to attack the Turkana in Kenya under the guise of cattle-rustling (Musambayi, 1998: 26, 30). Far worse and more widespread geographically has been the influx of small arms into northern Kenya.

Cross-Border Arms Trade

The regional illicit arms trade began in earnest in 1979 with Idi Amin's overthrow in Uganda, after which members of Kenya's Pokot community purchased weapons from their ethnic cousins across the border in Uganda (Musambayi, 1998: 25). The subsequent civil war and its remaining vestiges have further increased the flow of weapons from Uganda, as has the civil war in Southern Sudan. Continuing political instability in two other neighboring countries – the implosion of the Somali state in 1991, as well as the Ethiopian civil war, which overthrew a military regime in 1991 – also flooded northern Kenya with small arms and ammunition. As many as 5,000 automatic rifles, for instance, are said to cross the border with Somalia each month, while an estimated 90-95 per cent of households in northern Kenya are armed (Muggah and Berman, 2001: 10-1).

The easily available, low-price smuggled weapons, many of which have found their ways to Nairobi and the southern part of Kenya, have greatly contributed to insecurity. Between 500,000 and 1,000,000 small arms are believed to currently be in circulation (Muggah and Berman, 2001: 10). The Moi government did not crack down on the arms trade, more for the lack

of will than of ability (Human Rights Watch, 2002: 15-6). In some cases, Kenya is used as a staging-ground in a wider international conflict: Explosives used in the bombing of the US embassy in Nairobi in 1998 and an Israeli-owned hotel near Mombasa in 2002, as well as the surface-to-air rockets that shot down an Israeli passenger jet as it left Mombasa in 2002, are widely believe to have been smuggled into Kenya across its ‘porous border’ with Somalia by al-Qaida operatives or allied groups (*New York Times*, 4 December 2002).

Impact on Neighbors

The spillover *to* Kenya’s neighbors is less well documented – and probably less extensive – than the spillover *from* them. There have been requests from Ugandan officials that Kenya disarm its Pokot citizens, since armed Pokot raiders frequently cross into Uganda and commit acts of cattle-rustling and banditry, whereas the Ugandan government has disarmed its citizens on its side of the border (*Daily Nation*, 12 September 2002; Small Arms Survey Project, 2002: 291). In general, the Moi government attempted to portray itself as an ‘honest broker’ in the region’s conflict resolution mechanisms, in particular the Sudan peace process being sponsored through IGAD.⁵ Nonetheless, the KANU government provided support for the Hutu-dominated government of Juvénal Habyarimana in Rwanda, while private groups (inasmuch as they can meaningfully be distinguished from the government) assisted the OLF in Ethiopia and General Morgan’s clan in Somalia.

The KANU government and President Moi in particular decried the illegal weapons trade, often blaming weapon smuggling on the hundreds of thousands of foreign refugees on Kenyan soil. In 2000, Kenya provided leadership in hosting a regional conference on the proliferation of small arms in the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa. Generally ignored, however, was the Moi government’s responsibility for the use of Kenya as transit point for arms being shipped onward to conflict zones in Kenya’s ‘economic hinterland’, many of which were diverted to the local market.⁶ Nor did the government reveal the quantity and destination of the ammunition produced in a state-owned factory in Eldoret (Human Rights Watch, 2002: 8, 12-3; Small Arms Survey Project, 2002: 44-6).

Thus, the domestic dimension cannot be detached from the regional context of cross-border linkages in conflict and the arms trade. In addition, the Moi government’s actions should be considered within a global framework, notably as it reacted to and provoked reactions from international actors.

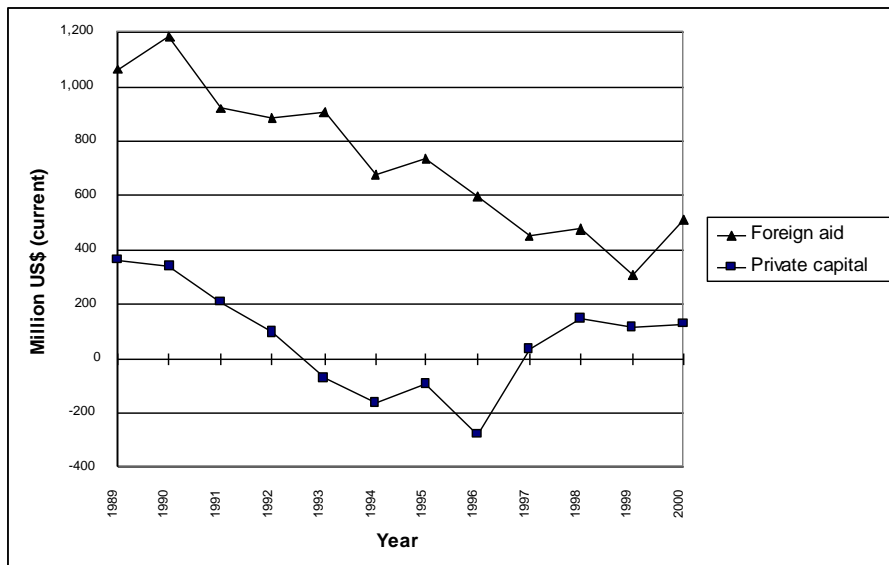
The Global Dimension

Donor Relations

Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Kenya was one of sub-Saharan Africa’s top five recipients of foreign aid (calculated from OECD, various years). Kenya was perceived to be an island of stability in a tumultuous region, which included Cold War flashpoints Ethiopia and Somalia, civil war-torn Sudan, conflict-ridden Uganda and socialist Tanzania. A close ally of Western countries, Kenya seemed impervious to the violence and *coups d’état* that many other African countries experienced. Within that context, Kenya’s human rights abuses and restricted political opportunities did not preoccupy donors.

The Cold War had allowed African governments to play one superpower off the other. The subsequent collapse of the ‘old order’ played a key role in the emergence of the ‘new regionalization’ (Lähteenmäki and Käkönen, 1999: 204) and heralded an important change in Africa’s relations with foreign aid donors. Since 1989-90, donors have increased their involvement in the domestic politics of African countries, especially in matters of governance. Because of objectionable political and economic governance, net aid to Kenya declined steadily from a high of US\$1.2 billion in 1989 to a low of US\$310 million in 1999 (see Figure 6.1 below). Similar concerns also caused net annual private capital flows to fall dramatically from US\$365 million to US\$116 million in the same period. Between 1993 and 1996, these figures turned negative and a net total of US\$615 million in private capital left the country (figures in current dollars, extracted from OECD, 2002).

Figure 6.1 Net Financial Flows to Kenya, 1989-2000



Source: OECD, 2002

The end of single-party rule was brought about by a combination of international and domestic actors, after many years of pressure from local lawyers, church leaders, NGOs, academics and politicians that had resigned or had been expelled from KANU. After pro-democracy activists adopted a strategy of popular mobilization in 1990, the movement gained momentum, culminating in riots that began in Nairobi and spread to other parts of the country, following the government's violent repression of a pro-democracy rally on 7 July 1990. After new aid to Kenya was suspended in 1991, pending, among other things, the liberalization of its political system, the government quickly responded by legalizing opposition parties and holding multi-party elections. Donors thus hastened the arrival of multi-partyism in Kenya, though did not bring it about on their own. Nonetheless, they have made no more than half-hearted efforts to counter the means the Moi regime employed to remain in power.

After 1990, donors provided significant assistance and encouragement to opposition parties, local NGOs and church groups in their struggle for political reform. Yet, as I have argued in detail elsewhere (Brown, 2003), donors were loath to compromise their relations with the Moi regime and therefore refused to recognize publicly the fact that most organized violence in Kenya was state-induced. As a result, attempts to prevent future violence proved ineffective. The earliest incidence of 'clashes' in Kenya attracted much donor interest, but this waned after the initial UNDP-led joint assistance project collapsed. The government implemented the project, to which many donors contributed, despite the fact that the ruling party officials were responsible for the attacks. As a result, it is hardly surprising that it failed to reach its objective of reintegrating the displaced into their communities (see Nowrojee, 1997). The spread of the 'clashes' to the coast in 1997 did not elicit any response beyond the rhetorical level. Though donors expressed concern, they undertook no concrete conflict prevention or mitigation activities (Kamungi, 2001: 27; Shakombo, 2001).

Donors have largely ignored the political component of violence in the north as well, leaving only a few human rights organizations and church groups to investigate and call for action (Mutahi, 2001). According to a Canadian diplomat, who at the time chaired the donor coordination group on democratic development, donors are less concerned with ethnic violence than other issues, especially corruption and hunger. They believed that donor monitoring would dissuade KANU from employing violence in the future (Burton, 2001) – though past evidence did not support this.

Reform and Stability

I have also contended elsewhere (Brown, 2001) that, though donors initially advanced the cause of political liberalization, they helped keep Moi in power by twice endorsing elections in spite of solid evidence that the polls were far from free and fair. Among other things, KANU engineered a playing field that dramatically favored itself – from the composition of the electoral commission to the distribution of constituencies – and conducted fraudulent ballot counts in key areas in both 1992 and 1997. On several occasions, donors also undermined domestic pressure for further democratization by pushing for apparent compromises between the reform movement and the Moi government in ways that in fact reinforced the status quo.

As in the case of state-led violence, donors appeared to be motivated primarily by a fear of destabilization that could lead to political and economic chaos, perhaps even civil war (though that possibility was overstated). Donors' risk aversion placed them in an ambiguous and changing position between the Moi government and the political reform movement (the opposition political parties and policy- and human-rights-oriented NGOs). Though supporting 'civil society', donors also provided various forms of assistance to the government, especially in response to support for Western foreign policy goals, most recently the US-led 'war on terrorism'.⁷ With few exceptions (the Dutch government is phasing out aid), most donors are currently providing what they term a 'low aid scenario', that is to say, maintaining a minimum level of support until Kenya improves its political and economic governance.

As in the rest of Africa and the developing world, donors – especially the United States and the Bretton Woods institutions – have strongly pressured Kenya to liberalize its economy as well and to enact a number of related macro-economic reforms that are often referred to as structural adjustment programmes (SAPs). These measures, begun in 1980, progressively reduced the state's control over the economy and the ruling party's concomitant ability to extract revenues for itself and its leaders and to use these resources, among other things, to retain popular and élite support. For instance, privatization prevented KANU leaders from using parastatals' financial resources and employment opportunities for private or partisan benefit. As a result, KANU turned to a host of other measures, including violence, as a means to remain in power.

Though political factors, alongside economic ones, contributed to the donors' decision to suspend new aid to the Kenyan government in 1991, 1997 and 2001, it was mainly or exclusively progress on economic matters (or promises thereof) that led to aid renewal in 1993, partially in 1997-98 and more fully in 2000. After 1994, it became clear that donors, especially the Bretton Woods institutions, valued economic reforms more than political ones. Bilateral donors expected President Moi to do little more than maintain stability and hand over power to an elected

successor at the end of his last mandate in 2003 (he was constitutionally barred from running again). They believed that political stability would reduce violence (Burton, 2001). As a whole, they do not link aid to the human rights issues and are lukewarm in their support for civil society (Southall, 1999: 108). A couple of donor countries – the Netherlands and Denmark – nonetheless retain a focus on political governance and the respect of human rights. The IMF and the World Bank are preoccupied mainly with economic growth-inducing policy reform – notably the fight against corruption – and most other bilateral and multilateral aid agencies are content to follow their lead. Ignored by all was the fact that patronage was KANU’s key to maintaining its power base, not merely an aberration in the system.

Donors sometimes consider Kenya within a regional perspective. In the 1990s, Kenya was no longer so clearly favored by comparing it to its neighbors. Tanzania and Ethiopia embraced political and economic reforms, while Uganda emerged as a much desired economic ‘success story’ in the region and the focus of international assistance – despite the lack of multi-party competition and continued fighting in outlying areas. This further marginalized Kenya in donors’ eyes. Kenyans are extremely conscious of this reversal of fortune, illustrated by US President Bill Clinton’s 1998 African tour: Uganda was chosen to be his East African stop, not Kenya. Still, Uganda cannot completely supplant Kenya in Western geopolitical interests, since it lacks Kenya’s military facilities, coastline and borders with Ethiopia and Somalia. It would seem that some authors, such as Lähteenmäki and Käkönen (1999: 208), overstate the declining relevance of geographical proximity in the ‘new’ regionalism. In some instances, the old ‘realist’ regionalism appears alive and well.

Another international factor worth raising, though I do not elaborate on it here, is the global arms trade. Several of Africa’s main foreign aid donors (the United States, the United Kingdom and France), along with the Soviet Union, also provided a vast supply of weaponry during the Cold War. This flow, though reduced, continues to this day, as private companies based in these countries and Russia, along with their licensees in developing countries, sell the arms that exacerbate insecurity in Kenya and its neighbors (Human Rights Watch, 2002: 8). The political economy of the international – and not just regional – arms trade plays a role in the endurance and spread of violence in Kenya and the rest of Africa.

In sum, the international context and international actors shape in significant ways the events under consideration here. The next task is to weigh the importance of the various dimensions and consider their theoretical significance.

Analysis and Implications

This chapter has demonstrated the value of adopting a multi-level analysis when addressing a complex issue such as deteriorating human security in Kenya. It has also illustrated the benefits, indeed the necessity, of ‘unpacking’ state-society relations – also part of the ‘new regionalism’ agenda advanced by this volume.

Inside the State

The state’s role in declining security goes far beyond a simple lack of capacity, more precisely a failure to secure national borders and prevent lawlessness. The Kenyan case underlines the need to examine critically state-society relations. To win elections, KANU employed numerous tactics, including fraud and selective violence. With the move to a multi-party system, violence became an integral part of the party’s repertoire for remaining in office. To assume a neutral or liberal state is to completely miss the fundamentally neo-patrimonial nature of the Moi regime and thus misunderstand the logic (some might argue necessity) of grossly illiberal practices, such as ethnic cleansing, in order to retain power.

In neo-patrimonial regimes, the border between the state and civil society is particularly blurry. Many non-state domestic actors – such as Kenya’s ‘tribal warriors’ and local warlords – actually have strong links to the state and individuals that occupy important political positions. They operate in a local context, but their creation – and the violence – originates in this case ‘from above’ (the state) rather than ‘from below’ (grassroots). For that reason, micro-regionalism in Kenya and other parts of Africa does not correspond to the European bottom-up experience.

Nonetheless, one should not conclude that the regime élites acted as puppet-masters, organizing all instances of violence across the country – state control is neither so pervasive nor extensive. A better metaphor is that by unleashing political violence, the KANU government released a genie that will not only refuse to return into its bottle, but that is also increasingly acting of its own accord. As ethnic identities and antagonisms are strengthened and as violence becomes more spontaneous than organized, human insecurity is increasingly ‘from below’.⁸

When power is as concentrated as it is in the Kenyan presidency, incumbents are loath to relinquish it voluntarily. Furthermore, being out of power would leave politicians open to prosecution for abuses of all kinds committed while in office. Even handpicking one’s successor might be insufficient to ensure immunity, as Frederick Chiluba of Zambia recently discovered. The higher the stakes, the stronger the imperative of remaining in power. In no region is this more the case than in Africa. Thus, continued attention to domestic factors, especially the state, is warranted, taking into account the logic of neo-patrimonialism and the complexity of state-

society relations. In integrating non-traditional actors into theorizing, it is important not to forget that states can in many cases remain key actors. The benefits derive from analyzing its interactions with non-state actors and other levels of analysis.

Regional Perspectives

There is a regional dimension to Kenya's declining human security that is of fundamental interest to the NRA, including black-market regional trade, cross-border fighting, ethnic links that predate and cross colonial-era borders, ethno-regional identities that compete with national ones and private armies, as well as incomplete sovereignty over large swaths of territory. The violence of the borderlands and the influx of small arms are closely linked to conflicts in neighboring countries.

Still, the regional dimension is less central in this case than the domestic and international ones. Though weapons' availability and lack of border controls have exacerbated human insecurity, especially in northern Kenya and cases of petty crime across the country, they were not a necessary precondition for organized violence. As the Rwandan genocide tragically illustrated, low-tech tools can be exceedingly efficient weapons of mass murder. Though the availability of cheap guns certainly permitted pro-KANU militias to out-arm their target populations, raiders used mainly machetes and arrows in most instances of 'ethnic clashes' in the Rift Valley. Had Kenya existed in perfectly sealed off borders with no trade in smuggled weapons, there is little reason to believe that KANU would have had difficulty unleashing political violence. If required, the government could have purchased arms on the international market and distributed them as desired. Relatively easy access to firearms, however, exacerbated the scale of violence and facilitates future incidents outside government control.

Kenya's leadership role in regional organizations, especially in the areas of arms control and conflict resolution, provides it with the potential for improving human security throughout the region. However, as we have seen, domestic financial and partisan considerations have so far outweighed the benefits of greater regional stability. The Moi government had a financial interest in the international arms trade, as well as a political one in arming certain domestic groups. For example, disarming the Pokot would probably have improved security across the border in Uganda, but KANU would have lost the political rewards derived from supporting the Pokot against neighboring groups in the Rift Valley.

International Linkages

The case of Kenya also underlines the importance of linking the national sphere to the global one. International actors, namely Western donors and the Bretton Woods institutions, played a key role in supporting the Kenyan government and then, after the end of the Cold War, dramatically reduced aid and applied pressure for reform. Despite years of domestic pressure, KANU allowed multi-party elections in 1992, albeit imperfect ones, only when faced with strong international coercion.

International structures also profoundly affected national politics, in part within a regional context. The end of Cold War lessened the West's imperative of having a close ally in East Africa – though other operations, such as US and UN intervention in Somalia and the so-called 'war on terrorism', partially strengthened Kenya's hand. The forces of economic globalization, by reducing the availability of patronage resources, eroded KANU's domestic support. The profound economic crisis and donor-driven structural adjustment measures threatened regime survival, forcing it to adapt its strategies. This did not necessarily entail using violence, but certainly helps understand why the Moi government chose to do so. Had robust economic growth continued in the 1980s and 1990s, élites and masses would not have become so discontented and therefore challenged the regime.

Donor activities tend to focus on the national dimension, occasionally on the regional one and rarely on the global one. By and large, they prefer to act with a state counterpart, but more recently place value in supporting 'civil society' organizations. As a whole, donors lack a critical awareness of their own role in Kenya's problems, casting the issue of growing violence as mainly a domestic and technical one – not a political one. As we have seen, domestic politics played a fundamental role in the violence, whereas future conflict will be less clearly defined, especially with the easy availability of weapons. Though donors do not want to admit this, the problem will not solve itself. Human security will not dramatically improve because of constitutional reform or a regime change.

In sum, international actors and forces are central to a nuanced understanding of the process of political and economic change in Kenya. Given the deleterious effects of the Moi regime's policies and practices, efforts to improve human security and promote development will require concerted efforts by the new government, domestic non-state actors, their international counterparts and donors.

Extending the Argument

The term ‘regionalism’ emphasizes the one level of analysis at the expense of the others. In some instances, this might be appropriate. However, a regional focus runs the risk of underemphasizing international actors, the forces of globalization and the enduring role of the state (and politics). As we have seen in this particular case, the regional component is an element of the explanation, but less important than the global and domestic ones. A strength of the plurality within the NRA is that it emphasizes the interaction between the different levels of analysis, without presupposing a dominant one. A comprehensive consideration of the problem of Kenya’s recent decline in human security necessarily entails an examination of the mutual embeddedness of the local, national, regional and global. Inasmuch as the NRA highlights these connections, it is a valuable tool for the study of Kenyan – and African – politics.

The second strong point of the NRA is its problematization of state-society relations. The Kenya case underlines how important this can be. In neo-patrimonial systems, liberal assumptions about the state and civil society as discrete spheres do not apply. For instance, seemingly private actors may act as proxies for the government or the ruling party. A decline in human security can be the result of deliberate political calculus meant to benefit those in power – however detrimental the resulting practices prove to be to country in the long-run.

In this chapter, I have focused on the physical security component of human security, but its relevance extends to other ones as well. For instance, violence and displacement – like economic stagnation – cause a decline in other forms of security, such as access to health and education, as well as the ability to secure a livelihood. Without further political and economic reform and serious efforts to prevent violence, Kenya’s economic situation will likely continue to deteriorate, further undermining prospects for human security and development.

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Notes

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1. In December 2002, a broad opposition coalition won Kenya's first free-and-fair multi-party elections. As this chapter goes to press, it is still too early to discuss what effect newly elected President Mwai Kibaki's government will have on human security.
2. I put the term in quotation marks because the 'ethnic clashes' (as they are generally known) are fundamentally neither ethnic nor clashes. 'State-sponsored attacks' or 'state-induced violence' would be more accurate descriptions, given the then ruling party's involvement and the mainly one-sided nature of the raids (see below).
3. *Mungiki* draws its members overwhelming from the urban poor, many of whom were displaced from the Rift Valley by the 'ethnic clashes' in the 1990s. It is inspired in large part by Kikuyu traditional beliefs and strongly influenced by anti-colonial and anti-neocolonial ideology. Though usually characterized as a religious cult, it has a strong – though variable and unfocused – political component.
4. More research needs to be undertaken to explain the relative absence of violence associated with the 2002 elections. Part of the answer follows from the fact that Moi chose as the KANU presidential candidate Uhuru Kenyatta, a relatively inexperienced Kikuyu who did not enjoy much support within the party. As a result, numerous senior KANU politicians defected to the opposition alliance, including several who had been implicated in 'ethnic clashes' and retained the capacity to unleash them again in their areas of influence. The multi-ethnic opposition de-ethnicized the contest to a significant extent by also selecting a Kikuyu, Mwai Kibaki, as its presidential candidate. In addition, the 'rump' KANU would have derived fewer benefits from 'clashes' in 2002 than in previous polls, given the opposition coalition's unprecedented unity and overwhelming support.

5. IGAD – the Intergovernmental Authority on Development – is a regional organization originally founded in 1986 to respond to the problems associated with drought in the Horn of Africa. It has since expanded its mandate to include a wide range of development issues, including security and conflict resolution. Its current members are Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda. The recently relaunched East African Community (EAC), which comprises Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, also aims to promote peace and security among its members. The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) will soon add conflict prevention and resolution to its official mandate (see *EastAfrican*, 16 September 2002).
6. Mombasa, on the Kenyan coast, is an important port of entry for goods that are transported across Kenya by rail or truck to Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi and eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), all of which have been sites of large-scale armed violence in recent years. These areas thus constitute an economic hinterland of sorts inside a transnational regional trade area.
7. For example, Britain and Germany are currently using the airport and navy base in Mombasa to monitor the coast of Somalia, while the United States had already negotiated access to military facilities. See Barkan and Cooke (2001) and *Africa Research Bulletin* (1 March 2002). The Bush Administration’s 2002 security strategy named Kenya – along with South Africa, Nigeria and Ethiopia – as one of the African ‘countries with major impact on their neighborhood’ that ‘are anchors for regional engagement and require focused attention’ (*New York Times*, 20 September 2002).
8. This rise in *uncivil* society could also be characterized as a decline in social capital, to use a term that is currently in vogue. However, the phenomenon is more the product of a broader process than a self-contained one.