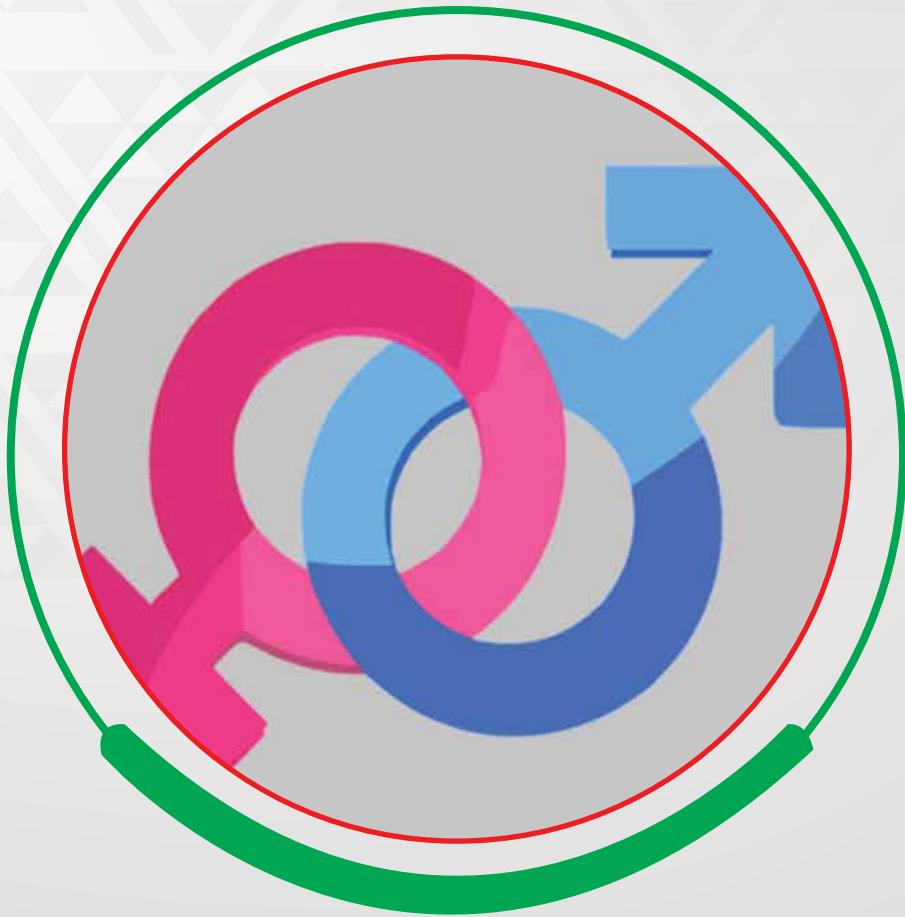




KOICA
Korea International
Cooperation Agency



**ASSESSING GENDERED IMPACTS
AND POLICY RESPONSES TO DANGEROUS
SPEECH AND RADICALISATION IN KENYA**



**ASSESSING GENDERED IMPACTS
AND POLICY RESPONSES TO DANGEROUS
SPEECH AND RADICALISATION IN KENYA**



Copyright © 2025

National Cohesion and Integration Commission

All rights reserved. Parts of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form including photocopying or other electronic methods, its excerpts and quotations embodied in reviews and other research works conditional to the full acknowledgement of the source.

ISBN No.:

ISBN 978-9914-9894-1-0



NCIC Publication No. 5/2025

Published by National Cohesion and Integration Commission

Contributors

Team Leader

Millicent Okatch – Director, Research and Knowledge Management

Research Leads

Millicent Okatch – Director, Research and Knowledge Management

Jescah Otieno – Deputy Director, Research

Senior Researchers

Olive Metet – Deputy Director, Corporate Communication

Jane Kamau – Deputy Director, Knowledge Management

Mohamed Hassan – Principal Research Officer

Regina Mutiru - Principal PBR Officer

Richard Nderitu – Principal Officer, Partnerships

Nancy Mulu - Senior Officer, Partnerships

Francis Merinyi - Principal Regional Officer

Castro Barasa – Principal Regional Officer

Mohamed Babaa - Principal Regional Officer

Collin Muganda – Senior Research Officer

Brian Enzoveli – Research Officer

Joy Atogot – Research Officer

Aurelia Phosa – Research Officer

Yasin Dika – Research Officer

Berlin Awuor – Research Intern

Stephen Juma – Program Officer

Peris Waweru – Regional Officer

Alice Nyambura – Regional Officer

Benson Kuyo – Regional Officer

Soke Goske – Snr. Regional Officer

Support

Roselyne Kamau – Principal Office Administrator

Caren Lochi – Finance and Accounts Officer

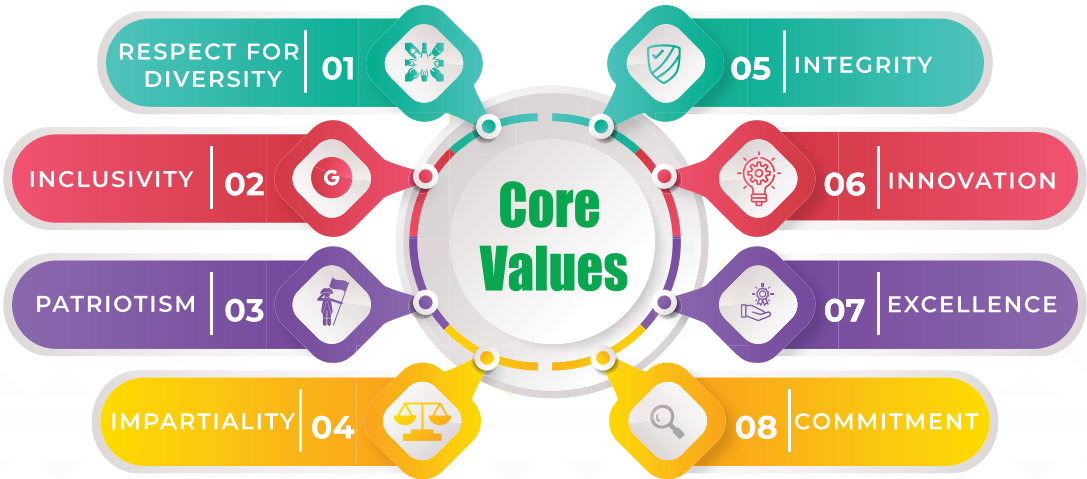
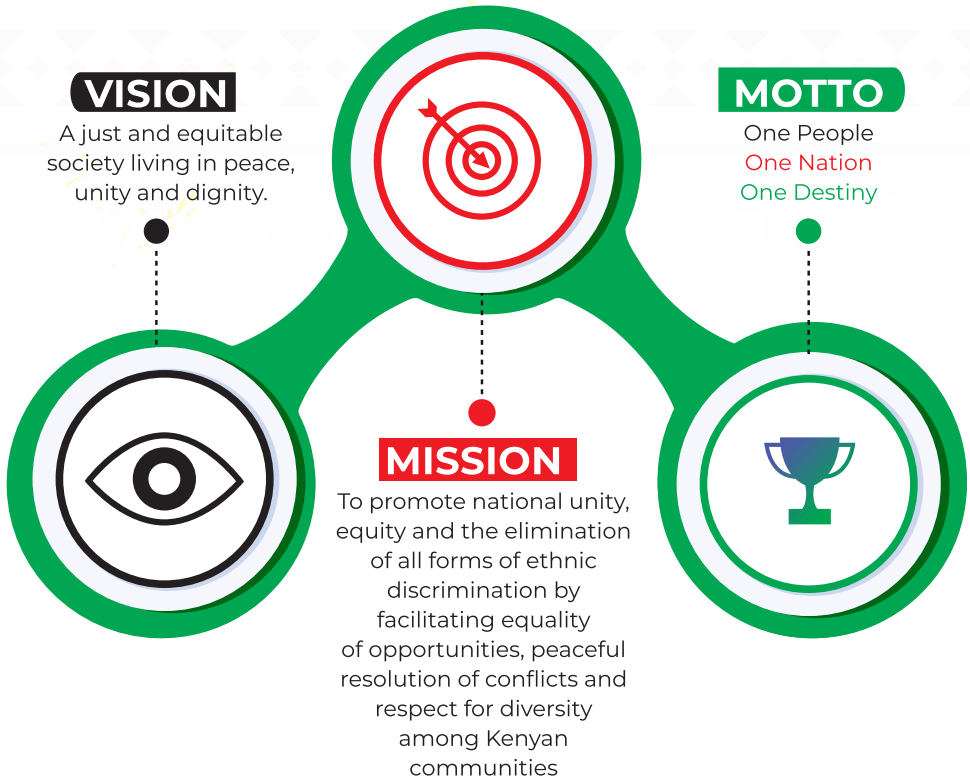


Table of Contents

CHAPTER ONE:	5
BACKGROUND	5
1.0 Introduction	6
1.1 Study Rationale	7
1.2 Study Objectives	8
1.3 Definition of Key Terms	9
1.4 Methodology	10
1.5 Structure of the Report	12
1.6 Conclusion	13
CHAPTER TWO:	14
UNDERSTANDING RADICALISATION AND HATE SPEECH THROUGH A GENDERED PERSPECTIVE	14
2.0 Introduction	15
2.1 Hate Speech and Dangerous Speech Defined	18
2.2 The Role of Dangerous Speech in fueling Extremism	20
2.3 Gender in the Context of Peace and Security	20
2.4 Existing Policies on Violent Extremism/Radicalisation and Gender	21
2.5 Conclusion	21
CHAPTER THREE:	22
DANGEROUS SPEECH AND GENDER VULNERABILITY	22
3.0 Introduction	23
3.1 Perceptions of Dangerous Speech	23
3.2 Forms of Dangerous Speech	24
3.3 Common Platforms where Dangerous Speech is Prevalent	26
3.4 Propagators of Dangerous Speech	29
3.5 Gender and Vulnerability of Dangerous Speech	31
3.5.1 Effects of Dangerous Speech on Men and Boys	31
3.5.2 Effects of Dangerous Speech on Women and Girls	32
3.5.3 Factors Contributing to Vulnerability of Different Genders	34

CHAPTER FOUR:	37
DANGEROUS SPEECH, RADICALISATION, AND GENDER VULNERABILITY	37
4.0 Introduction	38
4.1 Perceptions of Radicalisation	41
4.2 Perceived Drivers/Root Causes of Radicalisation	44
4.3 Nexus between Dangerous Speech and Radicalisation	47
CHAPTER FIVE:	47
EVALUATION OF EXISTING POLICIES ON DANGEROUS SPEECH, RADICALISATION AND GENDER	48
5.0 Introduction	48
5.1 Assessment of Awareness Levels of Existing Policies on Dangerous Speech, Radicalisation, and Gender	49
5.2 Perceptions of Policy Effectiveness and Implementation Gaps	53
5.3 Gaps in Policies and Interventions to address Gendered Dangerous Speech and Radicalisation	53
5.3.1 Gaps in Definition	54
5.3.2 Gaps in Gender Inclusivity	54
5.3.3 Gaps in Digital Communication	54
5.3.4 Implementation and Enforcement Deficiencies	55
5.3.5 Challenges in Addressing Radicalisation	57
CHAPTER SIX:	57
EMERGING ISSUES, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	58
6.0 Introduction	58
6.1 Emerging Issues	58
6.2 Conclusions	60
6.3 Recommendations	61
References	65

Acronyms and Abbreviations

CSOs	-	Civil Society Organisations
CVE	-	Countering Violent Extremism
DPP	-	Director of Public Prosecutions
EO	-	The Election Offences Act
FGDs	-	Focus Group discussions
GBV	-	Gender Based Violence
GoK	-	Government of Kenya
ICCPR	-	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICFJ	-	International Centre for Journalists
KIIs	-	Key Informant Interviews
KNAP	-	Kenya National Action Plan
KOICA	-	Korea International Cooperation Agency
KNCHR	-	Kenya National Commission on Human Rights
P/CVE	-	Preventing/Countering Violent Extremism
PWD	-	Persons with Disability
NCIC	-	National Cohesion and Integration Commission
TJRC	-	Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission
UN	-	United Nations
UNDP	-	United Nations Development Programme
UNSC	-	United Nations Security Council

Acknowledgement

The National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) extends its gratitude to all individuals and institutions whose contributions were instrumental in the successful execution and completion of this pioneering study on Assessing Gendered Impacts and Policy Responses to Dangerous Speech and Radicalisation in Kenya. This report represents a collective endeavor, emphasising the power of collaboration in addressing critical national challenges.



We are particularly indebted to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) for their visionary partnership and persistent commitment. Your generous and indispensable financial support was not merely a contribution but a deep affirmation of the urgent need to address the gendered dimensions of dangerous speech and radicalisation. This essential investment enabled the Commission to embark on this comprehensive study, providing the necessary resources to delve into complex societal dynamics and yield actionable insights. We deeply appreciate your trust and confidence in our mandate, which has been a cornerstone of this groundbreaking study.

Our sincere appreciation is also extended to the dedicated team within the Commission. The intellectual rigor, meticulous attention to detail, and tireless dedication demonstrated by our research teams, led by Ms. Millicent Okatch and Ms. Jescah Otieno, were exemplary. Your commitment to uncovering nuanced truths and shaping evidence-based policy

is truly commendable. We also recognise the significant efforts of all Senior Researchers and Support Staff for your collective hard work in bringing this report to fruition.

Furthermore, this study's depth and authenticity were greatly enriched by the candid insights and courage of the many Key Informants and Focus Group Discussion participants across the nine counties. Their willingness to share their lived experiences, perceptions, and recommendations provided the foundational human narrative that underpins this research. We are deeply grateful for their trust and active participation, which has given voice to critical community perspectives.

Finally, we extend our appreciation to all external experts, stakeholders, and government agencies who provided guidance, feedback, and collaborative support throughout the research process. Your collective wisdom and dedication to fostering peace and social cohesion in Kenya are deeply valued.

This report is a testament to the shared commitment to building a more cohesive, inclusive, and peaceful Kenya, free from the corrosive impacts of dangerous speech and radicalisation.



Dr. Daniel Mutegi Giti (PhD)
COMMISSION SECRETARY/CEO

Executive Summary

Kenya's security landscape is shaped by a persistent legacy of violent conflict and extremist threats, where hate speech frequently acts as a potent catalyst, sowing division and inciting violence. Gender dynamics are critical to understanding the intersection of hate speech, radicalisation and violent extremism. The United Nations Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism (2015) highlights that violent extremism is not gender-neutral, hence calls for gender-responsive approaches to address gender stereotypes and inequalities that is often exploited by extremist groups to recruit individuals. Likewise, the National Cohesion and Integration Act (CAP 7N) focuses on hate speech and its admissibility to the definition that incites violence on the basis of ethnic, religious and racial discrimination. However, this characterisation suffers from the vice of silence on the gender dimension. To address this lacuna, the study adopted the term dangerous speech, a concept which is complementary to hate speech with a broad perspective and incorporates gender issues.

This study, conducted by the NCIC in collaboration with KOICA and UNDP, provides a comprehensive assessment of the gendered dimensions of dangerous speech and radicalisation in Kenya. Its primary objective was to understand how harmful narratives and radicalising practices affect men, women, boys, and girls, to evaluate the effectiveness of existing policy responses, and to inform future interventions. The study was conducted across nine counties¹, adopting a qualitative approach and purposive sampling to facilitate an exploratory inquiry into the complex and sensitive issues around the study area. The data was collected from 62 Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and 292 participants from various Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). This was complemented with secondary data gathered from literature review.

Across the nine counties studied, a consistent definition emerged, characterising dangerous speech as any utterance intended to incite conflict, create division, or provoke hostility based on gender, ethnicity, or religion. Dangerous speech was widely perceived as inflammatory, inciteful, or harmful language capable of generating tension and promoting hatred, particularly along political, ethnic, or gendered lines. Worth noting is that participants viewed dangerous speech and hate speech as interchangeable due to their shared potential to incite emotion, trigger violence, and destabilise communities, demonstrating a fair grasp of the concept.

The study also assessed the participants' understanding of the different forms of dangerous speech. Majority of whom, considered ethnic-based dangerous speech as one of the most widespread and damaging, often involving the stereotyping of entire communities. They opined that politically motivated dangerous speech is intensified during election cycles with intent to cause ethnic divisions. They also demonstrated gendered speech, as being rooted in male chauvinism culture, religious beliefs and rigid gender norms, frequently targeting women and girls, especially those in public, academic, or leadership positions and more so by questioning their competence and morality. Religious intolerance was observed to strengthen exclusion or violence in specific counties including Isiolo, Marsabit, Kilifi and Taita Taveta counties. Religious intolerance manifested as dangerous speech that incites hostility based on religious identity, portraying certain groups as unworthy, dangerous, or spiritually inferior.

The study unearthed platforms where dangerous speech is more prevalent, key among being; social media platforms, traditional media, and public gatherings (both official and informal public events). Topping the list were social media platforms which increase and normalise harmful messages through memes, coded jokes, and misinformation; WhatsApp, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, and YouTube were frequently mentioned. Vernacular FM stations were noted as highly influential in rural areas due to their communication in local languages and the trust they command from listeners. The proliferation of creative arts, usually through cultural and creative platforms, including music, poetry, and comedy, were listed as platforms where dangerous speech is mostly witnessed. Participants expressed increasing concern over AI-generated content, deepfakes, and digital manipulation, which are used to weaponise and fabricate stories, dehumanise opponents, and incite violence.

The study sought to find out from the study participants who were the main propagators of dangerous speech. The participants identified politicians, community elders, opinion shapers, religious and cultural leaders, youth and social media influencers, as well as media personalities as key propagators of dangerous speech; amplifying divisive narratives that heighten exclusion and the risk of violence.

¹ Nairobi, Laikipia, Busia, Kisumu, Marsabit, Isiolo, Samburu, Taita Taveta, and Kilifi.

In terms of gender vulnerabilities to dangerous speech, the findings allude to the fact that both men and women/ boys and girls are subjected to hate and dangerous speech, though the specific forms, underlying motives, and resultant impacts vary considerably. The vulnerabilities are shaped by societal expectations, cultural stereotypes, and political dynamics. While the analysis of dangerous speech often prioritises its effects on women and girls, this study underscores its equally far-reaching and detrimental consequences for men and boys.

Concerning perception on radicalisation, the findings reveal radicalisation as a gradual and systematic transformation of beliefs largely influenced by an individual's vulnerability and susceptibility to manipulation. Participants generally understood radicalisation as a progression of ideological indoctrination that ultimately rejects mainstream norms and may legitimise violence. The study underscored numerous factors as drivers of radicalisation, key among them, socio-economic, political, cultural, and systemic factors that collectively create environments conducive to extremist ideologies. Economic hardship and social disintegration, religious and ideological drivers, political and governance related drivers, historical injustices and marginalisation, drugs and substances, peer pressure, and psychological vulnerability, ethnic and identity-based issues, misinformation and illiteracy, as well as external factors such as volatility of neighboring regions, spillover effects, porous borders, cross-border movements, and socio-economic linkages topped the list as factors perpetuating radicalisation in Kenya.

This study also sought to establish the nexus between dangerous speech and radicalisation, with findings illuminating a direct link between dangerous speech and radicalisation, viewing dangerous speech as a critical driver to radicalisation, an enabler of division, animosity, and violence within communities. The findings illustrate how harmful narratives and hate speech serve as catalysts that deepen social divisions and facilitate the recruitment of vulnerable groups, particularly women and youth.

Concerning the existing legal and policy framework strengths and gaps, the study established, community awareness of policies on dangerous speech, radicalisation, and gender as generally low. Many grassroots participants found the idea of a 'policy' abstract/ largely unknown. This reveals a clear gap between policy formulation and grassroots understanding. Conversely, some experts largely drawn from key informant participants, were fairly familiar with some

national and county policy frameworks on dangerous speech, radicalisation, violent extremism and gender. The findings also denote critical gaps in Kenya's policies and legal frameworks concerning dangerous speech and radicalisation. The study identifies existing gaps of gender inclusivity in the NCI Act and its definition of 'Hate Speech', which is overly broad and lacks clarity. Moreover, gaps exist on digital communication and social media, specifically in fighting all forms of hate speech, implementation and enforcement deficiencies in independent bodies such as NCIC, which lacks prosecutorial powers to enforce compliance. Across the nine counties, majority of the participants struggled to articulate what the Kenyan law specifically states about radicalisation. Worth noting is that most participants used the terms 'radicalisation' and 'violent extremism' interchangeably.

This study has also identified some emerging issues including; gendered vulnerabilities as dangerous speech pushes men toward aggression, while it shames and silences women. Digital amplification through online harassment, misinformation, and the misuse of AI, such as deepfakes were also evolving issues witnessed. New, concealed forms of coded terminologies which can be categorised as dangerous speech such as the 'kusalimiwa' trend loosely translated as 'being greeted', memes, and viral hashtags make detection harder. These trends, fueled by unemployment, exclusion, politicised religion, and local media that reinforce stereotypes, increase vulnerability to radicalisation and erode social cohesion.

As key recommendations, the study endorses a comprehensive, multi-layered approach to address the gendered aspects of hate speech, dangerous speech, and radicalisation. It recommends amending the National Cohesion and Integration Act and the Prevention of Terrorism Act to include clear definitions, foster gender inclusivity, combat gendered radicalisation, and resolve issues related to digital communication. Both county and national governments to enhance targeted literacy and critical thinking programs to reduce the vulnerability of the citizen to religious radicalisation and recruitment to violent extremist groups. Utilising community and traditional structures in peacebuilding efforts and the prevention of social ills, with key policy documents translated into local languages to enhance accessibility remain crucial to preventing radicalisation and impact of dangerous speech. Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to also prioritise civic education programs to better inform the public about relevant legal provisions and support initiatives to prevent radicalisation in Kenya, in addition to addressing socio-economic root causes alongside the government

and international partners. A comprehensive regulatory framework should be created to oversee religious organisations, with standardised and mandatory education and training requirements for religious leaders in peacebuilding and ethics, and regulations of religious messaging across all media platforms.

In conclusion, the study confirms that dangerous speech and radicalisation in Kenya are deeply intertwined with gender dynamics, political processes, and socio-economic realities. While progress has been made through policies and frameworks, critical gaps remain in addressing how gendered narratives fuel exclusion and vulnerability. By shedding light on these dynamics, the study provides evidence to guide more inclusive and effective interventions. Closing this gap requires stronger legal frameworks, gender-responsive interventions, and inclusive participation in peacebuilding efforts.



Chapter 1

BACKGROUND

1.0 Introduction

Kenya's security landscape has been marked by episodes of violent conflict and extremist violence, as well as the corrosive influence of hate speech on social cohesion, reflecting persistent challenges dating back to independence. Conflict, particularly ethnic and inter-communal violence, has shaped Kenya's colonial and post-colonial political economy. The election years of 1992, 1997, and 2007 saw surges in violence. The Waki Report (2008) documents that following the 2007 elections, there was widespread ethnic violence and hate speech that heightened tensions, resulting in numerous deaths, many women being raped, and a large number of people displaced. Over time, additional incidents have emerged, including the recurring banditry conflicts in northern Kenya, which have caused widespread displacement and loss of lives, with these events having devastating effects on the region.

Widespread inequalities underlie political economic processes that breed conflict and violence. Horizontal inequalities in resources, income, opportunities, access to services, and political power enhance further vulnerability to violence. Higher income inequalities, unemployment between groups, demographic attributes such as gender, age, and land inequality increase the probability of conflict in Kenya. The impact of horizontal inequalities varies across regions, with stronger effects on the Coastal and Northern counties, where income distribution, educational, and employment disparities significantly raise conflict risks (Mkutu & Opondo, 2019). Significant disparities exist between the pastoral and agro-pastoral northern parts of Kenya and the rest of the country, exacerbated by effects of climate change and poverty levels (Stewart, 2010).

Over the years, hate speech has become a significant trigger, amplifying extreme violence in societies. It is not only ethnic or political, shifting from use by a few politically connected individuals, it has become widespread in social discourse and is highly gendered. Ethno-political agendas often exploit gender vulnerabilities, especially during inter-communal violence (Broekaert et al., 2021). The proliferation of online platforms has significantly amplified the reach and impact of gendered hate speech. This online misogyny disproportionately targets women (KhosraviNik & Esposito, 2018), who are frequently subjected to sexuality-baiting, derogatory labels, and accusations of being promiscuous, immoral, or irreligious, regardless of their actual identities or beliefs (Nah, 2020). Online attacks often evolve into offline threats, smear campaigns, and social

ostracisation, particularly for women human rights defenders. An International Centre for Journalists 2022 report noted that Kenyan female journalists surveyed had received online threats of violence, including death, rape, or assault. Such misogynistic hate speech has serious mental and psychological impacts; deterring women's participation in professional and public life, contributing to trauma and self-censorship (ICFJ, 2022).

1.1 Study Rationale

Gender dynamics are critical to understanding the intersection of hate speech and violent extremism. The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) was a defining moment in global policy, affirming the essential role of women in peace and security efforts. The resolution recognises that women and girls disproportionately experience the consequences of conflict, yet remain largely excluded from decision-making structures (UNSC, 2000). Kenya has also taken steps in implementing these principles through the Kenya National Action Plan on 1325 II (KNAP II) (2020–2024), whose aim is to enhance women's participation in conflict prevention, mediation, and peacebuilding, while addressing gender-based violence as both a cause and consequence of conflict (GoK, 2020). Despite these commitments, persistent challenges such as entrenched gender stereotypes, lack of political will, and limited resources continue to hinder women's meaningful participation in peace processes (GoK, 2020).

The United Nations Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism highlights that violent extremism is not gender-neutral. It calls for gender-responsive approaches to understand how extremist groups exploit gender stereotypes and inequalities in their recruitment and propaganda (United Nations, 2015). The resolution emphasises that addressing violent extremism requires challenging harmful gender norms and ensuring women's active involvement in CVE efforts (United Nations, 2015). Within the Kenyan context, the Kenya National Action Plan against Hate Speech provides a framework for addressing hate speech as a driver of conflict and radicalisation. However, it offers limited explicit attention to how gendered hate speech uniquely targets men, women and girls and how toxic masculinity feeds into extremist narratives (NCIC, 2021).

Moreover, public discourse in Kenya has for a long time been saturated by ethnic hatred and discrimination. Hate speech is one of the most important legal instrument that addresses this historic problem. The National Cohesion and Integration Act (CAP 7N) focuses on hate speech and its admissibility to the definition that incites violence on an ethnic basis (ethnic, religious and racial).

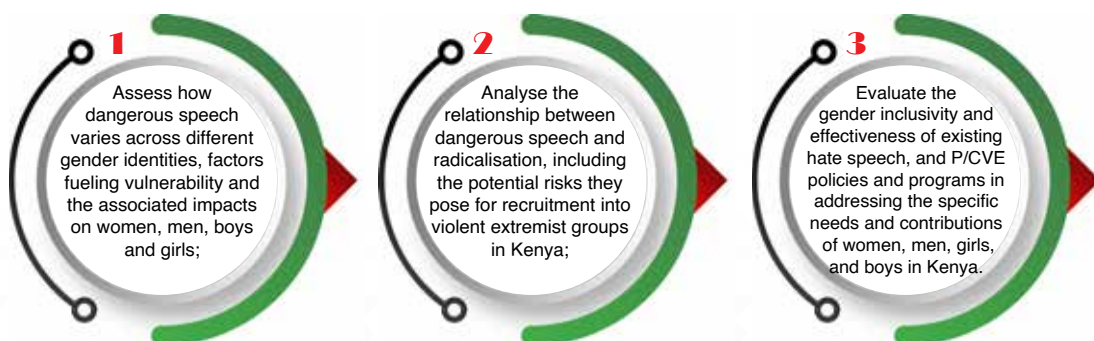
However, this characterisation suffers from the vice of silence on the gender dimension, presenting a lacuna in the definition where gender discrimination is vulnerable to exclusion, thereby preventing a broader definition consistent with the global context. To circumvent this, the current study adopts the term ‘dangerous speech’, a concept complementary to hate speech, and directs its focus towards it. Dangerous speech encompasses words or phrases that increase the risk of violence in society. The emphasis on dangerous speech facilitates the incorporation of gender issues, thereby addressing the lacuna of what constitutes hate speech, as currently defined through available legal instruments in Kenya.

Overall, these policies and resolutions mark significant progress in incorporating gender perspectives into peace and security efforts. Yet, there remains a notable gap in systematically examining how gendered hate speech and harmful gender norms contribute to violent extremism/radicalisation within the Kenyan context. It is the interest of this study to address this gap by exploring the gendered dynamics of dangerous speech; its intersection with violent extremism/radicalisation; and the existing barriers to men, women, boys and girl’s participation in peace building and national cohesion.

1.2 Study Objectives

The main objective for analysing the gendered dimensions of dangerous speech and radicalisation in Kenya is to understand how harmful messages/ radicalising practices are produced, experienced, and responded to by men/ boys and women/girls. The aim is to inform the development of targeted interventions, policies, and programs that effectively address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of different genders, ultimately helping to prevent violence and promote social cohesion in a way that is inclusive and gender-sensitive.

Specifically, the study seeks to:



1.3 Definition of Key Terms

Given the complex nature of the study topics addressed including dangerous speech, radicalisation, and gender, this report establishes working definition drawn from academic literature, legal frameworks, and contextual understanding within Kenya to facilitate consistent interpretations as shown below:

Gender

Refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, expressions, and identities of individuals. It is how society perceives, evaluates, and expects individuals to behave based on their perceived sex. Gender is a cultural construction that goes beyond biological makeup, creating the status of man or woman. It is a learned trait, continuously proven through behavior, language, and social role (Strazzeri, 2024).

Hate Speech

Threatening, abusive or insulting words/written material/songs/plays against a community meant to stir up ethnic/religious/racial hatred (NCI Act CAP 7N).

Dangerous Speech

Any form of expression (e.g. speech, text, or images) that can increase the risk that its audience will condone or commit violence against members of another group. Dangerous speech focuses on the potential of language to incite violence, which can include hate speech but also encompasses other forms of rhetoric that may escalate to violence even if they don't explicitly qualify as hate speech (Benesch, 2025).

Ethnic Hatred

Hatred against a group of persons defined by reference to colour, race, nationality (including citizenship) or ethnic or national origins (NCI Act).

Violent Extremism

The use of violence to achieve ideological, religious, or political goals by extremist groups. This often involves radicalised individuals or groups who hold extreme ideologies that justify the use of violence against civilians and other targets to further their aims i.e. terrorist groups, criminal gangs.

Radicalisation

The process by which individuals or groups adopt or promote extreme beliefs for the purpose of facilitating ideologically based violence to advance political, religious or social change (Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2023)².

Gender Dynamics

Gender dynamics refer to the relationships and interactions between and among boys, girls, women, and men. These dynamics are shaped by socio-cultural ideas about gender and the power relationships that define them. Depending on how they manifest, gender dynamics can either reinforce or challenge existing norms. They often involve people treating men and women differently in ways that affect their power, status, and authority (Mihal'ová, et al., 2024).

Gender inclusivity

Gender inclusivity goes beyond simple gender equality; it is about creating an environment where people of all genders feel valued, respected, and have equal access to opportunities.

Gender identity

Refers to an individual's deeply held, internal sense of being male, female, a combination of both, or neither. It is a core feature of human experience and may or may not correspond with the sex assigned at birth.

Gender stereotypes

These are oversimplified and often exaggerated beliefs about the characteristics, roles, and behaviors of men and women. They are widely held assumptions about the typical traits of each gender and can be found in everyday life and the mass media. These stereotypes often reinforce traditional gender roles and can limit opportunities for individual development.

Toxic masculinity

A set of socially constructed attributes often associated with the 'traditional' male gender role that are considered harmful. They are not inherent, but shaped by cultural and societal expectations.

²Prevention of Terrorism Act No. 30 of 2012, Revised 2023

1.4 Methodology

The research sought to understand the lived realities of diverse groups, uncover underlying narratives, and identify the salient themes that shape vulnerability to violent extremism, dangerous speech, and experiences of conflict, to identify gaps and opportunities for more effective policy responses.

1.4.1 Qualitative Approach

The study adopted a qualitative approach to facilitate an exploratory inquiry into the complex and sensitive issues surrounding dangerous speech and radicalisation in Kenya. This approach was suited for capturing the rich, subjective experiences of participants, and understanding the how and why behind their perceptions and interactions with dangerous speech and radicalisation. The study focused on understanding the socio-cultural contexts in which these dynamics unfold, moving beyond surface-level observations to uncover underlying mechanisms and gendered impacts (Lima & Newell-McLymont, 2021). The approach facilitated the gathering of rich, detailed insights into how gender norms and stereotypes influence responses to dangerous speech and radicalisation, as well as understanding the social and psychological impacts on different gender groups.

1.4.2 Scope

The study was conducted across nine counties of Kenya, including Nairobi, Laikipia, Busia, Kisumu, Marsabit, Isiolo, Samburu, Taita Taveta, and Kilifi, strategically selected to represent diverse socio-cultural and political contexts that may influence the prevalence and manifestation of dangerous speech and radicalisation. Specifically, Nairobi, as the capital and home of diverse populations, was selected as it provides insights into national-level trends and policy impacts. Laikipia, Marsabit, Isiolo, and Samburu capture the unique challenges of pastoralist communities and resource conflicts in Northern Kenya, where gender roles are often rigid and vulnerability to radicalisation / violent extremism is exacerbated by marginalisation. Western counties such as Busia and Kisumu provide perspectives on cross-border dynamics, social cohesion, and rural-urban interactions in the context of gendered experiences of hate speech and violence. Coastal counties including Taita Taveta and Kilifi face complex social tensions shaped by regional identities and economic disparities, making them key sites for examining how gender influences susceptibility to hate speech and conflict.

1.4.3 Data Collection Strategy

The study adopted the purposive sampling method in selecting participants for the study, while ensuring the selection of individuals based on their expertise, experience, and roles in relation to the focus of the research. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) specifically targeted experts distinguished by their profound understanding of gender dynamics, radicalisation processes, and the multifaceted nature of hate speech. A total of 62 experts were interviewed across the nine counties of study. A diverse range of participants were selected for Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) to capture a community perspectives. These included both young and adult men and women, influential community figures such as imams, pastors, and other religious leaders, village elders, chiefs or sub-chiefs, and teachers, grassroots influencers including nyumba kumi, community policing leaders, boda leaders/sacco officials, as well as sensitive populations such as victims/survivors of radicalisation / Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and former extremist groups. A total of 292 participants were interviewed in the FGDs. The sampling strategy ensured a balanced representation of genders to adequately capture gendered experiences and Persons with Disability (PWD).

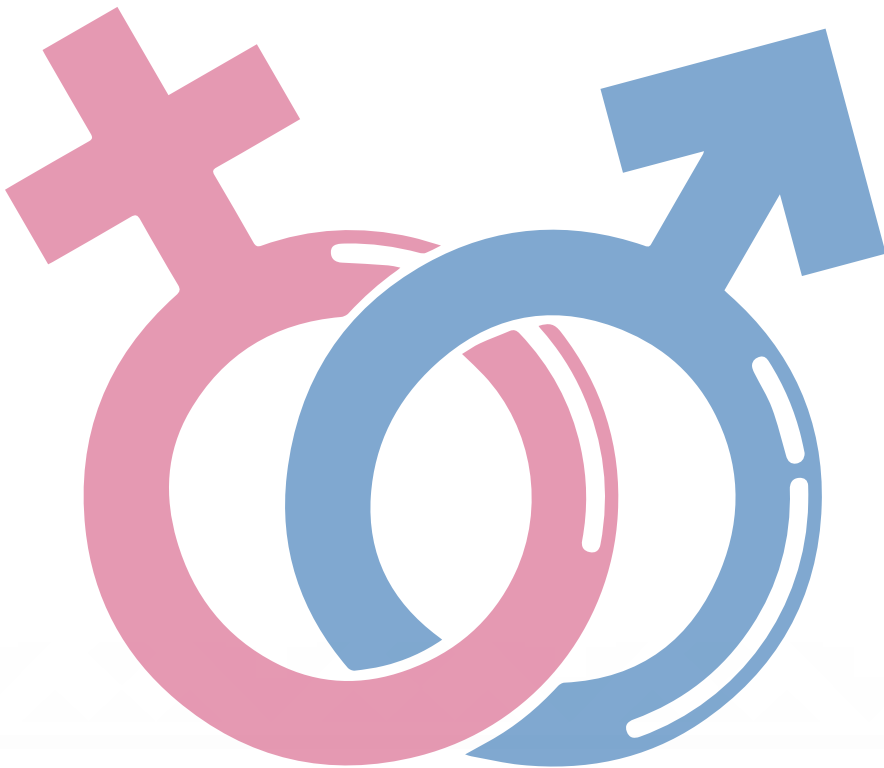
A thorough literature review was conducted to examine existing policies and frameworks on hate speech and violent extremism in relation to gender mainstreaming. The review assessed whether these policies address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of girls, boys, men, and women.

1.5 Structure of the Report

This report is structured into six comprehensive chapters: Chapter One sets the background and tone by demonstrating the context of radicalisation and dangerous speech in Kenya. Chapter Two comprehensively reviews the existing literature, synthesising current academic discourse that underpin the analysis. Chapter Three presents the findings, with a particular focus on a detailed examination of the phenomenon of dangerous speech, including how it is perceived across different communities in the counties of study. Chapter Four explores perceptions of radicalisation, analysing how it is understood and interpreted within diverse social contexts, and identifying the social and ideological drivers that make individuals susceptible to extremist influences. This Chapter also investigates the critical link between radicalisation and dangerous speech. Chapter Five critically evaluates existing policies addressing dangerous speech, radicalisation, and gender, highlighting strengths and gaps in current frameworks. Finally, Chapter Six concludes the report by presenting emerging issues, drawing key conclusions, and offering recommendations to inform future policy and intervention strategies.

1.6 Conclusion

This chapter has laid the groundwork for understanding critical aspects of gender, radicalisation and violent extremism, and hate speech within Kenya's socio-political landscape. Additionally, this chapter provides a clear rationale for why this study is essential, emphasising its role in fostering overall social cohesion and stability in the country. It also outlines the methodology to be adopted, ensuring a systematic and rigorous approach to the research. Furthermore, key terms and concepts are defined to provide clarity and context, enabling a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena under investigation. This chapter sets the stage for a detailed examination of the existing literature and policy landscapes, underlining the necessity for thorough assessment of how harmful narratives and societal biases contribute to the escalation of extremism and exclusion, particularly affecting vulnerable groups.





Chapter 2

**UNDERSTANDING RADICALISATION AND HATE
SPEECH THROUGH A GENDERED PERSPECTIVE**

2.0 Introduction

This Chapter delves into the impact of speech on societal cohesion and security, beginning with a clear delineation between hate speech and dangerous speech. It explores how such forms of speech are instrumental in fueling extremism and radicalisation, often by inciting divisions and hostilities within communities. Furthermore, it examines the critical role of gender within the broader context of peace and security, highlighting how gendered dynamics influence vulnerability to harmful narratives and shape participation in peacebuilding efforts. The Chapter also scrutinises existing national and international policy frameworks designed to combat hate/dangerous speech, violent extremism, and radicalisation, and the promotion of gender-inclusive approaches to peace and security.

2.1 Hate Speech and Dangerous Speech Defined

This section explores the meanings and characteristics of hate speech and dangerous speech, providing a clear understanding of their definitions, forms and impact on society.

2.1.1 Understanding Hate Speech

Hate speech remains a prominent feature of Kenya's political landscape. Often wielded as a weapon, individuals use it to galvanise support against opponents, frequently on ethnic grounds. One of the root causes of violence according to the Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission Report (TJRC) was the use of incitement in the public sphere by politicians or media personalities. The Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) further confirmed this through its report on 'On the Brink of the Precipice: A Human Rights Account of Kenya's Post-2007 Election Violence', revealing a causal link between incitement via hate speech and wanton violence (KNCHR, 2008). The consequences of hate speech are numerous and far-reaching. It directly fuels conflict especially when perpetrated by leaders or influential figures, depriving citizens of the right to live in peace and openly flourish within a harmonious society. Furthermore, hate speech fosters injustice by creating division, fueling discrimination, and undermining social cohesion, ultimately hindering progress and equality for all (Havard, 2017).

Although hate speech has grave consequences, it lacks a widely agreed-upon definition. It is criminalised under the Section 13 of the National Cohesion and Integration Act (NCI) CAP 7N, which records that what constitutes hate speech

is the use of threatening, abusive or insulting words, behavior or material which is threatening, abusive or insulting, with an intention to stir up ethnic hatred. The Act further defines ‘ethnic hatred’ as hatred against a group of persons defined by reference to color, race, nationality (including citizenship) or ethnic or national origins. The Election Offences Act (EO Act) of 2016 empowers the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) to prosecute hate speech and crimes of incitement within the context of an election³. The 2010 Constitution of Kenya establishes a balance between utterances of hate speech and the right to freedom of expression. Article 33 explicitly prohibits hate speech, stating that freedom of expression does not extend to incitement to violence, hate speech, and advocacy of hatred that constitutes ethnic incitement, vilification of others, or incitement to cause harm⁴.

In 2022, in recognition of the historical link between hate speech and large-scale violence particularly around elections, Kenya developed the ‘Kenya National Action Plan against Hate Speech’, to provide a comprehensive and coordinated approach to combat hate speech in the country. The Plan aims to synergise the efforts of various stakeholders involved in the fight against hate speech, while acting as an accountability tool for the public.

A closer examination of global research and legislative frameworks uncovers a broader spectrum of hate speech beyond ethnicity. For instance, the United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech, defines hate speech as ‘any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are, in other words, based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, color, descent, gender or other identity factor’ (UN, 2019). The Council of Europe emphasises hate speech as ‘all types of expression that incite, promote, spread or justify violence, hatred or discrimination against a person or group of persons, or that denigrates them, by reason of their real or attributed personal characteristics or status such as race, color, language, religion, nationality, national or ethnic origin, age, disability, sex, gender identity and sexual orientation’.

Worth noting is that gender does not feature as a basis for hate speech in current Kenyan legislation. While the NCI Act expressly addresses hate speech on ethnic grounds, there is no mention of hate speech with regard to gender discrimination. Alongside a potential expansion of the definition of the term, an

³Section 21, Election Offences (Act No. 37 of 2016)

⁴Article 33, Constitution of Kenya (2010)

emphasis on the concept of dangerous speech enables a greater focus on the gender dimension of the phenomenon. It also opens a path to redressing the lacuna between the treatment of ethnicity and of gender in Kenyan hate speech discourse.

2.1.2 Dangerous Speech Defined

The use of dangerous speech has a history that illustrates passages from rhetoric to the violence against which its power is directed (Holland, 2005). Introduced by Benesch Susan, dangerous speech refers to speech that has a reasonable chance of catalysing or amplifying violence by one group against another (Benesch et al., 2014). Dash et al. (2021) and Stranisci et al. (2022) further contend that dangerous speech is any form of expression such as speech, text, or images that can increase the risk that its audience will condone or participate in violence against members of another group. While it can inspire direct violence and create a climate in which violence becomes more likely, it can also inspire humiliation, discrimination, or increased polarisation. Although the boundary between ordinary and dangerous speech is fluid and contextual, it finds expression through diverse phenomena including hate speech (Strossen, 2018), incitement to violence, disinformation (Fallis, 2015), and a rhetoric of fear (Dash et al., 2021), aimed at convincing an audience that victims deserve their suffering. It addresses groups, not individuals, invoking or appealing to a common identity in its selection of an audience. Dangerous speech depersonalises its targets, reducing them to threats without the capacity for remorse or morality. Its speakers typically use coded, socio-psychological, and verbal tactics to elicit feelings of threat and grievance.

2.1.3 Legal Considerations of Dangerous Speech

Numerous international legal instruments such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), the Genocide Convention, and the Rome Statute establish standards for the regulation of dangerous speech (Gordon, 2013). Article 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR 1966)⁵ restricts speech ‘directed to propaganda for war and incitement to violence’. The same instrument also upholds the right to freedom of expression (Art. 19), which stipulates, inter alia, that propaganda for war and hate speech are not protected in any circumstance.

The prohibition of dangerous speech is also a fundamental principle of the laws of the European Union⁶. Several countries, including some democracies,

⁵ <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/ccpr.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.coe.int/en/web/freedom-expression/hate-speech>

have statutes and case law that criminalise dangerous speech and promote restrictions in that regard. The United States, for example, invokes laws such as the Smith Act, enacted in 1940, which criminalises advocating the overthrow of the government by force or violence, and the Domestic Security Enhancement Act of 2003, which includes measures to counteract extremist activities and hate-based violence. Similarly, Ethiopia cites the War Crimes Proclamation of 2021 as part of its legal framework to address issues related to hate speech and incitement to violence. This proclamation aims to prevent and prosecute war crimes, including acts of hate speech that may lead to conflict and violence. Tunisia's 2015 counter-terrorism law prohibits incitement and propagandising for violent extremist organisations. The country's 2017 legislation on combatting terrorism and violent extremism also prohibits expressions that contain glorification, promotion or encouragement of acts of terrorism or expressions that incite others to commit such acts (Dash et al., 2021).

2.2 The Role of Dangerous Speech in fueling Extremism

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2016) outlines an eight-point conceptual framework identifying key factors that can foster radical behavior and ultimately lead to violent extremist actions. These drivers include: the influence and consequences of global political dynamics; economic marginalisation and limited avenues for social advancement; political exclusion and the diminishing space for civic engagement; pervasive inequality, injustice, corruption, and human rights violations; widespread disillusionment with existing socio-economic and political systems; resistance to increasing societal diversity; governmental fragility and ineffective security mechanisms; and the evolving global culture coupled with the normalisation of violence in media and entertainment. Furthermore, individuals are frequently drawn into radical and ultimately violent movements through carefully orchestrated manipulation and associated socialisation processes, which can occur via various channels such as media, educational institutions, family units, and religious or cultural organisations. This susceptibility is often exacerbated by personal, emotional, or psychological vulnerabilities, including feelings of alienation, the quest for identity, experiences of injustice, the loss of a loved one, or past mistreatment or imprisonment. Furthermore, when the processes designed to cultivate social cohesion are unsuccessful, individuals may become more vulnerable and thus more inclined to adopt radical and violent beliefs and attitudes.

In the same vein, Badurdeen and Goldsmith (2018) observe that political exclusion, economic marginalisation and the mobilising power of religion are among the factors driving radicalisation in Kenya. Uneven development and historical grievances reinforce these vulnerabilities. Feddes, et al. (2023) notes that vulnerability becomes a precursor only when an already susceptible individual or community is intentionally targeted and engaged by an extremist recruiter or influencer. Although vulnerability is a precursor of radicalisation and recruitment, it is the final step that represents a critical tipping point in the process (Badurdeen & Goldsmith, 2018). Pastoral lifestyles and limited access to social amenities have limited the ability to participate fully in modern development. The associated social exclusion, political marginalisation, and weak governance structure have produced deep resentment and desperation, creating fertile ground for recruitment into violent extremist and terrorist activities.

Dehumanisation is recognised as a first step in processes of mass violence, with social exclusion and group separations reflecting the formation of radical social identities that facilitate violence by purveyors of dangerous speech (Dash et al., 2021). Radicalisation constitutes a multi-stage process through which an individual or group becomes increasingly receptive and, ultimately, committed to participation in violence. Benesch et al., (2014) argue that dangerous speech spreads strong, emotional messages that can influence people who are not yet involved in a conflict. This kind of speech makes violence seem necessary and justified, shaping people's beliefs about certain groups and events. It also often disconnects the messages from a person's previous political or social beliefs, making it easier for radical ideas to reach people from different backgrounds, while increasing the chance of more individuals being recruited into violence. Once recruited, individuals are more likely to perpetuate violence that the dangerous speech legitimised than peers who were not exposed to such messaging. Consequently, dangerous speech contributes actively to radicalisation processes that shapes social participation in violence.

The proliferation of dangerous speech is amplified by the ease of access of social media platforms, which provide fertile ground for propagating violence against specific groups (Mondal, Silva & Benevenuto, 2017). This digital amplification transforms dangerous rhetoric into a potent catalyst for radicalisation, linking directly to the incitement of violent acts and the creation of hostile environments for vulnerable populations (Pérez et al., 2023; Solovev & Pröllochs, 2022). Gaikwad et al. (2023) argue that this digital reach enables extremist elements to exploit social media for propaganda dissemination, radicalisation, and youth recruitment, thereby advancing extremism. The ease of access and anonymity

on these platforms make it easier for people to encounter extremist content, giving room for harmful ideas to be repeated and strengthened (Saleh et al., 2021). Wolbers et al. (2023) highlights digital spaces as primary incubators for extremist ideologies, by observing that 60% of violent extremist offenders influence online content during the process of radicalisation. This online exposure often leverages pre-existing individual vulnerabilities, such as unmet needs for belonging, dignity, or purpose, which extremist groups exploit by offering a sense of community and shared identity within their violent-justifying ideologies (Freilich, Chermak & Caspi, 2009; Wahlström & Törnberg, 2019).

In contexts where socio-political instability is high, latent discontent can quickly be transformed into overt expressions of extremism (Wahlström & Törnberg, 2019). Furthermore, younger demographics, particularly those aged 18-24, are disproportionately susceptible to such manipulation due to their heavy reliance on social media for political information, where misinformation and propaganda are rampant (NCIC, 2022).

2.3 Gender in the Context of Peace and Security

The safety and well-being of individuals, particularly marginalised groups, are paramount to sustainable peace (Nasu, 2011). Addressing the root causes of conflict, including gender inequality, and fostering inclusive governance structures is vital to ensure all segments of society are empowered (Shackel & Fiske, 2018). Traditional security paradigms overlooked the impact of conflict on the lives of women, including gender-based violence, displacement, and economic marginalisation, underscoring the need for a more comprehensive security framework that accounts for the diverse experiences of all individuals (Thomson, 2006). Chabikwa (2021) opines that women's engagement in peace processes is not monolithic. Rather, it is shaped by their specific social positions and complex power dynamics at play within their communities, prompting the need to tailor interventions that acknowledge the heterogeneity of women's experiences and their diverse contributions to peace and security.

2.4 Existing Policies on Violent Extremism/Radicalisation and Gender

The United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) S/RES/2178 denounced violent extremism and urged Member States to support initiatives focused on long-term solutions, particularly by addressing the root causes of radicalisation and violent extremism, which includes empowering young people. This resolution subsequently served as the foundation for the Secretary-General's Plan of Action, launched in January 2016.

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 2242, focusing on Women, Peace and Security, mandates a gender-sensitive analysis of the factors contributing to and the consequences of violent extremism. It also calls for greater engagement with women's organisations affected by this phenomenon. Furthermore, the resolution acknowledges that terrorism and violent extremism disproportionately affect the human rights of women and girls, impacting their health, education, and involvement in public life.

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 2250, dedicated to youth, peace, and security, acknowledges the growing concern of radicalisation and violent extremism, emphasising the necessity of addressing the circumstances and elements that contribute to their impact on young people. Furthermore, the Secretary-General's Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism highlights the crucial role of youth participation, leadership, and empowerment as central to the United Nations' overarching strategy and responses.

The European Union introduced its Counter-Terrorism Strategy in 2005, prioritising the advancement of sound governance, human rights, democratic principles, along with educational and economic prosperity, and active participation in resolving conflicts. This strategy also focused on addressing existing disparities and discrimination while fostering intercultural dialogue and long-term integration where suitable. Since its inception, this strategy has been revised severally, adapting to the changing trends, methods, and patterns of radicalisation⁷.

2.5 Conclusion

Existing literature relating to the concept of violent extremism/radicalisation and hate speech has revealed that hate speech is a form of dangerous speech. Policies, especially within the Kenyan context tend to be centered on hate speech, thereby failing to fully address various types of dangerous speech. Additionally, existing policies overlook the important role of gender in how dangerous speech and radicalisation are connected, yet these issues tend to affect men and women differently.

⁷ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52020DC0795>

A misty, ethereal landscape featuring a single, gnarled tree with golden-yellow foliage standing on a rocky outcrop. The background shows soft, hazy mountains and a light sky, creating a serene and somewhat somber atmosphere.

Chapter 3

**DANGEROUS SPEECH AND GENDER
VULNERABILITY**

3.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon of dangerous speech, examining how it is perceived by different communities and individuals. It discusses the various forms that dangerous speech can take, highlighting its manifestations within society. The chapter also identifies the platforms where such speech is most prevalent, offering insights into the environments that facilitate its spread. Additionally, it analyses the key propagators responsible for disseminating dangerous speech and explores the gender-specific vulnerabilities that make certain groups more susceptible to its impact.

3.1 Perceptions of Dangerous Speech

The study demonstrates a clear understanding among study participants of what constitutes dangerous speech. Across the nine counties studied, a consistent definition emerged, characterising dangerous speech as any utterance intended to incite conflict, create division, or provoke hostility based on gender, ethnicity, or religion. Dangerous speech was widely perceived as inflammatory, inciteful, or harmful language capable of generating tension and promoting hatred, particularly along political, ethnic, or gendered lines. In the words of a key informant,

Dangerous speech is the use of words, phrases or parables that can incite people to cause harm to others. Many times it's been used here in our country, in different contexts. For example, the 'madoadoa' phrase that was used sometime back is the kind of language that caused the 2007/2008 post-election violence. In Rwanda, we saw the Hutu calling the Tutsi 'cockroaches'. This kind of speech is dangerous. It starts with an individual, who makes utterances that make people from one community to fight a different community. It goes beyond words, to action against other people, then eventually it becomes a fully-blown community fight if not checked – KII Participant, Nairobi County

Participants highlighted that dangerous speech frequently dehumanises, mocks, or intimidates individuals or communities, thereby increasing the risk of violence or animosity toward specific groups. They identified its manifestations to include incitement, propaganda, and false information deliberately aimed at fostering animosity and hate among targeted populations. In their words, dangerous speech contributes to division, polarisation, and fearmongering, often portraying certain groups as undeserving of rights.

Dangerous speech refers to spoken or written words that have the potential to incite violence against a specific group, community, or race. It includes any expression that may provoke hostility or aggression, particularly along tribal, ethnic, or neighborhood divisions. It is speech or words that are directed to a vulnerable individual or group with the intention to incite or to influence an individual or a group of people to hold negative attitudes towards the other. It makes certain groups seem like they don't deserve rights, and that's how violence and hatred start – FGD Participant, Nairobi County

Worth noting is that participants viewed dangerous speech and hate speech as interchangeable due to their shared potential to incite emotion, trigger violence, and destabilise communities, demonstrating a fair grasp of the concept.

Dangerous speech is hate speech that we hear sometimes in everyday conversations because we have normalised it. I take it as incitement or public pronouncements meant to pit individuals against one another along gender lines, but it can also cut across generations, race, religion, and ethnicity, potentially leading to violence. The most common form is incitement where one ethnicity is incited against another, including religious groups - KII Participant, Kilifi County

3.2 Forms of Dangerous Speech

The study reveals four common forms of dangerous speech, deeply rooted in ethnic, political, gender, and religious intolerance. These forms of speech are recognised for their capacity to undermine peace and social cohesion. Participants opined that these forms of dangerous speech undermine peace and social cohesion in the country, particularly during elections, as was the case in the 2007, 2013, 2017, and 2022 General Elections. The said forms entrench prejudice into everyday discourse, fueling discrimination, violence, and marginalisation across different groups. Participants articulated the primary forms of dangerous speech as including:

3.2.1 Ethnic-based Dangerous Speech

A majority of participants considered ethnic-based dangerous speech as one of the most widespread and damaging, often involving the stereotyping of entire communities. It reinforces divisions and normalises social and political exclusion by perpetuating harmful labels and ethnic profiling such as associating an ethnic group with specific jobs and behaviors. Participants noted that it sometimes goes beyond politics and spills into economic and social life, thereby fostering deep-seated mistrust between community members as averred by an FGD participant:

*How many times have you heard people call Kikuyus thieves? We label each other on ethnic grounds all the time and those labels just deepen the mistrust and division between us. And it's not just about politics, these are statements we hear in everyday conversations...at work, or during social interactions. Haven't you heard people say all watchmen or farm laborers come from one tribe, like it's a fact? These kinds of labels and stories get passed around so casually, and over time, they become normal, making people accept discrimination as just part of life. This speech is dangerous, as it keeps stereotypes alive, and makes it harder for us to come together as one nation – **FGD Participant, Laikipia County***

3.2.2 Politically-instigated Dangerous Speech

Study participants averred that politically-instigated dangerous speech is characterised by divisive and manipulative language that frequently overlaps with ethnic, class, and regional identities. Particularly amplified during electoral cycles, participants noted that politicians and their supporters often employ this type of speech to divide communities and gain power, leading to instability and resentment that lasts beyond the said elections. In counties like Isiolo, inciting political language such as 'We will come back and fix them. Whom do they think they are? We will show them that it is our people who matter' was reported, illustrating how such rhetoric fuels fear and anticipatory violence among communities.

3.2.3 Gendered Dangerous Speech

According to study participants, this form of dangerous speech is deeply rooted in male chauvinism and rigid gender norms. It mostly targets women and girls, especially those in public, academic, or leadership positions. It seeks to delegitimise women's authority by portraying them as emotionally unstable or morally suspect, and reinforces stereotypes that limits their potential, thereby undermining their participation in peacebuilding, governance and public life as averred by one participants:

*'In my community it is so common to hear words like women are too emotional to lead; she is immoral based on how she dresses; women and girls can't be engineers...and such comments. Of course is meant to intimidate us, to limit us from gaining our full academic and professional potential. They say women are like children, not fit to lead or speak on serious matters. Such remarks don't just insult, they demean us. They make us question our competence and reinforce a culture that excludes us from decision-making roles. ' **KII Participant, Isiolo County***

3.2.4 Religious Intolerance

Evident in various counties such as Isiolo, Marsabit, Kilifi and Taita Taveta, religious intolerance manifests as dangerous speech that incites hostility based on religious identity. According to study participants, it often portrays certain groups as unworthy, dangerous, or spiritually inferior. Majorly perpetuated by religious/cultural leaders and community members, through the use of spiritual language to justify exclusion or violence, this form of speech is mainly witnessed during times of heightened tension. FGD discussions testify that such messages are particularly harmful when they come from respected spiritual authorities, lending them a perceived moral legitimacy as voiced by one participant:

When words such as a Kafir (non-Muslim) are used to insinuate that one is not fit to lead Muslims, then surely, such terms undermine the principles of religious coexistence and equality. What we have witnessed here, is that during periods of political or social unrest, religious rhetoric is very rampant and sometimes adopts violent undertones. Others will even say its God's punishment on this and that groups. It is worse if it comes from respected spiritual authorities, because of the place they are accorded in society' FGD, Isiolo County

3.3 Common Platforms where Dangerous Speech is Prevalent

Key informant interviews and focus group discussions revealed that dangerous speech is increasingly prevalent across a diverse range of platforms in Kenya, posing significant threats to social cohesion and peacebuilding efforts. Participants identified both traditional and digital spaces, as well as emerging digital threats, as primary channels for the dissemination of inflammatory content. The most commonly cited platforms include social media platforms, traditional media, public gatherings.

3.3.1 Social Media Platforms

Social media platforms emerged as the most dominant channels for the spread of dangerous speech. Specifically, WhatsApp, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, and YouTube were frequently mentioned as environments where dangerous speech and incitement flourish across the various counties of study. WhatsApp was highlighted as particularly problematic due to its encrypted and unregulated nature, allowing dangerous content to circulate rapidly through broadcast lists, anonymous forwarding, and private groups. Participants noted a surge in disinformation and incitement on WhatsApp during the 2022 General Elections. Additionally, meme culture, viral videos, hashtags, and coded language often disguise dangerous speech as humor or satire on these platforms, making detection and regulation challenging.

The proliferation of creative arts, usually through cultural and creative platforms, including music, poetry, and comedy, were also discussed as vehicles for dangerous speech. Participants averred that these have become commonplace, particularly with the explosion of the digital space, subtly embedding divisive narratives, and making them difficult to critique due to their entertainment value or symbolic framing. Participants observed that when dangerous ideas are presented through humor or art, they can spread quickly, particularly among young audiences, and contribute to the normalisation and internalisation of harmful stereotypes. A youth from Nairobi explained, ‘Some artists joke about tribes and politics, but those jokes hurt. Some of the things you see on TikTok, you just wonder why some people take some jokes too far’.

Worth noting is that Artificial Intelligence (AI) presents an emerging and growing digital threat in the fight against dangerous speech. Participants expressed increasing concern over AI-generated content, deep fakes, and digital manipulation, which are used to weaponise and fabricate stories, dehumanise opponents, and incite violence. In the words of a participant, ‘What radio did in Rwanda, social media is doing today, only that it’s now faster and worse’. These technologies create believable, yet false narratives that are difficult to verify and spread rapidly, amplifying dangerous speech at unprecedented speed and scale.

3.3.2 Traditional Media

The study reveals that mainstream and vernacular media also play a significant role in shaping public discourse and, at times, fueling dangerous narratives. Vernacular FM stations were noted as highly influential in rural areas due to their communication in local languages and the trust they command from listeners. Participants noted that while these stations have the potential to promote peace, they have also been used to incite division. Television and newspapers were also scrutinised for amplifying inflammatory political rhetoric during live debates or opinion segments, with defamation cases frequently experienced on print media.

‘I have been keenly observing how news is reported nowadays even in our newspapers. In fact there is one notorious one where even the heading on the front page of the newspaper alone is enough to send people to the streets. Inciteful is an understatement. But that’s not enough. Have you listened to our commentators on TV? These talk shows. Why bring people there to abuse each other, spew hate and even pit communities against each other? If we continue like this yet we are slowly nearing the electioneering period, then we will be in for it’. **KII Participant, Kisumu County**

3.3.3 Public Gatherings and Informal Settings

Both official and informal public events serve as offline flashpoints for dangerous speech. Political rallies and campaign platforms were identified as spaces where key leaders often make inflammatory remarks targeting specific communities or individuals, with audience cheers reinforcing harmful animosity. According to study participants, the normalisation of such speeches in these settings has led to the acceptance of divisive rhetoric as part of political engagement as voiced by an FGD participant:

Politicians are very notorious especially in political rallies and campaign platforms, where they often make very negative comments about a certain groups or people. But do you know what the people do, we cheer them on, reinforcing harmful communal animosity. In fact we have normalised such negative speeches so much so that we even glorify the politicians that do them, not knowing that we're the same people creating an environment where divisive rhetoric is accepted as part of political engagement' **FGD Participant, Nairobi County**

Data also testifies that dangerous speech is prevalent in everyday community interactions across various social gatherings such as churches, mosques, markets, funerals, weddings, and other social events. In these settings, prejudiced comments are sometimes dismissed as harmless banter, yet they powerfully shape attitudes, especially among children and youth, contributing to the intergenerational transmission of dangerous speech.

This kind of speech isn't just heard in debates or public meetings, it's everywhere. Even in everyday conversations at the church, the market, even at weddings or funerals. In fact, politicians here are notorious in using very bad language in forums like this. Of course in most cases people laugh it off, or dismiss it as just joking or harmless talk, but those comments can really shape how others see different groups. What we sometimes forget is that even our kids are in some of these forums, and what kids see is what they do. We cannot just talk anyhow, in the name of teasing each other, yet we end up passing this bad manners down through generations. Even local elders and community leaders, need to be very cautious because we pass down our bad stereotypes particularly during dispute resolution spaces and cultural ceremonies, my community is known for negatively targeting women, through their words. This needs to stop. **FGD Participant, Samburu County.**

3.4 Propagators of Dangerous Speech

The study identified several key actors consistently highlighted by participants as central to the propagation of dangerous and speech across the nine counties. These individuals and groups including politicians, community elders and opinion leaders, religious and cultural leaders, and media personalities spread narratives either intentionally or unintentionally, contributing to division and extremism.

3.4.1 The Politicians Class

The study consistently identifies the political class as the primary perpetrators, frequently exploiting tribal, religious, and socio-economic divisions to gain political support. According to study participants, politicians employ divisive rhetoric to incite supporters against rivals or minority communities, stirring fear, suspicion, and animosity. They noted that politicians ‘ride on tribalism to win votes’ and ‘use hate speech to divide communities and gain power’ ultimately weaponising identity and grievances for electoral gain.

3.4.2 Community Elders and Opinion Leaders

Beyond politicians, community elders and opinion leaders also play a significant role in propagating divisive narratives. Participants noted that while their speeches may not always be overtly inflammatory, they leverage their cultural authority to reinforce harmful stereotypes, particularly in disputes over resources such as land and leadership positions. Their influence can legitimise exclusionary views, subtly entrenching systemic exclusion and escalating local tensions as averred by a participant:

‘It is common in my community to hear elders and other respected leaders sometimes say who deserves land, jobs, or leadership positions. It’s like they sit down somewhere and agree and push it down our throats. Sometimes they use very unfriendly words against us women, often suggesting that we are not fit to hold certain positions. Sadly, through their comments, others are left out’

KII Participant, Marsabit County

3.4.3 Religious Leaders

Study participants openly appreciated the role of many religious leaders in promoting peace. However, they observed that some of them misuse religious language to justify exclusion or hostility as they tend to interpret conflict and suffering through a spiritual lens, thereby portraying certain groups as morally inferior or deserving of punishment. Such messaging is particularly dangerous due to its spiritual authority, making it difficult for communities to question or resist underlying narratives of hate as is the case of residents in Taita Taveta:

Here, people revere religion so much that whatever is said by a religious leader is taken as gospel truth. We don't question. We don't doubt. But sometimes the things they say, you even wonder because they use their language to divide rather than unite' **FGD Participant, Taita Taveta County**

3.4.4 Youth and Social Media Influencers

The study reveals that digitally active youth and social media influencers, especially those aligned with political movements, significantly contribute to the spread of dangerous speech. Data testifies that they frequently use social media platforms to disseminate such content, often under anonymous or false identities. Their digital fluency makes them influential, yet difficult to trace. Through viral posts, memes, and inflammatory commentary, these actors amplify divisive messages that can spill into offline violence and unrest, particularly in polarised seasons and environments as claimed by one participant:

'On Facebook, people say things they can't say face-to-face. Some are so dangerous, they can literally tear a country apart. And do you know why they do that? Simply because they don't use their real names. It's dangerous and hard to trace' **FGD Participant, Kisumu County**

Further, the study highlights a novel form of dangerous speech termed 'kusalimiwa' which reflects a significant shift in the discourse surrounding governance and civic engagement. Traditionally, politicians have actively played the role of pitting communities against each other. However, recent observations indicate that young people, driven by a desire to hold duty bearers accountable, are increasingly demanding their rights. While born from a quest for justice, this trend sometimes oversteps ethical boundaries, leading to the exposure of personal details and harassment of others including politicians' family members, not only exacerbating tensions, but also posing as a risk of fueling violence and deepening divisions.

3.4.5 Media Personalities

While the study augments several forms of media as platforms for propagating dangerous speech, it also identifies media personalities as key contributors who may incite or encourage such conduct. According to study participants, some media personalities provide space for inflammatory remarks without sufficient moderation or correction. In the words of an FGD participant in Nairobi,

'Some media guys play a big role in encouraging the use of dangerous speech on our televisions and even radios. If you watch/listen carefully, a lot is said during call-ins. Yet, the host doesn't always correct false or hateful remarks. Instead they laugh it off, encourage people to tear each other apart simply for following and

viewership. Do you know the damage this creates? It further entrenches societal divisions along ethnic, political, religious, and gendered lines' **FGD Participant, Nairobi County**

3.5 Gender and Vulnerability of Dangerous Speech

A primary focus of this study was to determine the susceptibility of both men and women/boys and girls to being targeted by dangerous speech. Findings allude to the fact that both men and women/ boys and girls are subjected to hate and dangerous speech, though the specific forms, underlying motives, and resultant impacts vary considerably, and are shaped by societal expectations, cultural stereotypes, and political dynamics. While the analysis of dangerous speech often prioritises its effects on women and girls, this study underscores its equally far-reaching and detrimental consequences for men and boys.

3.5.1 Effects of Dangerous Speech on Men and Boys

Study participants opine that for men and boys, dangerous speech perpetuates harmful stereotypes, discourages emotional expression, reinforces rigid masculinity, puts pressure on men/boys to engage in violence, limits their engagement in peacebuilding initiatives, and contributes to intergenerational cycles of exclusion as explained below:

3.5.1.1 Reinforcement of Rigid Masculinity

Participants across the nine counties demonstrated the use of dangerous speech to reinforce narrow definitions of masculinity, often portraying empathy and collaboration as weaknesses. Men who advocate for peace or support women's leadership often face ridicule and are labeled as traitors to traditional norms. An FGD participant in Nairobi provided examples of the use of phrases such as 'Wacha umama' (Stop acting like a woman) or 'siku hizi wamama waliacha kuzaa wanaume' (Women no longer give birth to real men), commonly used in everyday discourse to mock men who exhibit emotion, doubt, or vulnerability. This pressure compels men to demonstrate their masculinity through aggression, emotional fortitude, or financial dominance, often at considerable personal cost.

3.5.1.2 Pressure towards Violence in Conflict Settings

In conflict-affected areas such as the pastoral counties of Laikipia, Isiolo, Marsabit and Samburu, men are expected to fulfill roles as warriors and protectors, with limited avenues for emotional or psychological support. Data testifies that this expectation pushes them towards roles that prioritise violence over dialogue, perpetuating cycles of external aggression and internal turmoil. Most participants from the aforementioned counties noted that young men/ boys from marginalised communities are pressured to retaliate when their

communities are attacked, with dangerous speech used to incite emotions and portray violence as a sign of strength. Failure to respond aggressively results in the use of slurs such as: ‘If you don’t fight for your community, you’re not a real man’ or ‘can you really say you’re circumcised when you’re this fearful? If you can’t fight we will remove our dresses and skirts and put on your trousers instead’, implying a challenge to their masculinity.

3.5.1.3 Exclusion from Leadership and Decision-Making

A closer examination of the findings reveal that ethnic and clan-based discrimination, exacerbated by dangerous speech, leads to the exclusion of certain men from leadership and decision-making spaces. This is exemplified in counties like Isiolo, where dangerous speech intersects with ethnic hierarchies and clannism to marginalise entire groups. Study participants demonstrated that men from less dominant clans may be subjected to slurs like ‘children of ghosts’ (Nyap) which aim to delegitimise their presence and political participation. One participant highlighted this reality,

‘Leadership and peace talks are for the senior clans, and they tell us as much. Point blank. In black and white. That the rest of us are inferior and don’t deserve to participate in such sensitive talks. So we are left out. You will not even know when decisions were made. And if you dare open your mouth to ask, you will be asked who are you to ask? We already decided’ KII Participant, Isiolo County

According to study participants, this exclusion not only breeds resentment among different male communal members, but also limits the diversity and effectiveness of peace processes. Furthermore, the lack of inclusive participation diminishes the range of perspectives and insights needed to develop durable and comprehensive peace initiatives. As a result, peace efforts become less representative and less likely to address the root causes of conflict, ultimately compromising the sustainability and success of peacebuilding endeavors within the community.

3.5.2 Effects of Dangerous Speech on Women and Girls

A majority of participants from key informant interviews and focus group discussions across the nine counties consistently highlighted the severe impacts of dangerous speech on women. Participants noted that women are disproportionately subjected to stigmatisation and discrimination, which significantly impedes their participation and safety in public and political spheres. Other effects include exclusion from leadership, manipulation and exploitation, as well as vulnerability to violence.

3.5.2.1 Stigmatisation and Discrediting

There is strong evidence from participants across the nine counties of study that women are frequently stigmatised as weak, immoral, and undeserving of respect, with single women facing even greater prejudice. A section of participants especially from the pastoralist communities of Laikipia, Marsabit, Isiolo, and Samburu identified cultural norms as a significant factor in shaping the nature and impact of dangerous speech directed at women. These norms adversely restrict the participation of women in public forums typically dominated by men, highlighting how deeply entrenched traditions can silence women in crucial decision-making spaces. Underlying these dynamics are longstanding patriarchal structures and cultural gender norms that often depict women as unsuited for leadership roles.

'Men in my community do not believe that a woman, and worse if she's single, can lead them. To them, women are weak beings who shouldn't be allowed to lead. In fact, we scandalise the women who dare to contest, and you will even hear sexual allegations about them. It is worse if they are vying for a seat other than woman rep, as those are reserved for them. Unfortunately it is part of our culture and you will hear men, and even some women, using very bad words against them. Words that am not even comfortable uttering here' **KII Participant, Samburu County**

3.5.2.2 Vulnerability to Violence and Emotional Destabilisation

The study reveals that during periods of political or ethnic tension, women's vulnerability is often weaponised, making them strategic targets. Some study participants pointed out that dangerous speech directed at women during these volatile moments not only exposes them to verbal attacks, but also to physical violence and sexual assault. Such speech serves to emotionally destabilise the women and undermine their safety.

3.5.2.3 Systematic Exclusion from Leadership

Different participants across the nine counties shared stories of systematic exclusion from party positions or leadership structures, despite women being qualified, due to gendered stereotypes. The stereotypes, which are expressed in the form of dangerous speech, portray women as weak, overly emotional, or easily swayed, thereby undermining their leadership potential and limiting their participation in public life. In the words of a participant:

'It's not really a fair space, actually. If you just want to be a mobiliser, you will be used, even by MCAs, but the moment you declare your ambition to rise, you will be fought and abused. I suffered. They came up with scandals that were not even true, and I was axed from party nominations through a council of elders meeting, which is largely male dominated. Am yet to recover from the effects to-date. The struggle is exhausting and often demoralising' **KII Participant, Marsabit County**

The study highlights how this form of gendered dangerous speech manifests not only through offline stereotypes but also through cyberbullying and digital harassment, significantly curbing women's representation in leadership roles and their involvement in public spaces. Focus group discussants in Nairobi, in particular, noted that social media heightens the scale and anonymity of such attacks, leading to widespread digital self-censorship among women. Many recount incidents where opponents hire 'keyboard warriors' to intimidate and bully women online, fostering an environment of fear and silencing. They opined that this form of online harassment discourages women from engaging fully in public debates or political discussions, as they fear backlash and social reprisals.

When I was in active politics, most of my female colleagues quit simply because of being trolled on social media. The kind of language that is used on you especially if you're a woman is just something else. And if you happen to be single? Your male colleagues will literally trample on you and target you with very harsh words. You will even be asked how you can lead if you can't keep a man. Those who are not strong enough just gave up and quit' **KII Participant, Nairobi County**

On the overall, the study noted distinct patterns in how dangerous speech targets each gender. FGD and KII opinions point to the fact that men are frequently portrayed as aggressors or instruments of violence, while women are often targeted in ways that demean their character and reinforce their vulnerabilities.

3.5.3 Factors Contributing to Vulnerability of Different Genders

Interviews with key informants and discussions in focus group forums consistently identified a mix of structural, cultural, and socio-political factors that fuel dangerous speech in Kenya. These factors differentially impact men and women, reinforcing gendered stereotypes and promoting exclusion, incitement, and harm.

3.5.3.1 Patriarchal Norms and Gender Stereotypes

Findings allude to the fact that men are often framed as aggressors or failures, with speech weaponised to manipulate or marginalise them as they are

expected to embody dominance. Any deviation from this masculine ideal, such as advocating for gender equality or displaying emotional vulnerability, is met with mockery. For example, a man supporting a woman is often perceived as weak. For women, traditional patriarchal structures frame them as emotional, irrational, or incapable of leadership, making them vulnerable to ridicule and exclusion, particularly when they aspire to public or political roles. The use of phrases like ‘women are like children’ trivialise femininity and normalise abuse, undermining their participation in public spaces.

3.5.3.2 Political Manipulation and Electoral Competition

Participants across the nine counties voiced their dissatisfaction over how young men are frequently mobilised by political actors and exposed to speech that glorifies aggression and tribal loyalty, pushing them towards radicalisation and political violence through phrases like ‘if you don’t fight for your tribe, you’re not a real man’. For women, especially candidates and activists, the use of sexualised or moral attacks such as ‘she only got the position because she slept with someone’ are used to discredit their integrity.

3.5.3.3 Cultural and Religious Beliefs

The study reveals that traditional rites and views of masculinity more so in the pastoralist counties of Laikipia, Isiolo, Marsabit and Samburu, create hierarchies that exclude men who do not conform. Participants from Kisumu County voiced their concerns regarding the negative views of masculinity that create hierarchies and exclude those who do not conform, mainly through statements such as ‘Luo men can’t lead, as they are uncircumcised’. According to them, such statements reflect how cultural myths serve to marginalise entire communities. For women, societal norms, often reinforced by misinterpretations of religious texts, restrict their participation in decision-making and justify their exclusion from public roles. A case in point is in where religious teachings are misinterpreted as ‘women should not speak in public or lead, or an unmarried woman should not lead’.

3.5.3.4 Weak Legal Frameworks and Impunity

Study participants noted a lacuna in the current legal framework in Kenya specifically in addressing dangerous speech targeted at women. This deficiency, coupled with a perceived lack of enforcement and accountability, contributes to a culture of impunity for perpetrators. As highlighted by a Nairobi participant in key informant interviews, ‘No one is ever arrested for what they say about women, even if it incites violence’, which allows them to engage in dangerous speech against women, as they know that no punitive action will be taken against them. Similar to women, men are affected by the lack of enforcement

and accountability for dangerous speech, particularly when it targets men in rival communities, perpetuating cycles of retaliation and mistrust. A case in point is where men and boys in pastoral communities are incited to perform attacks and counter-attacks against each other, usually in the pretext of cultural norms.

3.5.3.5 Media and Misinformation

Media platforms, particularly those lacking editorial control, contribute to the normalisation and spread of dangerous narratives that impact men, and amplify stereotypes targeting women. Participants pointed out some mainstream and community media, including radio call-ins and political talk shows, which serve as platforms where unfiltered, inflammatory content thrives.

'You will even hear some radio hosts portray men and even women very negatively during their shows. And sometimes I wonder if we have editorial control in this country. In fact the morning shows are notorious. Some depict men so negatively, you even wonder what their motive is. Of course all these pass as entertainment. But there's more. It is reinforcing and entrenching very negative stereotypes even to our young people who are so innocent' **KII Participant, Busia County**

3.6 Conclusion

Dangerous speech and hate speech in Kenya are deeply embedded within both traditional and emerging platforms, perpetuated by a range of actors who exploit existing tensions and information gaps to advance divisive agendas. This chapter reveals that this kind of speech is deeply embedded within both traditional and emerging platforms, perpetuated by a range of actors who exploit existing tensions and information gaps to advance divisive agendas. These dynamics affect men, boys, women, and girls alike, with their effects often reinforced by existing stereotypes.



Chapter **4**

**DANGEROUS SPEECH, RADICALISATION,
AND GENDER VULNERABILITY**

4.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive examination of the perceptions surrounding radicalisation, exploring how it is understood and interpreted by various communities. It delves into the key drivers that facilitate radicalisation, analysing both social and ideological factors that contribute to individuals' susceptibility to extremist influences. Furthermore, the chapter examines the nexus between radicalisation and dangerous speech, highlighting how harmful narratives and rhetoric serve as both catalysts and proliferators of radicalisation.

4.1 Perceptions of Radicalisation

Across the diverse communities examined, key informant interviews and focus group discussions consistently characterised radicalisation as a gradual and systematic transformation of beliefs. This shift is largely influenced by an individual's vulnerability and susceptibility to manipulation. Participants generally understood radicalisation as a progression of ideological indoctrination that ultimately rejects mainstream norms and may legitimise violence. This perspective underscores radicalisation not merely as a change in belief but as a pathway shaped by systemic neglect, the cultural glorification of violence, and the erosion of constructive dialogue. Participants' perceptions of radicalisation included:

4.1.1 Slow and Systemic Shift

Radicalisation was frequently described as a slow and systematic shift in beliefs, often driven by vulnerability and manipulation. Several participants emphasised that this transformation often begins subtly, with individuals exposed to certain narratives or ideologies that exploit their vulnerabilities. These narratives, which might initially seem harmless, can gradually escalate into more extreme beliefs, especially when reinforced by peer groups, social networks, or online platforms. Participants underscored that this process is often covert, making it difficult for communities and authorities to detect early signs of radicalisation. They warned that once individuals are radicalised, they may become more prone to accepting and spreading dangerous speech, which further fuels tensions and violence. Overall, the insights reveal that radicalisation is a complex, layered process that requires early intervention and careful community engagement to prevent its escalation as averred by an FGD participant who framed it as:

'The process of changing someone's mind to be radical using some factors. It is a transformation that happens without you even knowing. Sometimes you are told things by someone who is so close...someone you trust and by the time you realise, you are so deep into some beliefs that don't even make sense. I can say it's a very complex thing. It's like it has no begin or end. You just find yourself believing something or someone and you can't explain how it happened' **FGD Participant, Samburu County**

There was a consensus among participants from the coastal counties of Taita Taveta and Kilifi that this process is often carried out through the distortion of spiritual and religious beliefs, which has been identified as a significant root cause of radicalisation. A notable example is the emerging case of Shakahola II that occurred in Kwa Binzaro area, Kilifi County, where individuals were apprehended by police after luring people into a religious cult. This follows the initial Shakahola incident, in which many individuals were deceived into fasting to death under the false pretenses of religious salvation. Others had been ideologically groomed by sect leaders to sell assets and avoid medical treatment in favor of prayer and other religious beliefs.

As we speak, there are already six bodies that have been discovered at Kwa Binzaro. And remember, we have barely recovered from the Shakahola case. Then you wonder, what really happen? How does one get convinced to the extent of starving themselves and their children to death? Why? Why have we distorted religion so much? And our people here are so vulnerable...you will find someone being convinced to give up their... everything...literally. They don't take their children to school, don't go to hospital and just refuse to eat in the name of waiting for Jesus. It is slow...it is smart...it happens in a way that the victim can't even detect. Sometimes by the time one realises it's too late. **KII, Participant, Kilifi County**

4.1.2 Progression of Ideological Indoctrination

In urban settings like Nairobi, participants viewed radicalisation as a progression of ideological indoctrination that eventually leads to the rejection of mainstream norms and the legitimisation of violence. A participant in Nairobi defined it as 'a process through which individuals or groups adopt extreme beliefs that justify or promote violence'. A recurring theme was the heightened vulnerability of youth to radicalisation, with one participant noting, 'people take advantage of someone's situation and convert them to extremist ideologies. And it's not easy to realise because you're so engrossed in your own issues'.

4.1.3 Contextualisation through Cultural and Traditional Lenses

In areas like Samburu County, radicalisation was often understood through existing cultural and traditional practices. For instance, the expectation for ‘morans’ (young men) to engage in banditry as a sign of maturity was cited as a tradition that could transform into organised violence. According to one KII participant,

‘Morans are so valued in this community, you’d think they are small gods. They are not even supposed to be seen eating by women. And they are expected to protect the community. They engage in banditry as a rite and tradition, and even the girls admire them. This tradition transforms into organised violence when young men gang up, receive weapons, and steal livestock from neighbouring communities’
KII Participant, Samburu County

There was consensus across the pastoral counties where cultural banditry is prevalent that radicalisation is seen as part of a socio-cultural ecosystem, nurtured by systemic trauma, misbeliefs, and deep-seated traditions that glorify violence, as voiced by a participant:

Here, I can say we celebrate violence...in a way. Women sing and celebrate the young men who bring in herds, and this fuels more raids. And if they don’t do it, we call them useless and unable to act like real men do. It’s time that we change our cultures. In Turkana, the youth are socialised to believe all animals belong to them, which justifies theft and escalates conflict
KII Participant, Samburu County

4.1.4 Connection to Violent Extremism

Most participants viewed radicalisation as a precursor to violent extremism, where extreme beliefs ultimately translate into action. Violent extremism was generally defined as ‘the use or threat of violence to advance ideological, political, religious, or social objectives’. In Nairobi, this was exemplified by urban criminal gangs and political incitement rooted in trauma, where individuals have engaged in acts of violence through participating in Al-Shabaab attacks in various parts of the country. In the words of a KII participant,

‘Violent extremism is full-blown killing and attacks...It comes about as a result of radicalisation. Where you have been slowly made to believe in certain things and have now come to the point of actualising it. Those criminal gangs that attack and kill people...and even those that have engaged in Al-Shabaab attacks in this country before. We have had many cases...it just started as a belief...and one day it was full-blown and the individual becomes violent and engages in violent attacks’.
KII Participant, Nairobi County

4.1.5 Subtle and Coded Nature

Radicalisation was also perceived as not always overt, but frequently insidious and covert in nature. This occurs through the use of coded language, actions and phrases that are weaponised to influence political and other beliefs and foster ideological rigidity, particularly in the lead-up to elections. A case in point is when large crowds often rally behind specific politicians and engage in certain acts that they may not fully understand or readily explain, driven by underlying radicalised messages that are embedded within seemingly harmless expressions.

4.2 Perceived Drivers/Root Causes of Radicalisation

Key informant interviews and focus group discussions have illuminated the drivers and root causes of radicalisation, revealing the socio-economic, political, cultural, and systemic factors that collectively create environments conducive to extremist ideologies. Participants consistently highlighted that radicalisation is not a singular phenomenon but rather a product of converging vulnerabilities and failures within society. The analysis below categorises these drivers into several thematic clusters, reflecting the nuanced perceptions of the study participants.

4.2.1 Economic Hardship and Social Disintegration

Unemployment, poverty, and idleness render many, particularly youth, susceptible to recruitment with false promises of financial stability and purpose. This is exemplified by the Marachi Boys domiciled in Busia County (dubbed jobless), who were lured by lack of employment opportunities. The attraction of instant wealth, especially among disillusioned youth, further escalates their vulnerability, as traditional pathways to success appear slow or unattainable. Compounding this is widespread idleness and boredom, which drive young people to seek excitement, identity, or belonging in dangerous spaces. Systemic corruption and impunity further erode trust in institutions, breeding resentment and catalysing radical tendencies.

4.2.2 Religious and Ideological Drivers

The manipulation of religious teachings and spiritual exploitation by radical leaders contribute significantly to radicalisation, especially among vulnerable populations. Distorted theological teachings are used to legitimise extremist behavior and reinforce extremist narratives under the guise of faith. In Taita Taveta, for instance, participants voiced concerns over the inability to question religious leaders who are revered as voiced by a participant:

'Religious radicalisation thrives in this county due to strong faith-based cultures, unquestioned doctrine, and economic desperation. People here value their religious leaders so much, sometimes I think they are even wonder if they worship them or worship their creator. Everything they say is gospel truth. Even when they are wrong, no one would dare question. Well, I think it's because people are so desperate, so beaten by poverty and life's struggles, they have to find solace for their problems. In fact, many locals affected by the Shakahola cult tragedy came from this region, lured by promises of salvation amid poverty. They ended up dying, most starved themselves to death' **KII Participant, Taita Taveta County**

4.2.3 Political and Governance Related Drivers

Political manipulation and systemic governance failures exacerbate feelings of exclusion and mistrust in public institutions. Inciteful speech from political figures escalate tensions and fuel communal animosity, while weak administrative structures and a perceived absence of justice create fertile ground for radical ideologies. As one participant in an FGD in Nairobi articulated, regarding systemic injustice and profiling:

*I just want to be a good citizen, but because I was treated otherwise by the system, I feel like I want to join Al-Shabaab. One time I was traveling to Garissa to attend a friend's wedding. We were stopped by the police and I was the only one ordered out. They asked me to produce my ID, but I said I have been trying to get it in vain. No one believed me. I was treated like a terrorist. Literally. The vehicle was ordered to leave and I was left there. And I was really mishandled. And they kept laughing and laughing at me. I ended up in police custody and by the time I was released I was just fed up. What country is this? You can't even get the services that you deserve as a citizen? You try to live your life as a good citizen and you're mishandled. I have never gotten over it. If I meet those people who recruit people into Al-Shabaab, I'll gladly join. Why shouldn't I? Am tired'. **FGD Participant, Nairobi County***

This sentiment underscores how deep-seated grievances and a sense of alienation can propel individuals towards radical pathways.

4.2.4 Historical Injustices and Marginalisation

Deep-rooted grievances and systemic exclusion, particularly in marginalised regions, act as catalysts for radicalisation. Unresolved historical injustices contribute to regional resentment and calls for autonomy, as seen in instances of massacres or land dispossession. Additionally, there is a growing identity crisis and sense of alienation among the youth. Many young people report feeling unheard, marginalised, and disconnected from national discourse, enhancing their vulnerability to radical ideologies and extremist narratives as averred by one youth:

'they don't listen to us. Decisions are made up there. Ours is to consume. Simply being told to do this and that. And let me tell you...even when they invite us to those meetings, it's like our recommendations are not considered. You will just hear later that this and that happened, then you wonder why they wasted time inviting you in the first place'. FGD Participant, Nairobi County

4.2.5 Drugs, Substance, Peer Pressure, and Psychological Vulnerability

A combination of behavioral, psychological, and social factors drives youth radicalisation. Substance abuse, traumatic experiences, the desire for revenge or social acceptance, and the absence of healing and support systems push individuals toward radical ideologies. Social media and peer influence further accelerate this process by exposing young individuals to extremist content.

'The kind of pressure that is on social media is on another level. You see your friends making it in life, living cool, and you're here looking so miserable. So you also have to fit in, right? So you learn...you ask...you copy what they do. Sometimes showing that you also know how to take those drugs looks cool. Otherwise people will laugh at you and you will be left out. And it's such a bad feeling' FGD Participant, Nairobi County

4.2.6 Ethnic and Identity-Based Issues

Ethnic polarisation, clannism, and tribalism contribute to social fragmentation and reinforce divisions. Ethnic profiling and the distribution of socio-economic benefits along ethnic lines entrench exclusion and contribute to inter-group tensions. A growing identity crisis and a sense of alienation among youth also enhances their vulnerability to radical ideologies as opined by a participant:

Ethnic issues in this country have divided us for far too long. We have even shed blood. But it is worse now because like in this county, we have even gone all the way down to the clan level. And it is sad because it reinforces divisions, with leaders always at the forefront of profiling and entrenching exclusion and contributing to inter-group tensions. And you know what? It's getting worse because we now have an identity crisis with the Gen-Zs feeling they have been alienated and segregated for far too long. All these enhances their vulnerability to radical ideologies. KII Participant, Isiolo County

4.2.7 Misinformation and Illiteracy

Limited access to education and the prevalence of misinformation are key enablers of radicalisation, particularly in marginalised communities. Illiteracy and low levels of awareness make individuals vulnerable to manipulation and more likely to accept false narratives, extremist ideologies, and propaganda

without scrutiny. In environments where educational content is inaccessible or illiteracy levels are high, harmful beliefs can spread unchecked as voiced by most participants in the coastal counties of Kilifi and Taita Taveta where an KII participant said,

'The levels of illiteracy here are extremely high. And that's why our people are so vulnerable to these ideologies. Coz how would you explain that one would fast themselves and their children to death? We need to talk about these things and educate our people. But as long as these discussions are happening in boardrooms, the information will not reach the mwananchi on the ground who continues to be manipulated so easily' **KII Participant, Kilifi County**

4.2.8 External Factors

The volatility of neighboring regions contributes to a spillover effect, amplifying insecurity and ideological contagion. Kenya's closeness to conflict-prone regions such as Somalia, Ethiopia, and other parts of East Africa makes it particularly vulnerable to the spillover of radical narratives and ideological contagion. These external environments create a fertile ground for the diffusion of extremist ideas, which can be absorbed by susceptible communities within Kenya. The porous borders, cross-border movements, and socio-economic linkages facilitate the flow of radical narratives, often normalising such ideologies. As a result, regional instability directly influences local dynamics of radicalisation, as voiced by one of the participants:

I have been there. At the center of it. Don't even ask me how I got there, all I know is that I was lured to join. You know the way you just meet people, get close to them and stuff. And then one day we were picked and driven away. All I know is that I found myself in the middle of nowhere with people speaking a strange language. We were trained, and not allowed to leave the camp. I knew that was the end of me by the way, because the place was extremely guarded. And that's why I fear for our young people. Even the many abductions we keep hearing...am not certain all of them are genuine. I tend to believe some youth could be recruited into Al-Shabaab unknowingly. **KII Participant**

4.3 Nexus between Dangerous Speech and Radicalisation

Study participants across the nine counties consistently illuminated a direct link between dangerous speech and radicalisation, viewing it as a critical driver and enabler of division, animosity, and violence within communities. Participants broadly defined dangerous speech as inflammatory or inciteful language that targets specific groups, often along political, ethnic, gender, or religious lines as explained below:

4.3.1 Dangerous Speech is a Trigger and Driver of Radicalisation

Study participants suggested that dangerous speech acts as both a trigger and a driver in the radicalisation process. It creates a fertile ground for extremist ideologies to take root and spread by influencing existing grievances and vulnerabilities. Findings point to the fact that dangerous speech dehumanises, incites, polarises, and spreads fear, diminishing empathy and normalising violent behavior. This process equips individuals with rhetoric that supports extremist beliefs.

'It all starts with the language that is used. Very harsh and inciteful language that at the end of the day, pushes you to do certain things. Let me give you an example. Am also a moran myself, but I deliberately chose not to pursue violence. You know am the last born in a family of 18 children, so you can imagine my parents are aged. I have been lucky because I was educated by my siblings, so I escaped some of the things I see here. But my peers...their parents literally push them into violence. What do you do when you are mocked as not being man enough? Too weak to protect your people? They even ask you what kind of a woman will accept you to marry them if you're this weak? You will end up going to steal those cattle...to fight your neighbors...just to prove a point. So it all starts with the language that is used' **KII Participant, Laikipia County**

4.3.2 Dangerous Speech is a Pathway to Extremism

Dangerous speech serves as a vehicle that transports individuals from radicalisation to extremism. Through consistent repetition, it becomes embedded in individual and collective worldviews, fostering exclusionary ideologies and extremist thought as voiced by a participant in Nairobi County,

'Violent extremism is a belief system, and speech acts as the vehicle that transports people toward it. You know when something negative is repeated many times, it tends to get into you and you finally believe it, and act on it. For example, when you are consistently told that community A are bad people, they do not deserve to live, they do not have your interest at heart, believe you me one day you will find yourself joining a group that eliminates those people. Simply because that's what you have been made to believe' **KII Participant, Nairobi County**

There is a very thin line between the two. Dangerous speech can easily lead to radicalisation, which may eventually escalate into violent extremism. In addition, hate speech and dangerous speech are key enablers and accelerators of radicalisation, creating fertile ground for extremist ideologies to take root and spread' **KII Participant, Nairobi County**

Dangerous speech is therefore considered a precursor to violence, as it begins with rhetoric that incites or dehumanises. It can be particularly influential for individuals seeking meaning or belonging, drawing them towards radical ideologies and groups.

4.3.3 Escalation of Grievances and Division

There is overwhelming evidence that dangerous speech exacerbates underlying frustrations and vulnerabilities, especially when directed at individuals who lack stable beliefs. It does not function in isolation; rather it leverages pre-existing frustrations and vulnerabilities. When directed at individuals who lack stable or established beliefs, such speech can expedite their movement toward extremist ideologies or actions. As one participant commented, 'If dangerous speech is directed to someone who is not grounded, for example, on the above shared root causes of Radicalisation, then the speech can lead these individuals to Radicalisation' (KII Participant, Busia County).

The impact of dangerous speech is significantly amplified when delivered by influential figures, such as political or religious leaders, and through digital platforms and public spaces. For instance, the use of phrases like 'these uncircumcised boys need to be pushed out. Let's not accept to be led by them'. FGD Participant Kisumu County. Cultural sayings can further magnify its effect.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the perceptions of radicalisation as deeply influenced by societal narratives, cultural stereotypes, and external factors that create fertile ground for extremism. The discussion revealed that the root causes of radicalisation are often intertwined with grievances related to identity, socio-economic marginalisation, and political exclusion, which are exploited through dangerous speech to incite division and violence. Importantly, the chapter emphasised the nexus between dangerous speech and radicalisation, illustrating how harmful narratives and hate speech serve as catalysts that deepen social divisions and facilitate the recruitment of vulnerable groups, particularly women and youth.

A close-up photograph of two hands writing on a white document. The left hand holds a red pen, and the right hand holds a blue pen. The background is a blurred office setting. The text 'Chapter 5' is overlaid on the image.

Chapter 5

**EVALUATION OF EXISTING POLICIES ON
DANGEROUS SPEECH, RADICALISATION
AND GENDER**

5.0 Introduction

This chapter undertakes a critical evaluation of awareness levels of existing policies designed to combat dangerous speech and radicalisation. It also highlights participants' perspectives on the extent to which gender inclusivity is integrated into existing frameworks addressing radicalisation and dangerous speech, revealing critical gaps and areas for improvement. The chapter further uncovers the gaps that remain in designing and implementing policies addressing the unique dynamics of gendered dangerous speech and radicalisation, while shedding light on the complexities of these policy responses, and emphasising the urgent need for the development of effective strategies that foster inclusion and resilience in our communities.

5.1 Assessment of Awareness Levels of Existing Policies on Dangerous Speech, Radicalisation, and Gender

This section analyses the awareness levels of the policy frameworks and interventions aimed at addressing dangerous speech, radicalisation, and gender dynamics in Kenya as shared by study participants across the nine counties.

5.1.2 Awareness Levels among Community Members

Analysis of key informant interviews and focus group discussions reveals a significant disparity in the awareness levels of existing policy frameworks related to dangerous speech, radicalisation, and gender dynamics in Kenya. Findings indicate that awareness of existing policies related to dangerous speech, radicalisation, and gender is generally low among community members. There is overwhelming evidence across the nine counties that most FGD discussants did not demonstrate familiarity with specific national or county policies. For many, the concept of a 'policy' itself was abstract. However, some participants did cite localised frameworks, such as the *Isiolo County Action Plan on Countering Violent Extremism* and County Peace Policies in some counties like Samburu, which has its own gender and peace policy. Other commonly mentioned frameworks included the County Integrated Development Plans and county-specific peacebuilding policies, which were largely seen as practical manifestations of national directives.

According to an FGD participant in Samburu County, *'There is no stand-alone policy on dangerous speech that I know of, however, there have been dialogue forums between the Samburu and the Turkana for the last six months... This at least is a drive addressing violent extremism'*. This statement reveals that while

some localised initiatives are recognised, formal policy instruments remain largely unknown or abstract to many community members.

While some national and county-level policies are in place to address these issues, a considerable gap exists between their formulation and grassroots understanding or implementation. This disconnect suggests that despite government efforts to prevent and counter radicalisation and promote social cohesion, the intended impact at the community level is often hampered by a lack of awareness and perceived ineffectiveness.

5.1.2 Low Awareness Levels among Experts

In contrast, a majority of Key Informant Interviewees reflected higher levels of awareness of formal legal and policy instruments. Participants referenced a comprehensive range of existing national frameworks, including the Constitution of Kenya; the National Cohesion and Integration Act CAP 7N; Gender Mainstreaming Policies; the Sexual and Gender-Based Violence Policy of 2019; the Cybercrimes and Computer Misuse Act; County Action Plans on Violent Extremism; Child Protection Policies; Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism Strategy; Sexual Offences Act; Marriage Act 2024; the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2012; the National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism - 2016 and 2024 versions; the Media Council Act; as well as the Penal Code and Electoral Code of Conduct.

One Key Informant also highlighted the moral and regulatory role of religion, noting, *'The Bible and other religious books guide as laws and regulations to behavior of men. They offer guidance and advice to promote peace and unity. There is no religious book that encourages conflict. Not the Bible, not the Quran'*
KII Participant, Samburu County.

5.2 Perceptions of Policy Effectiveness and Implementation Gaps

Participants provided valuable insights into their perceptions of the effectiveness of current policies and highlighted significant implementation gaps that hinder the achievement of desired outcomes in addressing radicalisation, dangerous speech, and gender-related issues.

5.2.1 Disconnect in translating Policies into Outcomes

A recurring sentiment across discussions was that while most policies do exist, they are largely unknown, poorly implemented, or perceived as ineffective. Stakeholders noted a disconnect between policy intent and real-world impact, highlighting issues such as tokenistic public participation, inadequate civic education, and entrenched patriarchal norms as one participant opined,

'Policies are there, however, the government is slow and poor at implementation, financial support is low and insecurity is rampant. Also, people just choose to be rogue and not follow the policies. People are deliberately killing others and then they pay police to evade justice. That is why we're in a state where nothing seems to work' **KII Participant, Nairobi County**

Even among the few who had engaged with relevant documents, there was a consistent perception that gender considerations, while sometimes mentioned, remain superficial or are poorly implemented in practice, highlighting a disconnect in translating policy intent into tangible and inclusive outcomes at the community level. As one Key Informant Interview participant cautiously stated when discussing a potentially gender-sensitive framework, *'We wait and see how implementation will be done. We know if there's no goodwill, it just remains there, like a piece of paper'*. This statement indicates that the mere existence of a policy, even a potentially well-designed one, does not guarantee its successful and equitable implementation.

5.2.2 Insufficient Legal Education

Participants consistently emphasised that despite the existence of various policies, their implementation remains weak, and legal education is insufficient. The study highlights a critical gap in legal education, revealing an over-reliance on informal actors such as elders, faith leaders, and grassroots women's groups, who have taken on roles traditionally designated for formal governance structures, often without the requisite legal training or authority. These sentiments were voiced by study participants who stated,

'We depend on elders, churches, and nyumba kumi for information. Most of them must talk to us in local languages so everyone can understand. How will they do it if they are not taken through? Or if these policies are in very difficult language? It probably the reason we don't know if policies are there or not. And if they are, then they're only meant for the educated ones in Nairobi.' **KII Participant, Samburu County**

'when some of us, who would be considered fairly knowledgeable are still struggling with the awareness of such policies, how much more is a chief or village elder who is expected to cascade them to wananchi? To be honest, legal education is extremely insufficient in this country. Not just among wananchi, but even among those you'd want to call the elite. We really need to rethink if we want change.' **KII Participant, Taita Taveta County**

This is compounded by language barriers, technical jargon, and limited civic education, all of which restrict meaningful engagement with policy content. When asked about their knowledge and perception of policy, one participant in Samburu explained,

*'Communities go to the authorities to report - such as elders, churches, and nyumba kumi. They don't know if policies are there or not. What they know is that these people have rich knowledge and the welfare of the community at heart. They talk to them in their local languages. But how can we shoulder all this burden to them? How do we expect them to comprehend the technical jargon? We don't even take time to educate them. This, in my view, is where the disconnect is'. **KII Participant, Samburu County***

5.2.3 Exclusion of Special Groups from Policy-making Processes

In reference to policymaking processes, community members felt excluded, with many expressing that public participation is often symbolic and non-inclusive, especially for women/girls, youth, and Persons With Disabilities (PWDs). There was an emerging consensus that such special groups are frequently used for statistics and visibility, but remain excluded from actual policy influence or leadership in implementation processes. A female FGD participant in Kilifi shared,

*'When discussing issues that affect us as women, we should be at the forefront because we are the main stakeholders. But that doesn't happen at all. An example is when discussing contraceptives that affect us, laws were passed without us being considered. They just went to Mombasa and passed the bill without involving those of us on the ground who are most affected. In short, public participation is simply symbolic and non-inclusive' **FGD participant, Kilifi County***

5.2.4 Digital Divide

The study reveals a digital divide, particularly in pastoral counties where access to online consultation platforms remains limited. While digital tools are increasingly employed to foster engagement and gather feedback, many rural and semi-literate populations are effectively excluded from policymaking and implementation processes. This exclusion reinforces existing social and infrastructural divides, leaving vulnerable communities, especially in remote pastoral regions, marginalised and underrepresented in decision-making forums. Moreover, findings point to the fact that the lack of reliable internet connectivity, limited digital literacy, and inadequate access to devices exacerbate the gap, preventing communities from participating fully in vital conversations that directly impact their lives, one KII Participant put it,

'Policies exist, but mostly we don't even know how they have come to be. There is completely no consultation. No public participation, especially for special groups like women, youth, and PWDs. And even when invited, they want to do it online. How many people here in mashinani can access the internet? How many even know how to read? Even here, not everyone has access to smart phones or the required gadgets. And who tells you we have strong network access everywhere? Sometimes I feel that some of these policies are just donor-driven and disconnected from local realities. It's like they just target the elite'
FGD Participant, Marsabit County.

5.2.5 Exclusion of Local Knowledge-holders

Across the nine counties, participants raised concerns that traditional leaders, local influencers, and academic experts, who possess contextual knowledge of radicalisation and conflict dynamics, are often excluded from policy development. According to study participants, even during public participation forums, the same people are represented in those forums, highlighting the lack of genuine, bottom-up engagement.

There was consensus across the nine counties that public engagement efforts are top-down in nature, and dismissive of local input. In the words of a participant in Nairobi,

'There is no public participation where we are invited unless it is by MCAs within the wards. And even when there is such opportunity, you can tell no one wants your opinion, after all they will pass it as it was initially planned. Look at the housing bill? They had already identified the site and everything else, and we were only invited as a by-the-way with no consideration for our needs or contribution.'
FGD Participant, Nairobi County

5.2.6 Limitations in Awareness and Implementation of Gender-Inclusive Policies

A significant observation across the study was the widespread unawareness among many participants regarding the gendered nature of existing policies. Their unfamiliarity with the content of these policies excluded them from effectively assessing their inclusivity. Among the limited number of individuals who had engaged with relevant documents, findings indicate that gender considerations, while sometimes acknowledged, largely remain superficial or are inadequately implemented. The Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) summarised the underlying challenge:

'Illiteracy, disability, limited civic education, cultural beliefs, traditional gender roles and norms, patriarchal structures, and gender-based violence (GBV) discourage women from actively participating in policy processes' **KII Participant, Nairobi County**

This suggests that even when policies articulate gender inclusivity, it rarely translates into practical integration or meaningful representation in decision-making processes. For instance, one Key Informant Interview participant, while acknowledging the potential for the forthcoming revised National Strategy on Countering Violent Extremism by the National Counter Terrorism Centre to be a gender-sensitive framework, observed, 'We wait and see how implementation will be done'.

5.3 Gaps in Policies and Interventions to address Gendered Dangerous Speech and Radicalisation

Key informant interviews and focus group discussions, supplemented by a review of relevant literature, have highlighted several critical gaps in Kenya's policies and legal frameworks concerning dangerous speech and radicalisation. These gaps span definitional clarity, legislative efficacy, implementation, public awareness, and institutional capacity.

5.3.1 Gaps in Definition

Participants noted that the existing definition of 'Hate Speech' in the National Cohesion and Integration Act is overly broad and lacks clarity, making implementation a challenge. According to the Act, for any word to be deemed inciteful, it must be proven to 'spur ethnic hatred'. The study therefore, reveals an existing gap in the general public's understanding of what constitutes hate speech, especially when comparing the use of inciteful words to the specific criteria outlined in the Act. There is limited understanding among the public that, according to the NCI Act, the term 'ethnic grounds' encompasses not only ethnicity but also race, religion, nationality, and ethnic or national origin⁸.

As a result, this study revealed a notable gap in the understanding among the general public regarding what constitutes hate speech and the boundaries of freedom of expression. This lack of comprehension hinders public participation in addressing the issue and creates a perception bias against institutions tasked with combating hate speech, further compounded by the limited success in prosecutions.

⁸National Cohesion and Integration Act. CAP 7N. Laws of Kenya

5.3.2 Gaps in Gender Inclusivity

Furthermore, there was a strong consensus across the nine counties that the NCI Act requires revision to incorporate gender inclusivity and adequately address the challenges faced by different genders, including the unique ways in which women, men, and marginalised groups experience and are affected by hate speech and radicalisation within their social, political, and digital contexts. According to study participants, the limitation of hate speech definitions primarily on ‘ethnic grounds’ in current laws also overlooks other crucial aspects, such as gender-based violence, particularly prevalent during election periods. In the words of a participant:

*Tell me why, in this time and age, the NCI Act does not encompass gender issues? I mean, we have all seen the challenges women and other marginalised groups encounter, especially around electoral cycles...there is need to address gender-based violence, and the Act should speak to it- comprehensively. **KII Participant, Nairobi County***

5.3.3 Gaps in Digital Communication

Participants emphasised that the evolving nature of digital communication and social media platforms has amplified the spread of harmful and inciteful content, making it imperative for legislation to adapt accordingly. Without comprehensive updates, existing laws risk leaving gaps in the fight against all forms of hate speech, thereby undermining efforts to promote equality, safety, and social cohesion, as averred by one of the participants,

*‘With the rapid growth of social media and digital platforms, harmful and inciteful content spreads much more quickly than before. Remember the NCI Act was drafted in 2008...this is over 15 years ago! Surely, it’s now outdated, and as you can see, it does not capture the realities of today. Our laws must catch up to effectively address this new landscape; otherwise, we will always be playing catch-up, and our efforts to protect Kenyans and promote social cohesion will be continually undermined. **KII Participant, Nairobi County***

5.3.4 Implementation and Enforcement Deficiencies

Despite Kenya’s efforts to benchmark its laws and institutions against international standards, significant shortfalls persist at the implementation level. The study revealed a widespread lack of public awareness regarding both hate speech and radicalisation laws, which further complicates enforcement. A key

concern raised was the insufficient empowerment of independent bodies such as the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) with prosecutorial powers to enforce compliance effectively. As a result, the low rate of successful convictions contributes to a sense of impunity among perpetrators.

5.3.5 Challenges in Addressing Radicalisation

Beyond concerns about hate speech, participants in key informant interviews and focus group discussions also demonstrated a notable lack of familiarity with laws pertaining to radicalisation. This unfamiliarity that was noted across board, manifested in two key ways. Firstly, most participants tended to use the terms ‘radicalisation’ and ‘violent extremism’ interchangeably. This conflation is perhaps understandable given that, in broader academic and policy discourse, radicalisation is often understood as a process through which individuals adopt increasingly extreme political, social, or religious ideologies that can lead to violent extremism (Chuang & D’Orsogna, 2019; GS & Kaushik, 2017).

Secondly, a majority of participants across the nine counties largely struggled to articulate what the Kenyan law specifically states about radicalisation as voiced by a Key Informant in Laikipia County

‘Am not sure that there is any specific law here in Kenya that covers issues of radicalisation. What I know is that the constitution is available and broadly covers issues of public safety, security, and hate speech. But, I wouldn’t say there’s a law that defines what radicalisation is by itself. I’ve heard a lot about violent extremism but I wouldn’t say there’s a clear explanation of how to differentiate it with radicalisation as per the law’ KII Participant, Laikipia

However, as per the Prevention of Terrorism Act revised 2023, the statement that Kenyan law does not explicitly detail a distinct legal definition of ‘radicalisation’ as a standalone offense or concept is not accurate. Section 12D of the Act specifically defines and criminalises radicalisation, ‘*A person who adopts or promotes an extreme belief system for the purpose of facilitating ideologically based violence to advance political, religious or social change commits an offence and is liable on conviction, to imprisonment for a term not exceeding thirty years*’. This section of the law directly addresses ‘radicalisation’ as a distinct offense, providing a legal definition and corresponding penalty.

The overall findings indicate that, although communities in high-risk regions such as the North and Coastal areas acknowledge the threats posed by violent extremism (VE) and radicalisation, their understanding of these issues remains

superficial. While many community members are aware that recruitment activities are occurring, there is a limited awareness of existing legal protections or reporting mechanisms to address such threats. For instance, a Key Informant in Kilifi acknowledged that suspicious behavior sometimes takes place, but admitted the lack of knowledge of how to effectively engage security agencies without fear of reprisal or adverse consequences. The findings demonstrate a significant lack of awareness and understanding of this law among participants, highlighting the need for comprehensive civic education to better inform the public about relevant legal provisions and support efforts to prevent radicalisation in Kenya.

Worth noting is that the Prevention of Terrorism Act, 2023 does not explicitly address gendered radicalisation or violent extremism, nor is it specific on gender issues within the context of these phenomena. The language used throughout the available sections of the Act refers to individuals generally as ‘a person’ when defining offenses, responsibilities, or actions. There are no specific provisions, definitions, or discussions that differentiate between how radicalisation or violent extremism might affect or involve different genders, or that outline gender-specific measures for prevention or intervention.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter assesses the current landscape surrounding policies aimed at countering dangerous speech and radicalisation. It has illuminated significant gaps in both awareness and implementation, particularly regarding the integration of gender considerations into existing frameworks. The findings highlight the complexity of addressing gendered dimensions of radicalisation and dangerous speech, highlighting the need for more effective and inclusive strategies.



Chapter 6

**EMERGING ISSUES, CONCLUSIONS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS**

6.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the key emerging issues identified throughout the study, synthesising insights gathered from various data sources, stakeholder engagements, and field observations. It highlights the challenges and trends that shape the landscape of dangerous speech, radicalisation, and gender dynamics, highlighting areas that demand immediate attention and strategic intervention. The chapter also consolidates the main conclusions drawn from the analysis, offering a clear understanding of the current gaps, systemic weaknesses, and opportunities for positive change. Lastly, it presents actionable recommendations aimed at strengthening policy frameworks, improving implementation, and fostering inclusive and resilient communities, for promotion of social cohesion.

6.1 Emerging Issues

This section summarises the emerging concerns identified through key informant interviews and focus group discussions across the nine counties under study, highlighting the gendered impacts of dangerous speech and radicalisation, and the associated policy challenges.

6.1.1 Gendered Vulnerabilities and the Prevalence of Dangerous Speech

For men and boys, dangerous speech actively discourages emotional expression and empathy, labeling such traits as weaknesses, thereby compelling men to demonstrate masculinity through aggression or financial dominance, often at a personal cost. Evidence from this study suggests that this is particularly evident in conflict-affected pastoral counties, where dangerous speech incites emotions and portrays violence as a sign of strength, pressuring young men to retaliate and perpetuating cycles of external aggression and internal turmoil. Failure to conform can lead to slurs like ‘If you don’t fight for your community, you’re not a real man; women stopped giving birth to real men’. Furthermore, this rhetoric contributes to ethnic and clan-based discrimination, leading to the exclusion of certain men from leadership and decision-making spaces, as demonstrated by derogatory terms such as ‘children of ghosts’ (Nyap), which not only breeds resentment but also limits the diversity and effectiveness of peace processes.

For women and girls, dangerous speech serves as a deliberate tool to silence, shame, and exclude women from public life. On the basis of available evidence, this form of speech exploits existing social vulnerabilities and reinforces harmful gender stereotypes, such as the deeply rooted belief that ‘women are weak, emotional, or simply unfit for leadership’. This rhetoric, often repeated and

validated, undermines women's qualifications and authority, drawing power from long-standing prejudices rather than facts. The aim is to make the cost of public engagement unbearably high for women, thereby deterring their participation in public discourse and leadership.

6.1.2 Digital Platforms as amplifiers of Gendered Dangerous Speech

The rise of digital platforms has provided fertile ground for gendered dangerous speech, manifesting as 'online harassment and misinformation'. The anonymity and speed of the internet facilitate the rapid proliferation of attacks, particularly targeting women in leadership roles. These attacks often involve sexual harassment or the spread of deliberate misinformation, targeted at undermining their professional identity and competence. There is overwhelming evidence from the study that highlights instances where female politicians have endured gendered insults focused on their appearance and demeanor rather than their policy positions. Furthermore, the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools is a growing concern, as their deliberate misuse can generate 'harmful or dehumanising content', and promote fabricated narratives, popularly known as 'deepfakes', to amplify gender-specific vulnerabilities by targeting politicians with fictitious and misleading content.

6.1.3 Novel Forms of Dangerous Speech and Challenges in Detection

The study identifies new and increasingly concealed forms of dangerous speech, making detection and regulation more challenging. The 'Kusalimiwa' trend, where young people share politicians' private phone numbers online to send threatening messages, exemplifies a new type of dangerous speech 'largely driven by bad governance'. Dangerous speech is also increasingly embedded within 'meme culture, viral hashtags and humorous posts', utilising slang, satire, or culturally specific proverbs. This subtlety makes it harder to identify and address.

6.1.4 Intersection of Religion, Dangerous Speech and Radicalisation

The study draws a nexus between religion, dangerous speech and radicalisation, highlighting how the entanglement of religious institutions in political affairs has contributed to the spread of harmful rhetoric. Study participants expressed concerns about religious institutions serving as platforms for politicians to disseminate dangerous speech, demonstrating how politicians exploit religious venues to advance their own agendas. Additionally, high illiteracy levels in certain regions increase residents' vulnerability, as they are less able to critically assess ideologies, making them more susceptible to manipulation and recruitment into cult-like movements by religious leaders, posing a significant challenge to community cohesion and individual well-being.

6.1.5 Socio-Economic Factors and Divisive Political Narratives

Economic hardship and unemployment render young people vulnerable to manipulation by politicians who weaponise language to ‘turn young men into either violent aggressors or loyal followers’. Inflammatory language, such as repeatedly referring to certain groups as ‘our oppressors’, can radicalise youth into believing that violence is a justified solution. Ethnic profiling and discrimination in employment further contribute to resentment and exclusion, potentially pushing some youth toward radicalised groups. Ethnic profiling and discrimination in employment reinforce a sense that the system has consistently failed to provide fair opportunities, which further fuels resentment and exclusion. This ongoing marginalisation can potentially push some youth toward radicalised groups as they seek belonging and justice. Divisive narratives, like the ‘natives versus those who migrated’ concept, further fuel ethnic tension and undermine social cohesion.

6.1.6 Media’s Role in Perpetuating Stereotypes and Dangerous Speech

An identified concern in this study is the role of some media stations in perpetuating stereotypes and the use of dangerous speech, particularly through local vernacular radio stations. These stations were frequently pointed out as common platforms where gendered stereotypes are spread, often disguised as cultural commentary. Although the content may appear harmless or traditional, it significantly contributes to long-term social fragmentation by reinforcing discriminatory narratives and biases. This portrayal of gender roles not only shapes public perceptions but also sustains environments where discrimination and inequality are normalised, making it a critical challenge in efforts to promote social cohesion and gender equality.

6.2 Conclusions

The study concludes that emerging issues in gender dynamics are deeply interconnected with dangerous speech, defined as any verbal or non-verbal expression that can cause harm, division, or incite violence, ultimately aiming to provoke hate or fear sufficient to trigger violent action. A central finding is that dangerous speech takes on specific, gendered forms, creating and exploiting vulnerabilities across diverse groups.

For men and boys, an emerging issue is their susceptibility to manipulation and pressure to conform to rigid masculine stereotypes, where high youth unemployment and economic desperation render young men vulnerable to being co-opted by political actors as ‘goons’ or enforcers. Men also face cultural pressure to be ‘tough’ and ‘warriors’, with phrases used to shame them for showing susceptibility or supporting women in leadership, which can lead to

ego-driven violence and discourages peaceful dialogue. Women, particularly those in leadership roles, are excessively targeted and stigmatised through stereotypes such as ‘women are like children, they are unfit to lead, are emotional, or belong to the kitchen’, which are used to justify their exclusion from political and peacebuilding spaces. This marginalisation is further reinforced by online sexual harassment, misinformation campaigns, and insults focusing on women’s appearance or marital status rather than their professional achievements, acting as a deliberate tactic to ‘shame and silence women’ and push them out of public life.

Furthermore, technology, especially AI and social media, is creating a new frontier for dangerous speech, with biased algorithms amplifying gendered vulnerabilities and the misuse of AI to create deepfakes and misleading content posing significant threats. The intersection of state and religion also presents a challenge, as traditional religious views on gender can clash with modern legal and social norms, sometimes serving as platforms for dangerous speech that reinforces patriarchal norms.

6.3 Recommendations

The study makes the following recommendations:

6.3.1 Legislative Reform

There is a need to ensure legislative reform through the dedicated efforts of specific institutions responsible for policy-making and legal oversight. Specifically,

National Cohesion and Integration Commission

It is imperative to revise and update existing legislation, particularly the National Cohesion and Integration Act, to provide a clearer and more precise definition of ‘hate speech’ as the current definition is overly broad and lacks clarity, making implementation a challenge. The NCI Act also requires comprehensive revision to ‘incorporate gender inclusivity and adequately address the challenges faced by different genders, including the unique ways in which women, men, and marginalised groups experience and are affected by hate speech within their social, political, and digital contexts. Furthermore, the NCI Act should adapt to the evolving landscape of digital communication and social media, to minimise gaps in the fight against all forms of hate speech.

National Counter-terrorism Centre

Additionally, the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2023, should be reviewed and amended as it does not explicitly address gendered radicalisation or violent extremism, nor is it specific on gender issues within the context of the provisions, definitions, or discussions that differentiate between how radicalisation or violent extremism might affect or involve different genders. There is need to ensure that future interventions address this gap by considering the distinct gendered aspects of radicalisation and violent extremism. It is crucial to actively involve both men and women, as well as vulnerable groups including the youth in both the design and implementation of these legislations and programs to ensure their relevance, effectiveness, and impact.

6.3.2 Proactive approaches by Civil Society Organisations

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) should take a proactive approach in enhancing public awareness and education, while also actively addressing socio-economic issues to foster sustainable community development. Specifically, CSOs should:

Enhance Public Awareness and Education

A significant gap exists in public understanding of what constitutes hate speech and the boundaries of freedom of expression, as well as a significant lack of awareness and understanding of radicalisation laws. Therefore, civil society organisations should design comprehensive civic education programs to better inform the public about relevant legal provisions and support efforts to prevent radicalisation in Kenya. This education should also cover existing legal protections or reporting mechanisms to address threats related to dangerous speech and radicalisation. Ample lead time should also be provided to create awareness about policies before public participation.

6.3.3 Accurate and Unbiased information by the Media

Media houses have a vital role in educating the public. They should provide legal education on existing laws, promote the importance of peaceful coexistence, and encourage their various outlets to provide accurate and unbiased information to counter the spread of rumors and misinformation, particularly on social media platforms.

6.3.4 Leverage Community and Traditional Structures

There is a deliberate need to tap into the significant influence of traditional and religious leaders in peacebuilding efforts and the prevention of social ills such as radicalisation and dangerous speech. Both state and non-state actors should facilitate these groups with necessary training to recognise and effectively

counter dangerous speech narratives. Fostering public forums at the grassroots level and establishing citizen committees can ensure that policies and programs are well-informed by the lived experiences of ordinary people.

6.3.5 Translate Policy Documents into Local Languages

There is need to ensure that all policy documents are translated into the languages spoken by the target communities to enhance understanding and engagement.

6.3.6 Leading Role of Religious Organisations in guiding the Public

Religious organisations should play a leading role in guiding the public responsibly, rather than exploiting religious platforms to disseminate dangerous speech and incite radicalisation. Specifically, they should:

Develop a Comprehensive Regulatory Framework for Religious Organisations

There is need to establish a dedicated legal framework, such as a ‘Religious Organisations Bill’ to clearly define the boundaries of political engagement for religious institutions. This framework should aim to prevent the exploitation of religious platforms for disseminating dangerous speech and inciting radicalisation. It should also include provisions for accountability when religious venues are used to advance harmful political agendas.

Standardise Education and Training Requirements for Religious Leaders

To mitigate the spread of dangerous speech and manipulation, all religious leaders should be required to meet specific educational and training criteria. This training should include modules on peacebuilding, interfaith dialogue, ethical leadership, and the identification and prevention of dangerous speech and radicalisation, ensuring that religious messages promote social cohesion rather than division.

Regulate Religious Messaging across all Media Platforms

The Media Council of Kenya should put in place measures to regulate religious messages broadcast or disseminated on television, radio, and online platforms. This regulation should focus on preventing the propagation of content that incites violence, discrimination, or radicalisation, while upholding freedom of religion. Collaborations with platform providers are crucial to develop and enforce guidelines for responsible religious messaging.

6.3.7 County Governments

County governments should play an active role in:

Implement Targeted Literacy and Critical Thinking Programs

To counter the vulnerability caused by high illiteracy levels, particularly in counties susceptible to manipulation such as coastal and western counties, the county governments should expand comprehensive literacy and civic education programs. These initiatives should focus on developing critical thinking skills among citizens, enabling them to critically assess ideologies and resist manipulation and recruitment into cult-like movements by religious leaders, thereby strengthening community resilience and individual well-being.

Address Socio-Economic Root Causes

To effectively reduce the susceptibility of young people to manipulation, the government, in collaboration with international partners, should invest in programs that actively tackle youth unemployment, improve access to education, and address widespread poverty. Creating a genuine sense of hope and providing tangible economic opportunities is a critical long-term strategy for preventing radicalisation.

References

Badurdeen, F. A. & Goldsmith, P. (2018). *Initiatives and Perceptions to Counter Violent Extremism in the Coastal Region of Kenya*. Accessed 25th July 2025 <https://core.ac.uk/download/201614885.pdf>

Benesch, S. (2014). Countering Dangerous Speech: New Ideas for Genocide Prevention. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3686876> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3686876>

Benesch, S. (2025). What is dangerous speech? Accessed <https://www.dangerousspeech.org/dangerous-speech> Accessed August 12th 2025

Broekaert, C., Renneboog, C. L., Okwaro, F., Mohiddin, A., & Temmerman, M. (2021). *Digital News Media Coverage on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence in Kenya: Scoping the Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic*. Accessed 7th August 2025 https://osf.io/preprints/socarxiv/vbku6_v1

Council of Europe. (2025). *Freedom of Expression: Hate Speech*. Accessed on 6th August 2025 from <https://www.coe.int/en/web/freedom-expression/hate-speech>

Chabikwa, R. (2021). Women, Peace and Security in Zimbabwe - The Case of Conflict in Non-War Zones. *Journal of African Conflicts and Peace Studies*, 4(2). <https://doi.org/10.5038/2325-484x.4.2.1141>

Dash, S., Grover, R., Shekhawat, G., Kaur, S., Mishra, D., & Pal, J. (2022). Insights Into Incitement: A Computational Perspective on Dangerous Speech on Twitter in India. In Proceedings of the 5th ACM SIGCAS/SIGCHI Conference on Computing and Sustainable Societies (COMPASS '22). Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 103–121. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3530190.3534800>

Fallis, D. (2015). What is disinformation? Accessed on 6th August 2025 from <https://core.ac.uk/download/158312946.pdf>

Feddes, A., Nickolson, L., Bergen, N., & Doosje, L. (2023). Extremist thinking and doing: A systematic literature study of empirical findings on factors associated with de(radicalisation) processes. *International Journal of Development Science* 17 (2023) 7-18.

Freilich, J.D., Chermak, S.M. & Caspi, D. (2009), Critical events in the life trajectories of domestic extremist white supremacist groups. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 8: 497-530. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9133.2009.00572.x>

Gaikwad et al. (2023). Multi-Ideology, Multiclass Online Extremism Dataset, and Its Evaluation Using Machine Learning. *Computational Intelligence and Neuroscience*, 4563145, 33 pages, 2023. <https://doi.org/10.1155/2023/4563145>

Government of Kenya (2020). *Kenya National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325 – Phase II (2020–2024)*. Ministry of Public Service and Gender.

Gordon, S. (2021). *Hate Speech and Persecution: A Contextual Approach*, 46 *Vanderbilt Law Review* 303. Accessed 6th August on <https://scholarship.law.vanderbilt.edu/vjtl/vol46/iss2/1>

Havard A. (2017). *Virtuous Leadership: An Agenda for Personal Excellence*. Scepter Publishers, Incorporated

Holland, B. H. (2005). Inherently Dangerous: *The Potential for an Internet-Specific Standard Restricting Speech That Performs a Teaching Function*. Accessed on 6th August 2025 from <https://core.ac.uk/download/217219085.pdf>

ICFJ. (2022). *The chilling: A global study of online violence against women journalists*. Accessed 6th June 2025 https://www.icfj.org/sites/default/files/2022-11/ICFJ_UNESCO_The%20Chilling_2022_1.pdf

KhosraviNik, M., & Esposito, E. (2018). Online hate, digital discourse and critique: Exploring digitally-mediated discursive practices of gender-based hostility. *Lodz Papers in Pragmatics*, vol. 14, no. 1, 2018, pp. 45-68. <https://doi.org/10.1515/lpp-2018-0003>

KNCHR. (2008). *On the Brink of the Precipice: A Human Rights Account of Kenya's Post-2007 Election Violence*. KNCHR.

Lima, W., & Newell-McLymont, E F. (2021). *Qualitative Research Methods: A Critical Analysis*. Accessed 8th June 2025 <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3845254> or <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3845254>

Mkutu, K., & Opondo, V. (2019). The Complexity of Radicalisation and Recruitment in Kwale, Kenya. *Terrorism and Political Violence, Volume 33*, 2021 - Issue 1.

Mihal'ová, et al., (2024). *Gender Egalitarianism in Focus: An Integrative Synthesis of Empirical Evidence*. *Hum. Aff.* 2025; 35(1): 137–171

Mondal, M., Silva, L., & Benevenuto, F. (2017). A Measurement Study of Hate Speech in Social Media. In Proceedings of the 28th ACM Conference on Hypertext and Social Media (HT '17). Association for Computing Machinery, New York, NY, USA, 85–94. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3078714.3078723>

Nah, A. (2020). *Protecting human rights defenders at risk*. Routledge.

Nasu, H. (2011). The Expanded Conception of Security and International Law: Challenges to the Un Collective Security System. *Amsterdam Law Forum*, 3(3), 15. <https://doi.org/10.37974/alf.190>

NCIC. (2021), Kenya National Action Plan against Hate Speech. NCIC

NCIC. (2022). *Conflict Hotspot Mapping for Kenya*. NCIC

Pérez, J. M. et al. (2023). *Assessing the Impact of Contextual Information in Hate Speech Detection*. In IEEE Access, vol. 11, pp. 30575-30590, 2023, doi: 10.1109/ACCESS.2023.3258973.

Saleh N. F, et al. (2024). Active inoculation boosts attitudinal resistance against extremist persuasion techniques: A novel approach towards the prevention of violent extremism. *Behavioural Public Policy*. 8(3):548-571. doi:10.1017/bpp.2020.60

Shackel, R., & Fiske, L. (2018). Rethinking Transitional Gender Justice. In *Gender, development and social change*. Springer International Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-77890-7>

Solovev, K., & Pröllochs, N. (2023). Moralized language predicts hate speech on social media. *PNAS Nexus*, Volume 2, Issue 1, January 2023, pgac281, <https://doi.org/10.1093/pnasnexus/pgac281>

Stewart, F. (2010). Horizontal inequalities in Kenya and the political disturbances of 2008: Some implications for aid policy. *Conflict, Security & Development*, 10(1), 133–159. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14678800903553936>

Stranisci, M. et al. (2022). O-Dang! The Ontology of Dangerous Speech Messages. *Computation and Language*. Accessed 6th June 2025 on <https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2207.10652>

Strazzeri I (2024) Gender and postcolonial studies: history of the concept and debate. *Front. Sociol.* 9:1414033. doi: 10.3389/fsoc.2024.1414033

Strossen, N. (2018). HATE: *Why We Should Resist It with Free Speech, Not Censorship*. Accessed on 6th August 2025 from <https://core.ac.uk/download/230514357.pdf>

Thompson, M. (2006). Women, gender, and conflict: making the connections. *Development in Practice*, 16, 342. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09614520600694976>

Truth Justice and Reconciliation Commission, TJRC Final Report-Volume 11B, 2013, 308

United Nations Security Council (2000). *Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security*. S/RES/1325. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/>

United Nations. (2015). *Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism: Report of the Secretary-General (A/70/674)*. <https://undocs.org/A/70/674>

UN. (2019). United Nations Strategy and Plan of Action on Hate Speech. Accessed 25th August 2025 on <https://www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/documents/UN%20Strategy%20and%20Plan%20of%20Action%20on%20Hate%20Speech%2018%20June%20SYNOPSIS.pdf>

UNDP. (2016). *Preventing Violent Extremism through Promoting Inclusive Development, Tolerance and Respect for Diversity: A development response to addressing Radicalisation and violent extremism*. UNDP

Wahlström, M., & Törnberg, A. (2019). Social Media Mechanisms for Right-Wing Political Violence in the 21st Century: Discursive Opportunities, Group Dynamics, and Co-Ordination. *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 33(4), 766–787. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2019.1586676>

Waki Commission (2008). Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Post-Election Violence (CIPEV). Accessed 13th June 2025 https://www.knchr.org/Portals/0/Reports/Waki_Report.pdf

Wolbers H, Dowling C, Cubitt T & Kuhn C 2023. Understanding and preventing internet-facilitated radicalisation. Trends & issues in crime and criminal justice no. 673. *Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology*. <https://doi.org/10.52922/ti77024>



Britam Tower, 17th Floor, Hospital Rd, Upper Hill
P.O. Box 7055 - 00100 Nairobi
Telephone: 0702 777 000 // +254-20-2585702
info@cohesion.go.ke
complaints@cohesion.go.ke
Toll free SMS: 1547
Facebook: National Cohesion and Integration Commission
Twitter: NCIC_Kenya