Kenyan Christian-Muslim relations: Bridging Factors and Persisting Challenges

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Abstract
Kenya is a multi-race country which hosts several communities from different backgrounds throughout many centuries. The aim of this research is to study the socio-religious factors that contribute to the social cohesion and those may pose as threat to national unity for better future of the country. The research will examine the early relationship between Kenyan coast and Arabian Peninsula and the subsequent interactions later which yielded significant religious and cultural influence of Islam along East African coastal line. It further explores the main bridging factors between Kenyan Muslims and their fellow Christians which help in maintaining peaceful co-existence and those challenges which need to be addressed reasonably in order to shield against potential social conflict and segregation in future. It concludes with proposals for the right ways to preserve national harmony and deal with alarming challenges.
Key words: Islam, Christianity, East Africa, Kadhi Courts, Coast Province, North Eastern province, Marginalisation, Terrorism.

1.0 Introduction

The relationship between East Africa and Arabian Peninsula dates back to pre-Islamic era. Sources confirmed the presence of Arab sailors in the second century AD whom were shuttling between Arabian Peninsula and the coasts of East Africa for commercial purposes. Their ships' movements were increasing with the sea waves becoming calm, while decrease when the tides were so high; according the monsoon's directions. Furthermore, the sources indicate that types of commercial activities had flourished among the two regions; including trades in ivory, fabrics, chewing gum and animals, where Arab traders were coming with fabrics, food stuff, iron, weapons and replaced them in return with ivory, frankincense, Arabian gum, animals and others (Al-Sayyar, 1975).
Later on, at the beginnings of the 7th century, Islam reached at the coastal lines of East Africa through some Arabs and Muslims who immigrated to Africa for economic and political reasons. Some historical writings that found on the ruins of several mosques in Gedi, Lamu and Pate; which date back to 1000 years ago show the arrival of Arabs to Kenyan coastal areas; where they exercised trade activities through significant routes from Southern Arabian peninsula and Red Sea to the new settlements which they established along the coastal line (Al-Naqira, 1986).
Likewise, Archaeological evidences attest to a thriving Muslim town on Manda Island by the Tenth Century AD. (Salim, 1973). The Moroccan Muslim traveller, Ibn Battuta, visiting the Swahili Coast

in 1331 AD, reported a strong Muslim presence in Zeila, Mogadishu, Lamu, Malindi and Mombasa. Ibn Battuta said that the inhabitants were pious, honourable, upright, had well-built wooden mosques and belonged to Shfi'i school of Islamic Jurisprudence (Ibn Battuta, 1987).

As a result of these continuous immigration influxes, many Muslim emirates and settlements emerged throughout East African coastal line such as: Zeila', Mogadishu, Merca, Barava, Kismayu (in Somalia), Lamu, Malindi, Mombasa (in Kenya), Kilwa, Pempa, Zanzibar (in Tanzania), Sofala (in Mozambique), Comoros Islands and some parts in Madagascar. The interactions between the native people of Bantu in Kenyan coast and the new immigrants yielded the emergence of new culture system which reflected on Swahili culture that embodied both Islamic and African civilizations through its culture, literature and judicial system.

Responding to the increasing Muslim population in the area, Muslim law courts came out to manage the social life of the people. The said courts were belonging to the Shafi'i school of thought among Sunni Islam; which dominates the entire East African region.

The coastal areas in Kenya remained Muslim settlements which were governed by Arab-Swahili rulers until1498, when Vasco Da Gama, a Portuguese Christian pioneer, arrived at Malindi, with Roman Catholic missionaries in his company (Barret, et al.,1973). He proceeded to Goa, India, with help from Swahili-Arab navigator, Ahmad Ibn Majid. Later, Vasco returned to Portugal with full report to his country asking his monarch to conquer East Africa in order to preach Christianity and manage naval routes. The Portuguese government responded to his call and sent series of Portuguese sailors whom started to establish a Portuguese rule along Kenyan coastal areas. In 1639, they achieved to build Fort Jesus castle in Mombasa, but the native Swahili people requested Omani rulers to help them expel Portuguese colony. In 1698, Swahili people, with help From Omani Arabs from Muscat, captured Fort Jesus from Portuguese colony with final extinguishing of Portuguese influence along East African coast in 1740 (Barret, et al.,1973).

The ruling of the area returned to its native Swahili people until 1837, when Omani Sultan, Sayyid Said, conquered Mombasa and in 1840 he moved his capital from Muscat, Oman, to Stone Town, Zanzibar, to establish strong Sultanate which ruled East Africa from 1840 to 1963 through 12 Sultans, started by the founder Sultan, Sayyid Said Ibn Sultan in 1840 and ended with the last Sultan of Zanzibar, Jamshid Ibn Abdallah al-Busaidi (Ingrams, 1967).

Within the Omani rule's era, British colony arrived at Kenyan coastal areas in 1888 which was first chartered to the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC) through agreement with Sultan of Zanzibar, Bargash Ibn Said (1837 – 1888), then transformed into a formal protectorate in 1895 when Sultan of Zanzibar, Hamid Ibn Thuwaini (1893-1896) leased to and permitted British government to administer the coastal strip as protectorate on his behalf, ushering in colonialism over his subjects along the Kenyan coastal region which subsequently turned into a crown colony in 1920 (Kimeu, 2011). The British colony continued until 1963 when Kenya gained its independency on 12th December, 1963, to start a new era of relationship between Muslims and Christians in the newly-independent Kenya.

This historical overview shows that there were interactions between Muslims and non-Muslims all over centuries in East Africa through business, intermarriage, political administrations which were generally stable except the Portuguese era. Similarly, these interactions continued after independence with rapid increase due to the fact that the Kenyan Muslims were ought to participate in building their new country together with their Christian fellows. The research aims to examine

the bridging factors in these relations and the significant challenges that face maintaining peaceful co-existence between the main two faith communities in the country.

2.0 Bridging factors

The main bridging factors which have contributed to the existing peaceful relationship between Muslims and their fellow Kenyans from other backgrounds are the following:

2.1 Historical Peaceful Co-existence

The historical relationship between Muslim traders and the native Bantu people in Eastern coastal areas shows mutual cooperation and harmony among them. The first evidence on that is the stable trade activities which continued to thrive along coastal lines for many centuries between Bantu peoples and Muslim traders whom were maintaining good relations with the local communities. Secondly, the intermarriage process which produced the emergence of Swahili people; whom their cultural and social identities embodied both Bantu and Islamic culture, is another sign on that course.

This peaceful relationship has continued during the Omani rule between 1840 and 1963 and has many examples where Omani rulers who were based in Zanzibar were open and tolerant toward Christians in East Africa. The founder Sultan, Sayyid Said (1797 – 1856) has permitted German missionary and linguist, Dr. Johann Ludwig Krapf (1810-1885), who was sent to East Africa by British Church Mission Society (CMS), to start a missionary station at the coastal city of Mombasa in 1843. The Sultan wrote an official letter to his governor in Mombasa; which says:

> *"This comes from Said (sic) Said Bin Sultan; greeting all our subject, friends and governors. This letter is written in (sic) behalf of Dr. Krapf, the German, a good man who wishes to covert the world to God. Behave well to him, and be everywhere serviceable to him"*. (Krapf, 1968).

Soon after his arrival in Mombasa, Krapf moved to the higher grounds of Mombasa on the coastal hills and established a new missionary station in Rabai. He started learning the languages of the local Mijikenda people and also Swahili which is an East African lingua franca language of communication. Here, later, he wrote the first dictionary and grammar of the Swahili language. He also started studying other African languages, drafting dictionaries and translating sections of the Bible with help from a Muslim judge, named Ali bin Modehin. He translated Genesis and went on to translate the New Testament (Gilbert,1988).

In 1868, the Omani Sultan, Majid IbnThuwayni (1834-1870), bestowed a vast tract of land to the "Fathers of the Holy Ghost" north of Bagamoyo on the mainland coast, in order for them to build the first mission in East Africa. The mission on this land grant is still active today. When the first printing press was brought to East Africa under the reign of Sultan Bargash (1837-1888), the missionaries used it to print Christian literature in Swahili to support their efforts on the mainland, Tanganyika. They were helped in their translations by the local scholar, Sheikh Abdel-Aziz bin Abd al-Ghani Al-Amawi, who in 1872 co-authored the translation of the Catechism and the Bible into Swahili language (Seminar, 2011).

Additionally, in 1870, Sultan Bargash Ibn Said (1837 – 1888), signed an agreement with Britain, prohibiting slave trade in his kingdom, and closing the great slave market in Mkunazini, Zanzibar. He also helped abolish the slave trade in Zanzibar (Stanley, 1899). Later, in 1887, he gave permission to Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC) to administer his territories in East Africa. IBEAC was a commercial association established to develop African trade in the areas

controlled by the British colonial power. In 1963, Sultan Jamshid Ibn Abdallah, who ruled Zanzibar from 1st July, 1963 to 12th January, 1964, conceded his territories in Kenyan coastal line to the new independent Kenya through agreement that joined Britain, Kenya and Zanzibar (Chesworth, 2011).

The only exception in this historical harmony between Muslims and other faiths was the Portuguese rule, where the situation was rudely shaken by the arrival of Portuguese in 1498. In 1505, the Portuguese took over Kilwa (after destroying it), sacked Mombasa ruler and by 1530 they controlled the entire coast, basing themselves in Zanzibar and Pemba. Of all the European nations whom arrived to East Africa, the Portuguese were the most anti-Muslim and one of their objectives for coming to the Indian Ocean, apart from trade, was to curb the prevalence of Islam in East Africa. Thus; during their occupation of the coastal city-states, the Portuguese pursued a very strong anti-Muslim policy. They tried hard to convert Muslims to Christianity and to massacre many of those who refused. Indeed, in 1542, the Portuguese went all the way to the Ethiopian highland plateau in the interior to tighten their Christian ties with Ethiopian Orthodox against Muslims in East Africa. But this interlude ended up with the expulsion of Portuguese rule by Swahili Muslim coastal communities in 1740 where they managed to restore their linkage with international trade of Indian Ocean and maintaining peaceful coexistence with each other (Bujra, 2002).

2.2 Parliamentarian Representation

The first elections to the legislative council (LegCo) were held in East Africa Protectorate now modern Kenya in February, 1920 as the first election in the country. The new Elected First Council consisted of 11 elected white members, two appointed members representing the Indian community and one appointed member representing the Arab community, as well as a number of appointees by Sir Edward Northey, the governor. The same year through a Kenya (Annexation) order –in-Council, the status of Kenya changed, from an East African protectorate to that of a colony. The territory formally became Kenya colony on 23rd of July, 1920. For Muslims, the said legislative council included three Muslim members whom were: Hon. Sheikh Ali Bin Salim, Liwali (governor) for coast region, Hon. Shmsu-Ud-Deen and Hon. Abdul Rasul AllidinaVisram as nominated Indian unofficial members (Richard, 2014).

The following elections to the legislative council which were held in1920, 1924, 1927, 1931, 1934, 1938, 1941, 1944, 1948, 1952, 1956, 1960 and 1961 included **61** Muslim Members: **33** members from coast region whom were Arabs and Swahilis, **26** members representing Indian community and **two** members representing Northern Frontier District (NFD) which is populated mainly by Somali and Borana communities.

Table1. Kenya Colony Legislative Council's Muslim Members (1920 – 1961).

Year of Election	Communities which members were belong to			
	Arab & Swahilis	Asians	Somalis	Borana
1920	1	1	Nil	Nil
1924	2	2	Nil	Nil
1927	2	1	Nil	Nil
1931	1	1	Nil	Nil
1934	2	1	Nil	Nil
1938	2	2	Nil	Nil

1941	2	2	Nil	Nil
1944	1	2	Nil	Nil
1948	3	Nil	Nil	Nil
1952	3	2	Nil	Nil
1956	3	3	Nil	Nil
1960	5	5	1	Nil
1961	6	4	1	Nil
Total	**33**	**26**	**2**	**0**
Grand total	61			

Source: Author's elaboration from: Richard, Omeri (2014).

It is worthy to note that most of the mentioned Asian Muslim members were Ismailis; an offshoot of Shia Islam contrary to the rest of Muslims in East Africa which belong to Islam's main stream; the Sunni Islam.
 On the other hand, Muslim communities continued to be represented in the parliament after independence in 1963 with remarks that the native Muslims' MPs doubled significantly while Asian-origin Muslim MPs declined drastically as a result of independence, where African communities managed to control themselves and get rid of Europeans and their associates from Asia. The following figure shows the increment in the numbers of Muslim MPs, senators, ministers, assistant ministers and governors from 1963 up to the latest elections that held on 4th March, 2013.

Table2. Independent Kenya Parliament's Muslim Members (1963 – 2013).

Year of Election	Components of the members				
	MPs	**Senators**	**Ministers**	**Assistant Ministers**	**Governors**
1963 (Independence Elections)	9	5	Nil	1	Devolution system didn't exist until 2013.
1966 (Little General Elections)	9	Senate System abolished until 2013	Nil	2	Nil
1969	19	Nil	Nil	5	Nil
1974	19	Nil	Nil	2	Nil
1979	23	Nil	Nil	5	Nil
1983	20	Nil	1	4	Nil
1988	24	Nil	1	4	Nil
1992	25	Nil	1	7	Nil
1997	30	Nil	1	7	Nil
2002 (including Nov 2005 reshuffle)	26	Nil	4	2	Nil
2007	30	Nil	5	7	Nil

2013 (including Nov 2015 reshuffle)	54	11	4 Cabinet Secretaries whom are not MPs	7 Principal Secretaries whom are not MPs	8 governors out of 47 governors for 47 counties
Total	**288**	**16**	**17**	**53**	**8**
Grand total	**382**				

Source: Author's elaboration from: Richard, Omeri (2014).

It is important to indicate, as it clear from the above chart, that Senate System was introduced first in the independence elections in 1963 but the state abolished it until 2013 , while Gubernatorial System and picking cabinet secretaries (ministers) and principal secretaries (assistant ministers) from outside of the parliament were introduced in 2013 elections as a result of Kenyan new constitution of 2010; which introduced devolved government and enacted picking non-MPs technocrat members as cabinet secretaries and principal secretaries. The said new constitution replaced the old terms: "Minister" with "Cabinet Secretary" and "Assistant Minister" with "Principal Secretary" (Republic of Kenya, 2010).

2.3 Democratic Environment
The development of democracy and public participation in Kenya has had mixed results since independence in 1963. Kenya, at the independence, adopted a Westminster style of democracy with multi-party institutions and a federal system of government. There was a devolution structure of government, popularly known as "Majimbo", under which the country had seven autonomous regions, some of whose boundaries were coterminous with ethnic settlement patterns. Some of the numerically large groups have a region to themselves and therefore some regions are identifiable with ethnic groups. Each regional government was responsible for setting and implementing a broad range of policies.
In addition, there were several political parties, the main ones being the Kenya African National Union (KANU) and the Kenya African Democratic Union (KADU). KANU's membership included some of the large ethnic groups, the Kikuyu and the Luo, while KADU combined the numerically smaller ethnic communities, many of which feared domination by large groups after independence.

The first government dismantled this set-up after independence. The ruling party, KANU, made it difficult for the regional governments to operate. The main opposition, KADU, joined KANU to form one party and govern with them. The government also introduced a series of constitutional amendments that centralised power in the presidency. These changes significantly constrained democratic participation. The government became increasingly intolerant of dissent political forces. In 1966, some critics within government resigned their positions to form a new political party – the Kenya People's Union (KPU). Keen to consolidate power without rivalry, the government banned the opposition in 1969. This gave the then ruling party, KANU, unchecked dominance. More amendments to the constitution to centralise power in the executive followed. In 1982, Parliament changed the constitution to make Kenya a one-party state. The country remained as such until 1991 when pressure, through people's struggles for democratic change, compelled the government to repeal this constitutional provision and provide for a return of multi-party democracy (Kanyinga, 2014).

The return of multi-party democracy in 1991 led to the expansion of space for the enjoyment of civil and political freedoms. It generally enhanced the space for participatory democracy. The state loosened its grip on political space and allowed for the proliferation of political groups, including opposition political parties and human rights organisations. But these gains were not effectively consolidated where huge anti-democratic systemised irregularities continued at state level that reflected on 1997, 2007 and 2013 elections where the state accused of rigging election results, oppressing opposition groups and minimizing democratic environment that caused lack of trust in general elections.

Despite these political setbacks from1966 up to date, Kenya still considered as a leading country in adopting democracy comparing to its neighbouring countries in East Africa. Kenyan citizens, regardless of their cultural backgrounds, enjoy many rights in terms of freedom of worship and expression, preaching faiths and participation in political process. Muslim preachers have witnessed thousands of Christians and non-believers converting to Islam; where they organise regular debates with Christians in major towns and streets which is pure show of freedom in a Christian-majority country. Also, Most of the hotels in Kenya's major towns and cities have embraced the concept of Halal food (religious legal food). To exhibit this religious freedom, the government is in the process of paying out 287 million in cash for the revival of a Halal meat company, Bul Bul, in Ngong town South-West of the Kenyan capital, Nairobi. This follows a request by Mohammed Moghas, owner of the Halal Meat Products Company, to pay parts of the company's damages as directed by the Attorney General (Jimale, 2009).

Thus, international commentators on Kenya cited the country as a successful development model of growth, with useful lessons for the rest of the developing world. With an average annual economic growth rate of more than 5% and relatively high per capita income compared to many developing countries. The West generally praised Kenya as 'one of the few economic and political ornaments to be held up, admired and analysed to detect what might be transferable in its exceptional performance (Kanyinga, 2014).

2.4 Teaching Islamic Religious Education

One of the issues that encourage positive relationship between Muslims and the government is that Islamic religious education (IRE) is taught in Kenyan primary and secondary schools where Muslim students are applicable in large numbers across the country. The Ministry of Education has set since 1980s a complete curriculum for IRE programme from primary to secondary levels in line with Christian Religious Education (CRE) curriculum. The ministry, also, trained and employed for that purpose hundreds of Muslim teachers to teach IRE/Arabic subjects to Muslim pupils in everywhere that hosts significant Muslim population. An Islamic Teachers Training College was established 1994 in Mkindani, Mombasa, to train Muslim teachers how to teach IRE/Arabic curriculum. Furthermore, many of the national and private universities in Kenya teach Arabic and Islamic Studies to Muslim and even non-Muslim students, who want to do so, at undergraduate and post-graduate levels which is an instrumental process that can play a pivotal role in enhancing better understanding between different communities in the country.

The main national universities: University of Nairobi, Kenyatta University, Moi University, Egerton University and Pwani University have departments in philosophy and religious studies which have inclusive curriculum that teaches both Christianity and Islamic Studies in addition to the famous religions in the world and African Traditional Religion (ATR). Mount Kenya University, a leading private university in Thika, Kenya, has Department of Humanities under Schools of Social Sciences

that offers MA programme in religious studies which covers Christianity, Islam and African Traditional Religion.

St. Paul's University, Limuru, has initiated a unique programme at MA level on Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations. The initiative is sponsored by Project for Christian-Muslim Relations in Africa (PROCMURA) and started in 2004 with a class of ten students and has offered training to students from a variety of backgrounds and nationalities including: Kenya, Tanzania, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Turkey, Sierra Leone, Nigeria, Ivory Coast and Sudan. The programme aims at the provision of necessary tools for Christian-Muslim positive engagement, doing Christian mission in an interfaith milieu and the appreciation of the Christian-Muslim presence in Africa and its meaning for Christian living (Mutei, 2013).

2.5 Maintaining Kadhi Courts

Kadhi Courts are subordinate civil courts which exclusively deal with limited civil cases that relate to Muslim parties under supervision of The High Court. Those civil cases are: marriage, inheritance and divorce (Republic of Kenya, 2010).

Historically, Kadhi Courts existed in the East Coast of Africa long before colonisation and were governing social system of Muslim communities along coastal lines from Zeila in Somalia to Comoros Islands. In 1895, the Sultan of Zanzibar gave the British authority power to administer The Ten Mile Coastal Strip subject to their respect to the existing Kadhi Courts among other conditions while retaining his sovereignty over The Ten Miles coastal strip.

The jurisdiction of Kadhi Courts over Muslim cases under Swahili rulers and Sultan's territories was unlimited but in 1931 British government limited their jurisdiction to three personal issues: Marriage, Divorce and Inheritance, and this limitation passed from colonial constitution to the independent Kenya's constitution (Chesworth, 2011).

During the last years of the independence's struggle and at the start of the Lancaster House Constitutional talks in London 1961, the status and fate of the coastal strip came up for determination. The British authority organised separate talks for the delegates from the protectorate of the coast and those from the Kenya Colony. The British Government together with Sultan of Zanzibar appointed a Commissioner, Sir. James Robertson, to study the issue of the coastal strip, consult all those concerned and report to them. In his report, entitled, "The Kenya Coastal Strip? Report by the Commissioner", he reported that opinion was divided as to whether the coastal strip should join Kenya, or be declared independent on its own, or reverted back to the Sultan of Zanzibar. He, however, recommended that it should be joined with Kenya subject to the Kenya Government guaranteeing to respect the existence of the Kadhi Courts among other conditions (Hassan, 2002).

The prime minister of Kenya, Jomo Kenyatta and the prime minister of Zanzibar, Mr. Shamte, on behalf of the Sultan of Zanzibar, then signed an agreement in October, 1963, in the form of an exchange of letters whereby the Sultan of Zanzibar relinquished/surrendered his claim of sovereignty over the coast to Kenya in return for Mzee Kenyatta guaranteeing the continued existence of the Kadhi Courts among other guarantees (Chesworth, 2011).

When the independence constitution was written, the Kadhi Courts were enshrined under the chapter on Judiciary. At independence, the Kenya Government expressed its sovereign desire not to be bound automatically by all the pre-independence treaties and agreements entered into by the colonial government. By his note reference EXT. 237/003A of 25th March, 1964, addressed to the Secretary General of United Nations, Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, informed United Nations of the Kenya

Government's intention to review all pre-independence treaties and agreements and determine which agreements will be honoured by the Government and those which will be abrogated or modified after appropriate notice to the interested parties. It is important to note that the 1963 agreement between Kenya Government and the Sultan of Zanzibar concerning the Kenya Coastal Strip and the preservation of Kadhi Courts was among those agreements that were immediately honoured by the newly independent Kenya Government. This is proved by the fact that the independence constitution of 1963 enshrined Kadhi Courts under Chapter 5 in the Judiciary and thereafter Parliament passed Kadhi Courts Act, the Mohammedan Marriage and Divorce Registration Act and the Mohammedan Marriage, Divorce and Succession Act to make these courts fully operational and functioning. At independence, Kadhi Courts were three. In 1967, the Kadhi Courts Act was passed which increased the courts to 6. They have subsequently been increased according to the increase in Muslim population needs and today there are 56 Kadhis serving across the country.

The Kadhi Courts were entrenched in the constitution as a measure of safeguarding the integrity of the agreement reached on them. If the courts were established under Ordinary Law by an Act of Parliament alone, then it would have made them vulnerable since any decision to abolish them would have required a simple majority of the members of parliament to repeal the Act. As a minority therefore, Muslims in Kenya find great relief and solace in the entrenchment of Kadhi Courts in the Constitution (Hassan, 2002).

3.0 Persisting Challenges

Opposite to the bridging factors that we have studied already, there are some persisting challenges which carry potentiality of being threat to better relationship between Kenyan Muslims and non-Muslims in future as follows:

3.1 Religious and Cultural Misunderstandings

Although Muslims have welcomed the arrival of pioneer missionary groups and their leaders, as we have mentioned in 2.1, the missionaries' attitude towards Islam and Muslims in East Africa was not reciprocal. Soon after their arrival, they started orchestrating misinterpretations and hostilities among Bantu tribes in coastal line against Islam; claiming that it adopts slavery and brutality against native peoples though that those Arabs and Swahilis whom engaged in slavery, in collaborations with western forces, were not representing Islam and didn't claim that.

Besides associating Islam with slavery and slave trade, some missionaries, also, regarded Kiswahili as the "language of the former slave owners". This was because Kiswahili was seen by main missionaries to be promoting the spread of Islam. In addition, they established new camps and towns for servants who fled their Arab and Swahili masters and started introducing Christianity to them which created social segregation between Muslims and Africans.

To achieve their goals, missionaries started to introduce western education system across the country because the school complements the mission work where the new converts were taught how to read and write which is important to convey The Bible. Western education has generated tensions between missionaries and Muslims because missionaries introduced education as a means to preach Christianity not for the sake of knowledge. Muslims perceived missionary education as a bait to convert their children to Christianity and there were many examples of conflicts between missionaries and Muslims over the religious content offered in the missionary schools. Consequent

to the evangelical nature of missionary education, Muslims generally developed suspicion and hatred towards Western education.

The situation worsened with colonial administration giving full support for Christian missionaries and imposing restrictions on preaching Islam in interior lands which yielded the domination of Christianity over Kenyan interior territories (Kahumbi, 2009).

With independence in 1963, the problem didn't decline; rather it increased and triggered several tensions between Muslims and Christians, where Christian sponsored schools hindered Muslim students from dressing their Islamic attire and attending to their religious services. There are many cases where Muslim students have cited discrimination in church sponsored schools which included denying Muslims admission into those schools, refusing them to practice their religious rituals, ignoring their remarks on dietary habits and forcing them to learn Christian Religious Education (CRE) without their will (Nairat, 2009).

Conversely, some Muslims in the colonial periods and early decades of the independence have declined to admit their children to the public schools claiming that they are converted to Christianity. Many local Muslim elders declared that sending Muslim children to the missionary schools was Haram (forbidden), and most Muslim children were withdrawn from them (Trimingham, 1964). This move was, actually, behind the spread of illiteracy among Muslim communities in Kenya and East Africa. The solution for these religious and cultural conflicts is to adopt mutual understanding of each other where the two religious communities have to work together for common goals instead of engaging negatively in their theological and cultural differences.

3.2 Unplanned Missionary Works

Both Christians and Muslims in Kenya are engaging in missionary works that aims at preaching their religions. However, Christianity has, actively, used many resources to achieve this goal in terms of luring Muslims to convert Christianity through education, health, services and public sermons that target Muslim areas while Muslims have limited preaching activities through public gatherings and engaging Christians to embrace Islam.

This competition between the two groups has ignited exchanged propaganda and accusations. In this regard, some Muslims accuse Christians and Christian organisations of crusading attitudes and activities against Islam. Equally, Some Christians accused Muslim groups of using unorthodox means to spread Islam in Christian areas. These accusations demonstrate an atmosphere of unplanned competition between Christianity and Islam that entails tensions and conflicts between the two communities.

For example, Kenyan Muslim leadership heavily criticized the former leader of Catholic Church in Kenya, late Cardinal Otunga (1923-2003), for calling Christians to "stand up and fight the spread of Islam in Africa". He did these remarks in an opening ceremony of the secretaries of the Episcopal Conference of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) in January, 1993, Nairobi. Also, the former head of The Anglican Church in Kenya (ACK), the late Archbishop, Manasses Kuria (1929-2005), claimed, while delivering a sermon in church in February, 1994, Nairobi, that Islam and Christianity are similar and that Muhammad was a Christian before he defected and found Islam. Later in the same year, another prelate of the ACK, Stephen Kewases, called on Christian to intensify evangelization in North Eastern and Coast area through building of churches as a method of challenging Islam. These remarks have heightened tensions between Muslims and Christians in those days.

The Islamic preaching works has also had direct effects on Christian-Muslim relations. Muslim preachers who specialized in Christianity hold public religious debates and lectures, which sometimes referred to in East Africa as "Muhadharat", to convert Christians to Islam. Due to the largely polemical nature of these lectures, conflicts and physical confrontations may occur between Muslim and Christian attendants resulting in injuries and loss of properties (Kahumbi, 2009). The right way in this regard is to respect the religious opinion of each group and engage in theological debate in a peaceful manner that guarantees the rights of all parties.

3.3 Unaddressed Historical Grievances
The Kenyan Muslim communities live primarily in the coast and Northern area of the country with some sporadic settlements in different parts of the country. At the arrival of British colony, the coastal area was under the authority of Sultan of Zanzibar, while the Northern area was populated by Nomadic tribes which belong to Somali, Borana, Samburu, Rendile and Gabra with Chiefdom systems for each tribe.

The British colonial administration transferred coastal area with the rest of Kenya from British Protectorate to Kenya colony in 1920. In 1925 it annexed the Southern parts of Jubaland region in present-day of Southern Somalia to Kenya colony. The newly-annexed area re-named Northern Frontier District (NFD) and was consisting of Northern and North Eastern areas of Kenya colony and administratively comprised of six districts: Garissa, Wajir, Mandera, Isiolo, Marsabit and Moyale.

During early 1960s; when Kenya was fighting for its independence, both regions were not given chance by colonial administration to determine their destinations and eventually annexed, as a result of colonial recommendations which was against the will of the majority, to the expected independent Kenya in 1963, although the Muslim community in coastal area was advocating for autonomy or secede to join the sultanate of Zanzibar instead of being incorporated in independent Kenya (Mwaruvie, 2011), whereas the majority of the peoples in NFD area interested to reunite with Somalia (Hassan,2008).

Protesting this political disregard, NFD peoples launched guerilla war, which was knows us historically by "Shifta War" (1963-1967), against newly-born Kenya, to fight for their right to determine their destination. During that rebellion era, nomadic tribes in NFD, especially Somali ethnicity, suffered mass detentions in camps, persecution and oppression. Their area was closed to general access and their livestock were killed en masse by Kenya Army which yielded severe starvation in late 1960s (Howard, 1986).

The war ended in1967 when Zambian President, Kenneth Kaunda, mediated peace talks between Somali Prime Minister, Muhammad Ibrahim Egal and Kenyan President, Jomo Kenyatta. The meditation efforts bore fruit in October 1967, when the governments of Kenya and Somalia signed a Memorandum of Understanding in Arusha, Tanzania, on 23rd October, 1967 that resulted in an official ceasefire, though regional security was not realized until 1969 (Hogg, 1986). After the 1969 coup in Somalia, the new military leader, Mohamed Siad Barre, abolished this MoU as he claimed it was corrupt and unsatisfactory, but he later signed another peace agreement with Kenya in December 1984 in which Somalia "permanently" renounced its historical territorial claims in Kenya.

Although Muslim areas were annexed to Kenya and the people started co-operating with the new independent Kenya, both coastal and NFD areas did not receive enough developmental support

from the central government. Yet, the two regions suffered series of negligence from successions of Kenyan governments since independence.

Additionally, series of human rights violations against the citizens of the two regions which carried out by state personnel have been recorded many times. From1963 to 1968, Kenyan security personnel imposed state of emergency on the whole Northern Frontier District (NFD). The sate reportedly committed numerous massacres in the region which was claimed responding to the Shifta insurgency that was fighting for the independence of NFD. During the state of emergency in 1960s, most of the young Kenyan nomadic tribes men left the district due to the injustices and killings. The victims estimate the number of those who were shot dead during the state of emergency, when thousands of pastoralists; especially Somalis and Boranas were put into three concentration camps, at 2,700 (Salesa, 2011).

Later in 1980s, President Moi's government accused of committing massacre in Garissa, the capital of the North Eastern Province, Kenya. The incident occurred when Kenyan government forces, acting on the principle of flushing out a local gangster, known as Abdi Madobe, set fire to a residential village called Bulla Kartasi, killing people and raping women. They then forcefully interned the public at Garissa Primary School football's pitch for three days without water or food. Human rights organisations estimate the dead at over 3000, with an equal number unaccounted for. Residents apart from Somalis were given permission to leave the school pitch unharmed. The Kenyan government lifted the curfew and released the detained individuals after threat from the neighbouring Somali government that it such brutalities did not cease, the Somali military will interfere (Hassan,2008).

This brutal action was followed by another barbaric one which took place at Wagalla air strip in Wajir District in the same province on 10th February, 1984; when Kenyan security forces, while responding to inter-clan fight between Ajuran and Degodia of Somali tribes, rounded up and detained over 5,000 men from the Degodia clan, confined them at the Wagalla airstrip, stripped them naked and held them without food and water for four days. The exact number of the deaths is unknown but eye witnesses confirmed that the death toll rose to 5000. (Sheikh,2007).

For years the Kenyan government denied that a massacre had taken place and insisted that only 57 people were killed in a security operation to disarm the area's residents. It was not until October 2000 that the government publicly acknowledged wrongdoing in the part of the country by its security forces (BBC, 2000).

On the other hand, the situation in Coast Province was not better than the way it was in North Eastern Province. The political arena in coast was dominated, since independence, by pro-government politicians whom were favouring personal interests than national development and strategy. When multiparty system was introduced to Kenya in 1992, after tough pressure from civil societies and international community, some coastal Muslim activists led by Sheikh Khalid Balala wanted to take advantage of this political change and register for Islamic Party of Kenya (IPK) to work for promotion of the interests of coastal area; especially the Muslim community. IPK addressed grievances including the under-representation of Muslims in government and public institutions, the neglect of areas with predominantly Muslim inhabitants, inter alia with regard to schools, lack of employment opportunities and similar economic and social demands (Moller, 2006). IPK was the first Muslim voice to raise public Muslim protest discourse and point to the marginalised position of Muslims in Kenya as a political problem which required political solutions (Mwakimako, 1995). The move was responded by banning the party, launching crackdown on its supports, branding it with associating with extremism, arresting Balala and stripping off his

nationality on the ground that the state cannot allow for the registration of religious-based party. The government's assault on IPK was attributed to its fear from the increase of political awareness among coastal people which will erode the support that it enjoyed in coastal areas since the independence and lead to political competition that may result in losing its seats. The tension continued until the party was put to an end in 1995 (Oded, 1996).

To address these historical injustices, the Kenyan government formed Truth, Justice and Reconciliation Commission (TJRC) in 2009. The TJRC handed over its final report to President, Uhuru Kenyatta, on 21st May, 2013, after four years of work. The report documented extensive human rights violations and other injustices committed in Kenya during the British colonial period (1888-1963) and under the administrations of presidents: Jomo Kenyatta (1963-1978), Daniel Arap Moi (1978-2002) and Mwai Kibaki (2002-2013) including the 2007-2008 Post-elections Violence. The report faced several serious challenges, including the government's reluctance to publish it widely and several court cases disputing its contents. Some of the cases seek orders from the High Court to expunge aspects of the report or block the implementation of some recommendations (Ndungu, 2014).

3.4 Marginalisation

The Muslim areas in Kenya have experienced severe marginalization by both colonial government as well as succession governments after independence to the current days. Although Muslims were the Liwalis (governors) and Mudirs (administrators) of coastal province before and during the era of Zanzibar Sultanate, the situation changed dramatically with the arrival of British colony in 1888. Between 1895 and 1908, British practice towards Muslims changed considerably, as British focus changed from the coastal area to up-country Kenya. After the completion of the Uganda railway in 1901, Nairobi soon replaced Mombasa and the coast. Muslim representation within the administration soon lost ground to the new up-country elite of African Christians converts, who had received secular education in the missionary schools and were well-versed in English language. As a result, coastal Muslims became increasingly marginalized politically and economically (Pouwels, 1981).

The marginalization in colonial period was in form of excluding Muslims from governance, administrative and educational systems; where authority was taken over by British colonialists while education was monopolized by missionaries. The British strongly favoured the Christian population; churches and Christian schools were founded everywhere. These Christian schools had more funding and often taught more modern skills than the older Muslim institutions. This practice led to differential treatment in the job market and hiring processes, even after Kenya became an independent state. Before and during World War 1, British Protestant missionaries competed against Muslims and even Catholics for converts. The environment was highly competitive and individuals spoke of "stemming the tide of Islam" as a righteous goal. Negative rhetoric and "us vs. them" mentalities put strain on interfaith relations, increasing fear and misunderstanding between Christian and Muslim Kenyans (Rasmussen, 1993).

This colonial marginalization extended systematically to the post-independence era. The inequalities in distribution of sources and jobs continued without any change as power and leadership remained in the hands of Christian elites from the interior lands. The Muslim areas in Kenya still the most underdeveloped regions in terms of infrastructure, education and health. North Eastern Province, which, now, splits into three counties: Mandera, Wajir and Garissa experienced severe negligence from the succession government since independence. The province still lacks the necessary elements for development where, up to now, there are no tarmacked roads,

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equipped health facilities, communication projects and service schemes. The education sector suffers from shortages of facilities, books, teachers and teaching materials where the province used, as a result of that, to occupy the last rank of performance annually in Kenya Certificate Primary Education (KCPE) and Kenya Certificate Secondary Education (KCSE) national examinations. Likewise, the rate of unemployment in the province is more than 90 per cent.

The government's energies and resources for the province were largely directed towards security and the maintenance of law and order and its policy has been described as one of containment not engagement. No constructive or meaningful development took place since independence because over 80 per cent of the region's budget was spent on security. The net result is that the region is today the most underdeveloped and marginalised in Kenya (Hassan, 2008).

Respectively, Coast Province, which currently combining of five counties: Mombasa, Lamu, Kilifi, Kwale and Tana River, has suffered chronic marginalization although it is one of the leading areas in existing and potential resources. The marginalization took the forms of excluding Muslims from top administrative and sensitive posts, political marginalization, poor infrastructure, curbing Islamic education and culture in favour of missionaries and job discrimination on the basis of culture and religion. This situation was totally contrary to the situation of coast Muslim during Zanzibar Sultanate and early British colony's era where elite coastal Muslims were leading East Africa in all aspects of life (Thordsen,1999).

But this situation does no longer exist in Kenya for decades and the Muslim populated regions are the most marginalised areas up to now. According to report on Policy on the Criteria for Identifying Marginalised Areas and Sharing of the Equalisation Fund, which is released by Commission on Revenue allocation (CRA) in Kenya on financial years 2011 to 2014, there are nine counties from Muslim areas in North and Coast out of the 15 most marginalized counties in Kenya according to historical injustices approach and seven counties from the same area out of the 10 most marginalized counties in Kenya according to County Survey Approach and six counties from the same region out of the 20 most marginalized counties in Kenya according to County Development Index (CDI) approach. The marginalization indicators are historical injustices, poverty, lack of infrastructure, health and education.

The figure below, which is taken from CRA's report, illustrates marginalization ranks among the most marginalised Kenyan counties according to three approaches. The Muslim dominated counties were identified with star * as follows:

Table3. County Ranking Using Historical Injustices, County Survey and County Development Index (CDI) Approaches

Historical Injustices		County Survey			CDI		
Rank	**County**	**Rank**	**County**	**Survey (%)**	**Rank**	**County**	**CDI**
1.	Turkana	1.	Turkana	27.72	1.	Turkana	0.27
2.	Mandera*	2.	Marsabit*	10.71	2.	Mandera*	0.31
3.	Wajir*	3.	Wajir*	9.45	3.	Wajir*	0.33
4.	Marsabit*	4.	Lamu*	9.13	4.	Marsabit*	0.37
5.	Samburu	5.	Mandera*	8.35	5.	Samburu	0.38
6.	West Pokot	6.	Tana River*	5.51	6.	West Pokot	0.38
7.	Tana river*	7.	West Pokot	5.20	7.	Tana River*	0.39
8.	Narok	8.	Samburu	3.94	8.	Narok	0.44

9.	Kwale*	9.	Kilifi*	2.52	9.	Baringo	0.44
10.	Garissa*	10.	Isiolo*	2.20	10.	Kwale*	0.45
11.	Kilifi*				11.	Kitui	0.46
12.	TaitaTaveta				12.	Garissa*	0.47
13	Isiolo*				13	Homa Bay	0.47
14	Kajiado				14	TharakaNithi	0.48
15	Lamu*				15	Trans Nzoia	0.49
					16	Kilifi	0.50
					17	Busia	0.51
					18	TaitaTaveta	0.51
					19	Bomet	0.51
					20	Migori	0.52

Source: Commission on Revenue Allocation (CRA) (2014).

3.5 Terror Impact

Since 1998, series of terror attacks have taken place in Kenya. The leading attacks were: the twin attacks on US embassies in Nairobi and Dar es salam in 1998, followed by Kikambala bombing in 2002, the Westgate mall shooting in 2013, Lamu attacks in 2014 and Mandera and Garissa attacks in 2015. These attacks, in addition to several sporadic attacks in different places between 2010 and 2015, have claimed more than 400 of innocent lives and other hundreds of injured peoples. Despite Muslim community in Kenya officially condemning these terror activities and disassociating with them, their impact was so negative and the Muslim community across the country has severely suffered in sequence of their repercussions.

The media has portrayed Islam and Muslims as negative elements in Kenya and orchestrated that Islam is associated with terrorism which created Islamophobia among Kenyan peaceful citizens. When any terrorist attack occurs, or even when something which could be a terrorist attack happens, many people are quick to blame their Muslim neighbours for that without paying any effort to confirm what really happened. Together with this, hundreds of Muslims were arbitrarily arrested and tortured while other dozens rendered or extradited to foreign countries denying them their right to be tried fairly. The government was accused by human activists of committing several extrajudicial killings by the ground of fighting terrorism (Thordsen, 1999).

Much earlier in the late 1990s, the government, aided by foreign security forces, cracked down quite harshly on various Muslim organisations, shutting down five NGOs: the Mercy Relief International Association, the al-Haramein Foundation, Help African People, the International Islamic Relief Organisation, the Ibrahim bin 'Abd al 'Aziz al-Ibrahim Foundation and the Rabitat al-Islam, all suspected of aiding the terrorists, mainly financially. Al-Haramein has since showed up in the UN's Counter-Terrorist Committee's list of "entities linked to al-Qaeda". (Moller, 2006). The move continued to the current days, where the government shut down dozens of companies working in money transfer (Hawalah) after Garissa terror attack in April 2015 by claim of financing terror activities although the majority of them were cleared later after investigations.

Conclusion

The study shows that there was early relationship between Arabia and Kenyan coastal areas before advent of Islam which later transformed to significant religious and cultural interactions that took place throughout many centuries and led to the spread of Islam across the region. With arrival of

missionaries and British colony in the 19th century, the area exposed to Christianity and many people in interior lands converted to Christianity and subsequently formed the majority of the country after the independence which resulted in the presence of two main religions in the country. As time passes, many local and international political, social and cultural challenges emerged to put the solidarity of the country in attest. After reviewing the bridging factors and persisting challenges in Kenyan Christian-Muslim relation, it is clear that the country's political, cultural and religious leadership needs to understand the nature of the social fabric of the country to identify the strong dimensions of the social diversity in the country and the weak aspects which embody potential threats that may undermine the country's stability. The right way to overcome these challenges is to promote mutual understanding between cultures and communities, curb unplanned missionaries works that lead to religious conflicts, address historical grievances seriously, harmonise allocations of resources among counties and regions and study, locally without foreign interference, the reasons that generate terror attacks so that the country can develop a lasting solution for this international phenomenon.

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