

Religious Territoriality in a Socio-economic Space: A Case of Christian-Muslim Relations in Kiamaiko Slum, Nairobi-Kenya

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This paper explores the coexistence of Muslims and Christians with a specific focus on the concept of territoriality. It examines their respective perceptions of who controls the religio-economic space in Kiamaiko slum, situated in the northeastern part of Nairobi, Kenya. Kiamaiko settlement was occasionally highlighted as a volatile area regarding Christian-Muslim relations. The need to curb the upsurge of antagonism between Muslims and Christians in Kiamaiko slum justifies the significance of this paper. The ultimate objective of this research is to offer an empirical understanding of the perception of public space by Muslims and Christians in order to pave the way for a peaceful coexistence in shared territory. This paper has a two-fold research focus. Firstly, it examines the scriptural basis of territoriality as illustrated in the respective scriptures: the Qur'an and the Bible. Secondly, the paper considers the perceptions of both Muslims and Christians regarding who controls the socio-economic space and how this has played out in their daily lives. A comparative analysis highlights the disparities and congruence between what the respective scriptures stipulate, and the perceptions of the adherents of the two faiths. The consequent implications of these perceptions indicate the kind of coexistence displayed in contemporary times within the Kiamaiko slum. Rivalry arises from exclusivist perceptions that Muslims and Christians have about the 'other.' These perceptions lead to a volatile coexistence while engaging in common trade. Recommendations for a Christian theology that would enhance peaceful coexistence are provided at the end of this paper. Hospitality, tolerance, openness, and persuasion with an understanding of the 'other' are cardinal themes suggested to promote peaceful coexistence.

Key Words- Territoriality, Muslim-Christian relations, coexistence, socio-economic, religio-economic, comparative study.

Introduction

Mutual coexistence is a salient ingredient for any development of a region. Yet such coexistence should be embedded in an environment where peace and tranquility are maintained. Peaceful coexistence is a bedrock for regional progress, especially where Muslims and Christians share territory. The relation regarding the two religions has been volatile since the inception of Islam in the 7th century. Periods of unrest between Muslims and Christians have been witnessed, interspersed with a few periods of

peaceful coexistence. The historical *convivencia*¹ in Al-Andalus² is a good example of a period when Jews, Christians, and Muslims coexisted together for the mutual development of a region, according to Lindsey Vaughan.³ However, there have only been a few of such examples in history.

This paper seeks to understand the coexistence of Muslims and Christians in Kiamaiko slum, Nairobi. There have been sporadic incidences of violence, which pose a threat to this coexistence. Seeking to understand the religious territoriality in the socio-economic space of Kiamaiko will present a clearer picture and thus enable up-to-date dialogues between Christians and Muslims in the area.

This paper is based on an empirical study that was done in Kiamaiko slum using ethnographical interviews and observations. We carried out in-depth interviews with key religious leaders as well as ordinary people in a bid to get different perceptions on the issue of religious territoriality within the socio-economic context. We also took the time to observe the socio-economic activities in Kiamaiko.

Theoretical Framework: Human Territoriality

Since the key players in the concept of territoriality used in this paper are people, we have adopted the theory of human territoriality as propagated by Robert Sack (1986).⁴ Sack's theory of human territoriality elucidates that there is a conspicuous difference between human and animal territoriality.⁵

The definition of territoriality is diverse as it cuts across the biological, and social sciences, as well as geography. We appreciate Sack's definition, that territoriality is "best understood as a spatial strategy to affect, influence, or control resources and people."⁶ Sack examines territoriality from a geopolitical point of view.

1. The term *convivencia* is a Spanish name meaning 'coexistence' or 'living together' especially referring to the time Jews, Muslims, and Christians lived together in Spain (according to *The Oxford Dictionary of the Middle Ages*, ed. Robert E. Bjork, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010). It was the period from the 8th century when the Muslim Umayyad conquered Hispania until the 15th century expulsion of the Jews in 1492.

2. Al-Andalus was the name given by Muslims during the Middle Ages referring to the region in the Iberian Peninsula that was under their control.

3. Lindsey Vaughan, "Convivencia: Christians, Jews, and Muslims in Medieval Spain" (Senior Honors Thesis Project, USA, University of Tennessee, 2003), 16–19.

4. Other scholars who have delved into the area of human territoriality include Claude Raffestin, "Territoriality: A Reflection of the Discrepancies Between the Organization of Space and Individual Liberty," *International Political Science Review* Bd. 5, no. Nr. 2 (1984): 139–46; John G. Ruggie, "Territoriality and Beyond: Problematizing Modernity in International Relations," *International Organization* 47, no. 1 (Winter 1993): 139–74; David Storey, "Territoriality: Geographical," in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, 2nd ed., vol. 20 (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2015); and others who have examined territoriality from different disciplines.

5 Robert David Sack, *Human Territoriality: Its Theory and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 1.

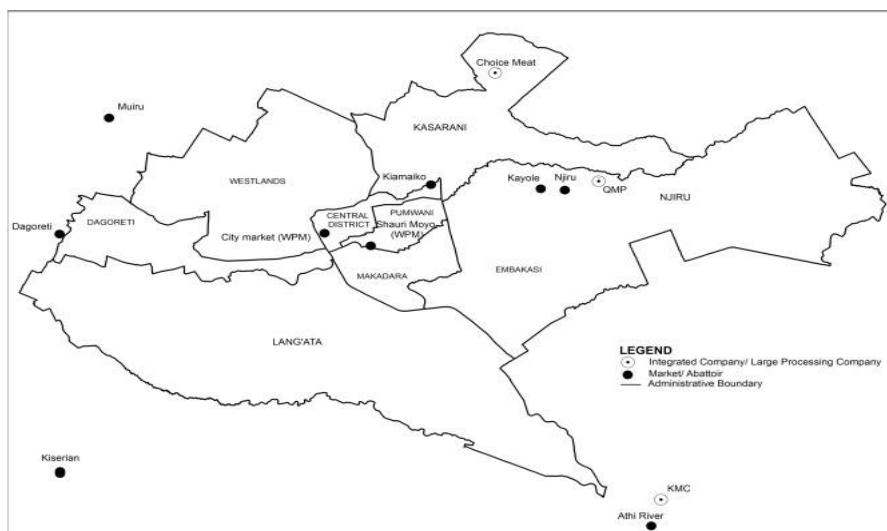
6. Sack, 2.

He alludes to the social aspect of territoriality when he asserts that territoriality relates to how people use the land, how they organize themselves on that land, and how they allocate meaning to that spatial place.⁷

The social aspect of Sack's definition of territoriality appeals to the ethos of this paper, which deviates from Sack's geopolitical perspective to a religion-socio-economic perspective. The latter perspective examines territoriality within the socio-economic context in the Kiamaiko settlement, and how this is implicated in the religious interactions between Muslims and Christians who occupy the settlement. Thus, this paper operationalizes the term territoriality as the "spatial strategy" undertaken by religious parties as they engage in socio-economic activities in the given space. Consequently, religious territoriality as discussed in this paper refers to the religious spatial and non-spatial strategies employed by both Muslims and Christians, as they co-exist within the socio-economic context of the Kiamaiko settlement.

Locating Kiamaiko Settlement Scheme

Kiamaiko⁸ is a sub-location in Mathare Sub-county,⁹ east of Nairobi city in Kenya. It is a major meat supplier for the city.¹⁰ The map below shows the centrality of Kiamaiko in relation to other geographical areas in Nairobi County.



Map 1: Location of Principal Livestock Markets and Abattoirs Supplying Nairobi
(From Pablo et al. 2017, 3)

7. Ibid.

8. The name "Kiamaiko" means "the place of Maiko," where Maiko is the English name, Michael. It is the name of the first person to settle in the area in the early 1970s.

9. Sub-counties are administrative units that are decentralized from the larger counties e.g. Nairobi County for efficient delivery of services.

10. "Mapping of Beef, Sheep and Goat Food Systems in Nairobi: A Framework for Policy Making and the Identification of Structural Vulnerabilities and Deficiencies," *Agricultural Systems*, no. 152 (2017): 3.

Kiamaiko is subdivided into four villages: Kambi Moto, Upper Kiamaiko, Lower Kiamaiko, and Ghetto Village. This forms an informal settlement that has an estimate of about 33, 824 people.¹¹ It is approximately 7 km/4.5 miles from Nairobi city.

Socio- Economic Context of Kiamaiko

Research indicates that Kiamaiko is the largest sheep and goat meat supplier in Nairobi.¹² It is reported to be the “goat slaughterhouse that’s driving” the thriving informal economy. There have been several threats to close the Kiamaiko abattoir and relocate it to another place called Njiru.¹³ This appeal to relocate was recently reiterated by the Nairobi County Assembly, and the idea has been resisted for fear of losing business (Omulo, 2019). The inhabitants of Kiamaiko have resisted this closure because of the employment opportunities the abattoir offers. This business has not only grown but has increasingly attracted a significant population of pastoral communities from northern parts of Kenya, particularly Marsabit County, which is dominated by the Borana people. Arero refers to these city/town dwelling Borana as the “Urban Borana” or *Borana Dirra* (in Borana language meaning “Borana of the townships”)¹⁴ The other Borana speakers, like the Burji, Gabra, Garre, and Sakuye are also classified as Borana. All these Borana speakers are Cushitic and tend to have similar body structures. This similarity makes the non-Borana neighbors refer to them all as “walalo” or “waria” where the former means “siblings” in the Somali language while the latter is a word used “casually” among Somali men. However, non-Cushitic people in Kenya have adopted these two Somali words synonymously to refer to all Cushitic people they intermingle with. However, there are several Somali people in Kiamaiko whose population is not as significant as the Borana speakers.¹⁵ Somali and Borana speaking people have generally not been on good terms even in their ancestral places in northern Kenya.¹⁶

Historically, Borana, Burji, and Gabra communities in Kiamaiko were settled by the government of Kenya from the late 1960s after being displaced from northern Kenya during the *shifita*¹⁷ war of 1966-69.¹⁸ These newcomers found the already settled Kikuyu people who readily accepted to coexist with them. There were no

11 The population estimate is from Tuko.co.ke

12. Pablo et al. 2017, 6.

13. Njiru is another major beef supplier in Nairobi, Kenya.

14. Hassan Wario Arero, “Coming to Kenya: Imagining and Perceiving a Nation among the Borana of Kenya,” *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 1, no. 2 (July 2007): 294.

15. Most Somali people are found in Eastleigh, which is a suburb area in the eastern part of Nairobi.

16. Lang’at inaccurately asserts that the “settlers in Kiamaiko are Kenyan Somali mainly Burji tribe of the Somalis” (Lang’at 2016, 15).

17. *Shifita* is a Somali word for bandits or rebels.

18. The population of these Borana-speakers in Nairobi is much lower than the ones who remained in Northern Kenya.

documented records of any inter-tribal skirmishes. With time, the Borana speaking communities have grown economically. They have bought and developed the land by constructing houses for rental and business.

Kiamaiko boasts of a thriving goat and sheep meat industry that has attracted the market from as far as Thika and Meru towns in the central region of Kenya. This meat is halal since it is slaughtered by Muslims and it is, therefore, freely consumed by both Muslims and Christians in the region.¹⁹ Several Muslim interviewees admitted that they have benefitted from slaughtering the animals as this task is exclusively allocated to them.

Slaughtering is an arduous task that is performed daily. It begins from midnight until early morning, according to MahAli²⁰ who worked at the abattoir for eight years. MahAli further stated that the average number of animals slaughtered daily would be about 600, especially over the weekends when the demand for meat is high. During the Islamic and Christian festive seasons, the demand increases even higher and there is a booming business.

Territoriality in the Bible and in the Qur'an

As already explained, territoriality in this paper refers to how Muslims and Christians regard space, how they utilize it, and their behavior in relation to each other in the given space. In this regard, this paper presupposes the influence that the beliefs of the two religions play in their behavior within this space. It is, therefore, imperative that one considers some of the foundational teachings from the two major texts of the religions.

In the Bible, the land was always associated with God's blessings to His people Israel and the space in which their prosperity will be manifest. Abram was called to go and occupy space from which God could bless him and his descendants (Gen. 12: 1-5). It was from the territories defined by God that the Israelites could live as examples and witnesses to other nations. This call of Israel is spelled out in God's promise to Abraham and reiterated to his descendants (Gen. 17, 26, 28). God commanded the Israelites to observe His laws to be a model to the nations (Deut. 4:5-7). The territory was used not only for the self-preservation of God's people, but also for the rest of their neighbors. This is the true meaning of love and Jesus' summary of the law; to love God and our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12:31) in the territory in which we find ourselves.

The Qur'anic teachings of space constitute both a moderate as well as an extreme understanding of the dichotomy between Muslims and non-Muslims. The concept of *al-haram* draws attention to space, which is permitted versus the forbidden (Surah 28:57). *Al-haram* is a sacred place that has an abundance of what is good for a Muslim, while other places may be profane and forbidden to a Muslim. A mosque is such a place. In Surah 60:4, Ibrahim is considered to be a good example of how to

19. Halal (allowed) meat complies with the Islamic regulation that prohibits Muslims from consuming meat that has not been slaughtered while invoking the name of Allah (Surah 5:3).

20. MahAli, Personal Interview at Kiamaiko, January 11, 2020.

deal with non-Muslims living among Muslims. As Ahmad explains, this encounter is essentially ideological and does not necessarily mean perpetual hostility (2008, 20).

Socio-economic Challenges in Kiamaiko

A report by a Christian organization working in Kiamaiko indicates that there are numerous challenges, including drug abuse, high illiteracy levels, insecurity, and dependence syndrome.²¹ The high crime rate in Kiamaiko is a major concern that culminates from the high birth rate and subsequent high population of the unemployed youth.²² On December 30th, 2012, residents of Kiamaiko clashed with policemen over insecurity in the area.²³ Insecurity is still comparatively lower than in other slum areas in Nairobi, due to the economic support from the slaughterhouses (Kavilu, 2017). However, there have been constant complaints to the government about insecurity in the area. The limited number of sources of livelihood and the increasing population in Kiamaiko point to difficult times in the future if other businesses are not created.

Religious Context in Kiamaiko

Islam in Kiamaiko

The migration of some Borana, Burji, and Gabra of Marsabit and Isiolo to Nairobi provided interactions with Somali Muslims, which consequently led to many of them embracing Islam. Arero affirms that the "Urban Borana" embraced Islam to get more opportunities for life in the city.²⁴ The removal of the Borana communities further from the leadership of their traditional religions under *Abba Gada*²⁵ in Ethiopia encouraged their adoption of Islam.²⁶ Just as in many other urban areas of Kenya, Islam has continued to grow as Muslims explore business opportunities and have high birthrates.

21 This is reported on the website belonging to the Missions of Hope International, which is a charitable organization that has established a primary school in Kiamaiko.

22 Nickson Kipyegon Lang'at, "Factors Influencing Use of Modern Contraceptives among Kenyan-Somali Women Aged between 15-59: A Matched Control-Case Study of Korogocho and Kiamaiko" (Masters of Science in Social Statistics, Nairobi, Kenya, University of Nairobi, 2016), 3.

23 As reported on 20th December 2012 in Capital News by Margaret Wahito "Police Clash with Nairobi Residents over Insecurity.

24. Arero, "Coming to Kenya: Imagining and Perceiving a Nation among the Borana of Kenya," 299.

25. The leader of the Borana traditional system of organization (Aguilar 1994, 32 quoting Baxter).

26. Mario I Aguilar, "Portraying Society through Children: Play among the Waso Boorana," *Anthropos*, Bd. 89, no. H.1/3. (1994): 32.



Map 2: Location of Al-Aqsa Mosque in Kiamaiko

The growth of Islam is indicated by the presence of mosques in Kiamaiko today. Apostle YayeBo, an early inhabitant of Kiamaiko narrated that there were no mosques in the late 1980s. Muslims in Kiamaiko could go to neighboring Eastleigh for their Friday *salat*. The current location of the largest mosque in Kiamaiko, Al Aqsa Mosque, was once a market area for selling goats.²⁷ Four mosques and several madrassas were later constructed within Kiamaiko. There was a land tussle involving one of these mosques when a non-Muslim, Kikuyu woman claimed that her land had been grabbed.²⁸

On the issue of Islamic radicalization, Kiamaiko is vulnerable because of the rising number of unemployed youths. The lure of money is a significant factor that draws young people to join religious clandestine groups in Kiamaiko. Some of the mosques do not encourage participation in Wahhabi fundamentalist orientation.

Christian Presence

Many Burji and Borana Christians joined the Christian fraternity when they went to Kiamaiko. They exhibited syncretistic tendencies as they mixed Christian practices with traditional rituals that kept them connected to their Oromo/Borana roots. As time went on, upcoming Christian preachers sought to address the syncretistic tendencies in the churches. Interviewee ApostJoh reminisced the time of “awakening/revival” when Christians flocked to churches in great numbers and were committed to the faith.²⁹ The influx of Ethiopian refugees in the mid-1980s occasioned this revival, which then led to the proliferation of evangelical churches in Kiamaiko, according to YayeBo.³⁰ Borana speakers, mostly from the Burji community, started a number of these churches.³¹ There are six such churches where the main language of preaching and teaching is Amharic with Borana/Burji translations. Majority of congregants in these churches are Borana speakers. The number of non-Borana speakers is relatively

27. ApostJoh, Personal Interview at Kiamaiko, January 29, 2020.

28 Reported by a local media house, K24 on 13th October 2019.

29 ApostJoh, Personal Interview at Kiamaiko, February 1, 2020.

30. YayeBo, Personal Interview at Kiamaiko.

31. These Amharic/Borana/Burji speaking churches are frequently referred to as “waria” churches.

small. This has necessitated the introduction of English/ Kiswahili Sunday services in these churches.

Religious Conflicts in Kiamaiko

Interviewee Hirlol recounted several occasions when Christians clashed with Muslims.³² There have been skirmishes that did not escalate to the tension experienced in 2019. Hirlol recounted the chaos that erupted in 1994 when a young Burji man converted from Islam to Christianity and decided to destroy the wall hangings in his house that depicted Islamic writings. This action agitated Muslims who interpreted it as an act of disrespect. As they brayed for the young man's blood, he was taken to the police station but was later released when Christians pleaded for him. Muslims, however, went ahead and broke the windows of one of the evangelical Burji-led churches. In 1999, the impending fracas was suppressed after Christians chose to forgive a group of Muslims who assaulted two Christian men. Much later in 2018, misunderstandings between Christians and Muslims led to a spate of stone-throwing after Muslims accused Christians of starting a fire that gutted a section of a mosque.

Our interviewees all narrated corresponding details of the May 2019 skirmishes. They all mentioned that the conflicts were mainly between Burji Muslims and Burji Christians. The other non-Borana speakers did not feature as prominently as the Burji during the chaos, which started when policemen confiscated a public address system belonging to Muslims. The latter were conducting an open-air meeting that castigated Christianity. The people in the vicinity of the open-air ground were disturbed by the noise emanating from the loudspeakers that they were using and thus went to complain to the administrative authorities. This made the policemen stop Muslims from proceeding with the meeting. They did not take this prohibition well and blamed the Christians. Some young Muslim men started throwing stones at the "waria" churches. Many windows were broken, and the property was vandalized in the process. Scores of people were injured in the mayhem. Apostjoh narrated how property from his church was destroyed:

My church was the first to be attacked on 17th May, which was a Friday. A group of Muslims stormed my church building armed with stones, machete, and even petrol. They broke the walls, which were made of carton boxes and soft boards. They broke everything they could lay their hands on in the Church building. All the plastic chairs I had in the church were broken. The music system was also torn apart. They tried setting the church ablaze, but some-how they did not manage because the policemen arrived and contained the situation. I witnessed all these from a balcony where I had climbed to see what was happening.³³

ApostJoh's church was not the only one that was vandalized. Four other "waria" churches and shops belonging to Christians were attacked. A leader of K. H. church described how they were forced to move from where they had initially

32. HirLol, Personal Interview at Kiamaiko, February 1, 2020.

33. ApostJoh, 2020.

constructed a church building after it was destroyed during the May 2019 chaos³⁴ The picture below shows the destruction meted on one of the “waria” churches.



Destruction of church property in May 2019
(Source: Ghetto Radio, 20th May 2019)

When asked to comment on the May 2019 conflict, Muslims blamed Christians for telling the police to stop the open-air meeting. They also blamed the police for ambushing innocent people who were coming from their Friday prayers in the mosques. The man who was shot dead during the chaos was called Abdihakim Malfadho. Muslims say that he was leaving the mosque at 2 pm when he was shot in “cold-blood.”³⁵

Findings and Analysis

This section analyses the findings of the research carried out in Kiamaiko. The data collected from the ethnographic interviews and observations are analyzed using some of the tendencies of territoriality highlighted by Robert Sacks (1986).

Classification of Space and People in Kiamaiko

Robert Sack asserts that territoriality comprises a system of classification that is “extremely efficient” in assigning things as “ours” or “not yours.”³⁶ Classification of space is used here to understand how territoriality is played out in Kiamaiko. The three spaces to be considered in this section are religious and socio-economic spaces.

The religious space in Kiamaiko is highly demarcated between Muslims and Christians. The different worship places found in the area illustrate the physical boundaries that should not be encroached on by the “other.” Christians know that the mosque is not their religious space and thus do not attempt to enter. Likewise, Muslims acknowledge the presence of churches in Kiamaiko that are not within their religious scope. Yet, these religious boundaries have been crossed provocatively, which seems to indicate some level of contempt. The impression that Islamic space does not belong to Christians was observed when we went to the mosque during our research. There was a sense of surprise and a question of what we had come for.

34. Guyo, Personal Interview at Kiamaiko, February 1, 2020.

35. Musa Abdi, Personal Interview at Kiamaiko, January 11, 2020.

36. Robert D. Sack, “Human Territoriality: A Theory,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 73, no. 1 (March 1, 1983): 58, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8306.1983.tb01396.x>.

Interestingly, this classification of the religious boundary is not evident in the abattoirs of Kiamaiko. We were very eagerly welcomed in all the businesses and many calling out for us to go in and buy, regardless of our religious affiliation. All the interviewees admitted that both Muslims and Christians work together inside the various abattoirs without any religious conflicts. This exhibits a different kind of classification of space that seems to maintain peace within its sub-context. The abattoir area uses a socio-economic classification that is based on the kind of work one does. A further inquiry about space in the slaughterhouses, we discovered that the categorization also has to do with the language/tribal affiliations.

The abattoirs belong to the “waria” people (Cushites). The non-Cushites or “people from Kenya” own the butcheries and eateries³⁷. During our observation sessions, we noted that the abattoirs had either Islamic or Borana/Burji names like Saku,³⁸ Tawfiq, etc. The butcheries owned by “non-waria” people had non-Cushitic/Islamic names like Munene butchery. The classification of “waria” and “non-waria” does not cause antagonism like religious classification.

Interestingly, all our interviewees admitted that the Burji people have further divided themselves along religious lines and have disregarded their tribal roots. The Burji pastors who have churches in Kiamaiko conceded that the last religious conflicts in May 2019 were mainly instigated by the Burji Muslims against their tribal counterpart Christians. Franco, who heads a Community Based Organization (CBO) in Kiamaiko, admitted,

Burji people turned against each other during the 2019 skirmishes. These are virtually brothers who know each other. In the same house, one finds a Muslim and a Christian living together as relatives. But when religious conflicts flare up, they fight and destroy each other's property without remembering they are all Burji.³⁹

Classification of space based on religious and tribal identity is a major portrait in the Kiamaiko society.

Exclusivist Tendencies

Another territoriality tendency on Robert Sack’s list is that territoriality is evidenced by boundaries that communicate possession or exclusion.⁴⁰ Christians and Muslims in Kiamaiko have erected invisible and visible boundaries that communicate an exclusivist tendency. When we inquired from the Christian interviewees whether they interact with Muslims on religious grounds, they all responded that they do not; neither do Muslims want anything to do with Christians on a religious basis.

37. Borana-speakers and other Cushitic people who live in the northern part of Kenya use this name to classify people who do not come from the region.

38. Saku is the name of one of the constituencies of Marsabit County.

39 Franco, Personal Interview at Kiamaiko, January 1, 2020.

40 Sack, “Human Territoriality,” 58.

Observing the way some churches have been constructed in Kiamaiko reinforces the fact that there is an exclusivist tendency. Two of the “waria” churches whose immediate neighbors are Muslims do not have windows on the walls that face the premises that belong to Muslims. ApostJoh explained that their Muslim neighbor constructed a madrassa (Islamic school) and he did not want any adjacent windows from the church opening to the madrasa side.⁴¹

The exclusivist position is displayed by the “waria” Christians who believe there is no salvation outside the church. They may not be aware of Cyprian, the Church Father’s famous principle “*extra ecclesiam nulla salus est*” (“outside the church, there is no salvation”).⁴² Yet, their attitude to Muslims indicates such an exclusivist stance. The people’s religious interaction is very minimal because of previous encounters. Interviewee YayeBo says he is cautious of Muslims because they deal with supernatural forces and beings that can easily be “thrown” to Christians⁴³

Borana Non-Involvement in Religious Conflict: *Nagaa Borana*

None of our interviewees mentioned any Borana person as having been involved in the religious chaos in Kiamaiko. Borana Muslims do not attack Borana Christians when their Burji counterparts assault each other. Halkano Wario explains that to be a Borana, one expresses the willingness to observe *Nagaa Borana* (Peace of Borana).⁴⁴ *Nagaa Borana* is the peace concept that is meant to maintain the solidarity of the Borana regardless of their religious affiliations.

Robert Sack’s fourth tendency of territoriality is that it “provides a means of reifying power.”⁴⁵ In the case of Kiamaiko, territoriality has provided a means of reifying peace as exemplified by the Borana people. Peace is an abstract concept that cannot be tangible. However, it is manifested in that Borana Muslims and Christians cannot pit against each other even when they watch the Burji Muslims and Christians attack each other. Mario I. Aguilar helps to expound on the deeper meaning of *Nagaa Borana*.⁴⁶

Nagaa Boorana is the foundational principle that expresses the continuity of belief amidst changes in belief and therefore in practice. The *Nagaa Boorana*

41. ApostJoh, Personal Interview at Kiamaiko.

42. Jaco Beyers, “A Historical Overview of the Study of the Theology of Religions,” *HTS Teologiese Studies/Theological Studies* suppl. 12, 73, no. 6 (2017): 3.

43. YayeBo, Personal Interview at Kiamaiko.

44. Halkano Abdi Wario, “Networking the Nomads: A Study of Tablighi Jama’at among the Borana of Northern Kenya” (Ph.D. Dissertation (Islamic studies), Germany, University of Bayreuth, 2012), xix.

45. Sack, “Human Territoriality,” 59.

46. The word Borana can have various spellings like Boorana and Boran. Aguilar uses the former, we prefer to use Borana.

is much more than the absence of war, it means a constant state of unity and cooperation among the people.⁴⁷

For the Borana people, peace is beyond religious tolerance or coexistence. It is the essence of their communal life that is safeguarded wherever they go. Contravening this peace of Borana has consequences that would befall the community.⁴⁸ The Burji people can also emulate the Borana's concept of peace (*nagaa Borana*) since they are also Borana-speakers.

Encouraging Peace Initiatives in Kiamaiko

Our interviewees informed us that there have been peace initiatives organized in recent times in the area. Kiamaiko was one of the areas targeted for a peace initiative program organized by Hekima Institute of Peace Studies and International Relations (HIPSIR) during the August 2014 by-elections for Mathare Constituency.⁴⁹ The expectation was that the participants would be impacted to maintain harmony even after the by-elections.

The religious institutions in Kiamaiko ought to be the vanguards in advocating for peaceful coexistence. Unfortunately, as this paper has shown, religious territoriality remains a volatile issue that needs urgent redress. Since the key players are Muslims and Christians, this paper recommends that concerted efforts be made towards interreligious dialogue for mutual understanding. Christian and Muslim leaders from the Burji community should be proactive in motivating their congregations to think about peaceful coexistence. They should refrain from holding public meetings that promote tension by castigating each other's religion.

Moussa Bongoyok admits, "Ignorance of Islamic teachings and practices is dangerous."⁵⁰ In agreement with this statement, we also add that ignorance of the Christian beliefs and teachings is likewise perilous. Both Christians and Muslims should be enlightened about each other's religion. Everyone, and the youth in particular, should be encouraged to participate in dialogue forums to enhance a better understanding of each other's faith. This is because they have been instrumental in the conflict and are also responsible to safeguard harmony in the future generations.

The foundation of any peace initiatives should be love. Both the Qur'an and the Bible underscore that it is God who initiates love in peoples' hearts. In Surah 3: 103, Muhammad reminds Muslims about Allah's favor that was bestowed on them

47. Mario I Aguilar, "Current Religious Practices and Generational Patterns among the Waso Boorana of Garba Tula, Kenya" (Dissertation for Doctor of Philosophy, UK, SOAS, University of London, 1993), 50–51.

48. Hassan Arero, "Keeping the Peace of Borana: Aspects of Peace and Conflict in Shifting 'Indigenous' Systems of Northern Kenya" (Dissertation for Doctor of Philosophy in Social Anthropology, Norwich, England, University of East Anglia, 2002), 155.

49. HIPSIR is run by the Jesuits and is part of the Hekima College, which is a constituent college of the Catholic University of Eastern Africa (CUEA).

50. Moussa Bongoyok, "The African Christian and Muslim Militancy," in *The African Christian and Islam*, ed. John Azumah and Lamin Sanneh (UK: Langham Monographs, 2013), 208.

when they were enemies, but “He joined” their hearts “in love and they became “brethren” by the grace of God. Surah 60:7 also alludes to the fact that it is God who gives love to enemies. Similarly, the Bible says that it is God, through the Holy Spirit, who sheds abroad love in the hearts of Christians so that they can love as they should (Romans 5: 5). These scriptural injunctions are very appropriate for the Burji Muslims and Christians. They need God to impress love for each other in them since He is the only one who can transform hatred into love.

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