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**|| SOCIAL INJUSTICES AND CRIMINAL GANGS IN KENYA: THE  
CASE OF MUNGIKI MOVEMENT IN KIAMBU, 1992-2013 ||**

**BY**

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**C50/79731/2012**

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## DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented to any other examination body. No part of this project should be re-produced without permission of the author and/or the University of Nairobi.

Date.. 20.11.2018 .....

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Sign.....  .....

This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the appointed supervisor.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this project to my family for their great support. Special thanks to my dear wife Juliet Akinyi Aguko, my daughters, Angela Aguko, Whitney Aguko, Jeleans Aguko, Aurelia Aguko, my sons Elvis Aguko (junior), Daudi Aguko and Jonathan Aguko. I also thank my late mother Joyce Aguko, for her support and prayers during my study period.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This study sought to establish whether the Mungiki movement in Kiambu is a case of social injustice or just a criminal gang. The main aim of this study was to examine the persistence of the Mungiki group in Kenya despite the government directive to wipe it out. It examined the validity of social injustice as a basis of the group's existence; the extent of criminal activities of the group as a consequence of social injustice and the response of the government. The following, hypotheses guided the research: the existence of Mungiki in Kiambu town is a function of social injustice; the criminal activities by the group are an income generating venture; government response was inadequate in curbing the group. The study used both primary and secondary data. This study applied the theory of "greed versus grievance as propounded by Collier and Hoeffler. They argue that violence is as a result of the actors' willingness for self-satisfaction; manifested in several ways, which includes economic gains enforced through the control of goods and services or by exceeding power in a given state. Secondary data was collected from literatures on the group, while primary data was collected from 215 respondents chosen through cluster and judgmental sampling techniques. The research instruments included questionnaires and interview schedules. The study found out that due to social injustices and lack of gainful employment among the youth, the Mungiki group emerged and continues in existence to give its members identity and means of survival.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>DECLARATION</b> .....	<b>ii</b>
<b>DEDICATION</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>ABSTRACT</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES</b> .....	<b>viii</b>
<b>LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS</b> .....	<b>ix</b>
<b>DEFINITION OF TERMS</b> .....	<b>x</b>
<b>THE MAP OF KIAMBU TOWN</b> .....	<b>xi</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>1</b>
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.1 The Area, Scope and Limitations of the Study .....	1
1.2 Statement of the Research Problem .....	3
1.3 Objective of the Study .....	3
1.3.1 Specific Objectives .....	4
1.4 Research Hypotheses .....	4
1.5 Justification of the Study .....	4
1.6 Literature Review.....	5
1.7 Theoretical Framework .....	9
1.8 Research Methodology .....	10
1.8.1 Secondary Sources of Data .....	10
1.8.2 Primary Sources of Data .....	10
<b>CHAPTER TWO</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>THE MUNGIKI MOVEMENT IN KENYA: A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVES FROM 1992-2013</b> .....	<b>12</b>
2.1 Introduction.....	12
2.2 The Origin of Mungiki.....	12
2.3 The Organizational Structure of Mungiki.....	18
2.4 Membership and Recruitment.....	20
2.4.1 Categories of Mungiki Membership .....	24

2.5 Objectives of Mungiki .....	28
2.6 Conclusion .....	29
<b>CHAPTER THREE.....</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>ACTIVITIES AND OPERATIONS OF MUNGIKI IN KIAMBU TOWN .....</b>	<b>31</b>
3.1 Introduction.....	31
3.2 Religious and Cultural Activities.....	31
3.3 Criminal Activities.....	37
3.4 Impacts of Mungiki Activities in Kiambu .....	43
3.5 Mungiki - A Case of Social Injustice.....	48
3.6 Conclusion.....	56
<b>CHAPTER FOUR .....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE MUNGIKI GROUP IN KIAMBU TOWN .....</b>	<b>57</b>
4.1 Introduction.....	57
4.2 Government Response to Mungiki and the issue of Social Injustice.....	58
4.2.1 Moi’s Regime Response to Mungiki in Kiambu Town .....	59
4.2.2 Kibaki’s Regime Response to Mungiki .....	60
4.3 Challenges the Government Faced when Responding to Mungiki.....	63
4.4 Suggestions on How to Deal with the Issues Raised by the Group .....	64
4.5 Conclusion .....	65
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>67</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY .....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>77</b>
Appendix I: Letter of Introduction.....	77
Appendix II: Research Questionnaire for The Mungiki Members .....	78
Appendix III: Focus Group Interview Guide.....	82
Appendix IV: Key Informants Interview Guide .....	84
Appendix IV: List of Interviewees.....	86
Appendix VI: Budget.....	88



## LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1: Motivation for Joining Mungiki.....	22
Table 2.2: Demographic variables of the Mungiki Members as Derived from Respondents .....	26
Table 3.1: The Rate of Drop out.....	51
Table 3.2 Injustices Alleged by Mungiki in Kiambu Town.....	55
Table 4.1: Suggestions on How to Deal with the Issues Raised by the Group .....	65

## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

<b>AIDS</b>	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
<b>DCIO</b>	Divisional Criminal Investigation Officer
<b>DCLG</b>	Department for Communities and Local Government's
<b>DSIC</b>	District Security Intelligence Committee
<b>ECPA</b>	Electronic Communication Privacy Act
<b>FAO</b>	Food Agricultural Organization
<b>HIV</b>	Human Immune Deficiency Virus
<b>HRW</b>	Human Rights Watch
<b>IRIN</b>	Integrated Regional Information Network
<b>KANU</b>	Kenyan African National Union
<b>KNYA</b>	Kenya National Youth Alliance
<b>MCU</b>	Muslim Contact Unit
<b>NARC</b>	National Alliance for Rainbow Coalition
<b>OCPD</b>	Officer Commanding Police Division,
<b>OPC</b>	O'odua People's Congress
<b>PSIC</b>	Provincial Security Intelligence Committee
<b>SID</b>	Society for International Development
<b>USA</b>	United States of America
<b>USDJ</b>	United States Department of Justice
<b>WMSI</b>	Welfare Monitoring Survey
<b>YJB</b>	Youth Justice Board

## **DEFINITION OF TERMS**

### **Taliban**

These are violent and organized youths operating in Kisumu town more specifically in Kondele area, and are engaged in fights, violence and purportedly protecting the rights of the community from external attacks and interferences by other people. These criminal gangs are also used by politicians to intimidate their opponents especially during the electioneering periods. The name was borrowed from Muslim c fundamentalist political group in Afghanistan founded in 1994. This group became a movement and eventually formed the government that ruled the Afghanistan from September 1996 to December 2001.

### **Al-Shabaab**

This is al-Qaida's affiliate in Somalia and operates primarily out of the country's Southern and Central regions.

### **Al-Qaeda**

This is a global militant Islamist organization founded by Osama bin Laden, Abdullah Azzam, and several others at some point between August 1988 and late 1989 with origins traceable to the Arab.

### **Boko Haram**

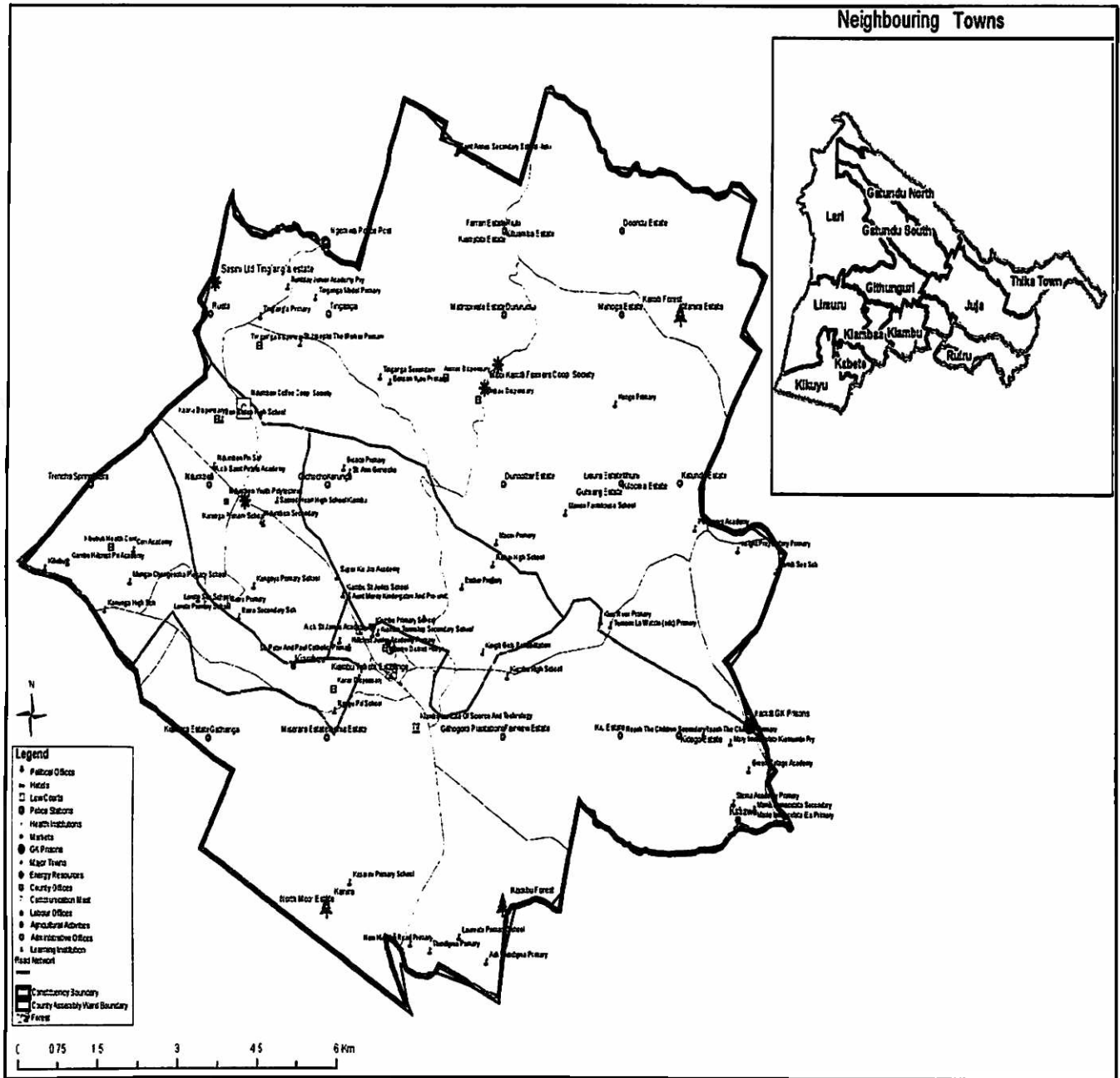
This group which called itself Wilayat GharbIfriqiyyah and was formerly known as Jamaat Ahl as-Sunnahlid Dawah, is an Islamic extremist group based in Northern Nigeria, and was also active in Chad, Niger and Northern Cameroon.

### **Nyumba Kumi**

This is an initiative by the Kenyan Government to increase community policing in which members of neighborhood are expected to know at least 10 of their neighbors and what they do for a living.

# THE MAP OF KIAMBU TOWN

## KIAMBU TOWN



# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Introduction

This study was carried out in Kiambu town to establish the reasons for the persistence of the *Mungiki* group despite concerted efforts by the government to tame and eradicate the group. The term *Mungiki* has been severally used by writers and researchers to describe a secretive militia group that was founded in 1987 in Molo in the outskirts of Nakuru in Kenya. The group was viewed as a militia religious sect. Its members were mainly drawn from the Kikuyu, of Central and Rift Valley regions of Kenya. The community spread across the former Central, some parts of the Rift Valley provinces, and also in other towns such as Embu and Meru counties.

The roots of *Mungiki* in Kiambu are complex and stretch back to the colonial administration. Out of colonialism, *Mau Mau*, poverty, landlessness, oppression and the failure of the post-colonial governments, *Mungiki* germinated to rock Kiambu, the Kikuyu heartland of Central Kenya and parts of Rift Valley. Kiambu town in particular, felt the heat of this social implosion with many young people trapped in poverty, landlessness, unemployment and hopelessness. This study was grounded on the theory of “greed versus grievance” as expounded by Collier and Hoeffler. According to this theory, violence comes about as a result of combatants’ hope for self-achievement encouraged through the quest for economic interests by monitoring the flow of goods and other essentials or by power increase.

### 1.1 The Area, Scope and Limitations of the Study

Kiambu town is in Kiambu County, formally Kiambu District in the former Central Province of Kenya. It is the headquarters of Kiambu County in the central region of Kenya. It has a population of 88,869.<sup>1</sup> The town is surrounded by hilly *Kikuyu* farmlands which are however under urbanization since the city of Nairobi is expanding at a fast rate and more and more inhabitants are settling at the neighboring cities. Kiambu is largely

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<sup>1</sup><http://tresury.go.ke/cbs.go.ke/pdf>

identified as the future basis of the capital city of Nairobi principally experiencing an increased development with small space for growth.<sup>2</sup>

Demographically, the town has certain disparities that impact on security and social cohesion. From the 2009 Population and Housing Census, it is evident that there is a declining fertility rate among women. The household size of 0-3 members is the highest at 54%. In terms of age bracket, 0-14 year, constitutes 35% of the total population of 88,869. But this is on the decline. The youthful population (15-34 years) constitutes 40% of the total population. This is on the increase though. It is this age bracket that has acted as the pool from which the *Mungiki* gets its members. It is the age bracket made up of the high working age population (comprising 62% in the county).<sup>3</sup>

Administratively, the town is controlled by the County government of Kiambu. The County has twelve constituencies namely; Kiambu town, Githunguri, Kabete, Kiambaa, Limuru, Gatundu South, Gatundu North, Lari, Kikuyu, Juja, Thika and Ruiru. Kiambu town is neighboring villages/towns of Ndumberi, Riabai, Kirigiti, Ting'ang'a, Kagongo and Kamiti. It has one elected parliamentary representative and four county representatives for the wards. The four county wards are Kiambu township, Ting'ang'a, Riabai and Ndumberi which are predominantly occupied by the Kikuyu community. This study is limited to Kiambu town and not these neighboring towns with a specific focus on the group's activities, its politicization by the KANU regime and the eventual assault on its activities by the Kibaki regime before its re-emergence in the run-up to the 2013 general elections. The study focused on Mungiki's activities within Kiambu town between 1992 and 2013 because this was the climax of the multi-partyism, generational and transitional politics where the sect members were used to intimidate opponents.<sup>4</sup>

The main limitation in carrying out this study was inadequate financial resources and time. Due to limited resources, the focus was narrowed down to Kiambu town. The other

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<sup>2</sup> Government of Kenya, (2013). 'Counties of Kenya, Kiambu County', Government Press.

<sup>3</sup> SID, 2013

<sup>4</sup>; Peter Kagwanja, "Facing Mount Kenya or Facing Mecca? The Mungiki, Ethnic Violence, and the Politics of the Moi Succession in Kenya, 1987-2002", *African Affairs*, 2003.

challenge was access to classified and/or sensitive information such as police and administrative security reports. Most of these reports could not be released for the fear of jeopardizing government efforts against *Mungiki*. This issue was partially resolved after assurance of confidentiality on the part of the researcher. Finally, most informants and interviewees feared for their safety and lives and could not divulge the most sensitive information about the group. To deal with this problem, contact persons, a *Mungiki* member, were identified and agreed to provide necessary assistance and guidance during the study. Their true names were deliberately omitted to avoid exposures and identity.

### 1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Academic analyses and commentaries on *Mungiki* such as Peter Kagwanja, Grace Wamue and Ruteere have for the most part been concerned with the social, cultural and religious justification of the movement and the elucidation of its role in Kenya's political economy and informal political violence.<sup>5</sup> Other accounts present the *Mungiki* as a product of social and economic dynamics of post-colonial society.<sup>6</sup> What most observers have failed to explain is the persistent nature and continuity of operations by the group despite concerted efforts by government security agencies to deal with the group. This study seeks to establish why the group has persisted despite government efforts to deal with the menace. It will focus on Kiambu town. Kiambu town is relevant given its proximity to the seat of Government, Nairobi, and the heavy manifestation of the group.

### 1.3 Objective of the Study

The main aim of this research was to establish the roots and the reasons for the persistence of *Mungiki* in Kiambu town. The study also aims to find out why the government is unable to decisively deal with the *Mungiki*.

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<sup>5</sup>Kahuyia, A. (2012) *On Fertile Ground: The Rise of Kenyan Gangs*, Capital Lifestyle Magazine, Nairobi - Kenya; Grace Nyatuga Wamue, "Revisiting Our Indigenous Shrines Through *Mungiki*," *African Affairs* 2001; Gecaga, Margaret. (2007). 'Role of Religious Movements in the Process of Democratization.

<sup>6</sup> Anderson, David M. 'Vigilantes, Violence and the Politics of Public Order in Kenya', *African Affairs*, Vol. 101, No. 405; Peter Kagwanja, "Facing Mount Kenya or Facing Mecca? The *Mungiki*, Ethnic Violence, and the Politics of the Moi Succession in Kenya, 1987-2002," *African Affairs*, 2003; Ruteere, M. (2008). 'Dilemmas of Crime, Human Rights and the Politics of *Mungiki* Violence in Kenya' Kenya Human Rights Institute.

### **1.3.1 Specific Objectives**

1. To examine the genesis and operations of *Mungiki* in Kiambu town.
2. To assess the activities of the group in Kiambu town.
3. To identify the factors that enabled the Mungiki to successfully elude government action.
4. To assess government response in the fight against the *Mungiki* in Kiambu town.

### **1.4 Research Hypotheses**

1. *Mungiki* emerged and continues to exist in Kiambu town as a result of social injustice.
2. The criminal activities by the group in Kiambu town are an income generating venture.
3. Mungiki has secret mechanism that keep it alive.
4. Government response has been inadequate in curbing the group and its activities in Kiambu town.

### **1.5 Justification of the Study**

This study would be beneficial to policy makers in the government. *Mungiki* is not only a social problem but also a national security threat that must be addressed through policy instruments. The study may thus inform the policy makers in Kiambu on the strategies to employ in dealing with the *Mungiki*. The strategies, if successful, may also be replicated elsewhere in Kenya given the reality of the group's geographical spread beyond Kiambu town and central Kenya. For academic researchers, the study provides additional literature on this phenomenon and serves as a point of departure for further research. The academicians and future researchers need to be presented with a different perspective in order to understand militia violence from a social background. It fills that academic gap and contributes to the available materials on the subject by bringing in this new dimension of thought and forms a basis upon which further research could be done.



## 1.6 Literature Review

Various studies have been done on the emergence and operations of militia groups in different societies. The Youth Justice Board of England and Wales conducted a systematic review of the scholarly literature on the process of radicalization, on young people, and the available intervening programmes in England and Wales

The findings of the review were that Islamic radicalization and terrorism emanate from various cultures due education, family background, socio-economic status and income.<sup>7</sup> Pratchett et al identify political grievances as a potential risk factor for radicalization. The studies demonstrate that radicalization is a menace that has been with humanity since time immemorial and that it occurs in even advanced economies like the UK.<sup>8</sup> While the lessons from such studies may not be directly applicable to Kiambu town, they are relevant in explaining the causes of radicalization in the society and how government institutions may respond.

According to Anderson, gangs nicknamed *Sri Lanka* and the *Kuzacha Boys* operated in parts of Mombasa with some political protection. *Baghdad Boys* in Kisumu, *Kaya Bomboin Kwale*, *Sungu-Sungu* in Kisii and Migori (2007-2008), *Chinkororo* and *Amachuma* in Kisii (2007-2008), the *Taliban* in Kariobangi (an estate East of Nairobi) (2002-2008), *Group of Forty* in Dandora (an estate East of Nairobi), are examples of groups that were formed either by politicians or some prominent individuals in Kenya.<sup>9</sup> From a comparative perspective, *Mungiki* operations were more sophisticated in terms of organization, membership, geographical spread, financial capacity and to some extent, political support. In his book titled *Vigilantes, 'Violence and the Politics of Public Order in Kenya'*, Anderson examines the operations of vigilante groups in Nairobi as the country moved towards the 2002 general elections, a period that saw many groups emerge to play some political role and to offer their services to the politicians who were willing to enlist and pay

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<sup>7</sup> Youth Justice Board, (2012). *Preventing Religious Radicalization and Violent Extremism, a Systematic Review of the Research Evidence*. London: Youth Justice Board.

<sup>8</sup> Pratchett. L., Thorp, L., Wingfield, M., Lowndes, V. and Jabbar, R. (2010) *Preventing Support for Violent Extremism through Community Interventions: A Review of the Evidence*. Department for Communities and Local Government. [www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/1513881.pdf](http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/1513881.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Anderson, David M. (2002). 'Vigilantes, Violence and the Politics of Public Order in Kenya', *African Affairs*, Vol. 101, No. 405

for the services. Drawing upon the activities of *Mungiki* and the *Taliban*, the two vigilante groups in Nairobi's Eastland, he argues that vigilantes were a product of insecurity and ethnocentric politics in the city. The vigilantes exploited the insecure social environment in the low-income areas to make a living by extortion. They also played a significant role in the struggle for dominance and control of the city's politics.

This study highlighted some of the underlying social constructions that could lead to vigilantism. Insecurity and ethnocentrism on political alignment are pointed out as the main factors underlying vigilantism (for the *Mungiki* and the *Taliban* movements in Nairobi).<sup>10</sup> The current study goes further however, by exploring the social injustices alleged by the *Mungiki* movement and compares them with their activities in Kiambu town.

Writing about injustices that may have contributed to the rise of gangs such as the *Mungiki*, though not specifically discussing *Mungiki*, Tabitha Kanogo mentions the indiscriminate alienation of African land by the colonial administration which rendered several thousand Africans landless. This situation was passed on to posterity as new political elites acquired huge tracts of land without any regard for the poor. This, combined with poverty and unemployment led to rapid radicalization of young citizens in post-colonial Kenya.<sup>11</sup> This text may not capture the origins of *Mungiki* but is relevant in tracing the ideological background that motivates groups like *Mungiki*.

Kagwanja, in his book *'Clash of Generations? Youth Identity, Violence and the Politics of Transition in Kenya'* examines the political violence that marred Kenya after the return to pluralist politics from the early 1990s. He argues that the emergence of multi-party politics formalized the process of ethno-political competition. He makes a general comment that African states facing determined opposition tend to resort to recruiting surrogates and clients to organize violence against citizens who were perceived to support the opposition. *Mungiki* which was by then a religious group teaching about morality became radicalized

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<sup>10</sup> Anderson, David M. (2002). *Op.cit.*,

<sup>11</sup> Kanogo, Tabitha (1987). *Squatters and the Roots of Mau Mau, 1905 – 1963*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers.

as a result of these clashes. Many of those who joined *Mungiki* to fight the government were the youths affected by the Rift Valley ethnic clashes. Although the government tried to curb *Mungiki* group through intimidation, arrests and torture, the same government was accused of soliciting the support of the group to pursue political objectives such as winning the 2002 general elections.<sup>12</sup>

In the article titled '*Power to Uhuru. Youth Identity and Generational Politics in Kenya's 2002 elections*', Kagwanja investigated the manipulation of generational and ethnic identities in patrimonial politics prior to 2002 general elections in Kenya. He concluded that, faced with the challenge of the NARC multi-ethnic political coalition, president Moi shifted the axis of the 2002 electoral contest from ethnicity to politics of generational conflict positioning young Uhuru against elderly Kibaki. This captured the interest of the youths in *Mungiki* who opted to support KANU and Moi's "Project Uhuru". This article contributes to the current study by demonstrating how militia group's existence in any given society can be re-interpreted to fit the prevailing situation. The *Mungiki* members were used for generational and ethnic identities to gain political power.<sup>13</sup> However, the paper does not address the question why *Mungiki* would resort to crime if their purpose was to show solidarity with the ruling government. The current study therefore attempts to answer this question.

Daniel Branch, in his work titled, *Between Hope and Despair*, says that *Mungiki* emerged as Kikuyu cultural revivalist movement in rural areas in the Rift Valley. Grace Wamue avers that *Mungiki* is a morally upright movement opposed to Western culture. The focus of this of Wamue's thesis is on the collective myth of Mau Mau uprising. Indeed, the *Mungiki* advocate a return to traditional customs such as abstaining from alcohol, facing Mount Kenya while praying and sniffing tobacco as their Holy Communion, avoidance of

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<sup>12</sup>Gecaga, Margaret. (2007). 'Role of Religious Movements in the Process of Democratization; Kagwanja, Peter Mwangi (2005). 'Clash of Generations? Youth Identity, Violence and the Politics of Transition in Kenya, 1997 – 2002'

<sup>13</sup>Kagwanja, Peter Mwangi (2005). 'Clash of Generations? Youth Identity, Violence and the Politics of Transition in Kenya, 1997 – 2002'.

all European-type beer and tobacco, Western fashion (miniskirts and trousers among women to prevent the evil of prostitution) and illicit sex.<sup>14</sup>

The rise of *Mungiki* as a religious sect is a subject that has also received some attention by writers. Grace Wamue, in her book named *Revisiting our Indigenous Shrines through Mungiki*, argues that religion can be used as a tool of oppression, exploitation and discrimination on one hand and also liberation and restoration of people's life and dignity on the other. Taking the example of *Mungiki* in Kenya, she observes that the group used Gikuyu traditional beliefs to fight modern religions perceived as oppressive and exploitative advocating for a complete return to indigenous beliefs and practices.<sup>15</sup> While this work tries to explore the basis for the formation of the *Mungiki* movement, it does not explain why they would not pursue these goals in a more peaceful and formal process. It is also not clear from this literature, what the goal of *Mungiki* is. Initially, it was thought that the goal of *Mungiki* was ostensibly to overthrow the post-colonial political and economic elite and replace them with a system modeled along African values. *Mungiki* blamed the government, the rich, the church and the politicians for the misery that they experienced. The current study intends to demonstrate that the *Mungiki* could be relevant if only they pursue the objective of seeing a return to progressive African values.

Ruteere explores the dilemmas human rights activists face while addressing both the rights of the criminals and those of the victims. Drawing upon the criminal activities of the *Mungiki* group, he argues that Kenyan human rights groups called on the police to clear out the *Mungiki* menace but to in accordance within the law. Mutuma Ruteere sees *Mungiki's* criminal activities as having political linkage.<sup>16</sup> The current study however, draws a line between the activities of the group and their social disaffection in order to aid the government in dealing with the movement effectively.

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<sup>14</sup> Daniel Branch, (2011). *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair*. Cornwall: Yale University Press; Grace Nyatuga Wamue, *op.ci*.

<sup>15</sup> Grace Nyatuga Wamue *op.cit*

<sup>16</sup>Ruteree, M. (2008). 'Dilemmas of Crime, Human Rights and the Politics of *Mungiki* Violence in Kenya,' Kenya Human Rights Institute.

Stephen Maribie examines the rural militia groups in Kenya narrowing down to the case of Mungiki in Kigumo District in Murang'a County. He focused on the activities of *Mungiki* in social, economic and political dimension. In his work, the activities are mainly economic and based on the agrarian economy. He also explored the social, economic and political impacts of the activities on the residents. His study reveals that the activities of the gang had both positive and negative impacts on the residents. However, he failed to explain the continued existence of the *Mungiki* menace despite the concerted efforts by the successive regimes in Kenya.

### **1.7 Theoretical Framework**

This study was specifically grounded on the theory of “greed versus grievance” as expounded by Collier and Hoeffler in 2002. The supporters of the greed theory argued that violence is caused by the participants’ ambition for self-gratification. This motivation is expressed in several methods; quest for economic progress by the control of products and services or by maximized authority at a certain country and power within a given state. According to Collier and Hoeffler, violence commenced through corruption which are basically assumed in developing countries with backward economic development and continued poverty.<sup>17</sup>

This shows that the government is unable to give stable opposition elements that will benefit the country economically. They discovered that reasons that maximize the military or economic effectiveness of rebellion in relation to cases of suggestions. On the other hand, proponents of the grievance’s theory argue that people engage in wars due to grievances that the state has failed to take care of, such grievances could be religious differences, political exclusion, ideological differences and economic alienation and/or backwardness. While Mungiki started as a religion-cultural group thus justifying the grievance theory of civil war, it later converted when its members started asking for taxes and extorting. Therefore, it justified the greed theory.

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<sup>17</sup>Collier, P. and Hoeffler A. (2002). ‘Greed and Grievance in Civil War’ the World Bank.

## **1.8 Research Methodology**

This research was both qualitative and quantitative, where both numerical and non-numerical data were collected from the respondents. It also entailed both face to face interviews and administration of questionnaires. In addition, the research used focus group discussions directed at specific groups such as religious leaders, security agents, business people and members of the *Mungiki* in Kiambu town. Respondents were asked about their perceptions, attitudes, beliefs and opinions on issues related to the operations of *Mungiki*, socio-economic disparities and government response. This was done in an interactive setting to isolate consistent views across the groups and use them to draw conclusions of the study. This study relied on two sources of data; secondary and primary. The data was also analyzed descriptively using SPSS and content methods.

### **1.8.1 Secondary Sources of Data**

Secondary sources of data were used during the research period due to time and financial constraints. In this study, document analysis/content analysis was employed to collect secondary information. This involved a rigorous process of examining and reviewing written materials relevant to the *Mungiki* issue. The sources used to gather information for this study included, books, newspapers, strategic papers, action plans, research reports, government reports, censuses, internet sites, journals and television documentaries, among others. The information was collected by use of note books and computer storage systems.

### **1.8.2 Primary Sources of Data**

Primary information about this study was collected through interviews and focus group discussions. Those interviewed were 100 members of *Mungiki* (who remained anonymous for their security reasons), government 52 security agents (the Officer Commanding Police Division, the Divisional Criminal Investigation Officer), 9 religious leaders (pastors and church elders) 4 youth leaders and 50 general members of the public. These respondents were purposively selected in the belief that they could provide the most reliable information on the issue under investigation. In some cases, questionnaires were administered to a selected group that could read and write.

A majority of *Mungiki* members were not able to fill the questionnaires as most were Primary school drop outs. The information from these sources was captured by use of camera, tape recorder and note book.

The targeted population for this research was Mungiki membership in Kiambu Town aged between 16 – 55 years (male and female). Given the criminal nature of this group, it was imperative to source for information from government security officers in Kiambu town. For this reason, the Officer Commanding Police Division, the Divisional Criminal Investigation Officer, and a few selected police officers were targeted for interviews. Finally, selected religious leaders and church elders were also interviewed.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE HISTORY OF MUNGIKI IN KENYA, 1992-2013

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the historical background of the *Mungiki* by looking at the origin, growth, structural organization and the group's activities within Kiambu town. The chapter also analyses the sect's trend, its activities and ritualized practices which indicate that the group had religious characters. It also explains the transformation of the group from a religious sect to a vigilante and ultimately to a criminal gang, with a combined religious and political interests. The chapter, focuses on the history of *Mungiki*, in Kenya.

#### 2.2 The Origin of Mungiki

It is not possible to discuss *Mungiki* without mentioning the *Mau Mau* movement which emerged after the Second World War to fight for the Kikuyu land rights. Mau mau used the word *muingi* as a synonym for the movement, referring to the movement of the many landless people. In 1958, the British colonial government banned the Kikuyu *Kiama Kia Muingi* (Council of the Community) by making it illegal because of its activities which were seen by the colonial government as subversive. Kikuyus were forced to form a series of ethnic opposition movements to fill the void. This background forms the idea and stage for the origin and growth of *Mungiki* movement in Kenya.<sup>18</sup> *Mungiki* is a Kikuyu word that loosely refers to masses.<sup>19</sup>

It also derives from the word "*irindi*" to mean crowds who own a particular place. It implies that all people are entitled to a particular place in their own universe.<sup>20</sup> The concept of *irindi* is in itself contestation or rebellious. It shows that a people want to prove their entitlement of some regions and that they too have a right of claim of space following disillusionment. It is the disillusionment that thrust the *Mungiki* movement into the centre-stage and thereafter its violent activities.

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<sup>18</sup>Grace NyatugaWamue, *op. cit.*, and Peter Kagwanja, *op.cit.*

<sup>19</sup> Grace NyatugaWamue, *op.cit.*, p.453

<sup>20</sup>Peter Kagwanja, *op.cit.*, p. 29



*Mungiki* is believed to have been formed by a group of six young students in 1987 from Molo Secondary School under the leadership of Ndura Waruinge. Ndura Waruinge, a grandson of a former *Mau Mau* fighter the late General Waruinge, was only 15 years and in form one when he started the sect.<sup>21</sup> The movement started as a local defense squad during land clashes between forces loyal to the Moi government whose majority members belonged to the Kalenjin ethnic group and their rivals who were members of Kikuyu ethnic group who were mainly farmers around Molo.<sup>22</sup>

The movement also started as a Kikuyu-based religious and traditionalist African sect, in Laikipia and Nyandarua areas who, owing to the danger the Kalenjin youths posed to the Kikuyu, approved of their plans.<sup>23</sup> Religion and traditionalism were fused into the movement as an instrument of mobilization. Through religion, it is easy to wipe people's emotions and insist on eminent danger.

*Mungiki* was in its initial stages best known as a religious sect that cherished the Kikuyu African traditional practices. However, with the re-introduction of multi-party politics and the hard-economic conditions surrounding the young people, the group transformed itself from a religious organization to a militia and later to a criminal outfit engaging in various activities which ranged from economic, social and political. Multi-party politics led to tensions over land access and resource distribution culminating into competition between favored and marginalized groups.<sup>24</sup> Kikuyus at that time grouped themselves among the marginalized communities. This presented an opportunity to politicians to employ the services of the group in pursuit of their political goals.

While the group had originated out of patrimonialism of Moi's government in the late 1980s, it rendered itself vulnerable to the manipulative tactics of the KANU regime albeit

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<sup>21</sup>Grace NyatugaWamue, *op.cit.*, p. 455-456; Peter Kagwanja, *op.cit.*, p. 29.

<sup>22</sup>Jeffrey Gettleman 2007, "Might Drink Your Blood, but Otherwise Not Bad Guys", The New York Times, 22 June

<sup>23</sup>Erik Henningsen & Peris Jones 'What kind of hell is this!' Understanding the Mungiki movement's power of mobilisation, *Journal of Eastern African Studies*, 2013, p. 13.

<sup>24</sup>Landau, Loren B., and Jean Pierre Misago (2009), Who to Blame and What's to Gain? Reflections on Space, State, and Violence in Kenya and South Africa, in: *Africa Spectrum*, volume 44, 1, p99-110.

for financial gain. In the words of Loren Landau and Jean Misago, the politicization of *Mungiki* was completed when the group rose to become a disruptive and influential force in Kenyan politics.<sup>25</sup> In certain occasions, there were high levels of collusion pitting the *Mungiki* and politicians mostly during the electioneering period. According to Maina Ngatia (name not real), he and other sect members were mobilized by the late Njenga Karume to work against the then prominent politician Stanley Munga Githunguri during the 1992 single party politics. As multi-party politics gained momentum, Ngatia disclosed that *Mungiki* became a hot cake for politicians within Kiambu town and other Kikuyu dominated areas. In Kiambu town for instance, the group members rendered several services to politicians who were ready to hire them. According to Ngatia, for Ksh. 100,000/- politicians could hire 30 to 100 men to threaten, intimidate, scare and even kill their opponents by invading homes of political opponents armed with clubs, machetes, knives and whips to brutally punish and intimidate.<sup>26</sup>

Apart from serving the interests of individuals, the group also worked closely with the government when it was convenient. In late 1990s, *Mungiki* would storm Nairobi CBD and controlled bus terminuses in Kiambu especially Kiambu town, Kirigiti and Ndumberi. Relations between the group and the government often oscillated between collaboration (before elections) and police persecution (after elections). It was normal for politicians from different political parties to enlist the support of the group. KANU under Moi, facing a stiff challenge from the opposition, attempted to rally support of the group during the 2002 elections.

During the 2005 referendum campaigns, the standard media reported that ODM leader Raila Odinga had forged some close relationship with the *Mungiki* and its leader Maina Njenga who had succeeded Ndura Waruinge.<sup>27</sup> After the disputed 2007 elections, the Waki Commission produced a report that showed a close relationship between Kikuyu politicians and *Mungiki* on one hand and top Government officers and *Mungiki* on the

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid

<sup>26</sup> Oral Interview, Maina Ngatia, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2015, Kiambu town.

<sup>27</sup>*The Standard*, October 11<sup>th</sup> 2013

other.<sup>28</sup> According to Wambui Kamau (not her real name), a *Mungiki* member and an oral respondent, top Kikuyu leaders ferried the group members to Naivasha to unleash terror on flower workers who were perceived to have come from opposition areas.<sup>29</sup>

Scholars like Wamue link the formation of *Mungiki* to Kenyan politics in the late 1980s and early 1990s. She argues that most members of *Mungiki* are victims of the land clashes in the areas that were affected by ethnic conflicts especially in the Rift Valley during the Kenyan multiparty general elections in 1992.<sup>30</sup> Wamue observes that the violent conflict in the Rift Valley resulted in tough political chaos pitting Moi's government and non-Kalenjin ethnic members residing in the area.

According to Rev. Newton Munene (not his real name) of AIC church Kirigiti, there were deaths, injuries and forced evictions of the Kikuyu from Burnt Forest, Molo, parts of Nakuru, Enosoopukia, Elburgon, Njoro, and Rongai including parts of Eldoret.<sup>31</sup> These IDPs were provided with make shift and tents within the church compound in Kiambu town. The remaining internally displaced inhabitants were greatly affected by the chaos and therefore opted to form a defensive movement to secure their property. This saw the formation of *Mungiki* whose main objective was to protect the Kikuyu interests. These clashes aggravated the situation and provided the path upon which *Mungiki* blossomed, and even constituted the aim for its change into a militia group. In retaliation to the chaos, *Mungiki* started to organize and marshal its adherents to violence.<sup>32</sup>

Susan Kilonzo relates the formation of *Mungiki* to increasing population growth that led to urbanization and freezing economy among the youth.<sup>33</sup> In the mid-1990s, Kenya went through a socio-economic crisis that led to the rise of unemployment and crime. This became the period of growth and expansion of the *Mungiki*. Many members were recruited

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<sup>28</sup>The Kenyan Commission of Inquiry into Post-Election Violence, CIPEV, 2008

<sup>29</sup> Oral Interview, Wambui Kamau, 24<sup>th</sup> January 2015, Riabai.

<sup>30</sup> Grace Nyatuga Wamue, *op. cit.*, p. 454.

<sup>31</sup> Oral Interview, Rev. Newton Munene, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2015, AIC Church Kirigiti.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*

<sup>33</sup> Susan M. Kilonzo, "Negotiating the Livelihoods of Children and Youth in Africa's Urban Spaces; The Trajectories of Survival of the *Mungiki* Youth in Nairobi," 2012

to join the group which by then had spread beyond Rift Valley to Nairobi and Central Kenya with Kiambu forming the bedrock of *Mungiki* outside Rift Valley.

The issue of economic hardship is well articulated by Kilonzo who says that numerous socio-economic problems that faced the youths in developing nations made them look for ways to address the challenges. These challenges include joblessness and the constant unchanging needs that have to be met. This view has also been supported by Grace Wamue who explained that young population were faced with a lot of economic hardships and therefore were forced to look for ways to survive in their environment and they therefore formed groups to identify with and enhance their survival techniques in the midst of economic hardships.<sup>34</sup> As *Mungiki* spread from Molo to other parts including Central Kenya and for this case Kiambu, it attracted landless, jobless and poverty-stricken young men looking for means of survival and recognition. It is from this pool that the group recruited its members who were readily available.

The origin of *Mungiki* is also associated with a Kikuyu religious sect called *Hema ya Ngai wi Muoyo* (translated as 'Tent of the Living God') founded by Ngonya wa Gakonya in Nairobi in 1987 to salvage Kikuyu culture through reviving, revamping and invigorating the laws and values of their forefathers.<sup>35</sup> Ngonya wa Gakonya believed that the Kikuyu had lost most of their culture and traditional laws to the foreign ones perpetuated by Western Europeans. The sect required its members to worship the traditional God (*Ngai*) of Gikuyu and Mumbi and to perform Kikuyu traditional religious rituals.

Ngonya was once a member of the *Akorino* sect where he later split after differing with *Akorino* leadership. He had undergone formal education and related well with old people on matters concerning Kikuyu traditional religion. His parents were Christians, a faith that he did not believe in. The elder of the *Akorino* sect had warned Ngonya against publicizing his views but Ngonya defied the order and this led to his split from the *Akorino* sect. He engaged in several activities including campaigns and crusades against Christianity.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup>Grace Nyatuga Wamue, "Revisiting Our Indigenous Shrines Through *Mungiki*," *African Affairs*, 2001

<sup>35</sup>Kenya wary as traditional religions are revived *The Washington Times*, August 24<sup>th</sup>, 2000.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid

Wamue reports that the sect was banned in 1990 after Ngonyo held a mass rally in Kamukunji in Nairobi after which he was arrested and jailed for two years. After his release, Ngonyo formed the Democratic Movement (DEMO), a political party that was also denied registration. According to its leaders, the party was denied registration because the ruling government viewed it as a competitor party. The state however claimed that the party was denied registration due to its religious background. Ngonyo then collaborated with Moi's KANU party, a move that annoyed some of his followers who accused him of betrayal and lack of focus.<sup>37</sup>

That way, Mungiki was born as a splinter group. Besides the Tent of the living God, *Mungiki's* ideological and religious leanings may have been inspired by other Africanist sects such as *Dini ya Msambwa*, *Legio Maria* and *Akorino*. These sects urged followers to embrace traditional values and practices, abstain from alcohol, and rebel against the teachings of the mainstream Christian churches.<sup>38</sup> The ideology of the group is characterized by revolutionary rhetoric, Kikuyu traditions, and a disdain for Kenyan modernization, which is seen as immoral corruption. Mary Ndande has linked the *Mungiki* Movement to *Mwakenya*. She argues that the sect was at one time associated with *Mwakenya*, an underground movement that was formed in 1997 to challenge the former KANU regime.<sup>39</sup> Those who share and believe in this thinking include groups such as the African Church Information Service.<sup>40</sup> Although there are contradictions on its formation, there is a common agreement that the activities of the Mungiki sect, came into the open 1990s, with reports that groups of suspicious youths were on becoming a common feature in Nairobi and its environs.

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<sup>37</sup>Grace Nyatuga Wamue, *op.cit.*, p. 4.5.

<sup>38</sup>Peter Kagwanja, *op.cit.*, 2003, p,33

<sup>39</sup>Mary Ndande, "Voices from the Past: Examining Some Unintended Consequences of Search for Cultural

Antecedents: The Mungiki Gang in Kenya," *Professional Development: The International Journal of*

*Antecedents: The Mungiki Gang in Kenya: Professional Development: The International Journal of*

<sup>40</sup>African Church Information Service, *Mungiki: A Mysterious Sect, a Thorn in the Flesh*, African

Information Service, February, 3, 2001, [www.apologeticsindex.org/385-mungiki](http://www.apologeticsindex.org/385-mungiki), accessed on 20/02/2017

### 2.3 The Organizational Structure of *Mungiki*

Knowing the organizational structure of *Mungiki* is challenging because knowledge and details about the group is limited due to its secretive nature.<sup>41</sup> However, *Mungiki* is an organization with many factions, each engaged in a series of political, economic and criminal activities within their specific locations and with its own leadership independent from the other factions but ultimately converging at the apex of the organization.<sup>42</sup> The sect has many coordinating units from the national level, former provincial levels, district and village levels.<sup>43</sup> The National Coordinating Committee (NCC) is the highest organ, although not highly centralized and Ndura Waruinge was the first national coordinator. Below were units at provincial, district and village levels, each unit comprising of 50 inhabitants who operate in platoon like militia groups of 10 people each and each platoon have an internal hierarchy and command among the members.<sup>44</sup>

The next important organ is called the *Mungiki* Defense Council (MDC). MDC is the armed faction of the group whose roles was to carry out retaliations and meting punishments to any defecting member as well as revenge through killings. It was heavily armed and relied on the use of AK 47 as a weapon of choice in addition to swords, knives and machetes.<sup>45</sup> The third organ is the *Mungiki* Political wing called the Kenya National Youth Alliance (KNYA) charged with the responsibility of taking over other political parties as well as increasing *Mungiki's* influence in politics by sponsoring candidates to parliament. While this structure is fairly representative of the organization's hierarchy, different regions may have different structures. In addition, leadership wrangles among cell members may interfere with the organizational leadership arrangement.<sup>46</sup>

At its formation, the first national coordinator was Ndura Waruinge who defected in early 2000s and converted to Islam. His name was changed to Ibrahim Ndura Waruinge. He later

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<sup>41</sup> Erik Henningsen & Peris Jones, *op.cit.*

<sup>42</sup> Oral Interview, Macharia Wangui, 24<sup>th</sup> January 2015, Riabai.

<sup>43</sup> Peter Kagwanja, *op.cit.*, p.34.

<sup>44</sup> Landinfo Country of Origin Information Centre 2010, "Kenya: Mungiki – Abusers or abused?" p7; Afrik.com, 19 October, 2010; Ibid

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Oral Interview, Macharia Wangui, 24<sup>th</sup> January 2015, Riabai.

converted to Christianity and he was baptized Ezekiel Ndura Waruinge.<sup>47</sup> His role was taken over by his cousin Maina Njenga, a co-founder and the spiritual leader of the sect who operated from behind the scenes.<sup>48</sup> Maina, also known as John Kamunya, has been the undisputed leader of the group from the year 2004.<sup>49</sup> Maina was arrested in 2007 over possession of drugs and weapons. He was released in April 2009 and immediately rearrested following the Mathira massacre that witnessed the death of 29 villagers.

While in prison, he converted into a Christian and became a member of Jesus Is Alive Ministries led by Bishop Margret Wanjiru. He was born in 1969 in the settlement community of Kericho where his father had migrated to. He was the second born in the family of four boys and six girls. The family migrated to Ol Ng'arua in Laikipia West that would become a family home and a place where his mother and two of his siblings were buried. He spent his formative years learning and playing like any other children born in the countryside. It is important to note that his father was a traditionalist and had inducted the young Maina into the old ways of Gikuyu traditional worship. He went to primary school in Nyandarua before he proceeded to the Ortum Secondary School in West Pokot.<sup>50</sup>

Maina Njenga subsequently transferred to Jomo Kenyatta High School in Nakuru in 1986. While in school he found himself in the role of an organizer of many activities as he had the ability to persuade his fellow students to participate in many school activities. An excellent student, Maina never fell below the rank of the top 10 students in his class. Here, he became popular among students after a white dove allegedly perched on his head at school and later bestowed him with prophetic powers. It was from this background that Maina Njenga rose to prominence and fame among his peers in the group.<sup>51</sup> Apart from Maina Njenga, other individuals who held important positions in the group were as follows; Njoroge Kamunya (Maina's brother) acted as the national organizing secretary, Kamau

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<sup>47</sup>Landinfo Country of Origin Information, *op.cit.*, p.7.

<sup>48</sup>Mary Ndande, "Voices from the Past: Examining Some Unintended Consequences of Search for Cultural Antecedents: The Mungiki Gang in Kenya," 2008. Professional Development: The International Journal of Continuing Social Work Education, p51

<sup>49</sup> BBC 21<sup>st</sup> June, 2007

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid*

<sup>51</sup>Fouere, Marie-Aude, and Susan Mwangi, eds. *Kenya's Past as Prologue: Voters, Violence and the 2013 General Election*. Twaweza Communications, 2015.

Mwatha and Robert Gachoka were the coordinators of Nairobi and Kiambu respectively while Kamondo Karuri and Kimani Ruo were the coordinators of Nakuru and other parts of Rift Valley respectively.<sup>52</sup> The above offices and leaders bore a greater responsibility of running the movement and recruiting new members.

## 2.4 Membership and Recruitment

*Mungiki* recruited youths of between the ages of 18-40, although membership was not limited to this age bracket as there is an exception of 40-60 age groups.<sup>53</sup> Members are mostly victims of the 1992 and 1997 land clashes who were left poor, landless and jobless, with little or no education.<sup>54</sup> However, according to Mihunyo Waruguru (not his real name), some of its leaders have university degrees hence they are knowledgeable and intellectual.<sup>55</sup> Most members who work as foot-soldiers are mostly class eight and form four drop outs and few from universities across the country.<sup>56</sup> For example, the former national coordinator Ndura Waruinge had a university degree.<sup>57</sup> The exact number of members however is uncertain because the sect operates like an underground movement.<sup>58</sup> The sect recruits members 'who are of use to the sect's continued survival and operations.'<sup>59</sup> According to the respondent Dr Wandaga [not is real name] a physician based in kiambu was either a sympathizer or a collaborator, since he offered free medical services to the sect members, and to some extent to their family members.

*Mungiki* fished people from all over the country. In relation to recruitment, Wamue interprets the term *Mungiki* to mean 'fishing people from all corners of Kenya, an objective that the sect strived to achieve over the years. In an interview with the former leader of the

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<sup>52</sup> Peter Kagwanja, *op.cit.*, p. 39.

<sup>53</sup> Grace Nyatuga Wamue, *op.cit.*, p.454

<sup>54</sup> Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2009 "Kenya: Activities of the Mungiki sect and response by government authorities," p.2.

<sup>55</sup> Oral Interview, Mihunyo Waruguru, 24<sup>th</sup> January 2015, Kirigiti market.

<sup>56</sup> Grace Nyatuga Wamue, *op.cit.*, p.454.

<sup>57</sup> Mary Ndande, "Voices from the Past: Examining Some Unintended Consequences of Search for Cultural Antecedents: The Mungiki Gang in Kenya," 2008. *Professional Development: The International Journal of Continuing Social Work Education*. p 51-52

<sup>58</sup> HIS, 2010

<sup>59</sup> Oral Interview, Sammy Muthoga Maingi, "The effect of the Mungiki sect on access to education in Nyeri County, Kenya." 2014 p2



sect Ndura Waruinge, Wamue argues that the leader claimed that the sect had 1.5 million followers, 400,000 of whom were women. However, she argues that the number is questionable because most Kenyans were against the sect.<sup>60</sup> Other sources have not been able to come up with an exact or approximate number of the sects' followers due to its secretive nature.

The sect's leaders also misinform about the size of the sect to create fear especially to the authorities who try to counter them.<sup>61</sup> This source also stated that some youths also lie that they are members of the sect in order to terrorize and gain influence in their areas. This also makes it hard to approximate the size of the sect. Oral respondents argued that *Mungiki* no longer exists. They claimed that most members abandoned the group when their expectations were not met, and the remnants had been swept off by the government.<sup>62</sup>

Geographically, the movement has spread from the Rift Valley where it was started, to the former Central Province and Nairobi. The movement is not purely Kikuyu as it has members from other ethnic groups who share similar culture with the kikuyu.<sup>63</sup> *Mungiki* continued to recruit members in the post-election violence era in 2008 where they deployed recruiters in the internally displaced persons (IDPs) camps that had masses of Kikuyu community.<sup>64</sup> However, the sect did not regain the strength it had in the 1990s since large numbers had defected fearing the wrath of the government.

Young men joined *Mungiki* predominantly believing the group had a solution to access economic and political successes. Oral interviews with Karanja Mwangi (not his real name) reveal that most young Kikuyu men and women in Kiambu joined the group as a way of finding solutions to their social and economic problems.<sup>65</sup> In *Mungiki* most young people found new life, new family, appreciation and respect as compared to what they witnessed in the wider society. In an interview with Chege Kariuki, he revealed that he was introduced

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<sup>60</sup> Grace Nyatuga Wamue, *op.cit.*, p.454.

<sup>61</sup> Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2009, *op.cit.*, p.2.

<sup>62</sup> Oral Interview, Macharia Wangui, 24<sup>th</sup> January 2015, Riabai.

<sup>63</sup> Mary Ndande, *op.cit.*, p.5.

<sup>64</sup> Landinfo Country of Origin Information, *op.cit.*, p.8.

<sup>65</sup> Oral Interview, Karanja Mwangi, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2015, Kiambu town.

to the group by a friend after completing primary school.<sup>66</sup> After joining, new recruits undergo induction through an elaborate initiation process punctuated by oaths and other rituals as slaughtering and eating of raw meat, drinking blood and baptism.

Both males and females found solace in the group. The sect members could be characterized as unemployed, poor and landless.<sup>67</sup> Recruitment is voluntary, though some forced cases have been reported.<sup>68</sup> The recruits are made to swear that they will be loyal to the group and the members and will not leave the group.<sup>69</sup> However, most members left the group after the government outlawed it, some of whom faced death penalties as per the oath. The table below shows some of the reasons that made youths join the movement and reasons behind the continued existence of the group.

**Table 2.1: Motivation for Joining *Mungiki***

<b>Motivating factor</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Economic benefit	53	53%
Security	25	25%
Peer pressure	15	15%
Threats	07	07%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Author, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017

From the table, a majority of the youth join the group because of economic benefits that come with being a member. Economic gain comes from various activities such as controlling *matatu* routes, charges for certain services, threatening business owners and outright robbery. The 53% of the respondents confirmed that their economic lives had changed significantly after joining the group. Those who mentioned security (25%) argued that they felt safer as members of the group because they could know where and when the group would attack. They also said that being members of the group, they would not be

<sup>66</sup>Chege Kariuki, 24<sup>th</sup> January 2015, Kirigiti Market.

<sup>67</sup>Erik Henningsen & Peris Jones, *op.cit.*, p. 24.

<sup>68</sup>Refugee review tribunal; Australian government p5

<sup>69</sup>Landinfo Country of Origin Information Centre, *op.cit.*, p.5.

attacked by their colleagues. A few (15%) joined because of pressure from their friends and age mates, while 7% are those who joined because they were threatened with dire consequences.

From the interviews with the police officer constable Kamau [not is real name], it emerged that the *Mungiki* exists and continues to exist because of various reasons that must be dealt with from a policy framework. They said that some businessmen with the blessing of the police, gives mungiki members opportunities to earn some money, by facilitating activities such as running the bus stop, operating motor bikes, carrying out crimes on behalf of members of the public [being hired to carry out crimes] and providing security to some members of the public for a fee. He indicated that there are very few opportunities for the boy child who unfortunately seems to have been neglected by the government at the expense of the girl child. For example, they said that the boys in the area hardly proceed to secondary school after primary education because most of the schools in the region are girls' schools. At the same time, most of the child empowerment programs focus on the girl-child to the disadvantage of the boy child. For these reasons, *Mungiki* becomes the next available option for them.

The religious leaders in their responses seemed to blame the families for neglecting their social and moral responsibilities at the expense of the pressures and leisure of the contemporary society. During the oral interview with Rev. Ndi, most of the parents are less concerned about their children's welfare especially the boy child. A common public view that emerged during the interview was that in central Kenya in general and Kiambu in particular, the boy child once out of childhood is ready to join the society and feed for himself. Such boys became vulnerable and are easy targets for the *Mungiki* recruiters.

The youth leaders gave a different view, suggesting that the main reason why the movement has persisted is because some of its members are politicians who in most cases fund the movement. They also use it to fight their political battles and therefore have ensured that the members could earn some financial income for their services. The group

is also allied to a number of political movements which enlist their support during elections. The politicians have also been said to use the group to threaten their opponents and in most cases end up winning because of such threats.

#### 2.4.1 Categories of *Mungiki* Membership

*Mungiki* membership can be classified into four groups. This includes the leaders of the movement who also known as the *Mungiki Kiama*, and the militants who were mainly the young and poor members (*Njama*). Others are the supporters of the movement who were mainly from the Kikuyu business community including the political class and finally donors from the middle and business class. The last two groups do not play any active role in choosing the sect leaders and instead support the group's activities from behind the scenes.

*Mungiki Kiama* is basically the leadership branch. These are the ones responsible for recruitment and issuing orders and instructions to the rest of the members. During an interview, Pastor Andrew Ndung'u (not his real name) cited Maina Njenga as the most recent overall coordinator of the sect but details on whether he is still the leader are not known.<sup>70</sup> Maina took over from Ndura Waruinge his co-founder. *Kiama* also consisted of other leaders at the provincial and district levels.

According to Rasmussen, *Njama* was the least unit composition of *Mungiki*. This is an ethnical term (based on the Kikuyu Language) used to mean a warrior. Looking back, *Njama* was a popular term in the Kikuyu dominated region, given that the country's freedom fighters from the Kikuyu were referred to as *Njama ya Itwika* to symbolize a group of young warriors and their demand for a paradigm shift (*Itwika*). This revolutionary group formed the etymology from which the *Mungiki*'s youths were named, in the sense that they were being transformed from typical youths to young warriors. According to a description by Rasmussen, prior to joining the sect, the sect leaders demanded that any youth with a criminal record was supposed to undergo a cleansing of their past habits. It was at this point

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<sup>70</sup> Oral Pastor Andrew Ndung'u, 18<sup>th</sup> April 2015, Anglican Church, Kiambu Town.

that they would be baptized so as to join the sect as new members with a proper recognition.<sup>71</sup>

This procedure was primarily inspired by the kikuyu norms, where one had to be cleansed both spiritually and mentally before joining the religious-oriented sect. The *Njama* was built on the axiom that the youths were traditionally closer to *Ngai* – the traditional supreme being of the Kikuyu community. This was so because the youths were believed to be unpolluted and cleaned since they had just undergone their initiation rituals. This procedure has, however, ceased to be applied in recruiting members into the movement, as the leaders have adopted the system whereby members are recruited from streets of the marginalised areas of the Kikuyu community in secret.<sup>72</sup>

For support, *Mungiki* made connections and linked with the political class for financial gains and for protection. Political elites hire the services of the *Mungiki* to exercise their interests and power in office. They render their services and support at a cost.<sup>73</sup> Cabinet ministers and members of parliament are also part of the gang though they do not directly involve themselves; theirs is to offer the required support to the group in form of funds. The sect also receives the services of journalists who offer them publicity.<sup>74</sup> *Mungiki* also claims that they have thousands of police officers who support them and who have taken the oath, a factor that makes some people withhold information about the *Mungiki* and fail to report violations committed by the group.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Jacob Rasmussen, "Mungiki as youth movement 2010, Revolution, gender and generational politics in Nairobi, Kenya," *SAGE publications*, p 309

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, p311

<sup>73</sup> Maribie W. Stephen, "Rural Militia Groups in Kenya: The case of Mungiki in Kigumo District, 1987-2008" 2010, p43.

<sup>74</sup> Mary Ndande, *op.ct.*, p.52.

<sup>75</sup> Landinfo Country of Origin Information Centre, *op.cit.*, p. 14-15.

The last category is that of donors. Similar to the supporters of the movement, donors are passive members of *Mungiki* and do not present themselves physically in meetings and in choosing leaders. They fund the group's activities and donate money to facilitate the running of the group.<sup>76</sup>

In order to achieve the objectives of this research, the analysis of demographic information of the *Mungiki* respondents was done. The analysis included gender, age and level of education. The data was presented as shown in table 2.1

**Table 2.2: Demographic variables of the *Mungiki* Members as Derived from Respondents**

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender Male</b>	76	76%
<b>Female</b>	24	24%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Age 16 yrs &amp; below</b>	12	12%
17-25 yrs	49	49%
26-35 yrs	17	17%
36-44 yrs	12	12%
45 yrs & above	10	10%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Education Primary</b>	27	17%
<b>Secondary</b>	41	41%
<b>College</b>	23	23%
<b>University</b>	09	09%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Author, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017

<sup>76</sup> Peter Kagwanja, *op.cit.*, p.34.

From this table, it is evident that a majority of members are males (76%) with females accounting for only 24%. This could be explained from the fact that most females would hesitate to join the group due to its aggressive nature. In one interview with a female group member, I was given a narration of how ladies are scared of the group due to what one has to undergo to become a member. The oath taking process and female genital cutting are some of the activities that scare females from the group. On the other hand, males find it easy to join as they are ready to engage in most of the activities that include extortion and violence.<sup>77</sup>

The table also shows that a majority of *Mungiki* members are young people, whose ages range from below 16 years to 35 years, accounting for 78%. This may be a consequence of lack of gainful employment for the youth in a densely populated town of Kiambu. In fact, most of those interviewed cited economic benefit as the main motivation in joining the group. A few members are aged above 35 years (22%). This age group is made up of those individuals with families, stable incomes and in most cases stable employment. For these reasons they may not want to associate with this group that engages in criminal activities.

In terms of education, a majority of members are primary and secondary school drop outs (68%). This is the category that finds it difficult to find gainful employment in the formal sector of the economy given their poor qualification and lack of experience. Joining the *Mungiki* group for these individuals is a natural way of finding some means of livelihood and survival as they hope for a better future. In an interview with a member of this group who dropped out of form three, I was told that in *Mungiki* they find hope and economic freedom. Those members with college education, with qualifications that range from Diploma to Post-Graduate, form only 32%. The implication is that most youth with college education may have acquired gainful employment and may not have had a reason of joining the group.

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<sup>77</sup> Oral Interview, Police Officer II (name concealed), 4<sup>th</sup> April 2015, Kiambu Police Divisional Headquarters.  
Kuria menjo 4 april 2015

## 2.5 Objectives of Mungiki

The main objective of the movement was to unite and mobilize Kenyan masses of Kikuyu origin to fight against the yoke of mental slavery.<sup>78</sup> They believed that adopting the western culture meant that Kenya was still under colonial rule. *Mungiki* referred to formal education as neo-colonialism which was to be fought from all sides. They argued that Kenyans would have been allowed to continue practicing their culture and still acquire technology just like the western countries that did not have to abandon their cultures.<sup>79</sup>

They therefore wanted to return Africans to their traditional values. Muthoga stated that the sect's members felt that their Africanness had been taken away from them by adopting the white man's culture. Their culture had been dominated and hence they wanted to revive it.<sup>80</sup> Muthoga states that *Mungiki* felt that people must be allowed to control their destiny and that is how they will acquire their freedom. The movement therefore strived to return Africans to the pre-colonial traditions and values especially the Kikuyu community.<sup>81</sup>

The movement's national coordinator Ndura Waruinge claimed that they had *Mau mau* blood in them and their objectives were similar. Kagwanja explain that the *Mungiki* claim that due to the incomplete mission of the *Mau mau*, Kenya has been unable to defend itself in the face of World Bank, International Monetary Fund and other forces of international capital and that has led to mass unemployment and poverty. *Mungiki* therefore sought to complete this mission and hence liberate Kenyans from those forces. He said that *Mau mau* fought for land, freedom and religion and so do they.<sup>82</sup>

*Mungiki* also wanted to reclaim political power and wealth which members believed had been taken away from the Kikuyus.<sup>83</sup> They accused the government of initiating and

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<sup>78</sup> Grace Nyatuga Wamue, *op.cit.*, p.459.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, p463

<sup>80</sup> Sammy Muthoga Maingi, "The effect of the Mungiki sect on access to education in nyeri county, Kenya." 2014 p11, Kenyatta University.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>82</sup> Peter Kagwanja, *op.cit.*, p.34.

the Moi Succession in Kenya, 1987-2002," *African Affairs*, p30

<sup>83</sup> Mary Ndande, *op.cit.*, p.51.



fueling the ethnic clashes that saw many Kikuyu killed and lose tracts of land.<sup>84</sup> The members believed that *Mungiki* was one of the groups that acted against ethnic cleansing in the 1990s when Moi's community wanted ethnic purification of the Rift Valley, which meant expulsion of other communities from the Kalenjin dominated areas.<sup>85</sup>

*Mungiki* was also formed to protect and defend the rights of the poor in the Kikuyu society. It played a very big role in rehabilitating and resettling those who were displaced during the land clashes in 1992 and 1998. They did this through helping them acquire land to do agriculture.<sup>86</sup> Kagwanja credits them for showing the values of generosity and charity. For example, *Mungiki* owned a farm in Kitengela where Erik Henningsen and Peris Jones held an interview with members of the sect and some of its leaders.<sup>87</sup>

The sect provided security and fought against repression of the poor in the Nairobi slums. They also engage in services like garbage collection though at a cost.<sup>88</sup> *Mungiki* condemned vices like corruption, bribery, immorality, drug abuse and crime.<sup>89</sup> They believed that drugs taking like drinking alcohol and smoking are western lifestyles which they intended to shun. They also didn't believe in adoption of personal names. Instead, one should carry on with ancestral names.<sup>90</sup> The initial works of *Mungiki* attracted approval by the society and local leaders. Ken Ouko argues that the group started as a quasi-cultural movement and this could be the reason leaders from Central Province embraced it.<sup>91</sup>

## 2.6 Conclusion

*Mungiki* is an outlawed, quasi-political/religious cult operating in Kikuyu dominated areas in Kenya. It is seen as both a destructive cult and a criminal gang which prays facing Mount

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<sup>84</sup>Landinfo Country of Origin Information Centre 2010, *op.cit.*, p.6.

<sup>85</sup> Peter Kagwanja, *op.cit.*, p.26-28.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup>Erik Henningsen & Peris Jones (2013), *op.cit.*, p.12.

<sup>88</sup>Jeffrey Gettleman 2007, "Might Drink Your Blood, but Otherwise Not Bad Guys", *The New York Times*, 22 June

<sup>89</sup> Grace NyatugaWamue, *op.cit.*, p.466.

<sup>90</sup>Erik Henningsen & Peris Jones (2013), *op.cit.*, p.15.

<sup>91</sup> Mary Ndande, *op.cit.*, p.51.

Kenya, which they believe to be the home of their God, known as Ngai. Their name, (*Mungiki*) means a united people. However, through their activities, Kenya's *Mungiki* followers are no ordinary believers. Their holy communion for instance, is tobacco-sniffing, their hairstyle that of the Mau Mau dreadlocks and the origin of the sect is still shrouded in mystery. Since the late 1990s, the sect has left behind a trail of blood in its rejection of the trappings of Western culture. This chapter's aim was to trace the origin, history, organizational structure and objectives of Mungiki movement.

*Mungiki's* hardline stand against Western ideologies put them on a collision course with the police. They would engage police in fierce running battles, and on a number of occasions, violently raided police stations to free arrested members (as will be discussed in chapter 3). They systematically and forcefully began taking over management of commuter service vehicles, popularly known as *matatu*. They started stripping naked in public, ladies wearing miniskirts and long trousers, and violently promoted female circumcision. In March 2002, they clashed with other vigilante groups in Nairobi, and later unleashed terror in parts of the country including Nakuru, Murang'a, Nyeri and Kiambu. This prompted the government to outlaw their grouping. They however, continued to exist, and even more openly propagated their warlike activities.

## CHAPTER THREE

### ACTIVITIES AND OPERATIONS OF MUNGIKI IN KIAMBU TOWN

#### 3.1 Introduction

Mungiki leaders and members engaged in several activities, some legitimate and others not. The initial objectives of the sect members in Kiambu which included self-defense and upholding traditional religious beliefs and customs changed as the group continued to grow and to gain influence among the youths. They diverted their activities from religious and cultural to political to economic and to criminal. Most of these activities however, were geared towards earning income for the group which attracted diverse views from people. Some saw it as a religious movement, others as a political organization and others as a criminal bunch, street gang, and vigilante group. These activities helped the *Mungiki* to camouflage and evade the states apparatus.<sup>92</sup>

The sect operated mostly in the extensive slums of Nairobi like Mathare, Dandora, Kibera and other informal sectors of Ndumberi and Tinganga within Kiambu, where impoverishment and crime were the order of the day. These areas were less covered by the police and other government agencies. The sect had spread tentacles in areas such as Kayole, Ruai, Waithaka, Dagoretti, Kinoo and Westland. These are towns that are adjacent to Kiambu town and the activities spilled over to Kiambu and its operations took roots in the town. This chapter will look into the activities and operations engaged in by Mungiki in Kiambu town.

#### 3.2 Religious and Cultural Activities

Religion was used as a tool to mobilize people and entice them to join the Mungiki movement. James Njoroge (not his real name), A.I.C church member who is also an ex-member of the sect, confessed that the reason he joined the movement was because he was not pleased with the hypocrisy in the mainstream of Kiambu Christian churches and had stayed for several years without going to any church. Mungiki therefore had come to

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<sup>92</sup>Maribie W. Stephen, *op.cit.*, p.35.

terminate his search for a genuine and sincere church.<sup>93</sup> Since their religion advocated for a complete return to their traditional God, *Mwenenyaga*, their religious activities depicted the traditional Kikuyu culture and religious practices in Kiambu town.

Mungiki members engaged in prayers interspersed with traditional chants of *thaa*, *thathaiya Ngai*, *thaa* (mercy, pray to God for mercy) beseeching him to hear their prayer as they face Mt. Kenya. Communication with *Ngai* is said to be vital to Mungiki since it was started by God, the supreme and ultimate decision maker.<sup>94</sup> Mungiki advocated to the return of Kikuyu traditional practices in the period of mental anguish of mainstream churches. From an interview cited by Godwin and Shadrack, a typical Mungiki prayer goes like this;

*Mwenenyaga twakuhoya*

God we pray you

*Utuhe wendani – thaa*

Give us love – we beseech  
thee

*Utuhe mugunda – thaa*

Give us land – we beseech thee

*Utuhe irio – thaa*

Give us food – we beseech thee

*Thaa thaa thaaithaiya Ngai -- thaa.*

We beseech thee, we beseech thee oh  
God.<sup>95</sup>

*Mungiki* inducted newly recruited sect members through a secret function which involved oath-taking and taking them through Kikuyu secret rituals. The rituals were meant to make the recruits conform to secrets failure of which would lead to punishment by death. Each member paid a subscription fee of Kenya shillings, 3000/=. The money symbolizes the three blessings of the Kikuyu community; milk, meat and honey; or the three peaks of Mount Kenya (Kirinyaga), the seat of *Ngai* (God). Anyone willing to join the movement must be vetted by the group's priest and prophets and be subjected to *Kirira* (teaching) of *Ngai*. *Kirira* teaches that there is only one God who lives in heaven but occasionally comes to earth.

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<sup>93</sup> Oral Interview, James Njoroge, 9<sup>th</sup> April 2015, Kirigiti Village.

<sup>94</sup> Oral Interview, Chege Kariuki, 24<sup>th</sup> January 2015, Kirigiti Market.

<sup>95</sup> Godwin Murunga and Shadrack Nasong'o (eds.), *Kenya: The Struggle for Democracy*, London and New York: Zed Books, 2007.

When on earth, he resides on Mount Kenya from where he gives blessings or punishes wrong doers. This is the reason sect members prayed facing and raising their hands towards the mountain. The group conducts its baptismal sessions in secluded places and at odd hours preferably at 3 am in the morning in a river. During this hour, the atmosphere is said to be serene and the water is still and pure having not been contaminated by other people carrying out their normal domestic activities.<sup>96</sup> Interviews revealed Ndumberi to have a site where recruitment around Kiambu town and its environs took place.

Sect members were inducted through an elaborate oathing centered on cult rituals like drinking goat blood. Blood is taken from the same calabash with the leaders being the first ones to drink then the calabash is passed on for every member to drink. Drinking from the same calabash is to portray their oneness and collaboration. When new recruits arrived a point where the oath is to be administered, they have to undress or are forcefully undressed. Information on whether they undressed both men and women together and what happened after undressing was not available from the sources consulted. However, according to Henry Muigai (not his real name), an ex-member of the group, the undressing was done to boost their confidence.<sup>97</sup>

They sang Kikuyu traditional songs and those which were composed by Kikuyu prominent singers like Joseph Kamaru who have a compilation of songs about the MAU MAU. Members of the sect also compose songs that they sing during their special occasions. An example is one titled 'Ndimu jama' meaning that 'I am a member of njama' (refer to chapter 2 for information on *njama*). Its chorus goes like this;

*Mundu utaiyaga mundu utanyuaga bangi, thigara kana njohi no karwara-*

*Uyu ti mumaraya ndogitaga na ndari uthu na mundu*

someone who don't steal from another, who don't sniff bhang, cigarettes and alcohol, except tobacco this person is not a prostitute, does not provoke anyone and does not have any bitterness against anyone.

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<sup>96</sup> Oral Interview, Margaret Njeri, 9<sup>th</sup> April 2015, Ting'ang'a Village.

<sup>97</sup> Oral Interview, Henry Muigai, 9<sup>th</sup> April 2015, Ndumberi Village.

The song is general praise for *Mungiki* for keeping clean and uncontaminated. In between the stanzas the singer insists that they do not have enmity with anyone except for anyone who insults them. He says that they are from the house of Mumbi (Gikuyu's wife and mother of all Kikuyus) and their aim is peace. Each stanza ends with the phrase '*Ndimu jama.*' He has also written a song on the way he was initiated into the sect. In his song he narrates how he was invited for an initiation celebration by a friend he calls *Macharia wa Karanja* but after arriving, he realized there was another agenda. The song is a narration of the chronology of events that took place that day. It goes like this;

*Ndetirwo cai wa irua na minji njua ni Macharia wa Karanja*

*Ngiamukira ndiamenyaga twaihuriirwo ni muroti twetereire muruithia*

*Ndamunyirwo cia kirera cia gititira ndiihitha itungati mwaki munene*

*Babylon nindaumire ukomboini ndingicoka igoto ritiraragia mwaki*

I was invited to a circumcision tea and peas ceremony by Macharia son to Karanja,  
As I was being served, I did not know that we were being served by a seer as we  
waited for the man of the knife,

I was cut off my pride and whereabouts and I can no longer hide a huge fire from  
the servants,

I came out of Babylon, I cannot go back to slavery, a banana's tree bark cannot  
keep burning up all night.

He explains the way he was ushered in to the sect. he says he is no longer in Babylon which he associates with slavery. Although *Mungiki* did not agree with the teachings of the Bible, they borrowed the concept of Babylon from the Old Testament where the Israelites were enslaved for 400 years. The term Babylon is used in the song to refer to the old lifestyle which they viewed as enslavement which they swear never to go back in the song.<sup>98</sup>

The rituals were performed in a small lit dark location, transforming it to an almost impossible to know those present. The sect recruits were lined up and made to sit with legs open, then told in Kikuyu that the place was holy and that they were the children of MAU MAU, the remnants of the bullets who were expected to live as their fathers did, being

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<sup>98</sup> Oral Interview, Chege Kariuki, 24<sup>th</sup> January 2015, Kirigiti Market.

patriotic by completing the work of liberation that was never completed. They were referring to liberating the minds of people which were swept and influenced to adopt Western lifestyles. They wanted to liberate them by taking them back to their cultural ways of worship. The person in charge then gave a series of warning and threats by informing the new recruits of the procedure they are about to undergo.

A goat is slaughtered, and each recruit receives a piece of raw meat called *mutura* (intestine stuffed with raw meat). A goat is symbolically used for ritual ceremonies in the Kikuyu traditions. As the myth goes, Gikuyu- the father of all Kikuyus- had to slaughter a goat so that God would provide men to marry his nine daughters. Being an objective of the *Mungiki* to revive the dead Kikuyu traditions, they selected a goat to seal their initiation ceremonies. The meat is held, and each swears by saying;

*“kumania na umuthi nindaingira mungiki, na ingikauma, nindetikira gukua”*

*“ingikanengerwo kindu o giothe ta itharaita kana mbecha ni murumiriri,*

*Ndikera mundu ungi na ingikauga ningakorwo ndihariirie gukua”.*

“From today I join *mungiki* sect and if I leave *mungiki*, I agree to die”.

“If given any property, like a weapon or money by any member,

I will not confide to anyone; and if I tell anyone, I will be ready to die.”<sup>99</sup>

As the recruits swear they are subsequently told to eat *mutura* and the ritual performer then forces each recruit to drink raw goat blood while swearing again. The oath ends with a session where *mungiki* elders give the recruits advice which include the following: Not to put on inner wear (women were however allowed to wear in order to manage menstruation), never to engage uncircumcised woman for marriage because they took pride in the women who had undergone the circumcision rite and these they regarded as complete women, not to take a shower after the initiation event for a fortnight; and not to have sex with their wives during menstruation because they were regarded unclean.

According to Njoki Wairimu (not her real name), a member of the sect, they used the Old Testament’s teachings where having sex with women while menstruating is rebuked.

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<sup>99</sup>Landinfo Country of Origin Information Centre 2010, *op.cit.*, p. 9.

Additionally, they were also not allowed to go to church because mainstream Christian churches came with the Europeans and theirs was to go back to the traditional way of worship.<sup>100</sup> Their bodies should be buried in the traditional Kikuyu cultural way, where the dead body should not be covered with soil but a goat skin. The grave is dug normally then a cave extension is developed at the base where the body is laid. They incorporate a tobacco sniff and a bottle of traditional beer with the body. According to them, upon death, the deceased has another life and the course of the journey of the new life the deceased will need the beer and tobacco to drink and sniff to quench the thirst. They have specific songs composed by their own singers. They burn incense, carry a lit lantern to the house of the deceased and put it off inside the house symbolizing that the life of the person on earth has ended.

Further, they were each commanded to recruit three more new sect members, to which they had to pay a registration fee amounting to ten Kenyan shillings each to the elders who led the initiation function. During the initiation ceremony, recruits were asked questions, and when they refused or hesitated to answer, they were thoroughly punished through frog matching and thorough beating.<sup>101</sup> However, informants did not know what type of questions they were and those who knew concealed the information. At the end, the recruits were told that what they endured during the initiation event was nothing in relation to what would befall them in case they violated terms of the oath. Any violation of the oath could be punished by death. The recruits were told that, through illustration where another *Mungiki* member put a large knife on the neck of another recruit to show how a violator will be beheaded. Once the ritual was complete, the master of the ceremony apologized for what the recruits had gone through, and each one of them received four coded names to help them in case of an emergency situation in their respective cell.<sup>102</sup> These names were however secret and were not known to the general public.

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<sup>100</sup> Oral Interview, Njoki Wairimu, 24<sup>th</sup> January 2015, Riabai.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid

<sup>102</sup> Ibid; *Immigration and Refugee Board* 2007, 1 November. Kenya: The Mungiki Sect - Leadership, membership and recruitment, organizational structure, activities and state protection available to its victims. Ottawa: IRB. Available at <http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/4784def81e.html>



The advantage of oath-taking and rituals was that they laid a strong bond in the sect to being members in the group for life. If an individual chooses to leave after this recruitment process, severe punishment by *Mungiki* members is the consequence. Indeed, defectors are often targeted and assassinated and many who left have been killed. *Mungiki's* aim included doing away with defectors, and those who did not support/ collaborate with the group. According to police officer I, it is not clear how many people were killed in Kiambu due to lack of proper records distinguishing between those who were killed by the gang members and those who died due to other factors.<sup>103</sup>

### 3.3 Criminal Activities

Mungiki attempted to provide social services in areas which were perceived to have been neglected by the government. These social activities were later criminalized when they started extorting money from the residents as a payment for the services. These activities included racketeering and extortion. Racketeering is the act of offering dishonest service to solve a problem that would not otherwise exist. It is associated with organized crime. In a racket, the problem that is to be resolved may be caused by the same group that offers to solve it, although that fact may be concealed with the specific intention to engender continual patronage.<sup>104</sup> Mungiki took the responsibility of providing the services that the government failed to give. For example, in the slums, they provided security for the slum dwellers at a fee, to reduce crime.

Mungiki provided services like water and illegal installation of electricity within Kirigiti, Tinganga and Ndumberi at a fee in those areas. They also charged a fee from tenants moving in and out of the Mungiki controlled areas, failure of which tenants faced a risk of being kidnapped or killed.<sup>105</sup> Kiambu town is not an exception. The most common example of a racket in Kiambu town is the protection racket. Mungiki created a security problem and at the same time offered to solve it. Mungiki members promise to protect the business owners from dangerous individuals then in return, collect some fee ranging from Ksh. 500

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<sup>103</sup>Police officer I (name concealed), 4<sup>th</sup> April 2015, Kiambu Police Divisional Headquarters.

<sup>104</sup>Emmanuel Kreike and William Chester Jordan, 2004 Kreike Emmanuel and Chester William Jordan, (Eds.) *Corrupt Histories*, Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2004.

<sup>105</sup>Landinfo Country of Origin Information Centre 2010, *op.cit.*, p.10.

to several thousand depending on the size and nature of the business. The informant could not approximate what the upper limit of the fees was. This fee was paid on daily, weekly or even monthly basis. The same individuals caused damages to the businesses whose owners could not pay. Those who were unable to pay suffered dire consequences such as; kidnapping, torture or even death.<sup>106</sup>

Hardware, supermarkets, shops and restaurants in Kiambu town paid protection fee to Mungiki especially during the disputed elections of 2007. Kiambu town has surrounding residences that lack basic services such as clean water, toilets and electricity. These surrounding areas provided an opportunity for Mungiki to organize and illegally provide these services at some fee. In Kiambu town Mungiki was associated with actions and activities which ranged from pure crime to provision of social services just like the state provided, though for which fees were charged. These activities are similar to those provided in the slums. Small and medium-sized businesses in the town also paid these fees.

Every resident of the town and its environs remitted a certain amount of money to the sect in return for security to guard against theft and damage of property. Further, the sect members “manned” public toilets, built by the then Kiambu Local Government Authority, where they charged fees for access to such facilities. The amount of money they demanded however differed from time to time. The gang also demanded money from businesses operating in the town, real estate investors, and the informal sector operatives (*jua kali*) sometimes asking for up to half of their daily earnings.<sup>107</sup>

Racketeering succeeds through extortion. This is the practice of obtaining something from another person, especially money through force or threat. It is a criminal offense of obtaining money or services from people through coercion. *Mungiki* targeted *Matatu* operators, charging the crews according to the size of the vehicle, and for the use of routes in the town most of which were under *Mungiki* control. In Kiambu, they controlled the vehicles that operated from Nairobi town to small towns in Kiambu, notably Ndumberi,

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<sup>106</sup>Human Rights Watch, 2008; *IRIN News*, 2008

<sup>107</sup> Oral Interview, Wanyoro Stephen, 30<sup>th</sup> May 2015, Kirigiti Market.

Kirigiti, Kikuyu town, Waithaka, Gatundu, Wangige and Githunguri. *Mungiki* took over the transport sector in Nairobi and its environs. They excelled in some areas and not in others. They were successful on Githurai and Kamiti routes. They claimed that the reason was to stabilize transport fares for the sake of the poor.<sup>108</sup>

In their operations, *Mungiki* was involved in bloody clashes with other gangs over the *matatu* routes control.<sup>109</sup> For example, *Mungiki* fought with Kamjesh Militia Group in Dandora when they tried to take over the route in October 2000 but that was just in Nairobi.<sup>110</sup> *Matatu* drivers complained about the extortion and urged the government to intervene and do away with the gangs, *Mungiki* included. Drivers and conductors incurred losses as they had to pay Ksh 200 for every trip they made which was more or equal to the profit they were making for every trip. On average, each vehicle made four return trips a day.

In Kiambu county, a *matatu* operator plying between Kiambu town and Githunguri said that the operators give an average of Ksh. 200/= daily to the gang. If any crew refuses to pay, violence is used to force them to comply. On one occasion, *matatu* operators resisted payment of route fees charged by the group and in response to this resistance, *Mungiki* member's set ablaze five commuter vehicles. Following this incident, *matatu* operators launched a manhunt and killed two suspected sect members and torched six houses belonging to the group members.<sup>111</sup> Another *matatu* was set on fire in Gatundu town when the operators refused to give money to the extortionists. Three *matatu* Sacco officials in Gatundu were murdered and *Mungiki* group members were suspected to have been involved in the crime.<sup>112</sup>

*Mungiki* also demanded a share from women who contributed money among themselves for innovative purposes. In an interview, Hannah Mbatia (not her real name), explained

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<sup>108</sup> Peter Kagwanja, *op.cit.*, p.38.

<sup>109</sup> Erik Henningsen & Peris Jones, *op.cit.*, p.372.

<sup>110</sup> Peter Kagwanja, *op.cit.*, p.38.

<sup>111</sup> *Kenya Times*, May 22, 2007

<sup>112</sup> Police officer IV, 4<sup>th</sup> April 2015, Kiambu Police Divisional Headquarters.

how they operated in fear and did not speak publicly about whom in the “*Chama*” would go with the day’s money because they would be followed home in the evening. She explained that they could not come in or depart from their chama meetings in a group. Instead, they moved as individuals and at intervals because moving in groups would send signals to the *Mungiki*.<sup>113</sup>

This kind of extortion also happened to families who received bride price and dowry from their relatives. According to Peter Nduati, a member of the community, they always claimed a certain amount of money paid to the parents-in-law, between KSH.1000 and KSH.5000 as tax.<sup>114</sup> Failure to give them the demanded amount resulted in torture and death threats. The sect leaders would later boast over the high income they made. Maina Njenga said that millions of shillings were coming in daily. Maina’s claims were supported by Kilonzo who argued that the sect’s income by January 2007 was 90 million in a day.<sup>115</sup>

Mungiki adopted the MAU MAU method of instilling fear into people, by beheading them and placing the heads on posts.<sup>116</sup> They beheaded *matatu* drivers, conductors, and *Mungiki* defectors, who had resisted the movement and those who refused their recruitment. Mungiki also carried out revenge by killings if some of their members were killed. This was the case in Mathira in Nyeri County, where Mungiki killed more than thirty people to revenge 14 of their own who had been killed. These killings happened on 21/4/2009 and local sources refer to it as ‘Mathira massacre’.<sup>117</sup>

In Kiambu town, *Mungiki* carried out killings just like in other towns. In May 2007, four people were beheaded in Kiambu town, with their heads dumped near the chief’s camp. This was one way of sending a message to the administration that the group was active in

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<sup>113</sup> Oral Interview, Hannah Mbatia, 9<sup>th</sup> April 2015, Riabai Village

<sup>114</sup> Oral Interview, Peter Nduati, 9<sup>th</sup> April 2015, Kiambu Town.

<sup>115</sup> Susan M. Kilonzo, *op.cit.*, e.

<sup>116</sup> Sammy Muthoga Maingi, “The effect of the Mungiki sect on access to education in Nyeri County, Kenya.” 2014

p28

<sup>117</sup> Sammy Muthoga Maingi, *op. cit.*, p.5.

the town and its vicinity.<sup>118</sup> Around the same time, a former *matatu* tout was beheaded and his body badly mutilated. His limbs and private parts were severed from the body and disposed in a thicket in Banana, a center just outside Kiambu town. The head of the victim was later found dumped a few meters from a chief's camp.<sup>119</sup> Another *matatu* crew was beheaded and his severed body dumped at Kiambu's main *matatu* terminus with his torso and private parts dumped in a thicket in Ndumberi, a center in the outskirts of Kiambu town. Most of these were individuals who had either resisted the payment of the illegal charges or had defected from the group and had threatened to expose them to the security agencies.

Many murders went unreported and most of those killed were in the *matatu* industry. They targeted the *matatu* industry because it was a sure way of income whether peak or off-peak periods, unlike in agriculture and other sectors where they would earn nothing during off-peak seasons. During the field study, the researcher met one religious leader who seemed disturbed by the continued existence of Mungiki in Kiambu Town. In the interview he recounted painful experiences his close friends and relatives were subjected to by the group. He recalled an incident in 2013, in which the group invited its members for a formal meeting. When all the members had gathered for the meeting the leader talked passionately about members who had gone against the doctrines of the group and others who had disobeyed the rules of the group and failed to carry out certain assignments. The assignments had been elimination of some people, stealing, and illegal operation of the bus stops. Others were suspected to have betrayed the group by reporting its members and planned activities to the security agents.<sup>120</sup>

After the meeting, some people went into a room where a small celebration was purported to be taking place and so some of the members who had been identified were lured into the rooms by being told to pick a knife and go into the room and help slaughter a goat for cleansing the suspected members. When they got into the room, they were surprised to find

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<sup>118</sup> Oral Interview, Police Officer IV (name concealed), 4<sup>th</sup> April 2015, Kiambu Police Divisional Headquarters.

<sup>119</sup> *Reuters*, May 28, 2007.

<sup>120</sup> Oral Interview, Peter Kamau, 27<sup>th</sup> April 2015, PCEA Kiambu Town

that their wives had been taken hostage and severely beaten. Out of the brutal punishment, a good number died in the process. He painfully recounted how he lost his brother and sister in-law who died three days after undergoing the punishment.

What hurt him the most was that even after causing so much pain to the families, any attempt to follow up on the culprits only led to death of the people trying to pursue the suspects.<sup>121</sup> There were many reports of grisly murders in many parts of the town, committed as revenge attacks on people suspected of leaking information about the group's activities. Abductions, torture, hacking to death, dismembering of victims' bodies and beheadings were common cases. Mungiki also held "kangaroo courts" for sect members who violated its serious code of dressing and behavior, especially women. Such victims were harassed publicly, tortured and to the extreme killed.<sup>122</sup>

*Mungiki* was also blamed for targeting women by demanding and imposing female genital mutilation on the conventions that it was a traditional cultural practice which all Kikuyu women were to undergo without questioning. Requesting women or eventually forcing them to be circumcised was critical on *Mungiki's* plan. They did this in an attempt to revive the traditions that they believed had been wiped out by the Western cultures.

In mid-2002, *Mungiki's* national leaders declared a three-month notice for all women aged between 13 to 65 years, who had not undergone the cut to do so or else, the group's members would perform it by force.<sup>123</sup> Apart from clitoridectomy, *Mungiki* was also alleged of stripping women naked who wore miniskirts and trousers. This too they described as a western characteristic. They claimed that their mothers and grandmothers wore decently and thus miniskirts and trousers were indecent. They regarded miniskirts and trousers as 'indecent dressing'.<sup>124</sup> Kiambu residents particularly women were engulfed with fear forcing many females to vacate the area and sought refuge in the city of Nairobi. However, *Mungiki* denied these allegations claiming that even their own women wore

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<sup>121</sup>ibid

<sup>122</sup>*Crisis Group*, 2008

<sup>123</sup>Landinfo Country of Origin Information Centre 2010, *op.cit.*, p.11.

<sup>124</sup> Peter Kagwanja, *op.cit.*,p.53.

trousers and miniskirts, and they are also uncircumcised. They explained that what they were interested in is the teachings that occur during the rights enactment, which are typically traditional.<sup>125</sup>

### 3.4 Impacts of Mungiki Activities in Kiambu Town

As seen above, the activities of *Mungiki* were mainly criminal. Although the *Mungiki* claimed to provide social services to the people of Kiambu town, they charged for the services and that equaled to extortion which is criminal by nature. *Mungiki* was declared a criminal group by the government in 2002, following its activities especially the protection rackets and intimidation of the public.<sup>126</sup> They caused pain and suffering to the country economy and to the residents of the areas they operated. It also affected the political sector of the country since the group had started to divert its activities into political in order to camouflage. Most impacts are as a result of fear that the group instilled into people. The impact ranges from economic and political to social as discussed below.

When *Mungiki* at first worked towards achieving their original goodwill objectives, they attracted many youths who joined in order to develop themselves economically. According to Hannah Mbatia, a member of the community, the *Mungiki* established farms in various places with a promise that every member would benefit from the crops. This at first boosted the economy of the places where the farms were established and that of the country.<sup>127</sup> When the gang started manipulating the people and extorting from them, the district's economic development dropped drastically. According to a police officer whose name is concealed, around 200 business men had to vacate their residences due to the fear of *Mungiki*. Many businesses were closed, and most investors pulled away to go and invest elsewhere leading to loss of jobs for most youths who relied on employment in the businesses and in the *matatu* industry.<sup>128</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Grace Nyatuga Wamue, *op. cit.*, p. 461.

<sup>126</sup> Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2009, *KEN103225.E – Kenya: Activities of the Mungiki sect and response by government authorities (2008 – October 2009)*

<sup>127</sup> Oral Interview, Hannah Mbatia, 9th April 2015, Riabai Village.

Oral Interview, <sup>128</sup> Police Officer III (name concealed), 4<sup>th</sup> April 2015, Kiambu Police Divisional Headquarters.

This meant that the youths had to look for alternative ways to earn income, which included joining criminal groups, the *Mungiki* gang not excluded, in order to revenge. This led to further economic collapse of the then Kiambu District. However, *Mungiki* members especially the leaders were able to develop themselves and they started their own businesses. They flooded the *matatu* routes in the areas they operated with their own vehicles.

The fear associated with the mention of *Mungiki* causes psychological panic in people. As stated in several sources, *Mungiki* are notorious for beheading and mutilation.<sup>129</sup> Since nobody want to lose their lives, people migrated from the *Mungiki* infested areas to more secure places. A Police Officer narrated how people abandoned their already established homes and farms to go and start life afresh in Nairobi. It also meant cutting off family ties when some members of a family migrated and left others, and also broken community links.<sup>130</sup>

Fear of *Mungiki* denied people the freedom of speech whereby people did not talk publicly about anything related to *Mungiki* and the atrocities they committed. A respondent narrated how they would come for your head at night if they knew you were talking about them. He also explained how people had adopted a myth that *Mungiki* members had secret agents everywhere going around homesteads at night listening who were talking about them.<sup>131</sup> Parents did not tell their children about the dangers of joining *Mungiki* and therefore children went ahead and joined the gang when they were promised successes and money, due to lack of enough knowledge about the gang. Nobody had the guts to condemn the activities due to fear of repercussions.

Fear of death kept members wedged to the group even when they wanted to defect. Most people joined *Mungiki* with a promise of wealth, which they did not acquire. They realized

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<sup>129</sup>Landinfo Country of Origin Information Centre 2010, "Kenya: Mungiki – Abusers or abused?" Landifo, p10

<sup>130</sup> Oral Interview, Police officer III (name concealed), 4<sup>th</sup> April 2015, Kiambu Police Divisional Headquarters.

<sup>131</sup> James Njoroge, 9<sup>th</sup> April 2015, Kirigiti Village



that they lost more than they gained and most were willing to leave the group. The national and provincial leaders used the money collected for personal reasons. Interviews reveal that they lived extravagant lives in prestigious estates and drove very expensive cars. A source cites that thousands of members were willing to defect but they remembered what happened in 2007 to those who defected and choose to stay.<sup>132</sup>

The oath they took when they were being recruited kept them glued in the group. As described already, the recruitment process was tough and throbbing. Towards the end of the recruitment process, the recruits were warned that what they had gone through is nothing compared to what will befall them if they defected.<sup>133</sup> *Mungiki* members therefore continued to be loyal to the group due to fear.

Defection also caused pain to the family of the defector. *Mungiki* members who wished to defect vanished from the community sphere to avoid the repercussions of defection.<sup>134</sup> Family members were left with worries of the whereabouts of their sons. Most were worried that their son might have been beheaded or killed by either the police or fellow *Mungiki* members. On the other hand, *Mungiki* members pressured the family of the defected member to give them back their member. They claimed that the family advised their son to run away and contended that they knew their whereabouts. When they failed to reveal their hiding places, they were severely tortured, and they were also made to pay a fee to counter the loss of a productive member.<sup>135</sup> They also received death threats. James Njoroge (not his real name) recounted how his son disappeared and never returned.

The son left his wife and four children who suffered threats from *Mungiki* members. The *Mungiki* leader of the area used to visit the homestead every night to check if the son had

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<sup>132</sup> Country advice Kenya, Australian government- refugee review tribunal. Kenya - KEN38528 – Mungiki – Police Protection 2011, p6

<sup>133</sup> Landinfo Country of Origin Information Centre 2010, "Kenya: Mungiki – Abusers or abused p10

<sup>134</sup> Country advice Kenya, Australian government- refugee review tribunal. Kenya - KEN38528 – Mungiki – Police Protection 2011, p6

<sup>135</sup> Maribie W. Stephen, "Rural Militia Groups in Kenya: The case of Mungiki in Kigumo District, 1987-2008" 2010, P68

come back. The wife sent them away with the money she had earned that day for her children's upkeep. She was threatened not to report to the authorities that they were coming to her house, otherwise they would kill her and make her children suffer for the rest of their lives. The children were also tortured in school because the teachers treated them like sons and daughters of criminals. The other children labelled and laughed at them for the fact that their father had ran away. This also showed the pain that families went through when a father died or went missing. They faced security threats and poverty because fathers were in most cases the sole breadwinners in most families.<sup>136</sup>

*Mungiki* had succeeded in instilling fear into citizens as was one of their aims.<sup>137</sup> Fear of *Mungiki* gave the members pride and approval to do anything they wanted. *Mungiki* members protected their own people and stood with those who suffered for being members. This was the case in 2002 when around three hundred youths went to the streets and executed more than 20 deaths with knives and machetes and injured more than thirty, in revenge for two of their own who had been killed by the Luo militia group, *Taliban*.<sup>138</sup> When Maina Njenga was sentenced to a five year jail for possessing a gun and marijuana, members went to the streets of Kiambu and Nairobi to protest against the jailing.<sup>139</sup> This was the case even in the *Mungiki* local cells.

In schools and homes, young *Mungiki* members were wild and unruly, based on the fact that people feared them. They did not do the class work assigned by teachers, and still refused to be punished. They walked out of school as they wished. If a teacher beat them, they could go and gather their fellow members to come and attack the teacher. At home, they also did not want to take part in the home duties. All they did was wake up in the morning and walk to the shopping centers to extort money from small businesses. They took advantage of their unity to disrespect their teachers, parents and elders. Indiscipline

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<sup>136</sup> James Njoroge, 9<sup>th</sup> April 2015, Kirigiti Village.

<sup>137</sup> Mary Ndande, "Voices from the Past: Examining Some Unintended Consequences of Search for Cultural Antecedents: The Mungiki Gang in Kenya," *Professional Development: The International Journal of Continuing Social Work Education*, 2008, p53

<sup>138</sup> Peter Kagwanja, "Facing Mount Kenya or Facing Mecca? The Mungiki, Ethnic Violence, and the Politics of the Moi Succession in Kenya, 1987-2002," *African Affairs*, p45

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid*, p54.

caused the number of school drop outs to increase. This is because many members ended up being expelled from school because of causing disorder. Others just left school to go and engage in the activities which they believed gave them income. Indiscipline greatly affected the running of schools and general student performance.

According to the police officers who could not clearly provide data due to security reasons, *Mungiki* killed their own members when they defected, or anyone who tried to resist or combat them. Several death incidences were reported to the police station, believed to have been committed by the gang members.<sup>140</sup> They also killed to revenge for their own who were killed by the police. Death denied families chances to be with their loved ones. This caused pain and agony to those families. Death left them suffering especially if the deceased was a resourceful person in the family. Most old people went hungry when their sons who provided for them were killed. They lived in sudden and deep poverty and most of them depended on charity endowments or they ended up dying due to depression and malnourishment.<sup>141</sup>

Loss of life also led to diminishing man power. In 2003, when the government of Kenya declared *Mungiki* a criminal gang, the police hunted anyone including youths they suspected to be a member of the outlawed sect. Police conducted extra judicial killings in the name of wiping out the criminal gang. When young people died, it meant that old folks had to struggle to perform the tasks that would otherwise have been performed by those youths. Those who did not have the strength depended on hired manpower which deprived them financial resources.

*Mungiki* activities generally affected the running of day to day activities in Kiambu town and its environs. It affected the programs of families, schools, churches and the community in general. It made people to fear venturing into some areas of life like business and *matatu*

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<sup>140</sup>Police Officer I (name concealed), 4<sup>th</sup> April 2015, Kiambu Police Divisional Headquarters.

<sup>141</sup>Maribie W. Stephen, "Rural Militia Groups in Kenya: The case of Mungiki in Kigumo District, 1987-2008" 2010, p65-66

industry. Most people did not want to be associated with politics because *Mungiki* forced politicians to pay a monthly tax and recruited them forcefully.<sup>142</sup>

### 3.5 Mungiki - A Case of Social Injustice

Social injustice refers to the way unfair activities are organized and executed in the society.<sup>143</sup> In his theoretical work, Edmond Cahn says that social injustice affects the emotional being and causes a confrontational reaction of outrage, horror, shock, resenting and anger that cause the being to counter attack. These emotions motivate individuals or groups to take actions that can be violence and war, to rectify the perceived wrongs.<sup>144</sup>

Social injustice may be understood through concepts such as wealth division in relation to work done and the role and knowledge; economics, class struggle, caste system, segregation, oppression, homophobia, patriotism, racism, prejudice, faith-based discrimination, religion, stereotyping and gender discrimination, cruelty and unfairness that cause pain in individuals forcing them to rebel. Its main characteristic is suffering, either by the actor or by the recipient.<sup>145</sup> It is from this view that this study views *Mungiki* as a case of social injustice. *Mungiki* committed social injustices based on local and international standards of justice.

Social justice is described as "enhancing a true society by bridging injustices and estimating growth." It is achieved when all people receive a similar natural right, similar treatment, encouragement, for their human rights, and an equal division of state resources. In matters of social justice, people are not to be segregated against, nor their livelihood and way of life affected or determined on the basis of sexuality, gender, religion, age, political

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<sup>142</sup> Mary Ndade, "Voices from the Past: Examining Some Unintended Consequences of Search for Cultural Antecedents: The Mungiki Gang in Kenya," *Professional Development: The International Journal of Continuing Social Work Education*, 2008, p52

<sup>143</sup> Chinemeremsioma, 2016 Social Injustice: Discrimination | Honor Society, [www.honorsociety.org/articles/social-injustice-discrimination](http://www.honorsociety.org/articles/social-injustice-discrimination)

<sup>144</sup> Opotow, Susan. "Social injustice." *The encyclopedia of peace psychology* (2011).

<sup>145</sup> Simon, Thomas W. *Democracy and social injustice: law, politics, and philosophy*. Rowman & Littlefield, 1995.

affiliations, belief, race, disability, social class, location, socio-economic circumstances, or other characteristic of background or group membership." <sup>146</sup>

Everybody is entitled to right to life. Denial of the right is an injustice in itself and it is a crime against humanity both locally and internationally. Right to life is a supreme right and unique on its own because without it, no other right can be enjoyed<sup>147</sup>. The main atrocity committed by the *Mungiki* was killing and torture, earning it the many titles that people use to refer to it. In a report prepared by Centre of Governance and Human Rights, unlawful killing is defined by Philip Alston as 'killings threatened or committed either with explicit or implicit official sanction, or within a context of impunity which bring into question the states upholding of its obligations to respect and to protect the right to life'.

In Kiambu town the sect is said to have taken lives residents who went against their doctrines, for example, the two Sacco Officials who were killed in Kiambu town.<sup>148</sup> Unlawful killing by this sect is a case of social injustice which should not have been condoned by the state. This section considers the violations to right to life and unlawful killings, besides other acts of impunity in justifying that *Mungiki* is a case of social injustice.

Unlawful killings can also be performed by state actors whereby the state can either be directly involved in the killings, non- state actors either individuals or groups but the state is responsible, or killings that occur during armed conflict. Example of state killings is when the state intervenes in a situation through police and military personnel who may in turn use excessive force due to reasons such as poor training, negligence and lack of proper accountability mechanisms leading to a culture of impunity.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>146</sup>Toowoomba Catholic Education, 2006

<sup>147</sup>Orentlicher, Diane. "international norms in human rights fact- finding." 2016

<sup>148</sup>Peter Nduati, 9<sup>th</sup> April 2015, Kiambu Town.

<sup>149</sup> Probert, Thomas. "Unlawful Killings in Africa: A Study Prepared for the UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions," 2014.

This was the case in Kiambu during counter-*Mungiki* operations. In Ndumberi, which is a town neighboring Kiambu town, three cases of youths who disappeared mysteriously and later found dead were reported. In an oral interview with Father Francis Kinyua of Catholic Church Kiambu, he reported that 7 deaths of people who had previously been arrested by the police occurred. The bodies were found dumped on the side of roads. He also reported of a case where the police beat up a man in one of their operations but fortunately he did not die.<sup>150</sup>

It is every child's right to quality education as education remains both human right in itself and also an important means in realizing other rights. Violation of this right is therefore an injustice not only to the children but also to the community as a whole. Mungiki activities in Kiambu town and its environs created fear in the community and among children such that the parents could not send the children to school by themselves. The schools recorded low enrolment and a high dropout level as this gang recruited pupils to their group. A Kiambu administrator reported to the daily nation newspaper that Mungiki was recruiting teens in Ndumberi, Ting'ang'a and Kiambaa. Additionally, children could not access education in places where violence existed. This is a violation of children's rights to education according to the children rights act. These violations of children right equal to social injustices.

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<sup>150</sup>Father Francis Kinyua, 25<sup>th</sup> April 2015, Catholic Church Kiambu Town.

**Table 3.1: The Rate of Drop out**

	<b>2010</b>	<b>2011</b>	<b>2012</b>
Kiambu Primary School	6	9	12
Kiu River Primary	13	14	16
Riabai Secondary School	6	6	9
Ndumberi Secondary School	4	5	8

Source: District Education Office, Kiambu District

According to the statistics from the District Education Office, the number of drop outs increased over the years. For instance, in 2010, the number of drop outs in Kiambu Primary School was 6, 9 in 2011 and 12 in 2012. The same rate was recorded in Kiu River Primary School where the number of drop outs in 2010 was 13, 14 in 2011 and 16 in 2012. In Riabai which is in the outskirts of Kiambu, the number of drop outs was 6 both in 2010 and 2011 but there was an increase to 9 in 2012. In Ndumberi Secondary School, the number of drop outs was 4 in 2010, 5 in 2011 and 8 in 2012 respectively.<sup>151</sup> These statistics shows to what extent the *Mungiki* sect affected the education sector in Kiambu between 2010 and 2012 when the Mungiki activities were heightened.

*Mungiki* is a non-state actor, they operate clandestinely and unleash terror to the local residents within Kiambu town and its environs. However, the state is aware of its existence and operation but has failed to completely wipe it out. This is due to several reasons such as the group's ability to camouflage and fit the status quo in the country. Another reason is that it has been able to successfully recruit some high profile persons, some of whom are in the government. The high profile members were basically sympathizers, collaborators and to some extent financiers in political and socio-economic activities. These people are used to shield and protect the interests of the group. The existence of the *Mungiki* has led to deaths that take many forms in terms of perpetrators and the method used. These deaths take any of these forms;

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<sup>151</sup>District Education Office, Kiambu Discript 2010, 2011 and 2012.

**Politicized violence-** This refers to targeted killing of political opponents and their supporters. It is presumed that the activities of the *Mungiki* during the 2008 post-election violence were overseen by political leaders who commissioned the *Mungiki* to go out and revenge against non- Kikuyus.<sup>152</sup> Violence interferes with the constitutional rights of citizens and therefore it is an injustice. When there is violence for instance, the freedoms to be enjoyed by citizens are limited, for example freedom of movement, speech association etc.

In Kiambu town anyone who talked of and against the *Mungiki* sect was killed by the gang members. From the study, the research was not able to establish how many people were killed by the gang members. However, Peter Nduati, a respondent, narrated about a family that was swept away by the *Mungiki*. One sect member overheard them talking about the sect and brought the rest to execute the killing.<sup>153</sup> The group would put up curfews to restrict residents from moving around at a particular time and those who did would pay a fine or be punished. Residents could not participate in their democratic right of voting as they were unsure of when violence is likely to erupt. This violated their rights and it transforms to social injustice. Use of violence by the *Mungiki* sect against anyone who went against their doctrines was not just.

**Vigilantism and organized actor killings** is a case where a group of individuals plans, takes law into their hands and start attacking others without the consent of the state. *Mungiki* members in many cases were reported to kill people in a vigilante manner. This on one hand shows failure of the state to protect its citizens and on the other hand injustice by local vigilantes. Killing of vulnerable groups refer to killing of journalists, human right defenders, humanitarian aid workers, women and children. Several sources have reported that *Mungiki* issued an ultimatum in April 2002 for women aged 13 to 65 to be circumcised according to the kikuyu traditional culture, giving a timeline of 3 months.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Henningsen, Erik, and Peris Jones. "What kind of hell is this! 'Understanding the Mungiki movement's power of mobilization." *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 7, no. 3 (2013): 371-388.

<sup>153</sup> Peter Nduati, 9<sup>th</sup> April 2015, Kiambu Town.

<sup>154</sup> Probert, Thomas. "Unlawful Killings in Africa: A Study Prepared for the UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions," 2014.



Human rights groups that criticized the claim were highly intimidated. Federation of Women's Lawyers (FIDA) chairperson received a threatening call for condemning the initial threat.<sup>155</sup> A journalist expressed her fears narrating how recruitment to the Mungiki would mean that she had to first be circumcised. She explained how the Mungiki were willing to recruit journalists so that they would get the publicity they needed.<sup>156</sup>

Although female circumcision was still practiced by some Kikuyus, most have abandoned it and detached its value. The international community also condemns the act and refers to it as mutilation. These practices have adverse effects to women, and it the reason most people has abandoned it. This qualifies it as an injustice especially when they make it compulsory to unwilling members. Sammy Muthoga also reported about a magistrate in Thika town who had received death threats by suspected Mungiki members, besides, the son of an inspector Henry Lumumba killed and mutilated by the gang members. This was the method the gang used to instill fear and intimidate those government agencies who investigated and prosecuted them.

**Death due to excessive use of force-** this involves the force by the police during control and counter terrorism activities and during mass demonstrations. Philip Alston, former UN special rapporteur, noted that "the government has a clear obligation to protect its citizens from *Mungiki* and other criminal violence while still respecting human rights including the right to life and suspects should be arrested, charged, tried and punished accordingly." Kagwanja reports of a case in 2001 where the police fired five live bullets in an attempt to disperse a prayer meeting and killed one member.<sup>157</sup> Around 45 *Mungiki* suspects had been killed by the police in 2009 and 2010.<sup>158</sup>

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<sup>155</sup>Kagwanja, Peter Mwangi. "Facing Mount Kenya or facing Mecca? The Mungiki, ethnic violence and the politics of the Moi succession in Kenya, 1987–2002." *African Affairs* 102, no. 406 (2003): p44

<sup>156</sup> Mary Ndande, "Voices from the Past: Examining Some Unintended Consequences of Search for Cultural Antecedents: The Mungiki Gang in Kenya," *Professional Development: The International Journal of Continuing Social Work Education*, 2008: p52

<sup>157</sup>Kagwanja, Peter Mwangi. "Facing Mount Kenya or facing Mecca? The Mungiki, ethnic violence and the politics of the Moi succession in Kenya, 1987–2002." *African Affairs* 102, no. 406 (2003), p41

<sup>158</sup> Country advice Kenya, Australian government- refugee review tribunal. Kenya - KEN38528 – Mungiki – Police Protection 2011; p10

The process of recruitment into the group is unjust, especially when it is forced recruitment. It involves painful experience and sometimes force that the recruits are not made aware prior to joining so that they are not scared away. This also qualifies *Mungiki* as a case of social injustice.

Other cases that justify the whole menace as a case of social injustice is the torture that suspects went through in the hands of the police. Erik Henningsen and Peris Jones have recorded an account where a man was caught by the police when he was wiping his shoes and they alleged him to be a member of *Mungiki*. They took all his money claiming that he had gotten it from extortion and also charged him 3000 shillings as a fine.<sup>159</sup> Pre-judgment on no solid ground and subjecting individuals to pay is injustice to them.

Extortion and racketeering is an injustice putting into consideration the areas where the gang operated. They forced the underprivileged in the society to pay the rackets leaving them desperate to feed their families and cater for other basic needs. Although they claimed to offer the services that the state failed to, they actually caused more anguish to the poor and unfortunate slum dwellers.

In conclusion, much as *Mungiki* is claimed to have arisen to stop social injustices that persisted since the colonial times and continued to oppress Kenyans especially youths, it is evident that they worsened the situation by taking law into their hands and committing more atrocities to the same people they claim to protect. It must also be submitted that the state is the most powerful organ in the country and the only organ that has most power to eradicate and do away with illegal vigilantes. The group is committing injustices to those it endangers, and the state extends the injustices by failing to protect its citizens and worse, by imposing excessive force through the police who kill any suspected member without considering other means of dealing with them, means that will allow time for investigations before reaching death penalty.

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<sup>159</sup> Henningsen, Erik, and Peris Jones. "What kind of hell is this! 'Understanding the Mungiki movement's power of mobilization.'" *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 7, no. 3 (2013): P377

The state has failed to investigate the reported killings of persons unjustly and to punish the perpetrators and this lack of accountability has led to a culture of impunity.<sup>160</sup> Reports suggest that victims are afraid of reporting cases and reporting injustices for fear that the state will not protect them and they end up being killed. This was the case in 2003 where some individuals offered to report some *Mungiki* secret activities in exchange of protection but they were killed. This shows that the state failed and there was no justice. The presence of the gang is the cause of all the injustices therefore it can be concluded that *Mungiki* is not only a criminal gang but a case of social injustice. The members of the *Mungiki* on their part identified the following as the most pressing issues facing them in Kiambu; unemployment, corruption, lack of basic amenities, poverty, poor housing and poor environment (sanitation).

The data was presented below.

**Table 3.2 Injustices Alleged by *Mungiki* in Kiambu Town**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Unemployment	55	55%
Corruption	21	21%
Lack of basic amenities	06	06%
Poverty	12	12%
Housing	03	03%
Environment	03	03%
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Author, 2017 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017

<sup>160</sup>Akhavan, Payam. "Is Grassroots Justice a Viable Alternative to Impunity? The Case of the Iran People's Tribunal." *Human Rights Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (2017): 73-103.

The form of social injustice that is mostly affecting the *Mungiki* members is lack of employment opportunities at 55%. Young people in Kiambu are therefore forced to join criminal groups to earn a living. The second highly mentioned problem was corruption in the area more specially when seeking for government services. Corruption affects the poor more than any category of people because they are not able to pay the bribes to access the basic governmental services. Poverty was equally mentioned as a problem that affects life in Kiambu, albeit at only 12%. The respondents also said that they lack services like good housing and clean environment.

### 3.6 Conclusion

*Mungiki* started as a religious group engaging in prayers and as a cultural movement with intentions of upholding the Kikuyu traditional religious beliefs. Their agenda diverted as they continued to gain influence especially among the youths and they started engaging criminal activities. They also involved in politics whereby they were used by politicians who took advantage of the large following. Religious activities include praying and chants of '*thaaithathaiya Ngai thai*', religious ceremonies during induction and teachings (*kirira*) of Ngai. They practiced culture by singing traditional songs, oathing and rituals during the recruitment ceremony.

The outlawed sect carried out criminal activities that include racketeering and extortion whereby they illegally installed water and electricity in slum areas, charged business and estates owners for protection fees, charged taxes from *matatu* owners and demanded some share of money from women self-help groups. They also beheaded people who defected from the group or those who were publicly countering them, forced women into female genital mutilation and undressing those they thought were inappropriately dressed. Due to the pain and suffering they caused, the group was outlawed by the government of Kenya who used force and extra judicially killed suspected members. The researcher therefore concluded that the *Mungiki* menace was not a mere criminal group but a case of social injustice.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE MUNGIKI GROUP IN KIAMBU TOWN**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The District Security Intelligence Committee (DSIC) was mandated by the national government to decisively deal with matters of insecurity in various Districts within the country. KIAMBU being a sub county was infiltrated by the mungiki adherent which had posed a threat to the District's residents, and the neighboring city of NAIROBI. Mungiki being a threats to the National security, government response to *Mungiki* was therefore a matter of concern and was outlawed by both MOI and KIBAKI's regime. The DSIC were under the Provincial Security Intelligence Committees (PSIC) for direction, to implement policies and formulations in matters related to security. The committee comprised of the District Commissioner [DC] who was the chairman, the area Officer Commanding Police Division [OCPD] as a member, the District Security Intelligence Office [DSIO] as the secretary, District Administration Police Commander [DAPC] and District Criminal Investigation Officer (DCIO) as a member. The committee met regularly with a view of assessing and interrogating the security intelligence matters and dealing with the Mungiki menace. The same committee was replicated at the Divisional levels of which Ting'ang'a, Riabai, Kirigiti, Ndumberi and Kiambu town divisions, were headed by the respective Divisional officers [Dos]. Chiefs and the assistant chiefs were also incorporated and mandated to implement government policies at the location and sub location levels respectively.<sup>161</sup>

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<sup>161</sup>Police Officer I (name concealed), 4<sup>th</sup> April 2015, Kiambu Police Divisional Headquarters.

*Mungiki* movement within Kiambu town developed and was structured in various ways as discussed in the previous chapters. The group engaged in illegal activities within the town and its environs including NAIROBI. Its membership equally expanded as socio-economic difficulties created a mass of unemployed youth who found solace in the group. Most of its activities were of criminal nature causing public outcry that compelled the government to assertively respond following the outcry of the local residents. This chapter will basically discuss the government response to the *Mungiki* activities in Kiambu town.

Central parts of Kenya, Kiambu included were specifically targeted by government security agencies due to the concentration of the group in these areas. The response came in form of security patrols, arrests, extra-judicial killings, transfers of security officers and community policing. The implementation of these security policies eventually attracted condemnation from Human Rights advocates and some Politicians from Central Kenya who felt that the security agencies were targeting young men and women from the region for elimination. Chapter four aims at achieving the fourth objective of the research: to assess government response in the fight against *Mungiki* movement.

#### **4.2 Government Response to *Mungiki* and the issue of Social Injustice**

Different regimes approached the issue of *Mungiki* differently. President Daniel Moi's regime was blamed for tolerating the group while Kibaki's regime was accused for extrajudicial killing of the members of the group. The bottom line, however, is that in both cases, security agencies were called upon to dismantle the structure of the group that was now accused of endangering civilian lives, stealing from local investors and most importantly, enhancing insecurity.

Although the response was nation-wide, the scope of this research was limited to Kiambu town. It must be noted that it may not be easy to focus on Kiambu without mentioning Nairobi. This is mainly because Kiambu neighbors Nairobi. It is not unusual to find people working in Nairobi but living in Kiambu or vice versa. Secondly, the businesses that were targeted by the *Mungiki* such as *Matatu* (transport means to and out of Nairobi) were also connected in the sense that most *matatus* operating in Kiambu also plied the Nairobi routes.

Finally, most *Mungiki* members who operated in Nairobi had their residences in Kiambu town. Hence, any government operation against *Mungiki* in Nairobi ended up in Kiambu town as well. It was, therefore, a challenge to specifically focus on Kiambu and leave out Nairobi and its environs.

#### 4.2.1 Moi's Regime Response to *Mungiki* in Kiambu Town

During President Moi's regime, it is when the movement is believed to have sprung and taken roots in various parts of the country. At this time the sect was tolerated at first with some politicians of that time employing members of the sect to intimidate opponents which in a way promoted its economic status and boosted the group. With time, the group diverted from their initial objective to reinstate Gikuyu traditions and beliefs in Ngai and became involved in criminal activities drawing wrath from the public. The public outcry over the activities of *Mungiki* was followed by a government crackdown to the subsequent imprisonment of *Mungiki* leaders and some members.

The sect's action of whipping and stripping naked women who were wearing trousers in the city during the sect's confrontation with the police who interrupted their prayers elicited public condemnation compelling the president to order a crackdown on the sect,<sup>162</sup>. There after eight members of outlawed sect were arrested and charged in court over the incident. Those charged however denied charges and got released on a bail of Ksh 5,000 each,<sup>163</sup>. Also, in October 2000, Philemon Abongo, the then police commissioner banned *Mungiki* gatherings and issued a directive to the police to arrest and charge members caught holding meetings,<sup>164</sup>.

In early 1998, during the ethnic clashes perceived to have been ignited by the KANU government *Mungiki* members were arrested and denied bail on charges of taking illegal oaths.<sup>165</sup> The creation of *Mungiki* in 1980s coupled with its development and spread to other regions outside Rift Valley in the 1990s was at a time when KANU system was

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<sup>162</sup>Panafrican News Agency, November 13, 2000.

<sup>163</sup>Panafrican News Agency, November 13, 2000.

<sup>164</sup> Kenya: The Struggle for Democracy. Edited by Shadrack W Nasongo, Godwin R Murunga

<sup>165</sup> Kenya: The Struggle for Democracy. Edited by Shadrack W Nasongo, Godwin R Murunga

heavily unwanted. The KANU regime had empowered the police and built a public area with no room for public assemblies and association. However, out of those frustrations, groups such as *Mungiki* grew and expanded.

In fact, at the end of the 1990s, the crusade for a regime overthrow in politics started to be more and more visible, and *Mungiki* played a crucial role in transforming central issue in their plan. While police brutality was employed on opposition elements during Moi's regime; there was some aspect of collusion between KANU and *Mungiki* especially towards the 2002 elections. President Moi used *Mungiki* adherents through its very influential leaders to gather support and mobilize masses to vote for him. More details on the relationship between the political party and the *Mungiki* group have been discussed in chapter two of this document.

#### **4.2.2 Kibaki's Regime Response to *Mungiki***

The atrocities committed by the *Mungiki* gang members led to the decision by the government of Kenya in October 2002 to outlaw all militia-like groups in Kenya. Following the 2002 elections, NARC government fought down on *Mungiki* and arrested and charged nearly 1000 sect suspects. In the subsequent months and throughout 2003, members of this group were arrested, charged and jailed. A special police unit called *kwekwe* was formed in 2008 to carry out a crackdown on the group, after few brutal killings connected to it in Central Province and specifically in Kiambu town.<sup>166</sup>

The police unit was composed of highly trained officers who were well funded and given discretionary powers over the *Mungiki* menace in Kiambu. The focus for the group was, however, in Nairobi and Kiambu. *Kwekwe* was perceived as a death squad that undertook mass killings of the sect adherents. The victims were murdered using one or two bullets from behind in close range. Others after being killed were dismembered. According to the KNCHR report, extra-judicial killings and other heinous acts of criminality had permeated by the law enforcers against *Mungiki* sect members and adherents; actions which may have

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<sup>166</sup>Nairobi Star, 2009



been done in pursuit to state policy authorized by the political leadership and heads of the police.

Human Rights Watchdog summarized, that after analyses of various extra-judicial cases, that the law enforcers hunt on *Mungiki* resembled or even over exceeded the ruthlessness of *Mungiki* itself. Because of police brutality, the problem became bigger. Rather than eliminate *Mungiki*, the policy led the members to extremes of retaliatory ferocity.<sup>167</sup> A similar sentiment was expressed by Philip Alston, the UN special rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions. He issued findings after a 10-day research into the alleged murders of the *Mungiki* gang members, petty criminals, insurgents and political protestors since 2007. In his report, he said that he had received many testimonies that there existed in Kenya a planned strategy to execute the members of the group. *Kwekwe* officers had to become ruthless and took law unto themselves, killing several adherents with impunity.<sup>168</sup> While there were other police units formed to deal with various crimes, *Kwekwe* was specifically formed to wipe out the *Mungiki* menace.

Apart from the *Kwekwe* squad, a special police unit was set up to deal decisively with *Mungiki* in Kiambu. This was because the group's activities had on several occasions paralyzed transport and businesses in the town. The police unit consisted of officers from the General Service Unit, GSU, and the Administration Police drawn from outside Kiambu. This is the unit that carried out regular patrols in Kiambu town. This was meant to reduce police complacency. There had been claims in the past that Government response failed because the police who were tasked with the responsibility of dealing with the group were compromised by the gang. According to Anderson, *Mungiki* claimed to have recruited thousands of police officers who were 'obedient to the sect and its agenda' instead of the police agenda.<sup>169</sup> As a consequence, members hate to the police, graft in the force and politicians' role in the group; as well as meaningful fear of *Mungiki's* response, most

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<sup>167</sup>Prunier, G. (2006). *The Rwanda Crisis, History of a Genocide*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers Ltd, p251.

<sup>168</sup> Philip Alston (2009), UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions: Mission to Kenya, 26<sup>th</sup> May 2009*.

<sup>169</sup> David Anderson, (2005). *Histories of the Hanged: The Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire*. New York: W.W Norton & Company.

members in small towns such as Kiambu refrained from reporting violations committed by the gang. As a consequence, people's fear in the law enforcers, graft in the force and politicians' role in the group, as well as authentic fear of *Mungiki's* response, most members in small towns such as Kiambu refrained from reporting violations committed by the gang where several residents ostensibly abandoned the home and re-allocated to the neighboring city of NAIROBI, where it was safe.

It must be noted that Alston's comments were announced a day after the state-appointed KNCHR posted one-year-old video-taped evidence by law enforcer giving a chilling testimony of how he saw the murder of 58 sect members while working as a driver for the *police squad*.<sup>170</sup> Although government's actions were justified on the basis of citizens' protection, the police response was deemed as either inadequate or weak and thus failed to liquidate the group. The police response succeeded only in doing away with the rule of law, by distracting the law enforcers from their guarding of life and investigative functions, exacerbating the cycle of conflict, and diminishing Kenya's reputation.<sup>171</sup> Despite government response, *Mungiki's* retaliations directed at defecting members intensified. A few *ex-Mungikia* adherents were murdered or lost completely.<sup>172</sup>

As much as the government response was criticized from various quarters (civil society, opposition politicians, media), it is important to note that the response succeeded in taming the gang and in driving them out of many towns such as Kiambu. Around 2004, 75% of former *Mungiki* adherents and who had left the sect due to a government amnesty, government look out and the group's diminishing administration of capital in the informal sectors.<sup>173</sup> In Kiambu, the problem was dealt with when the then transport Minister; John Michuki declared total war on members of the sect. All *matatu* termini in Kiambu town and its environs were declared security zones. Security agents were also directed by the

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<sup>170</sup>*The Nairobi Chronicle*, 2009

<sup>171</sup>Philip Alston (2009), UN Human Rights Council, *Report of the Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions: Mission to Kenya*, 26<sup>th</sup> May 2009; HRW, 2008

<sup>172</sup>Kagwanja, Peter Mwangi (2005). 'Clash of Generations? Youth Identity, Violence and the Politics of Transition in Kenya, 1997 – 2002'.

<sup>173</sup>Kagwanja, Peter Mwangi (2005). 'Clash of Generations? Youth Identity, Violence and the Politics of Transition in Kenya, 1997 – 2002'.

Minister to camp in those termini so as to smoke out the dangerous criminals who were suspected to be members of *Mungiki*.<sup>174</sup> This effectively reduced, scared, and scattered the group.

#### **4.3 Challenges the Government Faced when Responding to Mungiki**

The state's awareness of *Mungiki's* existence and operations, attempts to wipe out the sect completely has been faced by a number of challenges. This is due to several reasons such as the group's ability to camouflage and fit the status quo in the District. One, the group members were secretive, and no one exactly knew how many members the sect had. Also, the members did not have conspicuous marks to identify or associate them with the sect which made it easy for them to discreetly live with people and still go about *Mungiki* business. One could not be certain that someone belonged to the group and this challenged the government efforts to deal with the organization. The government could only arrest suspects they thought were *Mungiki* members but were later forced to release them due to lack of sufficient evidence to jail the culprits.

Another reason is corruption, the sect has been able to successfully recruit some high-profile persons, some of whom are in the government. These people are used to shield and protect the interests of the group. Also, the police seemed to know the perpetrators and sponsors of the group but were reluctant to arrest them because of bribery and connections with people in high places. In August 2000, *Mungiki* took to the streets to demonstrate against Uhuru Kenyatta and it struck those present that the sect was allowed to protest against a prominent supporter of the government with the police watching but the sect could not hold their prayer meetings without police intervention'<sup>175</sup>. Corruption therefore frustrated the effort by the government to wipe out this gang in Kiambu and its environs because while one side of the government was for fighting the sect the other was colluding with the sect leaders and devising ways to counter government attacks.

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<sup>174</sup>Descendants, M. M. (2007). Log in| Register Cart. *Review of African Political Economy*, 34(113).

<sup>175</sup> The East African- Nairobi, November 15,2000

Additionally, around 2008-2009, the group earned public sympathy after the extra judicial killings done by the police when the government ordered a crackdown on the sect and other illegal gangs. The police brutally killed many *Mungiki* suspects in bid to wipe out this menace to the extent the public could not deal with the mass killings anymore. However, the respondents couldn't authenticate the number of *Mungiki* members who were killed by the police. According to the KNCHR report, extra-judicial killings and other heinous acts of criminality had been permeated by the law enforcers against *Mungiki* sect members and adherents; actions which may have been done in pursuit to state policy authorized by the political leadership and heads of the police.

The harassment and killings of these Kenyans invited the sympathy of the public and human rights defenders came in to fight for the victims. The killings by the police squads would affect both *Mungiki* members and non- members. In 2011, three men alleged to be wanted criminals by the police were ordered out of their vehicle and shot dead in view of witnesses as they laid on the tarmac,<sup>176</sup>. This incident exposed the inhuman side of the security forces given that these suspects had surrendered inciting public sympathy.

#### **4.4 Suggestions on How to Deal with the Issues Raised by the Group**

The researcher sought to find out from the respondents' ways on how to help deal with the injustices cited above. The 215 respondents were given several options and asked to choose only one option that they thought would address the problem of social injustice.

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<sup>176</sup> Standard Digital Jan 23<sup>rd</sup> 2011

The responses were tabulated as shown below.

**Table 4.1: Suggestions on How to Deal with the Issues Raised by the Group**

<b>Strategies of dealing with injustice</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Create Employment opportunities	102	47.44%
Fight corruption	58	26.98%
Curb discrimination	11	5.11%
Improve community policing	25	11.63%
Enhance public participation	19	8.84%
<b>Total</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Author, 30<sup>th</sup> November 2017

#### **4.5 Conclusion**

The emergence of *Mungiki* and its spread to other places like Kiambu was a function of political and economic marginalization within the society. *Mungiki* was motivated by the desire to have social justice in Kiambu. But to achieve this objective, the group engaged in criminal activities in the town, thereby attracting government crackdown. This chapter discussed government response against *Mungiki* activities in general but focused on Kiambu town. It may not be easy to discuss the response in Kiambu town without tying it to the response nation-wide.

Those who commit crime in Kiambu town hide in the outskirts and may even be traced as far as Nairobi. Other members of *Mungiki* may commit atrocities in Nairobi but hide in Kiambu. Hence, in analyzing government response, one may not absolutely separate Kiambu town from the neighboring towns and Nairobi.

This chapter attempted to correlate the criminal activities to social injustice suffered by the young men and women in Kiambu. What was clear from the chapter was the strong link between various forms of social injustices and the existence of this group. Due to the

criminal nature of the activities of the group, government response was ruthless and seen by some observers as extra judicial killings targeting Kikuyu youths. There was need for government to find a better strategy of dealing with the group.

Despite government action, the group persisted in its activities in Kiambu town. The chapter found out that economic opportunities that members enjoyed served as a motivation and thus, explains the existence of the group. It is, therefore, concluded here that government response was inadequate to deal with the *Mungiki* group in Kiambu town. New strategies that would include police reforms should be instituted if the group has to be eliminated. Also social injustice as claims by the sect members need to be addresses through a policy framework.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSIONS

It is apparent that the roots of the *Mungiki* are complex and stretch back to the colonial administration. Out of colonialism, Mau Mau, poverty, landlessness, oppression and the failure of the post-colonial governments, *Mungiki* germinated to rock the Kikuyu heartland of Central Kenya and parts of Rift Valley. Kiambu in particular felt the heat of this social implosion with many young people trapped in poverty, landlessness, unemployment and hopelessness.

The study aimed at exploring the operations of the *Mungiki* group in Kiambu town between 1992 and 2013. It began by tracing the origin of the group in the Rift Valley and the growth of the group and its eventual spread into other parts of Kenya. This study was carried out in Kiambu town to establish the persistence of the *Mungiki* group despite the government directive to ban it. It examined the genesis of *Mungiki* in Kiambu, the extent of criminal activities of the group, the response of the government to the group's activities and the validity of social injustice as a basis of the group's existence.

The study sought to prove or disapprove the hypotheses that; *Mungiki* emerged and continues to exist in Kiambu town as a result of social injustice, the criminal activities by the group in Kiambu town are an income generating venture and government response has been inadequate in curbing the group and its activities in Kiambu town. This study employed conflict theory which views the society as an arena of ceaseless struggles.

This theory assisted in establishing the background and roots of *Mungiki* some of which are cultural, its growth and the transformations the group went through. Conflict theory, however, is a general theory that has been criticized by many scholars. One of its major critique states that if a society is perpetually characterized by conflict, it will most probably collapse. Due to the weaknesses of the theory, the study specifically applied the theory of "greed versus grievance where Collier and Hoeffler argues that violence is as a result of the opponents' desire for self-sufficiency; encouragements dictated in several ways,

including economic agenda by determining of items and services or maximized power in a given country.

The data was collected from primary and secondary sources and used various research instruments such as questionnaires and interview guides which were tested for validity and reliability. The three objectives and hypotheses were addressed in four chapters; two, three and four. Chapter two presented the history of the group and focused on the transformation of the group from a religious sect to a political entity and finally a criminal gang. It also identified the various activities of the group. Chapter three presented the activities of the group and the impacts of those activities.

Chapter four presented the government response to the group and its activities in Kiambu town the emphasis was on Moi's regime from early 1990s to Kibaki's regime. In both cases, the response was inadequate. Chapter three relied on primary data to identify the link between *Mungiki* activities and the alleged social injustice. The chapter determined that there was a significant positive relationship between the two variables. Three hypotheses were proposed in relation to the three objectives. The hypotheses were tested as follows. The first two hypotheses were proved in chapter two, three and four. The two hypotheses were supported by the information provided by the informants and literatures on the group. The fourth chapter addressed the third hypothesis by looking at how the two regimes under which *Mungiki* operated dealt with it. There is a significant relationship between the prevalence of *Mungiki* movement in Kiambu town and the social injustices.

It proved that the group emerged and continued to emerge as a result of social injustice. It disapproved the hypothesis that the criminal activities were an income generating venture. This is because some activities such as striping naked women were just criminal and non-economic. Other activities such as retaliatory killings and killing of defected members are also not economic-related.

The study concludes that the emergence of the *Mungiki* was a welcome relief for the public who had suffered from government marginalization. However, as the group grew in size



and activities expanded, the objectives changed. The group began to extort money from members of the public and to threaten those who could not comply. It also became a political tool to be employed by rival politicians from time to time. In small towns like Kiambu, the group became a nuisance to the businesses whose owners were forced to pay for protection services or face consequences. Most of the activities took an economic angle as the cells engaged in charging protection fees among business owners and motorists. The group also targeted women in the town and demanded that all of them be circumcised.

Due to the crude methods employed by the group, criticism from different quarters increased thereby inviting government response. It became a criminal gang that used intimidation and force to target its agenda, which was primarily materialistic. The members of the group attempted to justify their activities by citing government failure in its responsibilities. A correlation between these activities and social injustice was thus made and confirmed by the data collected from the respondents. There was need for government to find a better strategy of dealing with the group. Despite government action, the group persisted in its activities in Kiambu town. The economic opportunities that members enjoyed served as a motivation for joining and as an explanation for the existence of the group. Because of inadequate government response, it was necessary to institute new strategies to deal with the *Mungiki* group in Kiambu town.

The study found out that while the group is still active in Kiambu town, the challenge is how to identify them since they no longer have visible identification marks and most of their activities are underground. Varied reasons were advanced to justify the continued existence of the group in the town; provision of security against criminals, economic opportunities for the many unemployed young men and women, poor strategies by the government in dealing with the group, poverty and unemployment. In trying to find a solution to this issue, the respondents mentioned several strategies that could be implemented to eradicate the group from Kiambu. These included; employment opportunities, war on corruption, curbing discrimination, community policing and enhance public participation.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **APPENDIX I: LETTER OF INTRODUCTION**

Aguko Arthur Edwin.  
P.O Box 153 - 00521  
Nairobi

**RE: The *Mungiki* Movement in Kiambu, a Case of Social Injustice or a Criminal Gang.?**

My name is Aguko Arthur Edwin, a continuing student at the University of Nairobi, Department of History and Archeology. Currently I am undertaking a study to establish whether the *Mungiki* Movement is case of social injustice or a criminal gang. This is to fulfill the requirement for the award of a degree of Master of Arts in Armed Conflicts and Peace Studies. You have been selected as a respondent.

Through this letter, I am kindly requesting you to take your time and assist me in obtaining the data required for this study. The information sought for this study is purely for academic purpose and a copy of the final research report will be availed to you upon request. Your cooperation and positive response will be highly appreciated and useful for the completion of my masters' program. The information will be treated with the highest confidentiality.

Yours Faithful

Edwin Arthur Aguko

**APPENDIX II: RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE MUNGIKI MEMBERS**

**Part A: General Information**

1. Male (---) Female (---)
2. Select your age bracket by ticking one of the given groups  
16 and below ( ) 17 - 25 ( ) 26 – 35 ( ) 36 – 44 ( ) 45 and above ( )
3. Select your highest level of education by ticking one of the options provided  
Primary ( ) Secondary ( ) College ( ) University ( )
4. How long have you lived here, less than 1 year ( ), 1 – 5 years, 5 – 10 years, over 10 years ( ), I was born here ( )
5. Where did you come from before settling here? .....
6. If born elsewhere why did you choose to come to Kiambu town?.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
Have you ever been a member of *Mungiki*? Yes ( ) No ( )
7. How long have you been a member of the *Mungiki* movement? Less than 1 year ( ), 1 – 5 years ( ), 6 – 10 years, over 10 years ( ), others, .....
8. Why did you join the movement?  
.....  
.....  
.....
9. What changes have you realized in your life since you joined the Movement?  
.....  
.....

**Part B: Social Injustices alleged by the *Mungiki* Movement**

10. Use the rate of 1 to 5 to show the extent to which you agree with the following social injustices as experienced by your members. Key 1- strongly disagree, 2- disagree, 3- not sure, 4- agree, 5- strongly agree.

<b>Social Injustices</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Most of our members are not employed and the government has refused to help					
There is a very high level of corruption when seeking services legitimately from the government					
We are deprived of most of the basic necessities such water and security					
The government leaders are amassing the country's wealth without sharing with us hence we have been left poor all through our lives					
We are lacking very basic services like good housing, clean environment					

11. Give others.....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

12. Give suggestions on how these issues can be addressed?  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

**Part C: Criminal Activities carried Out by *Mungiki* Adherents in Kiambu Town**

13. Using a Liker scale of 1 – 5 show the extent to which you agree with the following activities as associated with your members in Kiambu town where (1) strongly agree, (2) agree, (3) uncertain, (4) disagree, (5) strongly disagree.

<b>Criminal Activities</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
Being involved in murder cases					
Carrying assignments from political leaders e.g attacks on their opponents					
Stealing, robbing and even mugging people on the streets and during dark hours					
Operating business cartels with the town					
Manning the Matatu terminus and collecting taxes from business					

14. Name others, .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Part D: The relationship between the social injustices alleged by *Mungiki* and their criminal activities in Kiambu town.**

15. What would you say is the main reason why your members engage in such activities?

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.....

.....

.....

16. How are they related to the issues raised on part B?

.....

.....

.....

17. How successful are the activities in addressing these issues?

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.....  
.....

**18. Are there other means your members can pursue to address the issues? , explain**

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.....

**Part E: the government's response to the *Mungiki* Menace in Kiambu Town**

**1. How have the security agencies responded to these actions?**

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.....

**2. How would you rate their level of success in handing the situation here?**

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.....

**3. Any challenges in dealing with the group.**

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**APPENDIX III: FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW GUIDE**

1. Group no. ....
2. Place of assembly.....
3. Tell us what you know and understand about the *Mungiki* movement in this town  
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.....
4. What do you know them for?  
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.....
5. Describe some of their activities in this town?  
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.....  
.....
6. Do you have an idea why they engage in these of activities?  
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.....  
.....
7. How have these affected the security situation in this town?  
.....  
.....  
.....

**8. Describe the government's response on this situation.**

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.....

**9. Any challenges facing the group in its mission?**

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.....

**10. Based on the responses given, give suggestions on what can be done to eliminate the threat of *Mungiki* in Kiambu town.**

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**APPENDIX IV: KEY INFORMANTS INTERVIEW GUIDE**

**1. Length of working in this region**

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**2. Current position.....**

**3. Tells us your understanding of the operations in this town?**

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.....

**4. Describe some of the activities they are known for?**

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.....

**5. Do you have an idea why they continue to operate in this area even after being outlawed by the government?**

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**6. Describe the security situation in this area?**

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**7. How are you dealing with movement's operations?**

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**8. Describe the challenges encountered in this operation?**

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**9. How effective have you been in dealing with this group and its activities?**

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.....

**10. Give suggestions on how this movement can be eliminated from Kiambu town.**

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**APPENDIX IV: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES**

**Mungiki members**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of interview</b>	<b>Place of interview</b>
Kamau Njoroge	22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2015	Kiambu Town
Maina Ngatia	22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2015	Kiambu Town
Karanja Mwangi	22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2015	Kiambu Town
Kuria Bidii	22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2015	Kiambu Town
Njuguna Wa Wairimu	22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2015	Kiambu Town
Michuki Karate	24 <sup>th</sup> January 2015	Kirigiti Market
Chege Kariuki	24 <sup>th</sup> January 2015	Kirigiti Market
Mihunyo Waruguru	24 <sup>th</sup> January 2015	Kirigiti Market
Macharia Wangui	24 <sup>th</sup> January 2015	Riabai
Wambui Kamau	24 <sup>th</sup> January 2015	Riabai
Njoki Wairimu	24 <sup>th</sup> January 2015	Riabai

**Police officers**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of interview</b>	<b>Place of interview</b>
Police Officer I	4 <sup>th</sup> April 2015	Kiambu Police Divisional Headquarters
Police Officer II	4 <sup>th</sup> April 2015	Kiambu Police Divisional Headquarters
Police Officer III	4 <sup>th</sup> April 2015	Kiambu Police Divisional Headquarters
Police Officer IV	4 <sup>th</sup> April 2015	Kiambu Police Divisional Headquarters
Police Officer V	4 <sup>th</sup> April 2015	Kiambu Police Divisional Headquarters

### Members of the community

Name	Date Of Interview	Place Of Interview
James Njoroge	9 <sup>th</sup> April 2015	Kirigiti Village
Margaret Njeri	9 <sup>th</sup> April 2015	Ting'ang'a Village
Hannah Mbatia	9 <sup>th</sup> April 2015	Riabai Village
Peter Nduati	9 <sup>th</sup> April 2015	Kiambu Town
Henry Muigai	9 <sup>th</sup> April 2015	Ndumberi Village

### Church leaders

Name	Date Of Interview	Place Of Interview
Pastor Andrew Ndung'u	18 <sup>th</sup> April 2015	Anglican Church Kiambu Town
Rev. Newton Munene	24 <sup>th</sup> April 2015	AIC Church Kirigiti
Father Francis Kinyua	25 <sup>th</sup> April 2015	Catholic Church Kiambu Town
Elder Peter Kamau	27 <sup>th</sup> April 2015	PCEA Kiambu Town

### Youth Leaders

Name	Date Of Interview	Place Of Interview
James Njere	30 <sup>th</sup> May 2015	Kirigiti Market
Wanyoro Stephen	30 <sup>th</sup> May 2015	Kirigiti Market

177

<sup>177</sup> A total number of 215 respondents were interviewed through oral interviews and questionnaires administration. However, most of them gave similar or almost similar views. The researcher only brought on appendices the names of respondents whose ideas were exclusively different. It is also important to note that the names provided are not the real names of the respondents because disclosing their real identity would compromise their position/status.

## APPENDIX VI: BUDGET

<b>Item</b>	<b>Units/Quantity</b>	<b>Unit Cost (Kshs.)</b>	<b>Total Cost (Kshs.)</b>
Research services (data collection and analysis)			20,000
Typing, printing and photocopying initial drafts		-	30,000
Transport		-	50,000
Communication (Internet and Telephone)		-	5000
Typing, printing, photocopying and binding final report	8 Copies	@450	40000
Miscellaneous		-	10,000
<b>Total Cost</b>			<b>155,000</b>

# SOCIAL INJUSTICES AND CRIMINAL GANGS IN KENYA: THE CASE OF MUNGIKI MOVEMENT IN KIAMBU, 1992-2013

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