TRANSFORMATION IN CHINKORORO MOVEMENT AMONG THE ABAGUSII OF KISII COUNTY, KENYA, 1961-2010

CATHELINE NYABWENI BOSIBORI

C50/27058/2014

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS (HISTORY) OF KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

JUNE 2017
DECLARATION AND RECOMMENDATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.

Signature: _______________________________ Date: ________________
Catheline Bosibori N. - CS9/27058/2014
Department of History, Archaeology, and Political Studies

SUPERVISORS

We confirm that the work reported in this thesis was carried out by the candidate under our supervision as the university supervisors.

Signature: _______________________________ Date: ________________
Dr. Peter Wafula Wekesa
Department of History, Archaeology, and Political Studies

Signature: _______________________________ Date: ________________
Dr. Susan Mwangi Owino
Department of History, Archaeology and Political Studies
DEDICATION

I dedicate this work with lots of love, respect, and appreciation to Steve Mayaka Nyabwengi Junior, my only brother. In you, I find the motivation to keep on sailing in this world.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

It is with no doubt that one has many individuals to acknowledge in this type of study. However, for pragmatic reasons, it will be impossible to thank all those who generously contributed to its completion through advice and any other form of assistance.

I pass my vote of thanks to the Kenyatta University Administration for granting me the opportunity to pursue my studies in their esteemed institution. My daily interaction with the human and material resources in the institution has equipped me with the knowledge, which is essential as far as this study is concerned.

I am greatly indebted to Fr. Lance Nadeu, the Chaplain Kenyatta University Catholic Community, for his generosity of granting me a sponsorship to cover my entire studies. Special thanks also go to IFRA, Nairobi for awarding me a grant that facilitated the fieldwork.

I have great appreciation to Dr. Gimode Edwin, the Dean of Students Kenyatta University, who was not only my teacher but also a great friend. One from whom I have had to seek help and advice frequently.

I am deeply grateful to my teachers, Dr. Susan Owino Mwangi and Dr. Peter Wafula Wekesa, who helped me in choosing the field of study. They also agreed to supervise this study and provided me with invaluable advice at every stage of this research.

I would like to accord my sincere and heartfelt gratitude to all my respondents who generously spent their time to be interviewed. More often, they had to triumph over all sorts of challenges, including difficult weather conditions, to participate in the interviews.

Special thanks to Mr. Job Nyaanga for responding to numerous questions and assisting me in tracing other credible respondents in addition to providing his vehicle as a means of transport during this research.
I greatly appreciate the entire staff of History, Archaeological and Political Studies Department for the love and hospitality they accorded me during my entire stay and study at Kenyatta University. I sincerely thank the former chairperson of the department, Dr Washington Ndiiri, for his support and encouragement. Special thanks to Drs Pius Kakai, Julius Nabende, Danson Esese, Felistus Kinyanjui, David Okelo, Felix Kiruthu, Joseph Wasonga, Edward Kisiangani, Isaiah Oduor, and Mr. Kennedy Gitu for their input. My gratitude goes to Yvonne Mutua, Margret Ndiangui, Carol Runyenje, and Margret Adongo for their motherly love.

I am grateful to my classmates at Kenyatta University for their support and motivation at various stages of my research, especially Grace Maina, Muthoni Esther, Irene Soy, Werunga Damaris, Kalimi Bernice, Albert Ochieng, Nyakundi Enock, and Geoffrey Nyarieko, whose desks I visited every time I needed help.

Special thanks to my beloved cousin Mr. Dickson Mayaka for the moral and financial support.

Lastly, I would like to thank my beloved family, Mrs. Asanate Mayaka and Mr. Thomas Ombati, for the financial support, encouragement and patience they accorded me during this study. In a special way, I thank my lovely mother for her sacrifice to offer herself as my research assistant. To my one and only brother Steve and great sisters Mildred, Sylvia and Immaculate, I am grateful for the patience and understanding you accorded me during my difficult research moments.

God bless you all abundantly
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION ................................................................. Error! Bookmark not defined.

DEDICATION ........................................................................... iii

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT ........................................................................ iv

TABLE OF CONTENTS ..................................................................... vi

LIST OF FIGURES ........................................................................... xi

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS ........................................ xii

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS ........................................... xiii

ABSTRACT ...................................................................................... xv

CHAPTER ONE .................................................................................. 1

INTRODUCTION .............................................................................. 1

1.0 Introduction .................................................................................. 1

1.1 Background to the Study ................................................................. 1

1.2 Statement of the Problem ............................................................... 8

1.3 Objectives of the Study ................................................................. 9

1.4 Research Questions ....................................................................... 9

1.5 Research Premises ....................................................................... 10

1.6 Justification and Significance ......................................................... 10

1.7 Scope and Limitation ................................................................... 12

1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK..... 15
Introduction ........................................................................................................................................ 15

1.8.1 Review of Related Literature ................................................................................................. 15

1.8. 2 Theoretical Framework ........................................................................................................... 26

1.9 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ................................................................................................. 31

1.9.0 Introduction ............................................................................................................................. 31

1.9. 1 Research Design ....................................................................................................................... 31

1.9. 2 Site of the Study ....................................................................................................................... 31

1.9. 3 Target Population ..................................................................................................................... 32

1.9.4 Sampling Techniques .............................................................................................................. 33

1.9. 5 Sample Size ............................................................................................................................ 33

1.9. 6 Research Instruments ............................................................................................................. 34

1.9. 7 Data Collection Procedures ................................................................................................. 34

1.9.8 Data Analysis and Presentation ............................................................................................... 35

1.9.9 Data Management and Ethical Issues ..................................................................................... 35

CHAPTER TWO .................................................................................................................................. 36

EVOLUTION OF CHINKORORO MOVEMENT AMONG THE ABAGUSII
OF KISII COUNTY 1961-1990 ......................................................................................................... 36

2.0 Introduction ................................................................................................................................. 36

2.1 An Overview of Abagusii Social-Economic and Military Organization in the Pre-colonial period ................................................................................................................................. 36

2.1.1 Social-economic Organization ............................................................................................... 36
2.1.2 Military Organization and War Fare .................................................. 38

2.2 Colonization and Warrior-hood among the Abagusii ....................... 44

2.3 Security Movements in Independent Kenya 1961-1990 ..................... 48

2.4 Chinkororo Movement 1961-1990 ...................................................... 54

2.4.1 Introduction ....................................................................................... 54

2.4.2 The Meaning of Chinkororo ......................................................... 54

2.4.3 Factors Which Informed the Rise of Chinkororo ............................ 57

2.4.4 Beliefs, Ethics and Practices of Chinkororo Fighters in the Period 1961-1990 .......................................................... 64

2.5 Chinkororo as Neighborhood Group ................................................. 71

2.6 Conclusion ............................................................................................ 72

CHAPTER THREE .......................................................................................... 75

FROM A NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP TO A POLITICAL MOVEMENT
1991-2002 .................................................................................................. 75

3.0 Introduction ............................................................................................ 75

3.1 Multiparty Politics and the Rebirth of Chinkororo Movement .......... 75

3.2 New Recruitment in Chinkororo Movement ...................................... 80

3.3 New Training Techniques of Chinkororo Members .......................... 83

3.4 Weapons Used by Chinkororo ............................................................. 86

3.5 Coded Language Used in the Field .................................................... 89

3.6 New strategies of Decoding Alerts ...................................................... 91

3.7 Changes in the Organization of Chinkororo Movement .................... 94
3.9 Chinkororo Leadership Structure ................................................................. 94
3.9 Recruitment of women in Chinkororo Movement ........................................ 100
3.9.1. Introduction ................................................................................................. 100
3.9.2. Women in the Chinkororo Warfare ............................................................ 100
3.9.3. Preparing for War ....................................................................................... 103
3.9.4. In the Battle Field ....................................................................................... 105
3.9.5. After the War ............................................................................................... 109
3.9.6. The Burial of Chinkororo Member .............................................................. 110
3.10 Conclusion ....................................................................................................... 112

CHAPTER FOUR .................................................................................................... 115

FROM A POLITICAL MOVEMENT TO A CRIMINAL GANG; 2003-
2010 ..................................................................................................................... 115

4.0 Introduction ...................................................................................................... 115
4.1 The 2005 Referendum and Gang Formation in Kenya .................................... 115
4.2. Chinkororo in the 2007/2008 Post-Election Violence ................................. 117
4.3. Chinkororo movement outside Gusii Borders ............................................. 120
4.4 The Prevention of Organized Crime Act (POCA) 2010 and the
Criminality in Chinkororo movement ................................................................. 123
4.5. The Current Manifestations of Chinkororo Movement .............................. 133
4.6. Factors to the Tenacity and Vibrancy in Chinkororo Movement .............. 134
4. 7 Conclusion ...................................................................................................... 138

CHAPTER FIVE ..................................................................................................... 140
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .................. 140

5.0 Introduction .............................................................................. 140
5.1. Summary and Conclusions ...................................................... 140
5.3 Recommendations ..................................................................... 148
5.4 Suggestions for Further Study ................................................... 148

REFERENCES ................................................................................. 150

APPENDICES ................................................................................... 166

APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE ABAGUSII COMMUNITY IN KISII COUNTY ..................................................... 166

APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR THE EX-MEMBERS AND MEMBERS ................................................................. 167

APPENDIX III: QUESTIONS TO THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATORS CHIEFS AND CLAN ELDERS ................................................................. 168

APPENDIX IV: QUESTIONS TO THE NON ABAGUSII COMMUNITY MEMBERS IN KISII COUNTY ................................................................. 169

APPENDIX V: MAP OF THE RESEARCH SITE ...................................... 170

APPENDIX VIII: RESEARCH PERMIT ................................................ 171

GLOSSARY ......................................................................................... 172
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 3: Leadership Structure of Chinkororo Movement------------------ 96
OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS

Gang/Militia - This refers to an illicitly organized group of persons, with plainly defined, set and radical rules whose violation can lead to severe punishment including death. It can also be defined as group of people organized in a paramilitary formation characteristically regarding themselves as defenders of individual rights against the supposed intrusion of the government. However, at times they can be state owned depending on their primary objective.

Informal Security Movements - Refers to an armed group considered as the security wing within the region of its operations.
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ACE----------Abagusi Council of Elders
BBC----------British Broadcasting Corporation
BSC----------Border Security Committee
CID----------Criminal Investigation Department
CJDG---------Criminal Justice Degree Guide
CSM----------Christian Science Monitor
DRC----------Democratic Republic of Congo
DRIRB--------Directorate of Research Immigration and Refugees Board
EB----------Encyclopedia Britannica
GSU----------General Service Unit
IRIN---------Integrated Regional Information Network
KADU--------Kenya African Democratic Union
KAMATUSA----Kalenjin Maasai Turkana and Samburu
KANU--------Kenya African National Union
KDF---------Kenya Defense Forces
KEPN--------Kenya Environment and Politics News
KHRC--------Kenya Human Rights Commission
KII---------Key Informant Interviews
KNAOR-------Kenya National Assembly Official Record

KNYA--------Kenya National Youth Alliance

KPU----------Kenya People’s Party

KRW---------Kenya Rights Watch

LDP----------Liberal Democratic Party

LRA---------Lord’s Resistance Army

MRC----------Mombasa Republican Council

NARC-------National Alliance Rainbow Coalition

NCSTRT------National Consortium for Study of Terror and Response to Terror

O.I.----------Oral Interview

ODM---------Orange Democratic Movement

PDM---------Pwani Democratic Movement

POCA--------Prevention of Organized Crime Act

SAPs--------Structural Adjustment Programmes

SLDF--------Sabot Land Defense Force

TRAC--------Terror Research and Analysis Consortium

WWI---------World War I
ABSTRACT

The emergence of informal security movements globally and in Kenya has received much scholarly attention. Many of such groups surface in response to social, political, and economic inequalities and dissatisfactions. From the outset, it is important to note that almost every ethnic community in Kenya has security movement perceived to be the security wing of the population. Notably, the government a security threat has declared many of such movements. Following the enactment of Prevention of Organized Crime Act in 2010, thirty-three ethnic movements were banned the same year. However, majority of the groups still exist as amorphous entities to date, and Chinkororo is one of such security related movement operating in Kisii County. This study focuses on the transformation in the Chinkororo movement in Kisii County in the period 1961-2010. It examines the rise of Chinkororo in response to various factors, including the struggle for political-economic inclusion, state security failure and rise of militias in other regions. It also examines the changes that the group has undergone over time as well as the current manifestation of the group. The main objectives of the study were to; trace the origin of Chinkororo among Abagusii in the period 1961-1990, to investigate the recruitment, training and organization of Chinkororo in the period 1991-2002 and to analyze the changing trends in the recruitment training and organization of Chinkororo in the period 2002-2010. The study is guided by Robert Merton’s strain theory and signaling theory. However occasionally the researcher borrowed some concepts form the rational choice theory and the labelling theory of crime to enrich this study. The study utilized descriptive research design. The study targeted both females and males aged 18 years, and above within the County of Kisii who were knowledgeable as far as the Chinkororo movement is concerned. Purposive and snowballing sampling techniques were used to select the population sample. One hundred and thirty-six participants were interviewed. The research employs both primary and secondary sources of data. Primary data was obtained from direct interaction with the respondents in the field through conducting interviews and focus group discussions. Secondary data was generated from the critical textual analysis of the books, journals, dissertations, reports and magazines. Archival sources were also consulted. The findings revealed that Chinkororo emerged in the early 1970s due to state security failure, especially along the Gusii-Maasai borders, coupled with negative ethnicity and the rise of Kalenjin warriors and Maasai Morans among the Kipsigis and Maasai respectively. It further establishes that Chinkororo have specific recruitment age, training grounds and an organized hierarchical structure. The findings also indicate that Chinkororo have undergone transformations in terms of lifestyle, training and organizational structure. The movement is seen to have mutated from a neighborhood group, to a political movement and finally to a criminal gang. These changes were informed by intensified negative ethnicity in Kenyan politics as well as tough laws on illegal groups in Kenya. The study is significant because it will be a source and stimulus in formulating and executing policies related to such movements not only in Kenya but continentally.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This section contains the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the research objectives, questions and premises. Additionally, it contains justification and significance of the study as well as the scope and limitations.

1.1 Background to the Study

In the recent past, there has been an emergence of informal security movements associated illegal activities around the world. States refer to such movements as militia or illegal gangs because their activities are above the law while other scholars see them as vigilantes (Asyraf, 2016; FMT news, 2016). On their part, these groups refer to themselves as security groups who are out to fill the gaps where the government has failed (South Africa History Online, 2015). Concisely there is therefore no single agreed definition on these groups. Terms such as militia and gang are laden with negative connotations and branding and therefore need to be applied with caution. In this study, we decided to refer to them as informal security movement. This is because the government does not recognize them yet in their regions of operations they are accepted and regarded as security wings of the community.

In the United States of America, there are over 1018 of such movements (Pokot, 2012). Examples include the Michigan based Hutaree, the 63rd Battalion of Light's Fort, and Spokane based militia and the Patriot Movement. Super head fears brought
about by economic dislocations for instance fueled the *Patriot Movement* whose concern was the changing racial make-ups of America and the re-election of Obama. The patriot movement emerged in 1994 in reaction to brutal government repression of rebel groups at Ruby Ridge, Idaho in 1992 and in 1993 near Waco, Texas (Pokot, 2012). Political, social, economic and individual factors fuel the emergence and growth of such movements.

Indeed, the youth bulge, lack of political economic inclusion, religious fundamentalism and state security failure are the major factors for the emergence of security-related movements (Spergel, 1995). The activities of these groups have had a number of effects, including fueling terrorism, insecurity, robbery, ethnicity, instability, underdevelopment, violation of human rights, displacement, disruption of livelihood and humanitarian crisis (Okumu and Ikelegbe, 2010). It is important to note that at times the members of these movements are those who have something to lose under certain conditions; therefore, they have to ensure that all efforts are channeled towards reclaiming the loss (Wipper, 1977). This was the case with *Sakawaism* and *Dini ya Msambwa* members. Spergel (1995) asserts that psychological and individual factors also motivate the rise and growth of the security movements.

In South America, such movements are widely considered as one of the major causes of violence (Rodgers and Baird, 2015). Such movements include *Latin Kings, the Jamaican Pose, Primero Commando da Capita (PPC)* and *Mexican mafias* among other (Pegg, 2012). The Christian Science Monitor-CSM (2015) reporting on the growth of such movements in South America notes that South American movements began as small street groups only to become powerful and a security threat. The
activities of these movements include drug distribution, kidnapping, robbery, car hijacking and home invasions. Additionally, they carry out extortions and forced-gang recruitment, leading to extreme violence (Criminal Justice and Degree Guide, 2015; Michael, 2014).

Africa is a host to many of such groups with most affected countries being Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Sudan and Nigeria (Oloo, 2010). These movements in Africa have different aims and objectives, and they operate in both rural and urban areas. Their recruitment procedures, *modus operandi* and most importantly their number remain conveniently obscure. For instance, the *Mambas*, *Cobras* and Ninjas in Republic of Congo strive for political domination, *the Intarahanwe* in Rwanda fights for identity rights, political inclusion and equity in access to resources and justice. The *Niger Delta Volunteer Pace* in Niger aims at insurgency while others like the *Bakasi Boys* in Nigeria are geared toward crime control (Okumu and Ikelegbe, 2010).

Kenya has also had its share of these movements, especially among deprived populace where joblessness, marginalization, ethnic inequalities, disparities and unequal allocation of national resources and services are widespread (Kaso, 2012). Many youths from such neighborhoods face not only social and economic crisis but also psychological and personal challenges that drive them to search for identity in security movements (Spergel, 1995). The growth of movements in Kenya can be historically traced back to the *Youth Wing* of the Kenya Africa National Union (KANU), a ruling party in 1960s (Oloo, 2010). The group aimed at intimidating the political opponents of KANU, especially the first opposition party, Kenya African Democratic union
(KADU). This continued to the 1980s with increased repression from the independent government. In the 1980s, Kenya saw individuals of similar minds from diverse regions form underground groups to not only provide security but also to fight for the opening up of the democratic space (Odinga, 2013). Former President Moi categorized the Mwakenya as a militia though operating from a different perspective. Many of the foregoing groups proliferated at the end of the 1980s with reduced returns from agriculture, repression from the KANU regime and the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs).

With the advent of multiparty politics in 1990s, many movements, like *Mungiki, Taliban, Jeshi La Mzee, Sungusungu* among others, emerged in response to marginalization, struggle for political and economic power as well as to protect their ethnic groups. *Mungiki* rose in 1980s and became more vibrant in 1992 to shield their own who had been displaced from the Rift Valley by the *Maasai* and *Kalenjin warriors* (Wamue, 2001).

However, this movement started as a Gikuyu ethnic and cultural movement in 1980s, advocating for a return to traditional customs (Rasmussen, 2014). In 1992, they developed a political ambition and formed a political party called the Kenya National Youth Alliance (KNYA) in 2004, which was denied registration by the NARC government. Members of the movement associates themselves with *Mau Mau*, a nationalist movement during the fight for Kenyan independence.

Security related movements emerged in various regions in Kenya, and as Oloo (2010) notes, majority were ethnic oriented. Among the Mijikenda, *Mombasa Republican*
Council (MRC) emerged. MRC was formed in 1999 in response to the political and economic marginalization of the coastal people (Terror Research and Analysis Consortium, 2015). The group remained latent until 2008 when it raised claims that the coast should break away from Kenya. The group claims 1.5 million members male and female, young and old (Kamande, 2012) and each member has a membership card that bears his/her name and the MRC logo (Dabbis, 2012). In 2010, MRC was banned (Kamande, 2012).

However, in 2012, the court overturned the outlaw and called for MRC to register as a political party and circumvent the secessionist call (Reuters, 2012; Kamande, 2012). In 2014, the group reformed itself to Pwani Democratic Movement (PDM) and started recruiting new members as well as inciting violence in the region (Terror Research Analysis Consortium, 2015). Kamande (2012) notes that MRC conducts its military training in Kilifi County and their main weapons include clubs, machetes and other small arms.

In Nairobi County, especially in the slum areas, groups such as Jeshi La Mzee, Siafu, Bankongo, and Taliban among many others emerged. Reporting on Vigilantes in Nairobi slum, Olang & Okoth (2010) note that Taliban is a Luo dominated movement that operates in Kariobangi and sections of Dandora. The emergence of Taliban was informed by the sense of apprehension that spread among the Luo populace in Kariobangi over possibilities of surprise attacks from Mungiki.

In addition, some Luo were unhappy with the forced circumcision practices that Mungiki had from time to time administered on its members (Luo). The activities of
this movement include lynching thugs and suspected criminals and keeping away strangers. *Taliban* is said to be more politically conscious and has been used mainly by Luo politicians from time to time (Olang & Okoth, 2010).

Among the Kalenjin, Maasai, Turkana and Samburu (KAMATUSA), the *Saboat Land Defense Forces (SLDF), the Kalenjin Warriors and Maasai Morans* emerged. When discussing on marginalization and the emergence of militias in Kenya, Oloo (2010) notes that *SLDF* is a movement drawn from *Soy* sub location of the Saboat. The movement emerged immediately after the 2002 elections but remained dormant until 2006. *SLDF* operated around Mount Elgon region and neighboring Trans Nzoia districts that border Uganda.

The movement portrayed itself as an organization that fights injustice and the alleged discrimination in land allocation. Members in this movement are mainly drawn from the Ogiek, Sebei, Teso, and Bukusu communities. *SLDF* aims at not only evicting non-indigenous people in the region but also curving the fertile land of Mount Elgon from Western Province to Rift Valley (Oloo, 2010). Reporting on SLDF lifestyles, the Standard Digital Reporters (2007) note that only leaders have specific hiding places such as caves and forested mountain slopes. The rest of the members live within the local population. The group has over 35,000 soldiers who carry out killing, torture, kidnap, rape and destruction of property (Standard Digital Reporters, 2007).

Among the Abagusii, movements, like *Sungusungu, Amachuma* and *Chinkororo*, emerged under various circumstances. *Sungusungu* traces its origin in Tanzania. However, in Kisii County, the movement emerged in early 1990s. This was in
response to state security failure coupled with social, political and economic changes that the community has experienced since the colonial era (Masese & Mwenzwa, 2012; Akinyi, 2014).

Membership in this movement comprises of the youth and mostly those unemployed and less educated. The activities of Sungusungu include punishing crimes such as adultery, witchcraft and containing political and business competitors (Akinyi, 2014). Funding in this movement comes from extortion of public members in the name of security. The impact of Sungusungu activities includes women giving sex for protection, enforced disappearance and parallel legal system (Kenya Human Rights Commission, 2010).

Amachuma have their origin in Nyaribari and was formed for the purpose of intimidating political opponents (Ombour, 2010). As Masese & Mwenzwa (2012) notes, Amachuma have become a political terror faction of politicians in fixing their rivals. The group does not have a clear organizational structure. Their activities include murder and defense (KHRC, 2014).

Waki (2008), studying the activities of Chinkororo in Kenya’s post-election violence notes that members in the group range from young to old, educated to uneducated. KEPN (2008) notes that Chinkororo is a traditional warrior of Abagusii while Katumanga & Ngunyi (2014) only say that the group is the armed wing of Abagusii.

Despite such studies, there is little in depth literature analyzing the changes that Chinkororo has undergone over time. What exist are fragmented descriptive pieces of information on its activities. Indeed, Chinkororo has loosely been studied alongside
other movements and its history is yet to be given serious scholarly attention. There is also a debate on the identity of Chinkororo in Kisii County and the time they emerged. This study seeks to fill this gap by analyzing its evolution, vibrancy and transformation since 1961.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The rise of security related movements globally has received much scholarly attention. In Kenya, many of such groups emerge in response to social, political and economic inequalities and dissatisfactions. As a result, almost every ethnic group in Kenya has a group associated to their community that is perceived to be the security wing of the region. To this end, many of these movements have been declared a security threat in the country and as such, following the enactment of Prevention of Organized Crime Act in 2010, 33 such movements were banned. However, majority of them still exist to date. Chinkororo is one of security related movement operating in Kisii County. Despite the ban, chinkororo activities intensified in Gusii region. Additionally, whereas the government regards the group as an illegal movement, the Chinkororo members are regarded as the traditional warriors of Abagusii and security wing in the region. This controversy raises a scholarly, concern thus the need to rethink this movement and its transformation over time. This study undertakes an in-depth historical analysis of the rise and transformation in Chinkororo in Kisii County in the period 1961-2010. It begins by tracing the emergence and growth of Chinkororo movement in Gucha, Bomachoge and Borabu sub counties. In so doing, the study sought to interrogate the recruitment, training and the organization of Chinkororo during the period of its initial formation. It also examines the changes that the
movement has gone through over time. These changes are addressed in reference to recruitment, training, leadership structure and participants in the movement. The factors that inform the transformation in Chinkororo are also assessed. The current manifestations of the movement are also discussed.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study sought to achieve the following objectives:

a. To trace the origin of Chinkororo among Abagusii from 1961-1990
b. To investigate the recruitment, training and organization of Chinkororo in the period between 1991 and 2002
c. To analyze the changing trends in the recruitment, training and the organization of Chinkororo in the period between 2003 and 2010

1.4 Research Questions

The study sought to answer the following questions:

a. What factors led to the rise and growth of Chinkororo in Kisii County in the period 1961-1990?
b. What was the nature of recruitment, training and organization of Chinkororo in the period 1991-2002?
c. What are the transformations that Chinkororo has undergone in the period 2003-2010?
1.5 Research Premises

The study was premised on the following assumptions:

a. That state security failure led to the rise of Chinkororo in Kisii County in the period 1961-1990.

b. That Chinkororo has since 1990s changed its recruitment, training and organization structure.

c. That the government ban of illegal groups in Kenya since 2003 informed the changing trend in the recruitment, training and organization of Chinkororo.

1.6 Justification and Significance

Historical documentation of transformation among Chinkororo in Kisii County has not received serious scholarly attention. Much of the existing literature gives security related movements a nationalistic approach. Chinkororo has been fragmentarily studied along other movements. In addition to failure by scholars to address the problem in Kisii County seriously, none has also provided information on the transformation and the current manifestation of the movement.

In Kisii County, scholars have dwelled much on Sungusungu and Amachuma. They include Akinyi, (2014), Masese, Mwenzwa (2012) among others. What has been written on Chinkororo majorly rotates around its activities. The authors do not also provide the nature of such activities in details. Even with such documentation by Waki, (2008), KEPN (2008), Ngunyi, and Katumanga (2012), very little has been written on Chinkororo and its historical documentation is extremely scarce. In fact,
the existing works even generate a debate on who Chinkororo are, leaving scholars in
dilemma.

The study, therefore, was necessitated by the fact that it departed from the nationalistic
analysis of security-related movements to a localized investigation into the study area.
At such levels, it was possible to uncover certain aspects that might have been
assumed or overlooked by embracing a nationalistic discourse of such movements. It
also addresses the transformation in Chinkororo, something that has not been
scholarly addressed.

Chinkororo Movement was chosen for study since there exist scholarly mystification
concerning the time the movement emerged and its legality. Additionally despite the
ban in 2010, the group continued its operations in Kisii County yet very little scholarly
attention has been granted to the groups as far as its origin, operation and changes in
its operations are concerned.

Kisii County is particularly crucial to this study because it borders Kipsigis and
Maasai areas where Chinkororo activities have been greatly felt. Kisii County also
offered a multi-ethnic space upon which different ethnic groups were interviewed.

The year 1961 provided a good starting point because this is when KANU's Youth
Wing was formed, which is considered by some scholars, like Oloo (2010), as the
founding stone of security-related movements in Kenya.
The year 2010 marked a historical period to end the study because following the enactment of the Prevention of Organized Crime Act (POCA) in the year 2010, the Kenyan government outlawed *Chinkororo* and other related groups.

The Kipsigis and Maasai borders are important because Abagusii have had a history of adverse relations with these communities since time immemorial.

Findings from this study are helpful to the government and other stakeholders as a stimulus and force to formulate and execute policies related to such movements not only in Kenya but continentally.

The study also suggests some solutions to the rise of security-related movements in Kisii County and Kenya in general. It will also add knowledge to the existing literature on such movements.

The study is significant in that, apart from enriching the historiography of security-related movements in Kenya, it also provides a new methodology and theoretical tools to interrogate the problem in Kisii County.

1.7 Scope and Limitation

The study interrogated the transformation in *Chinkororo* in Gucha, Bomachoge and Borabu sub counties in Kisii County in the period 1961-2010. However, the study did not confine to the period 1961-2010, where necessary, the researcher stretched beyond the period to bring out essential information to support the study.
The study was limited to specific areas in Kisii County. These included Gucha, Bomachoge, Nyacheki, Kiango, Gesusu, and Nyangusu centers given that it is here that Chinkororo activities have been greatly felt. The region also borders the Kipsigis and Maasai with whom the Abagusii have had adversary relations with since time immemorial.

The researcher encountered several challenges in the course of the research. Due to the secretive nature of matters dealing with security movements, the research participants were not willing to give information openly. It was also very difficult to trace the participants of the study, especially the ex-members and members of the movement.

However, this was addressed through assurance to the participants that their anonymity was to be maintained and that this research was for academic purpose only. In addition, the use of influential people in the region, such as chiefs and clan elders, was employed to enable the respondents feel less suspicious or fear any chances of being spied on. Additionally, use of snowballing techniques helped the researcher to trace the ex-members and the members of the movement.

In addition, the researcher was also faced with unlikely and unconvincing interview reports. Some of the respondents gave information that was biased and could not be supported by any pragmatic evidence in the field. The researcher had to make judgment based on her own insight and imagination in the pursuit of the real movement- Chinkororo. This would at times be based on the reports with the highest number of supporters from the field and from the secondary sources available.
Furthermore, it was difficult to access archival sources on *Chinkororo* movement directly because very little was documented as at the time of this study. However, archival sources on the traditional Gusii military organization and district security reports were more useful in unmasking the controversy behind the movement.

Furthermore, identification of and approach to informants was quite a problem. There were those who were supportive of the movement and could not want to do anything with its discussion. They considered it their defender given that at some time, some members allied to the movement harassed the researcher.
1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

This section contains a critical review of the already existing work on security-related movements not only in Kenya but also globally with a view of identifying the gaps that other scholars left. It also highlights the theoretical framework that guided this study.

1.8.1 Review of Related Literature

There are relatively many works, which discuss in a substantial measure the theme of the rise of security-related movements both continentally and in Kenya. Among such works include Wamue (2001), (Ombour, 2010), Katumanga (2005), Waki, (2008) Hagedorn (2008), Akinyi (2014), National Consortium for Study of Terror and Response to Terror NCSTRT (2015), Kegoro (2009) and Okumu and IKelegbe (2010), which are of immediate relevance here.

Jennifer et al. (2014) gives a brief analytic description of the origin, evolution and nature of youth gangs in different countries in the globe. In a twelve-chapter volume, these authors offer a concise description of the security-related movements in the globe. In problematizing such movements, they give special reference to gangs in specific countries mainly in Kenya, Brazil, South Africa, India, among others. They also note that the movements are universally formed from the same conditions but are variable across societies. However, the authors give the emergence of these movements a nationalistic approach. Thus, there is a possibility that some information
might have been overlooked, and this is what the current study uncovers on the emergence and existence of the *Chinkororo*.

Hagedorn (2008) looks at the impacts of globalization on persistence and proliferation of gangs in the world’s ghettos, slums, and favelas. He shows that poverty, inequality, racial and ethnic oppression in various parts of the world have led to security-related movement formation. He writes that demoralization and mistrust condition of the state makes people to start creating defensive radicalized and religious identities to protect themselves and their communities against discrimination. This breeds movements with an aim of replacing the state in fulfilling economic, security and service needs.

Analyzing gang formation in Chicago, Brazil and Cape Town, he argues that such movements have been institutionalized as a strategy to confront a hopeless cycle of poverty, racism and oppression. His ideas closely relate to this study because he gives the causes and factors behind security-related movements formation. However, his work gives the movements’ formation a global approach; therefore, he may have overlooked some features on such movements.

CJDG (2015) provides a list of movements that are considered dangerous in the America. Such include the *Mexican Mafia, Mongolos, Latin Kings, MS 13*, among others. The activities of these movement range from drug distribution, murder, rape, prostitution, car hijacking, robbery, and home invasions. The reports also note that some of these movements, such as the *Latin Kings*, have a constitution and a rigid hierarchical structure. Others, like the *Mexican Mafia*, have a special identity, which is a tattoo of a black hand across the chest. The report also notes that many of these movements started as prison gangs and mutated into what they are today. Despite
shedding light to this study on activities of these movements and some of the changes they have undergone, the report does not give the main factors for the emergence of such movements, and this study seeks to fill this gap. The report also does not explain why such movements are considered the most dangerous in America. This study seeks to address this gap with regard to the Chinkororo group in Kenya.

In their study of gangs in Latin America, Anderson and Bourne (2013) note that there is a hierarchical command structure of gangs in the Caribbean and Latin America. There is clear leadership at the top and few senior people who stipulate the functions, responsibility, duties and direction of the organization make those decisions at the apex of the pyramid. The authors note that the Los zetas gang in Mexico began out of the need to be a drug kingpin unlike the one in Jamaica. It later grew and became a transnational drug, gun and other criminal activities network. They murder and instigate violence among people. Their ideas shed light into this study as far as the organization activities and growth of security-related movements is concerned. However, they do not provide information on the sources of finance to these movements. In addition, the study generally focuses on movements in Latin America while this study focuses specifically on the Chinkororo in Kisii County.

Okumu and Iklegbe (2010) focus on militias, state rebels and Islamist insurgents in Africa. They do typologies and give the characteristics of security-related movements. However, in their discussion of such movements in Kenya, they only concentrate on Mungiki and Sabot Land Defense Forces (SLDF). The author of this chapter, Oloo (2010), only gives a detailed investigation into Mungiki in Central Kenya and SLDF in Mt. Elgon region. In a way, he does not focus on other
movements. He does not give us an account of *Chinkororo* activities in Kisii County. This raises the concern to study *Chinkororo* and get detailed information as far as their operations are concerned.

In addressing post-election violence, public discourse and the lie of Kenyan hood, Wafula (2008) notes that the most troubling thing in Kenya is the rise of security-related movements. He also notes that this has eroded the collective spirit of oneness. He says that most movements in Kenya emerged in 1980s and 1990s, especially in the metropolitan areas, and that they run in the silhouette of the state in both the bucolic and metropolitan Kenya while adopting brutal and Mafioso approaches to their activities. The author also notes that such movements run businesses, such as matatus, while demanding safety money. They also amass rates for necessary services such as security, rental fee, and refuse collection. He observes that these movements have their leaders and a hierarchical organization with a highly structured army that exhorts and terrorize anyone who goes against their aims. These movements are hired by politicians to advance political goals; therefore, most of them have become entwined with politics. Wafula (2008), reports that the existence of these movements is a sign of failure of various institutions of governance to evolve a more legitimately exclusive Kenyan nationhood. His ideas inform this study on the sources of finance, leadership and factors that led to the rise of such movements. He, however, presents these movements more as a monolithic group. This study differs from his ideas because it looks at *Chinkororo* as a specific movement.

TRAC (2015) while reporting on *MRC* notes that the movement was formed in the 1990s to respond to the continued political and economic discrimination against the
coastal people by the successive governments. The report further notes that the movement remained dormant until 2008 when it raised various concerns by stating that Mombasa should break away from Kenya and become a sovereign state. This report agrees with Kamande (2012) who reports that MRC gained widespread publicity in 2008 due to its slogan *Pwani si Kenya* (coast is not part of Kenya). The report also notes that MRC reformed itself in 2014 to *Pwani Democratic Movement (PDM)*, and it recruits members in addition to inciting violence. According to Kamande, the movement also urged its members to boycott the general elections in 2013. These studies are relevant to this study because they address the factors for the emergence of militia movements and their changing status. However, they do not provide clear information on membership and sources of finance to the movements, and this study fills this gap.

Waki (2008) reporting on post-election violence in Kenya, notes that organized movements did play a great role in eviction, lynching and murder of people during the 2007/2008 post-election violence. The report also indicates that *Mungiki* grew in 1980s as a religious cult but later on metamorphosed into a Mafioso mode movement. In this, he agrees with Wafula (2008) who says that most movements run in the silhouette of the state both in metropolitan and bucolic Kenya in a brutal and Mafioso manner. Waki’s report informs this study as far as the activities of movements are concerned. He also sheds some light on the transformation of such movements. He, however, discusses *Mungiki* into more details than any other movement. The findings deviate from this study because they do not report on the historical nature of
Chinkororo, which is the primary goal of this study. In fact, the movement is just mentioned alongside others.

Oloo (2010) blames politics on the rise of security-related movements. He explains that these movements are formed to intimidate political opponents in Kenya’s political arena. To him, individual members in such movements are trained in specific areas such as Simba Hills, Kaya Waa and Similani caves in Kwale. He also considers some movements that are associated with the opposition such as Jeshi La Embakasi and Baghdad Boys. In this way, Oloo (2010) says that such movements are either state-sponsored or opposition-sponsored. His work informs this study as far as the activities and the factors for the emergence of security-related movements are concerned. His work differs from this study because he concentrates on the general overview of the security-related movements in Kenya while this study focuses on one specific group, the Chinkororo.

KHRC (2008) highlights several movements that operate in different regions in Kenya. Such include Siafu, Bakhungu, Jeshi La Darajani, Ghetto and Mungiki. It also notes that these movements are organized around ethnic identities, agreeing with Okoth and Olang (2012) and Oloo (2010) who give the rise of such movements an ethnic approach. The report further says that while these movements normally engage in serving several activities, during elections politicians use them for political activities, including unleashing violence. The report is relevant to this study because it addresses movements from the ethnic point of view like the current study. It also sheds light on the activities of these movements. However, they do not provide us
with information on how these movements emerged and have changed over time, which is one of the objectives of the current study.

Wamue (2001) studies Mungiki from the re-traditionalization perspective. She postulates that Mungiki is a religious-political movement that resents accumulation of wealth by a small number of individuals, especially those in political ranks. The movement rose to mobilize the masses against the government that was perceived to plan the 1992 clashes that saw the eviction of many people from the Kikuyu tribe from the Rift Valley regions. The movement, she says, advocates for “itwika” the transfer of leadership from the old generation to the new generation of youths. She also demonstrates that Mungiki is not entirely a Kikuyu affair because the group has membership outside Central Province from places like Pokot, Maasai and Luos. Her ideas are relevant to this study because she attests that security-related movements have a homogeneous history and a common goal they set out to achieve. She also touches on the factors that led to the rise of Mungiki, which is of immediate relevance to the study of the evolution of the Chinkororo movement. However, Wamue (2001) does not give us an account of the Chinkororo. This study differs from Wamue’s ideas because her focus is mainly on Mungiki while the focus of this study is on the transformation of Chinkororo.

Mwangi & Ndeda (2010) in their discussion on Mungiki and the election crisis in Kenya since 1992, note that Mungiki emerged within a rubric of multiparty misunderstanding. The movement has mutated over time such that how it presents itself today is different from the way it was in 2002 and 2007. They note that the movement has changed, and that it has become a useful tool in the hands of those in
power. Their ideas are relevant to this study because they note that security-related movements undergo some changes over time, which is one of the premises of this study. However, Mwangi and Ndeda only handle Mungiki while the current study focuses on Chinkororo.

Rasmussen (2014) gives the origin of Mungiki and its transformation. He says that the movement began as a Gikuyu ethnic and cultural movement in the 1980s, advocating for a return to the customs of the tribe. In this, Rasmussen agrees with Wamue (2001). The group later on developed political ambitions in 1990s and formed a political party in 2004, that is, the KNYA, which was denied registration by the then NARC government. Rasmussen also notes that most of these movements transformed from juvenile delinquent groups to criminal entities while others developed interests in local politics or even changed into more overtly political reform systems. Rasmussen’s ideas are relevant to this study because he is addressing the question on the emergence and transformation of the Mungiki, a movement that is similar to Chinkororo.

Kagwanja (2003) gives the rise of security-related movements a religious approach. He considers what he refers to as the re-tribalization of the public as a causal factor for the rise of such movements. He borrows much from Wamue (2001) while criticizing the views of Anderson (2002). He traces Mungiki from Mau Mau liberation movement and says that Mungiki is out to complete the mission that the Mau Mau fighters failed to complete. His work sheds light to this study as far as the rise of the movements are concerned. However, this study differs from his work because it
focuses on *Chinkororo* in Kisii County while his focus is only on Nairobi area and to a larger extent *Mungiki* and the politics revolving around its formation and operations.

Katumanga (2005) asserts that security-related movements rise due to power struggle, state security failure and economic drives. He gives an example of *Taliban* that rose in Kariobangi in response to inadequacy and corruption by the police. To him, these movements have political sponsorship and membership, and he provides *Mungiki* as an example that is funded by some politicians from Central Kenya. His works shed light to this study as far as the evolution of movements is concerned. However, he gives one case study into details, leaving scholars in a dilemma as to whether this is the case with other movements such as *Chinkororo*. This study differs from his ideas because this study focuses on *Chinkororo* while his focuses on *Mungiki* and *Taliban*.

Akinyi (2014) and Masese and Mwenzwa (2012) appreciate state security agencies ineffectiveness in crime prevention and failure by the police to stop cattle stealing in emergence of *Sungusungu* in Kisii county. The group comes into action when the police fail to act. These authors also give the activities of *Sungusungu* and their impacts in Kisii County. To some extent, they try to tell us that the movement’s activities and manner of approach has changed over time to criminality and terrorizing of innocent individuals once hired to do so. Akinyi (2014) demonstrates that membership in this movement majorly include the youths who are unemployed and less educated. Their ideas form the basis of this study as far as the objectives are concerned because they address the emergence, sources of funds, membership, training, changes and impact of *Sungusungu* activities. This study addresses these aspects from the *Chinkororo* point of view.
Discussing the state of security in Kenya in the period of 2010 to 2014, the KHRC (2014) notes that apart from Chinkororo and Sungusungu there are other such movements within the Kisii County. These include Kumikumi and Bamba 40 movements that carry out extortion, robbery, and burglary within the County. The report also notes that within the period 2010-2014 Kenya had about forty-six security related movements. The KHRC report sheds light towards this study because it discusses security-related movements within Kisii County while trying to interrogate their activities. However, the report does not provide any information on the changes that these movements have undergone over the years and their current manifestation. This study aims at filling this gap by interrogating the transformation of the Chinkororo movement.

Reporting on militias in Kenya, KEPN (2008) notes that Chinkororo was outlawed in 1990s and that the group is equivalent to the Kalenjin warriors, a militia that emerged from within the Kalenjin community. The report further indicates that Chinkororo represent the armed wing of the Abagusii community while acknowledging that the militia is traditionally the community’s defense force. However, KNEP (2008) does not give the current manifestation of the movement since it was first banned in 1990. The report also provides a debate on identity of the actual Chinkororo and its membership. This is apparent given that Ochieng (1974) observes that during the pre-colonial period, the Abagusii had no distinct military organization under a solitary command and that every clan conducted its warfare and forays independently. Accordingly, this not only brings a scholarly mystification and dilemma but also
generates a heated debate on when *Chinkororo* emerged. This study clarifies this issue.

Kegoro (2009) discusses *Chinkororo* with special reference to post election violence. The author notes that *Chinkororo* are residents along the Gusii/Maasai border. He also notes that women played a key role in the movement by mobilizing the community in case of invasion. Furthermore, the author notes that leadership in the group was informal by 1991 although a visible leader was chosen in the same year. His work informs this study on the organization of the movement, which is the focus of this study. However, he does not give the changing trends on the movement. Moreover, he does not explain the tenacity of the movement and the impacts of Prevention of Organized Crime Act (POCA) on the movement. This study fills these gaps.

Katumanga & Nguni (2014) describe *Chinkororo* as an ethno-geographic militia group. They argue that the members of the movement are armed with machetes and that they are politically connected and hired. Their work informs this study because they provide the defining characteristics of the *Chinkororo* while also revealing its funding sources. However, as much as they address *Chinkororo*, they fail to address crucial issues such as the changes the movement has undergone over time. Concisely, the two have a narrow account of *Chinkororo*, allowing the need for a more detailed study to provide an in-depth investigation of the *Chinkororo* holistically.

The literature reviewed indicates that some studies have been undertaken on security-related movements worldwide. However, several gaps that were identified needed a scholarly attention. Given the controversy and debate about *Chinkororo*, the study
addressed some of these gaps by looking at the evolution of Chinkororo, their activities, funding and impact of their activities among the Abagusii and their neighbors. Indeed, the works that were reviewed above were just but a selected few. There was, therefore, little doubt that from the review very little research had been undertaken to interrogate the emergence and growth of Chinkororo in Kisii County. The study utilized the numerous sources in related fields to harness relevant data to address this gap. In addition to the failure by scholars to seriously address the issue of Chinkororo in Kisii County, none had given clear information concerning training and funding of this movement. This study sought to fill this gap. In addition, none of the scholars had given information concerning the transformations that the movement has undergone since its emergence and its current manifestation.

1.8. 2 Theoretical Framework

There are a number of theories used to explain the evolution, organization, structure, recruitment, training and activities of security-related movements. Such include the rational choice theory (1961), Merton strain theory (1957), labeling theory of crime (1963), signaling theory (1973) among others. It is important that we evaluate each of these theories with a view to borrowing the aspects that are relevant to this study.

George Homas pioneered rational choice theory in the year 1961. However, in the 1970s, other theorists, as if Blaau (1964), Coleman (1980) and Cook (1977) expanded George’s framework and developed a more formal version of rational choice that is guided this study. Rational choice theory assumes that human beings base their actions
on rational calculations. They act with sagacity when they make choices, and that their choices point at optimization of their pleasure (Scott, 2000).

The theory presents three actors in the society: the rational actors who choose to commit crimes that can be prevented by severe penalty, the predestined actors who cannot control their urge; therefore, driven by the environment to commit crimes, and the victimized actors who are the victims of a lopsided society. This theory is relevant to this study because most movements tend to emerge due the feeling of inequality in the society. As such, they comprise the victimized actors in the society. Accordingly, members tend to come up with their own ways of life in a bid to address their perceptions of inequality.

However, rational choice theory has its own weaknesses. For instance, it cannot be used to explain the existence of certain social phenomenon such as reciprocity, philanthropy and trust. Additionally, it cannot be used to explain why individuals voluntarily join associations and groups where joint and not individual gains are pursued (Scott, 2000). As such, the theory is individualistic and does not give a suitable account of the existence of the larger social structures.

Tennenbaum developed the labeling theory in 1938. The theory holds that if a person is described as a criminal, then he automatically becomes one (Law teacher, 2015). In a way, if one is described as a gang member and he is not, then he automatically joins a gang or any other related group. This theory is relevant to this study because most of the movements in the world have been labeled as militias and illegal criminal gangs. In fact, governments have banned majority of them. This aspect of the theory was
useful in explaining whether the changes that the *Chinkororo* movement has had to undergo is due to the government ban and the labeling of such movements as illegal criminal gangs. However, the theory has little applicability to gang formation. It also does not explain how the deviant behavior emerges. Furthermore, labeling does not always lead to deviant ways. Sometimes an individual may undergo a degradation ceremony and change positively to prove the labels wrong (Law teacher, 2015).

Given the weaknesses of the two theories discussed above, this study will in addition employ Merton strain theory and signaling theory. Robert Merton developed the Merton’s strain theory in 1940s (Andersen and Taylor, 2007). The theory postulates that crime breeds in the gap imbalance or disjunction between culturally induced aspirations of economic structures and structurally distributed possibilities of achievement. When there is no balance between the set goals and the means of achieving them a deviance is likely to occur. In this way, the marginalized have least legitimized opportunities for achievement; therefore, they can do whatever they can, including formation of gangs and militias to commit crimes to achieve their ends.

The theory presents five actors in the society, the conformist, the ritualists, the innovators, the retreatists and the rebels. The conformist adheres to the set goals and the established means of achieving them. The ritualists do not believe the established goals, but they believe in and abide by the means of achieving these goals. The innovators accept the goals but reject the established means of achieving them (Andersen and Taylor, 2007). Such people include the thieves, prostitutes, drug dealers among others who seek wealth through illegal or unconventional means. The retreatists reject both the set rules and the means of achieving them without replacing
them with counter cultural forces. Such include the alcoholics and the homeless. The rebels reject both the society goals and means and substitute them with new goals and means (Anderson and Taylor, 2007).

This theory was used to explain how lack of adequate economic and political inclusion of Abagusii coupled with state security failure resulted into limited opportunities in national participation. Therefore, this was a possible reason for the emergence of the Chinkororo to break the available laws, replace them with theirs and get a society of their design. In a way, the Chinkororo movement is assumed to present the rebel actors of the society who due to the lopsided society, reject the societal set goals and means of achieving them and replace them with their lifestyles and rules.

In looking at the recruitment, training and structure organization of Chinkororo, the study applied signaling theory of recruitment. Michel Spence developed the theory in 1973. The theory assumes that the recruitment process is a trust game between the recruiter and the recruit (Densley, 2013). It further holds that the central logic shaping the recruiter tactics is the search of cost determining signal for trustworthiness.

Gangs overcome their informational handicap situation by screening and selecting among prospective members based on the hard to fake signals (Densley, 2013). The theory is concerned with differentiating between the honesty and the costliness of signal or any observable feature that the sender purposively displays to modify the receiver’s beliefs about something or someone. The signal may be a tattoo in a sender’s body (Densley, 2013). This theory explains how the Chinkororo group
selects members for recruitment and training. It also explains their criteria of electing leaders within their organizational hierarchy.
1.9 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1.9.0 Introduction

This section contains the research design, the site of the study, the target population, sampling techniques and the sample size. Additionally, it contains the data generation instruments, data collection procedures and the ways that were used to ensure that validity and reliability of the research instruments. It also contains the methods of data analysis and presentations as well as the ethical considerations that were taken into account while carrying out this research.

1.9.1 Research Design

The study utilized historical research method and makes use of the qualitative approach. This design is important because it provided chronology of events as they unfolded in *chinkororo* movement. Moreover, it provides an in-depth examination of the phenomenon of the study through ascertaining attitudes, values and opinions.

1.9.2 Site of the Study

The study was undertaken in Kisii County mainly in the former Gucha and Borabu districts in Bomachoge, Kiango, Nyacheki, Nyangusu, Gesusu and Bobasi. The main inhabitants in Kisii County are the Gusii normally referred to as *Abagusii*. The County consists of nine constituencies including Bobasi, Nyaribari Masaba, Nyaribari Chache, Bomachoge Borabu, Bomachoge Chache, Kitutu Chache North, Kitutu Chache South, South Mugirango and Bonchari. The county has nine Sub-Counties, 24 divisions, 75 Locations and 190 sub-locations.
The county shares common borders with Homabay and Migori counties to the West, Narok County to the south and Nyamira County to the North East. The administrative headquarter of the region is Kisii town. The county covers a total area of 1,317.5 square kilometers with an approximate population of 1,236,966 (population and Housing census, 2009). Physical, historical, and economic development policies pertaining to land settlement influence the population distribution of the region. Population densities are high in areas with large proportions of arable land such as Kitutu Chache South, Nyaribari Chache, Bomachoge Borabu, and Bomachoge Chache (Kisii County Integrated Development Plan, 2013-2017).

Kisii County is mostly known for its association with soapstone majorly used in the production of curios, which are the main tourism trade merchandise in Kenya. Agriculture is the main economic activity in the county, and the main crops grown include bananas, maize, tea and coffee. Animal farming is also practiced. Trade in the county is mainly on agricultural products and is both retail and wholesale.

1.9. 3 Target Population

The study targeted Abagusii of Gucha and Borabu districts, both male and female aged 18 years and above, who were knowledgeable on issues about Chinkororo. This is because they are the indigenous inhabitants of this region and some have even participated in some Chinkororo activities. The study also targeted Chinkororo ex-members and present members because they are the custodians of first-hand information on training, organization and funding of Chinkororo. Community leaders, such as chiefs and clan elders, were also a target because they had some knowledge
of this group since it operates in their areas of jurisdiction. The study also targeted non-Abagusii community residing in Kisii County because in one way or another they have felt the implications of Chinkororo activities.

The inclusion criteria consisted of mature men and women who were knowledgeable of Chinkororo movement. The study excluded Members and ex members of other groups such as sungusungu and Amachuma. This was because the major focus of the study was on chinkororo movement.

1.9.4 Sampling Techniques

The study employed purposive and snowballing sampling techniques. Purposive sampling was used to select participants considered by the researcher to have vital information for the research. The purposive technique was used to select the clan elders and chiefs for interview.

Snowballing sampling was used because the research topic involved sensitive issues as far as Kenya’s security policies are concerned. In addition, the activities of the security-related movement matters are secretive and the knowledge of the insider was required to locate the participants of the study. The technique was used to trace the Chinkororo members and ex-members for interview purposes. One insider helped in tracing other members and ex-members of the group.

1.9.5 Sample Size

Fifty-two people were interviewed in this study. They consisted of 42 KII and 9 oral interviews. A total twelve focus group discussions were conducted in the study areas
with each group consisting of seven participants. Additionally, one focus group discussion with Gusii and Kalenjin and Maasai Elders was conducted. This helped the research to address the bias of the respondents from the three communities on which the study focused on. The participants were obtained depending on their availability and willingness to give information and more importantly, their knowledge on *Chinkororo* movement. Ultimately, the study had 136 participants drawn from the various sub counties in Kisii County. The sample size was arrived at once the data collected reached saturation point thus the researcher had to stop further interviews and focus group discussions.

1.9.6 Research Instruments

This research utilized both primary and secondary data. Primary data was obtained from direct interaction with participants using semi structured interview schedules, focus group discussions and key informant interviews. Archival sources were also consulted. The archival sources constituted the colonial and post-colonial security reports in the former Nyanza province found in the national archives, Nairobi. Secondary data was generated from critical analysis of books, journals, newspapers, conference proceedings, thesis and dissertations, Internet and magazines.

1.9.7 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher obtained a research permit from NACOSTI. The permit was then presented to the county administrators in Kisii County and an appointment booked with them and other research respondents. The researcher briefed the respondents on
the purpose of the study. This enabled establishment contact and familiarity with the respondents.

Oral interviews and focus group discussions with the respondents then followed on agreed days. Data was collected through tape recording the oral interview and taking notes in the course of the discussions and interview.

1.9.8 Data Analysis and Presentation

The analysis of data started in the field to avoid loss of important information. Analysis of data begun by creating themes of collected data. Tape-recorded data was transcribed and typed, and the collected data was arranged and analyzed thematically and periodically. The themes were based on the three research objectives of this study. Secondary data was subjected to critical textual analysis and interpretation to establish the relevance and accuracy of the data. This was achieved by examining the expertise background of the authors, the correspondences of the content with other sources (both primary and secondary) and the context under which the text was written. The analyzed data was reported in form of narrations coupled with first hand quotation from the primary data.

1.9.9 Data Management and Ethical Issues

Data recorded in the field was transcribed. The participants were included on voluntary basis and their identity was not revealed without their consent. Any reference to the work is fully acknowledged.
CHAPTER TWO

EVOLUTION OF CHINKORORO MOVEMENT AMONG THE ABAGUSII OF KISII COUNTY 1961-1990

2.0 Introduction

Scholars have given a number of conflicting views concerning the identity of Chinkororo movement. Accordingly, it is significant for a historian to examine the identity of Chinkororo before tracing its evolution and growth among the Abagusii. This can be adequately achieved by studying the Abagusii military organization precolonial period. This chapter presents a background on the Abagusii military organization and warfare in the pre-1961 period and traces the history of private security related movements in Kenya. In furtherance, the chapter discusses the evolution of Chinkororo movement as well as the factors that informed their emergence. Finally, the lifestyle of Chinkororo members at the time of the movement formation is explored.

2.1 An Overview of Abagusii Social-Economic and Military Organization in the Pre-colonial period

2.1.1 Social-economic Organization

Abagusii are among the Bantu speaking groups in Kenya. The community occupies the most south-west portion of the cool fertile section of Western Kenya highlands (Ochieng, 1974). The Luo to the east borders the Abagusii and to the southeast, the Kipsigis and the Maasai border them. To the south, the community is closely related
to the Kuria though separated by a corridor of Luo.

Smelser (1980) states that the Gusii polity before 1907 British conquest consisted of seven named territory divisions. Each of these divisions was a cluster of intermarrying localized patriarchal clans without permanent leadership positions or centralization. Clan elders interviewed explained that the community was stateless and never had a paramount king or chief with armed retainers to enforce discipline and obedience. Ochieng (1974) who notes that the Gusii had a stateless society echoes the same remarks. The young people learned about the society through socialization around fireplaces and in huts from elders who had taken part in clan and ethnic wars and settled conflicts. The experience of these elders made them authoritative and custodians of the law.

The family was the basic unity of the society. Accordingly, the homestead of a patriarch, a man, his wife and sons consisted of an autonomous unit of defense and internal governance. The Gusii believed in one supreme God called Enkoro who was the creator of the universe (Kenya Information guide, 2015). However, a diviner revealed that apart from Enkoro, the community believed in ancestral spirits and normally had to name their children after the dead (Diviner, KII, 31/12/2015). Sacrifices were also given to appease these ancestral spirits, especially when a bad omen had struck a family or the community.

An oral source revealed that the Gusii were both animal keepers and crop cultivators (clan elder, KII, 31/12/2015). These remarks concurs with Owili (2010) who asserts that in the pre-colonial period, the Gusii cultivated crops like millet and sorghum and
kept animals like cattle, goat and sheep. Like in any other African communities, there was division of labor among the Gusii. In a focus group discussion with the Abagusii council of elders (ACE), participants revealed that the women did a lot of cultivation while the young men took care of the animals. The fathers had the sole responsibility of decision-making (ACE, FGD, 21/12/2015). These remarks agrees with Smelser (1980) who notes that traditionally the Gusii women did much of the crop cultivation while the young men did herding and men supervised decision making. An oral source further revealed that Gusii made hoes and iron implements such as axes, spears, razors and arrows (clan elder, KII, 31/12/2015). This agrees with Ochieng (1974) who discusses the pre-colonial Gusii community as ironworkers who made axes, arrows and spears.

The farm produce, especially the finger millet, was exchanged with their neighbors for animals, which were normally used for bride prize. Hakansson (1994) articulates that at times there was increased demand for the cattle for bride wealth. This increased the desire for more grains, which were used to buy cattle. Accordingly, there was need to increase cultivation and more arable land. By the end of it, this led to a conflict-laden environment of frequent cattle raiding.

2.1.2 Military Organization and War Fare

Angwenyi (2011) and KENP (2008) argue that Chinkororo are traditional warriors of the Abagusii. The observation was made in response to the media reports that Chinkororo are political thugs for hire that had disrupted the ODM political rally in 2007 in Kisii County. The two points of view created a controversy on the identity of
Chinkororo. Given the above controversy, it is significant to look at the Abagusii military organization and warfare in the pre-colonial period to establish the identity of Chinkororo.

One distinct characteristic of the Abagusii in the pre-colonial and colonial period is that they had no centralized political unity (Rw, 967.6203.MAX). The community was organized in terms of clans. A clan elder explained that a clan typically implies people who could not marry each other. These people were believed to trace their lineage from the same ancestor (Clan Elder, KII, 29/12/2015). This agrees with Ochieng (1974) who notes that among the Gusii a clan was composed of people who could not marry. Given their decentralized nature, the community did not have a distinct military organization.

Even when fighting the British in 1907, an oral source consulted revealed that Abagusii never fought as one unit (Rw 967.628.WIP). Only the Bogeke, Nchari, Getutu and Nyaribari fought the British. Writing on the pre-colonial history of the Gusii Ochieng (1974) observes that:

> Each clan conducted its raids and wars separately. The highest form of military cooperation was at the sub tribal level. In addition, even here it is difficult to account for more than a few instances in which the Gusii sub tribes acted as sub tribe. Only a few friendly allied clans of each sub tribe, which cooperated and not the entire sub tribal clan. Immediately such a war was completed, each clan would militarily fend for itself (Ochieng, 1974: 11).

This is an indication that in this period the Gusii never had a single military organization as an ethnic group. An elderly man interviewed noted that united political or military action by an entire Gusii was not common (Elderly Man, O.I, 4/1/2016).
Such unity could only come for defense against other Gusii sub ethnic groups or non-Gusii neighbors after which each clan or sub clan could fend for themselves (Rw 697.629 MAX). The same remarks are echoed by Smelser (1980) who notes that clans occasionally fought and only united in case of external threat.

An oral source consulted revealed that it was the duty of young men to provide security to the clan (clan elder, KII, 31/12/2015). This agrees with Silberschmidt (1999) who notes that men who herd with their sons were responsible for safeguarding the community. Hakansson (1994) also explains that having many sons was a sign of prestige for the big man contributed to the most of security to the defense of the community and the sons would be the leaders to the young men in the cattle kraals.

The value of maleness was strongly related to men’s role as warriors. An oral source explained that the warriors received training on the art of warfare and learnt how to handle weapons like spears, arrows and shields (clan elder, KII, 31/12/2015). Silberschmidt (1999) notes that the warriors were in charge of cattle camps. The warriors were trained and subjected to a number of rules. This education was towards manhood that ensured each warrior was strong, quick, courageous and disciplined. Each clan had its own warriors with its own known and well-respected leaders. The warriors were of 18-40 years of age (Ochieng, 1974). Training took place at the cattle kraals, commonly referred to as Ebisarate, where they communally looked after the cattle (Rw 697.628 MAX). The warriors in training camps lived a Spartan lifestyle and kept off women.
According to the participants in a focus group discussion held at Nyangusu market, the cattle Kraals were normally sited at the centre of the village or sub ethnic settlement (Clan Elder, FGD, 31/12/2015). Everybody who had cattle would send a few of his sons to stay with young men from other families. A member of Gusii council of elders noted that these warriors were supposed to be armed and keep watch in turns in case an attack erupted from other clans or ethnic groups likes the Maasai and Kipsigis, normally referred to as Abamanyi (ACE, FGD, 21/11/2015). The elder further noted that since time immemorial the Gusii has had conflictual relations with the Kipsigis and the Maasai who constantly raided them.

This agrees with scholars who observe that the Maasai and Kipsigis were known for raiding the Gusii livestock constantly. As such, the idea of building Ebisarate was coined in a meeting held in 19th century by Sakawa (Finke, 2003). In addition, the Encyclopedia of world cultures (1998) articulates that the Gusii relations with the Kipsigis were perpetually hostile due to cattle raiding. Further, scholars, such as Mwanzi (1977), confirm the existence of the hostility when he writes that the Kipsigis and the Gusii at times were locked in combat over cattle rustling. Levine (1996) notes that when Rinderpest struck the Kipsigis cattle in the late 1880s, the Kipsigis not only traded their girls for Gusii grains but also raided the Gusii borders with ferocity that the Gusii built walled settlement for protection.

Explaining the idea of cattle kraals, Ochieng (1974) notes that the Maasai always raided the Gusii since the Gusii were unable to curb the Maasai warriors who were more organized and trained. This led to the idea of setting up cattle kraals at the center
of the villages after a meeting that was chaired by Sakawa in late 1880s. Occasionally, the young men in the cattle kraals would launch raids on neighboring areas.

The leaders in the Kraals were chosen from senior and tough warriors. Usually, married men could not stay in the cattle villages and if any did, he was never permitted to bring his wife for no woman was allowed into the cattle villages except for the purpose of bringing food. In a focus group discussion at Kiango, participants remarked that the young warriors lived on roasted meat from wild animals and milk from the cattle they protected. Occasionally, they were allowed to slaughter a ram or a goat if they so wished (ACE, FGD, 21/12/2015). Wrestling, hunting and military practices were part of life in these villages. Many a times, the young warriors went against the desires of the elders and even harbored criminals (Ochieng, et al., 2012).

A call of a horn or drum was a signal of trouble and the response was intuitive. A key informant interview with an old man in Kiango revealed that the young warriors could desert what they were doing and race to fetch their weapons and then dash to the direction of trouble (Elderly lady, KII, 9/1/2016). The clan military leader could be the first warrior to land at the scene and the warriors could take their positions as instructed by the leader. However, it is worth noting that the organization of Ebisarate was an expression of the emotional attachments to and value of cattle that was stronger among the Abagusii in pre-colonial times and had nothing to do with military (Rw 697.628 MAX).

Inter clan conflicts were very rare and whenever they occurred they could normally fight using clubs. A key informant interview with an elderly woman at Kiango
revealed that no perilous weapons, such as poisoned arrows or spears, were allowed (Elderly woman, KII, 9/1/2016). Her remarks agree with Ochieng (1974) who notes that no dangerous weapon was used during inter clan fights among the Abagusii of Western Kenya since the elders could not allow this to ensue. However, sub clans that were fond of backbiting each other were infrequently given a chance to battle with shields and clubs until the elders felt that the feuding clans had had enough. The uninvolved elders could then arbitrate by moving in between the feuding sides.

A focus group discussion with Abagusii council of elders revealed that local wars (inter clan) were more often than not triggered by many reasons (ACE, FGD, 21/12/2015). Examples include instances where young men from one clan snatched a girl from another clan or when young men from one clan killed a young man from another clan while he was passing through their territory. In addition to above-mentioned reasons, inter clan wars involving clans of different sub ethnic groups or ethnic groups typically revolved around boundary disputes, cattle raiding, pasture, water points or land disputes.

Since neither the Abagusii nor Kipsigis or Maasai had unitary martial strategy towards their neighbors, it could be supposed that there were no inter-tribal wars as such because neither the Kipsigis nor the Maasai fought the Gusii as an ethnic group. In fact, the Gusii took a unitary military action only in one occasion in the early 19th century. This is the time of the great battle between the Kipsigis and the Gusii in 1890s (Rw 976.628.WIP). In this regard, Mwanzi (1977) and Ochieng (1974) note that in 1890s in the battle of *Mogori*, the Gusii united and the battle was fierce that the Kipsigis suffered a great deal. The scholars note that the Kipsigis population was so
depleted that the elders ordered the initiation of young boys before their time and encouraged them to marry. Apart from this occasion, only sections of Gusii, for example that of North Mugirango, raided another section of Kipsigis tribes call it Soti clan. Apart from these feuding clan sections, the rest of the Gusii, Maasai or Kipsigis could remain unaffected and often even friendly. Nevertheless, when a number of Gusii clans had conflicts with a section of the Maasai, they could generalize that they fought with the Maasai.

The point, however, remains that in the pre-1907 period, Abagusii never fought as one ethnic group. Moreover, they did not have a unitary traditional warrior unit. Thus, with this it will be instructive to conclude that Chinkororo were not and are not traditional warriors of Abagusii. With this in mind, it will be important to discuss the colonization and Gusii martial policies

2.2 Colonization and Warrior-hood among the Abagusii

In 1895, Kenya officially became a British protectorate. Communities in Kenya reacted in diverse ways to colonial invasion. Some like the Maasai had passive resistance while others like the Nandi and the Giriama chose active resistance (Strayer, 1978). For the Gusii there was mixed reaction. A clan elder interviewed explained that the Gusii had expected the white people since Sakawa had prophesized about them and warned them against any hostilities (clan elder, KII, 31/12/2015). This agrees with Ochieng (1974) who notes that Sakawa had prophesied about the coming of the White people in Gusii land and even foretold where the administration post would be erected at Getembe. Omwoyo (1990) also asserts that Sakawa had
prophesied that the Whites, could come to Gusii region, but they were destined to go one day. The Gusii warriors would be disarmed if they showed resistance. However, the British expedition in the region was characterized by wanton burning of houses, seizure of cattle and senseless human massacre that poisoned the nexus between the community and the British throughout the colonial era. Maxon (1971) notes that the Gusii resistance took too many forms including open fighting, adherence to the millennial movement, *mumboism*, refusal to cooperate with the white colonial policies, and political activity.

In a key informant interview, clan elder explained that the inhumane approach that the British gave the Gusii led to the Gusii warrior called Otenyo to spear Narthcote, the white administrator in the region in 1908 (clan elder, KII, 18/12/2015). His remarks concur with Ochieng (1974) who holds it that the Gusii had thought that the British were mere sojourners in the country whose departure could be hastened by attacking their sole representative, Narthcote. In addition, Levine (1996) asserts that a Gusii warrior called Otenyo speared and wounded a district commissioner called Northcote. This incident changed the white man’s view of cattle kraals. The cattle kraals were therefore regarded as centers of treason (Ochieng, 1974). The young men were regarded as treacherous and war like, the worst offenders against the British. An old man in Kiango explained that with regard to this, the cattle kraals were abolished. Omwoyo (1990) articulates that the British turned to destroy the cattle camps where the young men stayed to take care of the animals. This agrees with Levine (1996) who notes that in 1913 the British abolished all cattle camps dispersing the young warriors to their homesteads. Silberschmidt (1999) who holds it that, it was the British who
destroyed the *Ebisarate* Lifestyle among the Gusii echoes the same remarks. To eradicate the cattle camps effectively, hut tax was imposed on each hut within the camps. An archival source consulted revealed that in 1909 the District Officer (DC) wrote that:

> In my report last year, I mentioned that I considered it important that the cattle villages should be broken up and the young men who inhabit them forced to return to their parents until married. This has largely come out automatically through having them counted for hut tax and informing the natives that every hut in the village must pay (KNA/DC/KSI/1/1/1909).

In addition, an archival source revealed that by 1911, the cattle camps were outdated (KNA/DC/KSI/1/1/1911). However, despite the abolition of the cattle camps, the Abagusii were accused of cattle theft in the colonial period. For instance, on 30th September 1910 the DC reported that there was increase cattle theft by the Gusii (KNA/DC/KSI/1/1/1910). The same accusations reemerged in 1912 with the Luo being the victims of the theft (KNA/DC/KSI/1/1/1912). This is an indication that although the Warrior-hood system had been affected by the desertion of cattle camps, still elements of cattle raiding between the Gusii and their neighbors were felt.

With this and the outbreak of World War I (WWI), the Gusii underwent a social change. An old woman in Bomachoge narrated that the military activities within Gusii and neighboring region was brought to an end by the British (Elderly Lady, KII, 9/1/2016). Levine (1996) notes that security shifted to the centralized authority, chiefs and the police where the state provided courts for the dispute. Silberschmidt (1999) also notes that the migrant labor that was introduced by the British forced men to go
away. When they returned home, most of their former way of life had died away. Security and local political influence were in the hands of the British. Participants from the ACE held it that new departments (security and administration) deprived the young warriors their special functions as warriors (ACE, FGD, 21/12/2015). With this the young men felt deprived, became demoralized and increased violent activities, such as raiding and abduction, of unmarried women from other clans and communities (Levine, 1996).

In their effort to resist the Colonial powers, the Gusii realized that the British had weapons that were more superior. As a result, Mumboism a quasi-religious movement developed that glorified the Gusii culture and emphasized on Gusiiness (Silberschmidt, 1999). However, the movement eventually died due to the British repression. Accordingly, the Gusii began undergoing change to suit their new situation. An old man interviewed noted that the age of initiation was for instance reduced to ten years. This agrees with Levine (1996) who notes that the age of initiation dropped from 16 years to 10 years by 1946. This was an indication that initiation was no longer preparation for warrior hood in which they could be called upon to fight, but an entry into an ambiguous adulthood. In view of this, Ogot & Ochieng (1995) note that colonization not only despised Africa people but also altered their cultures, social life and abilities to effect change to improve themselves.

Demolishing of the warrior hood among the Gusii clans continued until independence. This implies that even during the colonial period the Gusii had no such a movement known as Chinkororo. Therefore, this calls for a need to discuss the evolution of
private security related movements in independent Kenya in an effort to trace the period when Chinkororo movement emerged.

2.3 Security Movements in Independent Kenya 1961-1990

In his article on marginalization and the rise of militia groups in Kenya, Oloo (2010) notes that the history of security related movements in Kenya can be traced from the KANU youth wingers of 1960s. On the eve of independence, Kenya had two main political parties, KANU led by Jomo Kenyatta and Oginda Odinga and KADU led by Ngala and Arap Moi. The rivalry between the two political parties led to each party recruiting its own youth wingers to intimidate the political opponents (Willis, 2015). In 1961, KANU youth wingers was formed to agitate for the release of Jomo Kenyatta (Kariuki, 2001). An oral source revealed that during the 1963 political campaigns, the rivalry between KANU and KADU could not be assumed (Elderly Man, KII, 3/1/2016). For instance, the Odinga youth wingers were arrested in Nairobi and convicted. In Nakuru, the police raided the KADU offices, found armories, and homemade weapons (Willis, 2015). This is a clear indication that the wingers made use of weapons in their operations. Immediately after independence, Odinga and Kenyatta cooperated politically and served in the same government for a short time. A former politician interviewed explained that Odinga quit KANU and formed KPU. On its part, KANU was not ready to hand over power to any political party (Former politician, KII, 11/9/205). Accordingly, violence and threats to violence were swiftly demonstrated by KANU youth wingers against KANU opponents (Willis, 2015).
In 1966 KANU, youth wingers were used to coerce and intimidate KPU rallies through stone throwing and shouting (Willis, 2015). The state had increased use of violence exponentially when the police killed the KPU protesters. Okombo (2010) notes that by 1966 general elections the government had begun to use public resources to finance military groups to intimidate opposition from within and outside the ruling party. Meetings of KPU were disrupted and their leaders harassed by KANU youth wingers. Furthermore, in 1969, Kenyatta banned KPU after his cold reception in Kisumu. The Luos felt that the KANU government assassinated Tom Mboya, and that Kenyatta was suppressing one of their own, Odinga, politically. As a result, they gave Kenyatta a very cold reception in Kisumu and the visit turned into chaos and police used violence against the people in Kisumu (Former Politician, KII, 10/1/2016). This concurs with Odinga (2013) who notes that the opening of Nyanza hospital was marked by violence from the police on innocent people simply because KPU members were against the ruling party. In the same year, political campaigns had begun and Kibaki by then the vice president said thus:

The youth wingers must be told that they are supposed to campaign for the candidate of their choice (Willis, 2015.16).

However, the activities of the youth wingers intensified. A key informant interview with a former politician revealed that the Wingers began soliciting bribes from the public forcefully and intimidation of other opposition politicians increased (Former Politician, KII, 10/1/2016). It is because of these activities that Okoth and Olang noted:
It is against this background that the KANU youth wingers qualify to be included among the earliest state militia operation (Olang & Okoth, 2010: 15)

Katumba and Ngunyi (2014) assert that whenever a security related group is formed, there must be another group formed to counter the activities and attacks of the former. Accordingly, with the increased violence from the police, provincial administrators and KANU youth wingers, politicians from the opposition formed their own ethno regional wingers to counter the activities of the KANU youth wingers (Olang & Okoth, 2010). In a way, the formation of these groups was informed by the increased demand for their activities. They were regarded as security wings in their ethnic groups suppressing opponents. Concisely, the groups started filling the gap that the government had left in the provision of security to the public. It is worth noting that as from 1970s Kenya was a one party state and oppression of KANU opponents intensified. The emergence of opposition Jeshi also intensified. Thus, most of the security related movements emerged in 1970s and Chinkororo in Kisii County is not an exception.

Despite the fact that the origin of private security movements is traced from the KANU youth winger, it is important to note that as they emerged, these groups operated as neighborhood groups. This was because both the colonial, Kenyatta and Moi regimes never accepted and recognized these groups. In Kenyan history, as early as 1952 the Mau Mau fighters were being opposed and fought by the colonial government (Kahiga, 1990). Immediately after independence, what followed in Kenya was an authoritarian rule marked by single party that begun unofficially in 1969 (Odinga, 2013). Ogot and Ochieng (1995) assert that Kenyatta banned KPU and
threw her leaders into detention. Given the restricted space of operation, the activities of these movements went underground and remained secretive although the impacts of their activities normally came into the limelight without the perpetrators being caught or recognized.

A focus group discussion with members of the Abagusii Council of Elders revealed that cattle rustling from these neighborhood groups had become an issue by late 1973 (ACE, FGD, 21/12/2015). This agrees with a security report from Nyanza, which asserts that there has been emergence of cattle rustling in the area (Daily Nation, September 10th, 1974). The report indicated that two cattle rustlers were slashed to death in Kisii after stealing 121 heads of cattle. The same elements of cattle rustling was reported in Meru, South Nyanza, Eldoret, and Kiambu. A part from cattle rustling, findings indicated that poaching silent groups had also emerged. This agrees with a report that revealed that some poachers had been arrested at Nyangusu along the Maasai-Kisii border (East African Standard, July 3rd 1974). Politicians were also victims of these groups as others were being beaten in Kisii district (Daily Nation April 28th 1974).

A former district officer in Kisii region noted that some group members disguised themselves as police officers to cause havoc among people (Former District Officer, O.I., 19/1/2016). For instance, bogus Criminal Investigation Department (CID) officers stole 3,700 shillings from a Nandi farmer in Kisumu (Daily Nation, June 6th 1975). In addition, mad gangsters were causing terror along the Kisumu-Kericho highway yet none had been arrested for their hideouts were never known (Daily Nation 18th 1975). In an interview, a clan elder at Kiango remarked that in the early
1970s, security had deteriorated and people had begun to lose hope in the government’s promises to offer them security (Clan elder, KII, 09//12/2015). Archival sources consulted in the national archives also revealed that the security gap in the 1970s had widened so much to an extent that the chiefs themselves assaulted the locals. For instance, chief Kena of Nyaribari Masaba in Kisii County assaulted his subject and was charged in court only to be released (Daily Nation, 6th 1975). The government officials were not secure either. In Nyakach region of Kisumu it is noted that:

A gang of notorious criminals murdered the officials in the land and settlement ministry (Daily Nation, May 27th, 1975).

The same year (1975) the district commissioner Kisumu could complain of wangcheng group that operated in his region. He noted that, what was mystical is that nobody had an idea on how the group worked; only their impact were felt in terms of theft and loss of lives (Daily Nation, May 12, 1975).

In Nairobi County, the then Nairobi Province things were not different. An oral source revealed that cattle rustling has taken its roots in region such as Kayole, Embakasi, Murang’a and Kiambu (Retired security officer, KII, 2/12016) The Daily Nation May 23, 1975 reports that a group of cattle rustlers armed with spears, arrows and bows chased away a night watchman and stole cattle in the Kayole Estate of Embakasi Constituency. Nevertheless, no arrests were made.

In 1975, cases of cattle rustling were reported in various parts of the country with the Kisii, Maasai and Kipsigis borders being hit the most (Daily Nation, May 8th, 1975).
A key informant interview with a retired chief at Bomachoge revealed that many people were killed in raiding battle, including the police who tried to disrupt the two communities fighting (Retired Chief, KII, 31/12/2015). Such raids were made possible because these groups had no organized structure that could make it possible for them to be recognized. In addition, there were no Anti-stock theft units along the Kisii-Maasai borders (Daily Nation, May 8th, 1975). Again, an oral source explained that the people had also lost confidence in the police who were accused of taking bribes from cattle rustlers. The communities along these regions felt left out as far as security is concerned. The then Minister for National Resources noted:

I have approached the vice president (Mr. Moi) several times about the establishment of anti-stock theft units along the Maasai-Gusii border but he has done nothing (Daily nation, August, 5th, 1975).

A report by a retired police Commissioner in Nyanza Province revealed that cases of ammunitions being in circulation were also witnessed (Retired Police Commissioner, KII, 10/1/2015). This agrees with a report by the Daily Nation, April 4, 1975 and Daily Nation April 7, 1975, which asserted that arms and guns were in the hands of unlicensed civilian. It is against this complex security context that Chinkororo emerged.
2.4 *Chinkororo* Movement 1961-1990

2.4.1 Introduction

As discussed in the previous section, *Chinkororo* movement never existed in the pre-1961 period. This section discusses the evolution of *Chinkororo* movement in Kisii County highlighting the meaning of the term *Chinkororo* and the factors behind the emergence of *Chinkororo* movement in Kisii County.

2.4.2 The Meaning of *Chinkororo*

A proper and comprehensive study on the evolution of *Chinkororo* movement should attempt to relate it to the wider picture of the etymological meaning of their identity. In an oral interview with a clan elder it was revealed that, *Chinkororo* movement refers to a group of border residents who lived in the forest, armed, with the sole purpose of defending the Gusii territory against cattle raiding by the Maasai Morans and Kalenjin warriors often referred to as *Abamanyi* (Clan elder, KII, 31/12/2015). Angwenyi (2011) in addition explains that at times the movement engages in acts of cattle rustling to compensate those whose livestock are stolen but never recovered. Moreover, Kegoro (2009) defines *Chinkororo* as a group of warriors that is deployed in the defense of territorial integrity of the Gusii people when it is under threat from other ethnic communities. The author further notes that the term *Chinkororo* was first used in 1962 to refer to Gusii warriors who participated in the inter-ethnic conflict between the Gusii and the Maasai at Kiango. Nevertheless, how this movement came to identify itself with the name *Chinkororo* has generated various interpretations.
Three interpretations explain the evolution of the term *Chinkororo* among the Abagusii. The first explanation holds that etymologically the term *Chinkororo* is derived from a Gusii word *Enkororo*. An ex-member explained that *Enkororo* refers to a Columbus Monkey that lives in the forest, especially on trees near water catchment areas (Ex-Member, KII, 4/01/2016). The animal has black and white spots and a very long tail. Kegoro (2009) who notes that *Enkororo* is a Gusii term for a Columbus monkey echoes the same views. A Columbus monkey is so gentle unless the territory where her young ones live is invaded. When there is such a threat of invasion, it responds fast and in a fierce manner that can lead to the death of the invader. An oral source explained:

“Given the identified characteristics of the animal, the Gusii border residents chose to take up the name *Chinkororo*-the plural form of *Enkororo* because they considered themselves to have almost similar characteristics as the animal. These include, the fighters staying in the forest as the animal did as well as the swiftness and fierce response to threats of invasion in their territory (Ex-member, KII, 4/01/2016).

The movement is latent unless the Gusii territory has been invaded. In addition, they respond so fast and fiercely whenever there is an alert of the attack and their response at many times lead to the death of the attackers (Ex-member, KII, 4/01/2016). We decided to call the interpretation the *wild creature approach*. This is because the term *Chinkororo* is linked to the characteristics of wild animal.

The second interpretation holds the view that the term *Chinkororo* originates from a Gusii term *Obororo* that simply means anger. According to the clan elder interviewed, *Chinkororo* movement takes up the name because their rise was triggered by anger of
being attacked by their neighbors (the Maasai and Kipsigis) constantly (Clan Elder, KII, 31/12/2015). As such, whenever they are fighting Chinkororo members fight due to the rage of losing their livestock or annoyance of the Gusii being attacked and killed by the Maasai and Kipsigis Morans. We called this explanation, the angry version. This is because the term Chinkororo is linked to the state of being angry.

The last interpretation has the view that Chinkororo simply means, “we rain on you.” This explanation agrees with Owaahh (2013) who notes that Chinkororo translates to we rain on you, simply misunderstood raindrops. Although there is no relationship between Embura, a Gusii term for rain and the term Chinkororo, an oral source revealed that the relationship is sought from the activities of the movement and the impacts of rains. As noted the:

It is not a light rain. It is simply thunder and hails. Just like hails and thunder do not occur often, so are the activities of Chinkororo. However, just as thunder and hail are destructive, so are Chinkororo once provoked. Our rain is that of arrows and spears (Elderly Lady, O.I., 18/1/2016).

The statement above indicated that the Rain version draws its explanation of the meaning of Chinkororo from the impacts of hails and thunderstorm. Just like thunder destroys and can lead to death so are Chinkororo in a battlefield. Like hail stones falling from the sky, so do they throw their arrows to their enemy non-stop. In this study, we call this interpretation the Rain impact approach. This is because Chinkororo is linked to the impacts of rain.

From the foregoing discussion, the tentative conclusion we can arrive at based on the most likely of inferences is that Chinkororo movement identify itself as Chinkororo
because of characteristics and activities of its members that relate to the fierce aspects of nature. However, the most probable version that covers all the aspects of *Chinkororo* is the wild creature explanation. Many respondents supported thus preposition about the origin and meaning of the term *Chinkororo*. These included clan elders, old men and women as well as the ex-members to the movement as compared to the other two.

2.4.3. Factors Which Informed the Rise of *Chinkororo*

It is with no doubt that, the emergence of every security related movement is necessitated or triggered by various factors that can be social, political, economic and even individual in nature and *Chinkororo* is not an exception. As noted by Masese & Mwenzwa (2012), and Akinyi (2013), many of the security related movements in Kisii County emerged due to the feeling of security gap in the region. However, for the case of *Chinkororo*, several factors informed its emergence and growth.

First, since time in memorial, Abagusii have had conflicting relations with the Kipsigis and the Maasai along border regions like Bomachoge, Kiango, Nyacheki, and Borabu (KEPN, 2008). Gusii border residents revealed that the Maasai Morans and Kalenjin warriors constantly raided the Gusii people with an aim of stealing cattle (Gusii Residents, FGD, 16/1/2016). In addition to driving away large herds of cattle from the region, they also killed the Gusii young men who tried to resist them.

Tracing such livestock was a difficult task on the side of the Abagusii who had no single military unit under one command. Consequently every time Abagusii were attacked and raided, they were caught unawares, unarmed and unprepared
(Participants, FGD, 21/12/2015). In a way, the military division among the Abagusii made it difficult for them to trace their stolen animals in from the Maasai and Kipsigis. Furthermore, in the early 1960s it was difficult for the Gusii to cross the Maasai border to trace their stolen animals due to strict colonial policies. Kegoro (2009) notes that as a result, Gusii men dressed like Maasai crossed the border to avoid being detected by the colonial government since to pursue their stolen animal they needed a permit from the government. The situation became worse in 1970s with the intensified activities of brutality from the state and KANU youth wingers. Scholars have noted that it is the role of the state to provide peace and security for its citizens both inside and outside the nation and ensure protection against all threats (Waigur, Kamenju and Singo, 2004). However, as noted by one businessperson along the Maasai/Kisii border, the state had forgotten her duties and left her people vulnerable and exposed to attacks (Business Lady, O.I., 18/1/2016). This feeling of deep insecurity led to Gusii border residents to have a meeting and find a long lasting solution to their predicament. A key informant noted that:

The meeting was held in Kiango; it was secretive in nature and chaired by clan elders most who are dead now. Its main agenda was to devise ways of how to counter attack the activities of the Morans and Kalenjin warriors. The idea of having a youth wing was coined. Each household was to send one or two of their young boys to be trained in the forest for security mission in the region (Ex-member, KII, 4/01/2016).

Out of this meeting of 1972, the Gusii residents along the borders came up with a group of young men who would stay in the forest and receive training on warfare. For this reason, the study contends that Abagusii became the victimized members of the
society likened to those identified by George Homas in his theory of rational choice (Scott, 2000). Thus, the Abagusii made a choice and came up with their own ways of survival by creating such group to fill the security gap they were experiencing. The group was expected to be ready to strike at an enemy and trace any Gusii cattle stolen by the neighbors. This group came to be referred to as Chinkororo. Reporting on cattle rustling and insecurity along the Maasai/Kisii border, the East Africa standard, September 29 1973 reported that a group of youths from Kisii town called Chinkororo took up arms and conducted cattle raiding in Luo land on allegation that a Luo man had locked up some Gusii women in his mill. Early on, it had reported that a Gusii Enkororo (singular for Chinkororo) had been killed in a raid between the Maasai and the Gusii (The Daily Nation September, 17th 1973). This reports points out that by 1970s, Chinkororo movement has emerged and its major activity was cattle rustling. In his study of militias in Kisii county Ombour (2010) asserts that Chinkororo are residents of volatile borders thus confirming to the idea of security gap along the borders and the participation of the movement in filling the gap.

The first Chinkororo group was formed at Kiango, the same region where the meeting was held, bordering the Gusii and the Maasai. Chinkororo members became the rebel members of the Kenyan society who due to a lopsided society rejected the national goals and means of achieving them as far as security is concerned and replaced them with their own lifestyle and rules (Andersen and Taylor, 2011). However, the movement later spread to Bonchari among the Abasunya and later on to Gucha among the Ababasi. An oral source explained that by 1980, other regions in Kisii County especially those bordering other ethnic groups had learned about Chinkororo due to
the swift way that the group tracked stolen cattle. Given the fact that they faced the same problem as residents in Kiango, they also sent their boys for the same training. The above saw the expansion and spread of *Chinkororo* movement to areas like Bonchari and Gucha (ACE, FGD, 21/12/2015). This explains why the movement enjoyed the immense good will of the Abagusii community. Thus, the community considered the role of the *Chinkororo* as noble and crucial to the community security. The group was seen as a block to fill the security gap that the government had failed to fill especially along the borders.

Secondly, the positive embrace of *Chinkororo* movement was triggered by negative ethnicity. There was a feeling of *we-them* dichotomy that had cropped up among the three communities at the borders (Maasai, Gusii and Kipsigis). During the reign of Moi, especially from 1980s this negative ethnicity intensified with the escalation of the activities of KANU youth wingers. Communities in Kenya had felt that Moi had begun the *Kalenjinization* of Kenya (Anassi, 2004). Accordingly, the Gusii border residents felt that the Kalenjin and Maasai Morans attacked them often simply because president Moi was their relative. The presupposed favor enjoyed by the Kalenjin and Maasai can be explained from the bitter comments made by one of the respondents.

“The Moi government supported our neighbors simply because he reigns from their ethnic group. No action was taken whenever our cows were stolen. Moreover, whenever we fought with them the Moi government sent Maasai and Kalenjin GSU officers only who aimed at suppressing our Gusii fighters. He even demanded for the arrest of *Chinkororo* fighters. At no point did he demand for an arrest of the Maasai Morans or Kalenjin warriors. This intensified our spirit. We developed the attitude of us against them. We had to intensify our unity to win (Clan Elder, KII, 29/12/2015).
Another respondent noted that:

“The Moi government sent non Gusii GSU troops who killed our Gusii men and raped our mothers and sisters mercilessly. Even if we were to surrender the Chinkororo movement, such episodes could not allow us. We had to reorganize ourselves better and fight them more. We felt discriminated thus; we had to protect ourselves because the government had failed us (Clan Elder, KII, /01/2016).

With such perception of discrimination by the government and the escalating feeling of negative ethnicity, the growth of Chinkororo movement intensified among the Gusii people. The Abagusii felt that coming together to protect their territory was the only way for their survival. This explains why Abagusii from Bomachoge could go all the way to settlement schemes to fight the Kipsigis in case a war erupted. This agrees with the report by the East Africa Standard (29/9/1973), which notes that in 1973, a group of Gusii youths dressed in Maasai attire crossed the border to Narok and stole 140 cows. From the views of elderly, men in focus group discussion in Kiango, this group was made up of Chinkororo fighters (Clan Elders, FGD, 29/12//2015). In a way, ethnic patriotism and nationalism had turned into jingoism where the warriors were even determined to die for their own ethnic group. The above is evident in the way Chinkororo fighters swore never to stop fighting the Morans until their stolen animals had been returned in 1980.

This negative ethnic feeling and spirit is evident in the composition of the group. The movement is made up of Gusii people only. No other ethnic group is represented yet there are numerous ethnic groups living along the borders of Gusii, Maasai, and Kipsigis apart from the three ethnic groups. One respondent from the Gikuyu ethnic group noted that:
“Whenever I look at the Maasai and Gusii, the two ethnic groups especially those living here at the border do not trust each other. Each group regards the other as thieves of their livestock. Sometimes they even swear of never marrying from each other although the cases of intermarriage between the two communities are being witnessed. However, whenever a war breaks out the women are sent back to their relatives. The relationship between the two communities is complicated, friends at one point and enemies who even kill each other at some point (Businessman, O.I., 4/1/2016).

This verbatum revealed that it is not only in politics that negative ethnicity plays a key role in Kenya (Abadejo, 2006), but also in the emergence of security related movements and especially in the evolution and spread of Chinkororo movement among the Abagusii of Kisii county.

The third factor relates to the first and second factors. Given the negative ethnicity and feeling of insecurity, Abagusii felt that it would be wise for them to have a military wing like the Maasai Morans and the Kalenjin warriors. This is the rise of other movements in other regions coupled by the desire to be like their neighbors. On the eve of independence, the Gikuyu in central Kenya had already developed a movement known as Mau Mau to fight the colonial masters in Kenya who had alienated their land (Lonsdale, 1992). On their part, the Maasai had their Morans and the Kipsigis, the Kalenjin warriors. Similarly, the Kuria people had developed the Mura movement. It is against this background that the Gusii border residents desired to have one of their own who were anti Morans. This conforms to Katumanga & Ngunyi (2014) hypothesis that:

Whenever one movement emerges there must be another movement that rises to counter attack the activities of the former (Katumanga & Ngunyi, 2014.38).
Just like *The Hague* in Kirinyaga, which emerged to counter the activities of *Mungiki* in central Kenya (Katumanga & Nguyi, 2014), *Chinkororo* movement emerged to counter the activities of Morans and Kalenjin warriors.

Briefly, it can be concluded that state security failure along the Gusii/Maasai/Kipsigis borders seem to account for the emergence of *Chinkororo* movement among the Abagusii of Kisii County. Cattle raiding along the borders led to the emergence of symbiotic relationship between the supply of *Chinkororo* activities and its demand by the Gusii community (Katumanga & Nguyi, 2014). However, like a river, state security failure was only one tributary, other causes included negative ethnicity, and the rise of other movements in other communities like the Kipsigis and the Maasai.

In addition, it is important to note that although formed in 1972 *Chinkororo* first came into the limelight in 1973 when a group of Gusii men dressed in Maasai attires crossed the border and stole 140 cattle in Narok (East Africa Standard, 29th September 1973). Also in 1975 chief Ombati was interdicted for inciting *Chinkororo* against Hon. Sunkuli’s Maasai clansmen (KNAOR, 1994). Its intensity grew when again it came into the national limelight in 1983 during the tribal flare up along the Gusii Maasai borders. The clashes were reported to be politically motivated to serve the interests of the then KANU regime (Commission of Inquiry Act CAP 102). The Morans and Kalenjin warriors evicted all non-Kalenjin ethnic groups living in the former Rift valley province. Some members of Abagusii were also affected and evicted and *Chinkororo* stood to defend one of their own just like *Mungiki* emerged to protect their own Gikuyu and the Morans to protect their own Maasai and Kipsigis kinsmen.
This violence led to the ban of *Chinkororo* movement later on as an illegal group in Kenya together with many others like *Mungiki* and *Taliban*.

In conclusion, therefore *Chinkororo* fighters seem to be the victimized or rebel members of a lopsided society as far as security is concerned. Due to security gap in the region, the group rose to fill it. The above was achieved through the rejection of the legal way of maintaining security to that of taking power in their hands and avenging whenever there was an attack. Therefore, the Merton strain theory find its application in the emergence of *Chinkororo* in Kisii County. *Chinkororo* Movement bred in the gap imbalance or the disjunction between the nationally induced aspirations for security and the structurally distributed possibilities of the Gusii border residents to achieve this security. Accordingly, the movement emerged as rebel members of society (those presented by Merton strain) who rejected the societal security goals and their means of achieving them and came up with theory own lifestyle and rules of self-defense.

**2.4.4. Beliefs, Ethics and Practices of *Chinkororo* Fighters in the Period 1961-1990**

After discussing the meaning of the term *Chinkororo* and the factors that informed the emergence of the movement, it is instructive to look at the lifestyle of the *Chinkororo* members when it was formed. It is important to note that although a neighborhood group at this time, the movement had specific aspects of their life that they strictly adhered to. The lifestyle of *Chinkororo* is discussed herein in terms of their dress code, residence, diet and the significance of each aspect mentioned.
In an interview with one of the clan elders in Nyangusu, it was revealed that Chinkororo had a distinct dress code at the time of the movement’s formation (Clan elder, KII, 5/1/2016). Given the idea that they wanted to be like their rivals (Maasai Morans and Kalenjin warriors) most of their attire resembled that of the Morans and Kalenjin warriors. These remarks agrees with contents of a security report which noted that 70 Gusii men dressed in Maasai attire crossed into Maasai reserves and stole over hundred heads of cattle (Daily Nation, August 27, 1973). In addition, reporting that a group of styled Gusii youths dressed like Maasai Morans crossed the border to Narok to raid the Maasai, the East Africa Standard (29/09/73) confirms this dress code. Additionally, Kegoro (2009) asserts that Chinkororo wore Maasai regalia and applied red ochre as Maasai Morans.

The ex-members in Bomachoge revealed that the red attire normally known as shuka is the only top garments that Chinkororo wore especially when going to the battle field (Ex-members, FGD, 17/1/2016). Ideally, during this period, these were not really cotton cloths but an animal skin shaped and softened to resemble the modern Maasai red shuka. This skin could be smoothened using cow milk cream and then decorated using dust ground from red stones to serve the purpose of red ochre that is normally used by the Maasai to give the resemblance to the Maasai Morans. The red stones were obtained from the riverbanks and others from quarries. However, one key informant remarked that by 1990 the group has abandoned the use of skin cloths. Therefore, they used a red cotton shuka instead of the skin (Ex-member, KII, 8/1/2016). The above was due to the idea that cotton cloths were lighter compared to skins thus enabling one to jump easily during war.
The garment was tied from the right shoulder to the left hip where a skin belt normally called *enuga* helped to hold it tight to the waist. In a focus group discussion with a group of Abagusii council of elders, it was revealed that the garment was tied from right to left and not the reverse because it was believed that the right hand is a strong hand since it was associated with men in the Gusii culture (ACE, FGD, 21/12/2015). Therefore, anything had to start from the males’ point of view. The left hand is related to women and is considered naturally weak by the men who make up the Gusii patriarchal society (Liyong, 1972). Additionally, a key informant noted that such a way of wearing the garment enabled the *Chinkororo* fighters to escape the arrows shot by an enemy. They could easily move aside leaving the garment to swing freely (Former *Chinkororo* Commander, KII, 5/1/2016). The arrow could pierce through the flying garment without touching the body of the fighter.

Wearing red garments (*shuka*) as the Maasai Morans enabled the *Chinkororo* fighters to disguise themselves; therefore, their rivals could not easily identify them. By looking like the Morans, *Chinkororo* could easily confuse the Morans in a battlefield, as the Morans could not easily distinguish between themselves and *Chinkororo*. An old man interviewed uttered a proverb to explain the dress code, *Kaga nomomanyi okorwana, n’Onkiono yaenchoire* (do not be mistaken into thinking that it is the Maasai fighting, these are members of the *Okiono* clan who have disguised themselves to look like the Maasai). Okiono is a clan from Bomachoge occupying a stretch of land near the Maasai border (ACE, FGD, 21/12/2015).

With such a dress code, at many times, Morans could unknowingly take *Chinkororo* members as one of their own. This gave *Chinkororo* easy victory in a battlefield. The
entire idea of confusing the Maasai Morans was asserted by security report in the East Africa standard, 29/09/1972, which articulates that it was difficult to know who was a Gusii or Maasai since their dress code was the same. In addition, Kegoro (2009) contends that dressing like the Maasai aimed at producing Gusii decoys of Maasai Morans with a view of surprising and confusing the Maasai during attacks. Study participants also explained that the dress code enabled the Chinkororo to enter the Maasai terrain without being recognized, thus, attack them both from within and outside. This concurs with Kegoro (2009) who notes that the dress code at times enabled Chinkororo to enter the Maasai region as Trojan horses and launch attacks on the Maasai Morans from behind their own lines, sand witching them between the elite and the advancing group from Gusii side.

A chief in one of the locations in Kisii County reported that occasionally, Chinkororo fighters would wear black and white spotted garments. This enabled them to camouflage in their hide out normally called ebikoba or ebisarara (Chief, KII, 21/12/2015). With such spotted attire, they could look more like wild animals, especially a colubus monkey that was common in the region. With this, their rivals could not easily identify them. Thus, the Chinkororo could easily attack their enemies and kill them. In a key informant interview, an ex-fighter noted that the black and white garment was also useful in attracting Moran thieves whenever they wanted some for interrogation on Maasai and Kalenjin war secrets. He noted that:

“In our black and white garments we could bend like cattle grazing on hilly grounds. A Gusii spy could be sent to a known Maasai thief and suggest a deal to steal livestock from Gusii for mutual benefit. The Moran thief then from far is shown the grazing animals (disguised Chinkororo)”
that they are to drive away to Maasai land. Convinced that we are cattle, he could come with our Gusii spy. Once he was within our territory we could capture him and torture him to give us the Maasai war secrets (Ex-member, KII, 27/12/2015).

On their head, Chinkororo neither wore anything nor shaved their hair. They kept long hairs which they plated using cloth threads. In a focus group discussion, ex-members explained that after platting the hair, milk cream could be added to the red powder grinded from stones to make a liquid called etago, that resembled the Maasai red ochre (Ex-Members, FGD, 17/1/2016). The liquid could be applied to the hair. With this decoration, their hairstyle could typically resemble that of the Maasai Morans.

Animal skins called ebisena were used as shorts. These garments were made from the skins of sheep, goat or jackal. A jackal commonly referred to as egesimba, is known to be a dangerous wild animal that usually attacks and eats poultry at night. The wife of an ex-member explained that using its skin to make attires was symbolic among the Chinkororo fighters. In this case, the Maasai Morans were taken to be like chicken that would be attacked by Chinkororo any time and be devoured (Wife to an Ex-member, O.I., 4/1/2016). This explained the fierce and dangerous nature of the Chinkororo movement. Nevertheless, by 1990 the group had shifted from the wearing of ebisena to wearing cotton shorts and socks.

On the feet, at first (1972-1980s) Chinkororo wore sandal made from animal skins. This enabled them to protect their feet from thorns and stones. To prevent themselves from cold and insect bites, they applied a milk cream mixed with mold. An ex-member noted that:
“I entered the movement in 1982 and we wore rubber shoe and socks on our feet. However, the red skin top garments were still worn especially by the commanders (Ex-member, KII, 4/01/2016).

The above is an indication that by 1980, Chinkororo had stopped the use of skins as sandal. However, when interrogated some respondents failed to explain the reason for such a change. Nevertheless, in a focus group discussion in Nyacheki market participants attributed the change to the fact that rubber shoe were more comfortable as compared to skin sandals. Occasionally, they wore bands on their wrists. The bands were made of animal skins especially the leopard or python. This was a sign of heroism and bravery, a message to their rivals on how tough they could be in war.

In terms of residence, Chinkororo fighters stayed in the forest in many cases. However, they could occasionally visit their families. A clan elder in Borabu, also an ex-member explained that in the forest, they lived on roasted meat from wild animals. Sometimes they could send some few members to the villages to collect milk, porridge, and bananas (Ex-member, KII, 8/1/2016). An oral source further revealed that the porridge was normally sugarless (rikairo). They believed that a man who took sugarless porridge was stronger than one who depended on sugared porridge (Wife to an Ex-member, O.I., 4/01/2016). They also preferred bananas to ugali because bananas were taken to be lighter thus made one flexible unlike ugali that made one heavy and tired. Such heavy meal could not make one a good fighter. However, a close look at the diet reveals that the fighters used staple Gusii meals since bananas normally referred to as matoke is the main staple meal of the community.
In the forest, *Chinkororo* lived a simple lifestyle and they kept off women. Women were not allowed into the *Chinkororo* camps unless for bringing food at stipulated times and places. This aspect of their lifestyle was borrowed from the Gusii *Ebisarate* lifestyle where men who lived in the cattle Kraals had a Spartan lifestyle and kept off women (Ochieng et al., 2012).

In a nutshell, *Chinkororo* lifestyle was significant to achieving the sole purpose of the group. Their lifestyle served three main functions. First, by looking like the Morans, they were able to go deep into the Maasai terrain without being recognized. This enabled them to attack their rivals both from inside and outside making their victory easy.

Secondly, their dress code communicated the fierce nature of the group. Wearing skins of dangerous animals like leopards and pythons was a symbol of how fierce the group was. In addition, the attire enabled them to avoid insect bites and cold at night in the forest. By staying in the forest, the fighters demonstrated their boldness and that they were not afraid of anything even the wild animals. The residence also enabled them to be committed to one cause, community defense.

In a way, we can conclude that every aspect of *Chinkororo* lifestyle was significant in accomplishing their mission. However, most aspects of their dress code had undergone changes by 1990. Specifically, the skin attire was no longer worn since cotton cloths had replaced them. Such changes were attributed to the views that cotton attires were lighter and more comfortable to work with as compared to skin garments and sandals.
2.5 *Chinkororo* as Neighborhood Group

It is worth noting that during its formation, the *Chinkororo* movement had no well-defined organization or leadership. Clan elders were the main controllers of the group, the movement was operating underground. In the early years of its formation, the group was more of a neighborhood group. At this time, *Chinkororo* fighters stayed in the forest. However, they could occasionally visit their families. However, an oral source revealed that at this time the group carried out cattle raiding once provoked by their neighbors (Ex-member, KII, 04/01/2016). The East Africa Standard, 29/09/1972 articulates that it was difficult to know who was a Gusii or Maasai in these raids since their dress code was the same. Very little, was known about the group since it emerged amid multiplicity of factors and operated in an environment that had several groups such as Morans, Kalenjin warriors and poaching groups. Moreover, the movement was only operating within Gusii region thus was ethno regional in nature. Due to its intense activities of violence, in 1975, *Chinkororo* movement was a motion of debate in Kenyan parliament (KNAOR, 1994). Even with this, the group did take part in the 1982 ethnic flare up along the Gusii/Kipsigis/Maasai border.

During the 1982 tribal flare up along the Kipsigis /Maasai / Gusii border, a need for a defined leadership among the fighters in the forest was proposed. Participants in a focus group discussion held in Nyacheki noted that:

> It became apparent that to be able to attack and counter attack well, the fighters needed leaders who would live with them in the forest and accompany them to the battlefield in order to defeat their rivals. However, this was treated like just as an idea since
they did not come up with such a leadership pattern at that time (Ex-members, FGD, 3/1/2016).

This is an indication that by 1990s, *Chinkororo* movement had coined the idea of having leadership structure as discussed later on in chapter three.

### 2.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, we looked at the Gusii social-economic and military organization in the pre-1907 period. It was established that in the pre-colonial era, the Gusii society was stateless with no centralized kings or chiefs. The society was organized according to clans. The young men were charged with the responsibility of providing community defense and herding the cattle. The women were responsible for crop cultivation as well as did other domestic chores while the men made the decisions. With such a stateless society, it was revealed that the Gusii had no single military unit under one command. Each clan had its own warriors who lived in cattle camps to defend the community from internal and external aggressors.

With colonialism, the cattle kraals were abolished and the duty of security provision shifted to the police. At independence the same situation was perpetuated thus, the warriors had no space and place in Kenya. This implies that *Chinkororo* are not the traditional warriors of Abagusii but a recent phenomenon that rose in 1970s.

In addition, the history of security related movements in Kenya was discussed. It was established that the origin of security related movements in Kenya can be traced from the KANU youth wingers of 1961. The activities and brutality of the wingers and the
KANU police led to a security gap in the nation leading to the ethno regional movements called Jeshi. Chinkororo was regarded as the Jeshi from Gusii region.

The chapter also interrogated the evolution of Chinkororo among the Abagusii of Kisii County was discussed. In so doing, various presuppositions that explain the meaning of the term Chinkororo were discussed. It was established that Chinkororo draws their identity from the fierce aspects of nature like wild animals, rain and angriness. However, the wild creature interpretation had many supporters; therefore, we settled at it as the best explanation to the meaning of the term Chinkororo.

It was also established that the emergence of Chinkororo was informed by state security failure, characterized by constant raids along the Gusii/ Kipsigis/Maasai borders by the Kipsigis and Maasai warrior. As the foregoing discussion revealed, several raiding cases were reported in the region, during the 1970-1974 period. Other factors included negative ethnicity and desire to be like their neighbors. The oral sources and archival sources consulted revealed that the group emerged around 1971 and 1972 at Kiango. Given the multiplicity of factor around the emergency of the movement, we concluded that the movement could have emerged in the period 1971-1972.

Lastly, it was noted that the Chinkororo had a distinct dress code that helped to confuse their rivals, give them warmth at night and communicate their fierce nature to their enemies. They also lived in the forest and fed on roasted meat, porridge and bananas. Moreover, they never cut their hair. However, some aspects of their lifestyle
had already changed by 1990. Such changes included the move from wearing animal skins as attires.

It was also revealed that the movement was operating as an underground or a neighborhood group whose operation was not understood by the government. Additionally, the government was so strict and never accommodated any of such groups thus the movement was so much suppressed. This is evident in the manner in which raiders could be arrested or killed by the police. Majorly, only its activities such as cattle rustling were felt and the public could not exactly tell the group behind such actions like raiding in the Gusii region. Although rumors of the movement had begun spreading in the region and in Kenya, very little was known about their operations and mission.
CHAPTER THREE
FROM A NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP TO A POLITICAL MOVEMENT
1991-2002

3.0 Introduction

In the previous chapter, Chinkororo was portrayed as a neighborhood group that operated in a closed space. As observed in the period 1961-1990, Chinkororo concentrated on building up the movement and spreading its mission among the Gusii residents within their borders. The movement was more or less a simple group with no well-defined hierarchy, rules of recruitment and training. During this era, Kenya was under one party rule that had begun, although unofficially in 1969 with the banning of KPU by Mzee Jomo Kenyatta (Nyström, 2000). The era was marked by limited freedom for the citizen (Abadejo, 2006). This chapter focuses on the period after 1991 following the entrenchment of multiparty politics in Kenya. We examine how multiparty politics in Kenya affected the organization and activities of the movement. The chapter argues that in the period 1991-2002 Chinkororo movement mutated into a political movement.

3.1 Multiparty Politics and the Rebirth of Chinkororo Movement

The early 1990s was a landmark period in Kenya’s history. The wave of democratization had hit the African continent and Kenya was not left behind. Section 2A of the Kenyan constitution was repealed and multiparty politics took roots in Kenya (Patel, 1993; Odinga, 2013). The members of the Abagusii council of elders
revealed that with multiparty politics, ethnicity intensified as evidenced in political parties formed along ethnic lines (ACE, FGD, 21/12/2015). These factors paved way for the 1992 political clashes immediately after the 1992 multiparty general elections. A former politician explained that due to international pressure for freedom of association, the KANU hired civilians (*Jeshi*) to do dirty work, (remarks that agree with Olang and Okoth, 2010). A politician from the Gusii region noted that the *Jeshi* operated in the company of the police to unleash violence in the 1992 clashes (Political leader, KII, 12/1/2016). His remarks agree with those of other scholars who noted that during the 1992 multiparty elections president Moi used provincial administrators and security agencies to frustrate the opposition’s efforts (Mkutu, Marani and Ruteere, 2014). Katumanga, Mitullah and Maupeu (2005) asserts that the 1992 general elections were marked by violence, open use of violence, killing, intimidation and displacing communities perceived of opposing the government. On their part, the opposition responded by recruiting *Jeshi* from their ethnic groups (Olang and Okoth, 2010).

It is noted that by 1992 even land issues had become appoint of confrontation among communities (Commission of Inquiry Act CAP 102). An oral source revealed that the situation was made worse with the use of police officers to evict the squatters from Rift Valley. This agrees with the Commission of Inquiry Act CAP 102, which notes that the police evicted squatters; for instance, the Abagusii were evicted from the Rift valley while the Kuria were evicted from Kilgoris. Leaders from the Rift valley were reported to have taken part in provoking the clashes as evident in the remarks below:
A leader instructed the *wananchi* in the province to visit beer halls and crush any government critic and report to the police that they had finished them (Commission of Inquiry Act CAP 102.50).

Further, the report notes that:

“In another leader from the Rift Valley Province urged the people to arm themselves with *Rungus*, bows and arrows and destroy any FORD member (Commission of Inquiry Act CAP 102.50).

In a way, the 1992 ethnic clashes were multifaceted in three causes: land, cattle rustling and political differences. With regards to the Gusii, Kalenjin and Maasai, the relationship between the three communities had been turbulent censured and insoluble from onward appearances. The armed youths from the three communities had always attacked each other suddenly and engaged in blatant incursions into each other’s territory to steal cows or pursue stolen animals. However, a focus group discussion with the Kalenjin and Gusii elders revealed that the government seemed helpless in this situation (Gusii and Kalenjin, Elders, FGD 8/1/2016). Hence, multiparty politics only magnified and fuelled the ethnic loyalties among these communities. Accordingly, various movements emerged and reorganized themselves to protect their own who had been evicted from the Rift valley. Such movements included *Mungiki* and *Chinkororo*. The Moi government banned many security related movements that were considered ethnic in nature (Former politician, KII, 12/1/2016). This concurs with IRIN (2008) which reports that due to violence perpetrated by these groups, Moi banned all ethnic groups. Among those banned included *Chinkororo* Movement.

Participants to this study noted that the ban intensified the spirit of these movements (Clan Elders, FGD, 29/12/2015). This observation is in agreement with Olang and
Okoth (2010) who note that as the popularity of these youth wings waned, they took new identities like *Jeshi La Mzee* among others. For instance, *Mungiki* that arose in 1980s intensified its activities to protect their own people (Gikuyu) who had been evicted from the Rift valley (Wamue 2001). The movements even received greater support and acknowledgement from their kinsmen.

In a way, there was commodification of violence. The activities of the groups continued to increase as the demand for their services by the community rose (Katumanga and Ngunyi 2014). In short, the ban intensified the activities of the groups and even gave them a broader dimension of their activities. In a key informant interview, a politician remarked that after the ban most of these movements became political in nature (Politician, 12/1/2016). This agrees with Katumanga, Mitullah and Maupeu (2005) who argue that in multiparty Kenya, a new form of ethnic violence, banditry and cattle rustling emerged where it was propagated to settle political scores. The authors further notes that warriors who traditionally were cattle rustlers now started making use modern firearms along with the traditional ones and carried out raiding to punish opposition supporters. The warriors had tested blood and the society could not control them.

Studies indicate that during the 1991-1993 periods the nation witnessed a bourgeoning of two dominant group: state-backed militia and organic militia (Katumanga and Ngunyi, 2014). A number of groups were formed by politicians and political parties to defend their communities against KANU youth wingers. In a way, the authors note that gangster-ism became a political expression of a regime cycle with the period recording the most protracted state instigated clashes in Kenyan history.
It is against this background that Chinkororo re-organized and shaped itself into a more complex and defined armed wing among the Abagusii with a defined system of recruitment, training and organization. A key informant interview with an ex-member notes that as from the 1990s a dramatic change in activities of Chinkororo took place (Ex-member, KII, 18/12/2015). Although initially aimed at defending the community against cattle rustlers, the fighters started taking part in political wars. This was the case in 1992 and 1997 ethnic clashes. However, when asked whether the movement was political in nature, the participants from Abagusii council of elders had divided views with other explaining that at no point the Chinkororo have fought as a movement in ethnic clashes while several others acknowledged that the group did actually take part in ethnic clashes (ACE, FGD, 21/12/2015). In addition, the ex-members in a focus group discussion at Kiango noted that as from the 1990s, the movement became political and they did take part in political wars. These ex fighters further note that they even received both material and financial support from the politicians from Kisii County (Ex-Members, 3/1/2016). This is in agreement with the Commission of Inquiry Act Cap 102, which notes that political leaders incited and supported the youths in unleashing political violence in 1992.

Although KEPN (2008) refutes this argument and insist that Chinkororo is a political movement, the Waki Report (2008) identifies Chinkororo as one of the movements that were used to unleash violence in the post-election violence in 2007/2008. Accordingly, substantial evidence from the field indicates that as from 1991 Chinkororo fighters had become political and even received the patronage and support of politicians.
In nutshell, as from 1991 the movement mutated to political participation. Many of the fights and wars in which the movement engaged in were ethnic in nature but politically supported. Such includes the 1992 ethnic clashes, 1994 and the 1997 ethnic wars in the Rift Valley.

3.2 New Recruitment in Chinkororo Movement

Recruiting members into any movement is one of the most significant and carefully done processes. The recruiters have to check all aspects that may lead them into betrayal by the new member (Spergel, 1972). As such, various practices are carried out to ensure that the member does not betray the group or denounce the group even if it means death. In his signaling theory of recruitment, Spencer notes that recruitment is a trust game between the recruit and the recruiter (Densley, 2013). Accordingly, the recruiter has to search for a trustworthiness element in the recruit. For instance, Mungiki carry out oath-taking ceremonies on their new recruits.

The newly recruited members have to swear an oath of secrecy (Reuters, 2007). Others movement carry out rituals which include bathing in a concoction of a blood, urine and sometimes tripe (Reuters, 2007). The Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) in northern Uganda forces the new recruits to kill and rape their parents to ensure that they will never leave the group (War child, 2014). In other movements, the exercise entails the beating of the new member to test his boldness and aggressiveness. This is the case in MS 13 and Balio 18 in South America. In some cases, the recruits are given an activity to test their bravery and courage (Safer Access, 2007). However, in some movements, membership is voluntary while in others it is a forceful exercise.
Although these groups are secretive about their oath-taking process, there is a uniform pattern. Upon indoctrination, the members take an oath of loyalty to the group.

Participants to this study noted that in the *Chinkororo* movement, it was voluntary for one to join the movement. An elderly woman interviewed at Nyachekei noted that to be recruited into the group depended on one’s courage and bravery (Elderly Lady, O.I., 3/1/2016). However, a group discussion at Kiango revealed that in times of war if the movement ran short of work force, young men from the village were forcefully recruited to help in the collection of food and raw materials for making weapons (Elders, FGD, 29/12/2015). Additionally they could be used to nurse the wounded fighters and preparing food (roasting meat) in the camps.

Nevertheless, cases of forceful recruitment were rare due to the common spirit that of community defense among border residents. As sign of patriotism, young men from each homestead joined the movement without necessarily being forced. Furthermore, the socialization process and the Gusii oral sayings helped to mobilize the young men to join the movement. In a focus group discussion with members from the Abagusii council of elders participants remarked that from childhood, the young boys were socialized into acknowledging the significance of *Chinkororo* movement among the Gusii border residents. The Gusii proverb ‘*Sinyo egochi gokura na abamura etabwati*’ (a front that faces frequent unrest has no sons/men) was used to motivate the men to guard their borders so that they could prove that they were actually men by taking up socially constructed masculine roles more especially security (ACE, FGD, 21/12/2015).
As in the traditional cattle kraals, only men aged 18 to 35 years are recruited into the movement (Ochieng, 1974). All the recruits had to be circumcised according to the Gusii tradition. They had to be fully societal men to join the movement. Those recruited included both the unmarried and married men. However, none was allowed to bring his wife into the training camps. To fulfill their sexual desires, one had to seek permission to go home and meet his wife.

A former commander to the group noted that at some point, the unmarried members were given an opportunity to go and get married (Former commander, KII, 5/1/2016). This was because according to the Gusii tradition, no man was supposed to die unmarried or without children. The same remarks were echoed by members of the Abagusii council of elders who noted that for a Gusii man to be given responsibility, he ought to be circumcised and be married (ACE, FGD, 21/12/2015). In addition, the recruitment process was never ceremonial in any way. However, after entering the group an oath of secrecy was mandatory. In a focus group discussion in Kiango, participants noted that goat meat mainly blood, intestine, and liver were eaten raw to symbolize devolution of life (Ex-members, FGD, 11/1/2016). This agrees with Mwangi (2010) who notes that in such movements, oathing ceremonies resemble witchcraft and the methods used are charming. The author further notes that either animal or human blood, intestines, liver, brain or hearts are eaten raw to symbolize devolution of life. After the oathing ceremony, training then followed.
3.3 New Training Techniques of Chinkororo Members

To accomplish their mission Chinkororo movement members went through an intensive training. The training took place in specific places far away from the border or secret areas. This helped them to avoid being seen by their rivals. Occasionally, they did their training in places such as Kasarani and Simba hills regions of Bomachoge (Ex-member, KII, 4/01/2016). The training ground was always an extensive large field where arrows and spears could easily be thrown. The field could be a school playground or somebody’s farm. The trainers were the most experienced members of the movement who had served the movement for the longest time. Leaders of the group also carried out the training.

Several rules were given to the new recruits as part of their warfare training. In case a colleague had been shot in the battlefield his closest fighter could help him escape the battlefield by retreating backwards. In an interview with an ex-member of the movement it was noted that at no point could the movement allow one of their own to be taken away by their enemies dead or alive (Ex-member, KII, 4/01/2016). This could easily lead to the revealing of Chinkororo secrets thus betraying them to their enemies.

One was to keep off women while heading to the battlefield. The Chinkororo fighters were not supposed to pass in between women. In case one met a woman on his way to the battlefield, the woman had to stand on the left hand side and pave way for the fighter to pass. This agrees (Kegoro, 2009) who notes that women were not allowed to cross the road in front of men on the way to the battlefield. In a focus group
discussion at Gucha, participants noted that women were considered a weak vessel, 
avoiding their contact could help one to escape death in the battlefield (Gusii 
Residents, FGD, 16/1/2016). This was rooted in the Gusii culture that is 
discriminatory and exploitive to the women (Liyong, 1972). However, given the idea 
that women played part in the supply of food to the fighters a focus group discussion 
in Nyacheki revealed that this rule was more biased in favor of men. Arguing that 
coming into contact with women could lead to death in the battlefield is not logical 
here since the findings revealed that women were responsible for the provision of 
food to these fighters (Ex members, FGD, 3/1/2016). Accordingly, we took another 
exploration of the rule which held that coming into contact with women could divert 
the mind of the fighter into admiring the ladies and forget strategizing for the war (Ex- 
member, KII, 4/01/2016). The above was based on the idea that naturally men are 
weak at the sight of women, especially beautiful ones.

Land cultivation was also not done when the warriors were in the battlefield. An oral 
source revealed that land cultivation was a female occupation and digging while men 
were fighting was like burying them alive. This agrees with Kegoro (2009) who notes 
that land tilling a female pro-occupation during peacetime, was suspended at times of 
war. The author explains that turning the soils while warriors are at battle fronts 
amounted to burying them alive. Anybody found doing such an act was condemned 
and scorned by everybody in the community and cleansing rituals had to be done.

The fighters were also warned that at no point should a woman hand the war weapons 
to her husband heading to the battlefield. If war erupted while the husband is at home, 
the woman was supposed to place the weapons at the exit of the house from where
the man could pick them up and run to the battlefield without seeing each other off. A clan elder explained that bidding bye was believed to mean that the man is never to come back again; he may be killed in the battlefield (Clan Elder, KII, 3/1/2016).

Furthermore, a fighter whose wife was pregnant was never allowed to join his colleagues in the battlefield and so was to the newly married fighters. It was believed that such fighters could be killed or hit at the battle. The old men interviewed attributed this to the idea that such a man could be overwhelmed by the happy moments he had with the newly married wife since love is so strong during the first wedding days. Accordingly, the fighter is likely to have divided mind, at war and at home thus easily loose the match due to lack of concentration (An Old Man, O.I., 12/1/2016).

In case one of the fighters killed an enemy in the battlefield, another fighter close to him was supposed to aid him quit the war field backwards. The killer would unfold his bow, and go home to rest. It was believed that if he continued to fight he might end up being killed by the enemies. Additionally, if the enemy killed was closer to the fighter, he could lick his blood. If the enemy killed was not close to the fighter, a cleansing ritual had to be done at home before he could enter the house.

An interview with a diviner in Bomachoge revealed that a white hen or a red rooster was slaughtered. The diviner further noted that the beak and the intestines of the hen could then be hanged around the neck of the fighter with the help of the clan elders who presided over this function (Diviner, KII, 3/1/2016). The elders could then appease the ancestors by pouring blood libations. This symbolized that the fighter had
paid for the blood of the enemy he shed. In this way, the dying man's spirit would not haunt him. Further investigation into the ritual revealed that this ritual was rooted in the Gusii cleansing ceremony in case one had accidentally killed a person (Diviner, KII, 31/12/2016). This agrees with Ochieng (1974) who articulates that the Gusii performed cleansing rituals and scarifies to appease the ancestors whenever one killed a person or a clan totem.

Also in their training, Chinkororo members were introduced to war weapons and taught on the appropriate time each weapon was to be used. They were also taught how to make each weapon used in the battlefield and how to poison them. An ex-member in a key informant interview noted that, extraction of poison from wild reptiles like venomous snakes was part of the Chinkororo training (Ex-member, KII, 4/01/2016). Given this, it will be appropriate to discuss each of these weapons and their significance to the lifestyle of Chinkororo fighters.

3.6 Weapons Used by Chinkororo

A fighting stick commonly known as ekeranya was the most significant weapon of Chinkororo fighters. An ex-member noted that the stick was about 2.5 feet long and was given to an individual by an old man (Ex-member, KII, 4/01/2016). The old man was usually among the traditional healers or diviners of Abagusii who were believed to provide charm.

Very few members of the Chinkororo movement had this stick. Its holders were usually the leaders of the group or outstanding members of the movement. The stick
was regarded as a charm because holders were highly respected, feared and believed to be automatic victors in a battlefield.

The stick was used to hit arrows shot by the rivals. As the arrows fell down other Chinkororo members behind the holders could pick them and shoot back at the enemy. This could continue until the enemy ran short of the arrows. Here, the holder could remove the machete from its pocket and behead the enemy so easily.

The arrows were the main weapons of fighting. This is because even in the traditional Gusii set up, the arrows were the main weapons used by the warriors in the cattle camps (Ochieng, 1974). During their training, the fighters were taught how to aim and hit at a target without missing. They were also taught how to make arrows and how to extract poison from pythons to poison the arrow tips. An oral source revealed that they were also cautioned against using their own arrows unless they were sure that they could hit the enemy (Ex-member, KII, 4/01/2016). In a way, they were taught how to capitalize on the enemy’s arrows and save their own. Another ex-member noted that:

> We were cautioned against using our arrows anyhow. Our trainers insisted that our poisoned arrows could only be used when one was sure of hitting at the enemy. No arrow from our side was supposed to go to waste (Ex-member, KII, 8/1/2016).

The above statement indicates that despite the fact that Chinkororo made their own arrows, in many cases, they utilized the enemy’s arrows. In a focus group discussion, participants remarked that this tactic helped them because they could not easily run short of weapons. This placed them in a more advantageous position in a battlefield than their rivals (Ex-Members, FGD, 3/1/2016).
There were two types of arrows used by Chinkororo fighters. The first one was a barbed arrow known as Egesingororo. The second type was Rinyamarati with barbs ensuring that if the arrow lodges in the body, only a surgical operation would succeed in removing it. However, as time went by, the sizes and shapes of these arrows have changed.

The arrows were used in a complementary manner with the bows. The bows consisted of a stretchable stick tied at both ends using the backbone vein of a cow. One of the former weapon makers in the movement noted that the backbone was preferred because it is strong and cannot tear easily (Former Chinkororo weapon maker, KII, 5/1/2016). The arrow was then placed in between the stick and the vein pulled back and released to an enemy. Arrows were carried in a skin pocket called Omochere. The pocket had a thread that helped the fighter to hang it on his shoulder backwards. As part of their training, Chinkororo members were taught the best way to carry the arrow pocket to make their movement in the battlefield easier.

An oral source revealed that spears were only used when the enemy was at close range. The person who used a spear was always equipped with a shield and a machete (Ex-member, KII, 27/12/2015). A focus group discussion in Nyacheki revealed that one had to tie a piece of cloth around his fingers to reduce the friction between his skin and the handle of the shield. This is because the spears or stone thrown from an enemy came with intense force that could easily throw somebody down (Ex-members, FGD, 3/1/2016). Hence, the person using the spear and the shield was always among the strongest men of the movement; these were people with well-built bodies that could easily withstand the force of a landing spear or stone. A shield was crucial in
protecting the fighter against spears and stones from the rivals thus were made up of strong animal hides.

Another important weapon is a sling, which was used to throw stones. This weapon was used when the enemy was far so away that the arrows and spears could not reach the target. A Machete was not only used in beheading the enemies but also cutting through the forest for easy penetration. Additionally, they could use it to skin any wild animal hunted for food. The hare was the most commonly wild animal hunted in 1990s. A member of the movement remarked that:

“I joined the movement in 1993. In 1997, I participated in fighting during the 1997 ethnic clashes. I remember with bitterness the way I beheaded one Kipsigis man. I had no option, I could not misuse an arrow when he was at close range, and the machete was the only weapon I had that could kill him instantly. It is a game of win or death; I had to behead him (Chinkororo Member, KII, 29/12/2015).”

A club (echebunye) was occasionally used. However, it was used once the enemy had been caught. Its sole function was to hit the enemy on the head leading to fast death due to internal bleeding.

3.5 Coded Language Used in the Field

Another important aspect of the training was on the language use in the battlefield. Given their similarity with their rivals in terms of dress code, Chinkororo had to learn a secret language among themselves. For instance, a member of Abagusii council of elders noted that a term like Noano translated to who are you while Noito translated to am yours (ACE, FGD, 21/12/2015). In a key informant interview, a former coach
of the movement noted that a common secret language helped them to identify each other as well as avoid cases of their rivals getting their secrets (Former, Chinkororo coach, KII, 4/1/2016). This is in agreement with another scholar who notes that such movements have a unique set of language, handshake, gestures, sounds and graffiti and non-letter symbols that they use to hide their information during communication (Erick, 2013). In furtherance, another study by Hamilton (2012) noted that the secretive language in these movements enables them to avoid their rivals ripping them off.

Masterly of the battle language was essential for communication and coordination during the war. It was during the training that they were introduced to a coded language as far as the coordination and organization of their movements in the battlefield was concerned.

An ex member explained that the left hand side of the group in a battle field could be given number seven (7), the center number three (3) and the right side number five (5) (ACE, FGD, 21/12/2015). Each Chinkororo member was supposed to master these numbers and their interpretation because instructions by leaders in the field were given using these numbers.

Furthermore, the recruits had to learn the Maasai, Kipsigis and Kuria languages as part of their training. Those who had been in the movement for a long time helped the trainees in this aspect of training. Participants to this study noted that learning Kuria language was significant because it enabled them to communicate with Mura, a security-related group among the Kuria people usually referred to as Abatende. The
*Mura* always came to help *Chinkororo* fighters when the Kipsigis and Maasai had overwhelmed them (Ex-members, FGD, 11/1/2016). One former *Chinkororo* member recalls that the *Mura* was of great help to the *Chinkororo* fighters during the 1992 ethnic clashes. The battle was so fierce and thus *Chinkororo* needed a backup (Ex-members, FGD, 11/1/2016). Knowledge of Maasai and Kipsigis language enabled them to understand what their enemies were conversing in a battlefield. It also enabled them to mix freely with the enemy without being easily identified thus gather secrets from their enemies.

The above implies that as from the year 1990, *Chinkororo* movement had spread its wings to the neighboring communities. The collaboration with the *Mura*, from Kuria is an indication that the movement had developed collaboration with similar movement in other regions. However, a focus group discussion with the Abagusii council of elders revealed that this collaboration was both political and ethnic in nature because; the two communities regard themselves as long distance relatives (ACE, FGD, 21/12/2015). Additionally, the two communities had suffered eviction from the Rift valley due to their political ideologies against the KANU government. This agrees with the commission of inquiry Act CAP 102 which notes that in 1992, both the Gusii and the Kuria were evicted from Rift Valley and Kilgoris respectively.

### 3.6 New strategies of Decoding Alerts

As part of their training, the *Chinkororo* fighters were trained on how to distinguish between a cry for war from those of other events like funerals. This was an essential part of the training because reaction and response of a fighter depended on the call
normally known as *ekurate*. As such, the fighters were trained to decode various sounds produced by *enkoma*, a drum that was used by Abagusii for alerts of any eventuality. One key informant interviewee noted that:

> A cry of an *enkoma* accompanied by *ekurate* (women’ screams) was an alert of war or invasion by an enemy. All of us had to be aware of this and master this sound because any slight confusion could lead to a delayed response or an overreaction which was a mistake (Former Coach, KII, 4/1/2016).

However, since 1992 *Enkoma* has never been used in war alerts. Remarks by participants in a focus group discussion at Nyangusu revealed that the last time the drum was utilized was in the year 1992 despite the fact that since then *Chinkororo* have taken part in ethnic wars (Clan Elders, FGD, 5/1/2016). The fighters felt that the drum alerted even the enemies for possible retaliation thus organizes them for the defense. However, an elder in Gucha attributed the change to death and reduction in the number of the old men who had skills in beating the drum to produce specific defined sounds for varied purposes (Clan Elder, O.I 27/12/2015).

On the battlefield, *Chinkororo* were also trained to distinguish between a cry of victory and the cry of defeat of their rivals. Such a skill could help them know whether it is one of them who have been hit in a battlefield or is an enemy to take necessary actions.

The ex-members of the group remarked that a cry of jubilation meant that the enemy has been hit while a cry of torment from the enemy meant that *Chinkororo* members had been hit (Ex-member, KII 8/1/2016). Given the hidden and opposite meaning of
different cries, it was vital that every member of *Chinkororo* movement got conversant with them before even going to the battlefield.

The last part of the training entailed movement and conduct of the fighters in battlefield. This was a very crucial part of the training because any slight mistake in the battlefield could lead to the *Chinkororo* fighters losing it to their enemies. Discipline and swiftness were core values taught in the training camps. The two, coupled with carefulness were the pillars of success in any battle.

The training usually took three weeks to three months depending on the time the war starts. If a war erupted amid training, each warrior had to take part in it. However, in a focus group discussion held in Kiango participants noted that keen considerations were taken into account to find out the best positions for those not fully trained to avoid betraying the entire movement to its enemies (Ex-members, FGD, 11/1/2016).

In conclusion, therefore, the training of *Chinkororo* fighters was an intense and a very important aspect of membership in the movement. However, no special ceremony was conducted to mark the pass-out for such recruits. In an oral interview, a former member to the group noted that the heroism of a member was only determined after successfully killing an enemy in battlefield (Ex-member, KII, 4/01/2016). The remarks agree with Lars (2016) who notes that a man who raids and kills is considered a hero in most African community. Songs are composed about them and they receive heroic welcome at home. This explains why *Chinkororo* members who had killed in battlefield could receive a warm welcome at home by the clan elders.
Accordingly, in the movement different individuals specialized on different weapons depending on their ability to aim. There was thus an aspect of specialization in warfare. Each fighter had to possess some skills in using all the weapons discussed above but specialized with one or two. This aspect made their attack on their enemies an easier one and gave them victory without incurring many injuries and losses. We majorly relied on Chinkororo ex members, members and clan elders to gather this information thus no doubt that their training was entirely on weapons, language and signals, movement and coordination in the battlefield.

3.7 Changes in the Organization of Chinkororo Movement

In the previous sections, we have looked at the origin, the recruitment and training in Chinkororo movement. It is very significant discussing the above highlighted aspects of Chinkororo movement. However, it should be appreciated that to an historian, it becomes even more essential to cast a significant glance at the very fabric of their organization in terms of leadership structure, gender and warfare tactics.

We shall now proceed to address the following questions; how did the nature of Chinkororo hierarchical structure change? What was the role of women in the group? What changes took place in the way they organized their war?

3.9 Chinkororo Leadership Structure

Studies indicate that security related movements have a clear organizational structure. For instance, Richard (2007) notes that security related movements have a clear corporate style structure in the shape of an Egyptian pyramid. In this type of structure,
the author notes that at the bottom, there are street soldiers topped by a hierarchy, which is capped by leadership and finally a king or presidents at the top. However, in some groups, studies indicate that some structures are democratic with cliques that have independent charismatic leaders.

With regard to Chinkororo, a key informant revealed that the movement developed a visible chain of command and hierarchy with a distinct overall leader in the 1990s (Ex-members, KII, 18/12/2015). This agrees with Kegoro (2009) who notes that although initially informal and without specific leaders and office bearers, in 1992 conflict, Chinkororo produced visible leaders. These leaders received recognition beyond the basic unit. The first overall Chinkororo leader was Ombaki Nyang’oina from Machoge clan. The need for a defined structure was driven by the need to have a clear link between the political elites of the county and the movement. In a key informant interview, a former politician noted that to be able to receive the support and funding of the politicians in the region, one overall leader had to be chosen to be a link the group to the political elite of the Gusii region (Former Politician, KII, 10/1/2016). Kegoro (2009) holds that the leadership of Ombaki attracted not only the attention of the local politicians but also president Moi who sought to patronize him with an aim of exercising control over Chinkororo. Ombaki was the coach of the movement. The hierarchy of Chinkororo movement was pyramidal in nature with the coach at the apex followed by the commanders and lastly fighters in their various sections as illustrated in figure 3.0.
Figure 3.0 The leadership Structure of Chinkororo Movement.

Source: Former Chinkororo Coach (KII, 4/01/2016)
Structurally, at the top of the hierarchy was an overall leader referred to as a coach. A coach was among the longest serving members of Chinkororo movement with outstanding traits. Such traits included bravery, wisdom, charisma, ability to control others, authoritativeness and swiftness (Former Chinkororo Coach, KII, 4/01/2016). These criteria of selection agrees with Davis (2007) who notes that in most gangs a leader had to be one of the culture, brave, bold, think for others and be in a position to bend low to the democracy of the group. Additionally, for one to be chosen as a coach, he had to be a good aimer thus possesses esaba. One had to be a master of indigenous Kipsigis, Kuria and Maasai languages and had to be conversant with the rivals’ terrain.

Choosing the coach was mainly the duty of the clan elders. This ensured that no fights and conflicts emerged in relation to that position. Elders, especially diviners were highly feared and their decisions were respected without question. Participants from the ACE remarked that it was the role of the coach to inform the commanders about an impending war (ACE, FGD 21/12/2015). The commanders delivered to the others any information from the coach. However, an ex-member interviewed noted that sometimes anybody could avail information on any impending attack in case he heard about it ahead of the coach or commanders (Ex-member, KII, 4/01/2016). The coach then gave instructions on what was supposed to be done. This agrees with Davis (2007) who notes that the overall leaders of a movement is the one who thinks for others on what is to be done. The coach was always the first man to arrive at the battlefield and was the first one to throw an arrow thus opening the battle. As a sign of authority, the coach wore two shukas, carried a spear, a shield, a machete and an
arrow all at once each time. To demonstrate respect, other members of the movement could stand up with their arrows pointed upward whenever he came around until he ordered them to sit.

Two or three other fighters referred to as commando simply meaning a commander assisted the coach. These officials acted on behalf of the coach in case he was absent. They were also responsible for training the new members and coordinated different teams in the battlefield. Below the commanders, were other Chinkororo members usually referred, as abamura be esinyo. These were the fighters who were controlled by the coach and the commanders. Within this group, various sections existed. These sections included weapon producers, messengers and spies (Former Coach, KII, 4/01/2016). The weapon producers specialized in the manufacture of all sorts of weapons used by the movement. The messengers were responsible for collection of hens, food, raw materials for making weapon and money from the village once sent by their leaders. An oral source explained that, the spies could be sent to the enemy’s terrain to gather information of any impending war or any plans to invade the Gusii territory by the enemy (Ex-member, KII, 5/1/2016).

The spies had to be well conversant with the enemy’s territory, language and lifestyle. They had to be people who were bold and persevering; People who could not betray the movement even if it meant death. In many cases, these people loved politics. An old man who once lived in Molo, Rift Valley noted that:

“I lived in Molo for over 20 years before I was evicted during the 1997 political clashes. The Kalenjin normally spoke of eviction in parables. This is where the role of Chinkororo spies could come in. If rumors of war went
round, the spies would come, survey the region for a long time collecting information from the daily gossip in public, and beer places. I remember that in 1992 I hosted one spy for over a month that had come to gather information about the planned 1992 ethnic clashes in the Rift valley. Words had gone round that the foreign ethnic groups had to be evicted since they were supporters of the opposition (Old man, KII, 3/1/2016).”

A former spy to the group noted that:

“To gather more accurate data I could even attend the political rallies and campaigns of the Kalenjin politicians as a supporter. From these I could get information on what the warriors have been told to do. This is because at many cases Morans and warriors acted as per the command of their politicians who always incited them against any ethnic group that was against KANU (Former Spy, KII, 4/01/2016).

The remarks of these participants agrees with the commissions of inquiry Act CAP 102 which notes that the Kalenjin warriors and Morans were instructed by their politicians to wage war against the non-Kalenjin in the Rift valley during the 1992 political clashes.

As observed from the foregoing discussion, there was division of labor in the movement as each member had a specific role to play. This observation agrees with Chin (2000) who notes that there is division of labor among gang members and leaders are in complete control of all gang activities

After the death of Ombaki whom the community ridicule to have died like a woman, scholars argues that he was never replaced (Kegoro, 2009). He had been blackmailed by the British and assassinated. However, ex-members interviewed noted that, although there was no replacement for the coach (Ombaki) that could rule exactly as
he did, the movement had a new coach appointed and blessed by the clan elders. This therefore refuted the idea of absence of formal leadership in the group between the 1990 and 2002 period.

3.9 Recruitment of women in Chinkororo Movement

3.9.1. Introduction

As discussed in the previous sections Chinkororo members lived a simple lifestyle and kept off women. However, this does not mean that women completely played no role in this movement. In this section, we discuss the role of women in Chinkororo movement. This is based on the premise that women played supportive roles in the movement. In addition, it will be more instructive to look at the warfare of Chinkororo movement because their sole purpose was to fight or engage with external aggressors who attacked the Gusii territory. Accordingly, this section will in addition, look at how Chinkororo organized and prepared themselves, before, during and after a war and the specific roles that women and politicians played at each stage.

3.9.2. Women in the Chinkororo Warfare

Kegoro (2009) notes that women are not legible to become Chinkororo members or fight on behalf of the community. The author further asserts that men were not allowed to share anything about warfare with women who at times were not allowed to handle war weapons. However, as much as women were not allowed as fighters, while men were in the forest fighting or training, women had to be in their homes taking care of the family. The wife of an ex-member remarked that Women played a key role in the
supply of food (Wife of ex-member, O.I., 4/1/2016). During war, women prepared porridge and milk for the fighters. Another elderly woman noted that:

“We played a role of a typical African woman, cooking and guarding the house when our men were in the forest fighting. We also prepared brew for the soldiers returning from war or during a cleansing ritual (Elderly Lady, KII, 18/1/2016).”

The remarks from these elderly ladies agrees with Hakannson (1996) who notes that traditionally Gusii women played a key role in food production and cooking as well as preparing brew for their husband while their men focused on herding and waging wars. Kegoro (2009) agrees that women cooked for the Chinkororo members and took food to them at specific places and times. As such, the role of these women in this movement was more akin to the traditional roles of Gusii women in the society.

The women could take food to the training camps and leave immediately. The food was brought uncovered because it was believed that covering food could lead to the defeat of the fighters at war. A diviner interviewed noted that covering the food was like locking their power and energy in the war field (Diviner, KII, 5/1/2016).

Women also played a critical role in alerting the fighters of an invasion by an enemy. Usually, the cry of an enkoma was accompanied by women’s’ screams in the event that the Gusii territory was under attack. This is in agreement with Kegoro (2009) who notes that among the most crucial role of women in Chinkororo movement was alerting the community of danger. Once enkoma sounded followed by women screams then the fighters could know that their territory was under invasion. In a focus group discussion with elderly women in Kiango, the participants noted that as they
screamed, women had special words to utter; *kae abamura amagoro, Konya abamura* translated to please support our men (Elderly Women, FGD, 4/01/2016). There were different types of alarms that women raised during different occurrences such as invasion by an enemy, cattle raiding, internal fights and death of a person. Accordingly, women were socialized to produce different tones for different events. Kegoro (2009) explaining this role writes that their high-pitched cries helped to spread the intended message in a way that men could not.

An old woman living along the Kisii Kipsigis border gave a narration on how they alerted the village that the enemies were already surrounding them. She narrated that:

“Elections were approaching in 1997, one week to voting, war erupted in the Rift Valley and the Gusii were being evicted. The Kalenjin chased our kinsmen up to this border and were almost entering our territory. As our men woke up to defend we had to send a message to the entire location through our screams and alert the *Chinkororo* members wherever they were to fight back (Elderly Lady, O.I., 3/1/2016).”

In case of an intensified war, women could gather stones for the fighters to use. These were the stones used together with slings. It is important to note that no woman was recruited as a *Chinkororo* fighter. Women were considered as weak thus could not be trusted in a battlefield. In playing their roles, women were more external players and their roles were associated more to the domestic sphere thus in a way *Chinkororo* movement was patriarchal in nature.
3.9.3. Preparing for War

Studies on gangs and security related movements indicate that before attacking, the groups have to be well prepared and equipped. They have to study the location of attack well and trace the movements and operations of the targeted people as well as train intensively for the attack (Cooper, 2016). For Chinkororo movement, before leaving to the battlefield to raid the fighters conducted a ceremony called *esasi* organized by clan elders. Members of Abagusii council of elders noted that in this ceremony, old men, who were known to produce charms, prepared herbs and charm to produce a mixture known as *esasi* (ACE, FGD, 21/12/2015). This agrees with Finke (2003) and Hakannson (1996) who notes that production of such charms was entirely, the work of ritual specialist normally referred to as *Abanyamariogo*. This *esasi* was then burnt and the direction of the smoke could be a source of information predicting the outcome of the war. It was believed that the smoke from this mixture frightened the enemies. Kegoro (2009) asserts that such rituals and charms removed evil spells on the way or in the battlefield. If the smoke rose sideways, it was believed that if not careful, Chinkororo fighters would be defeated in the battlefield. If the smoke went upwards, the victory was on the side of the Chinkororo fighters. An elderly woman who is a wife of a diviner noted that normally it was the work of ritual specialist called *Abaragori* to interpret the outcome of the war depending on the direction of the smoke (Wife to a Diviner, KII, 9/11/2016). This agrees with Hankinson (1996) who notes that *Abaragori* had the sole responsibility of detecting, removing curses and bad omen as well as pointing displeased spirits and proscribing sacrifice to it.
After the ceremony was over, the elders could then bless the young fighters. In blessing the fighters, the old men could sip the traditional brew prepared by women known as *Ebusa* and spat it on the fighters uttering *genda moirane bwari buya* translated to “May you go and return in peace” (Clan elder, KII, 23/09/2015). With this, the fighters led by their leaders departed to the battlefield without bidding the community farewell. This agrees with other scholarly works on the role of culture in fights and cattle raiding which reveals that community elders commissioned the youth fighters to raids and fights (Gebremichael, Kassaye, and Ambaye, 2005).

Participants also noted that the politicians from Gusii region played a key role in these ceremonies. They provided funds for the purchase of animals that were offered as sacrifices. In addition, they provided tokens to be given to the old men presiding over these rituals. A former politician interviewed noted that:

> “They were our army and we had to fund and protect them at all cost just like Kenya protects and funds Kenya Defense Forces (KDF). They were fighting to protect our community against our political enemies in the Rift valley. We had to fund every aspect of that war (Former, Politician, KII, 10/1/2016).”

The remarks above indicates that politicians had taken an upper hand in the activities and operation of the chinkororo movement. As at this time, there emerged a strong connection between chinkororo members and the political elites of the Gusii region. This was evident in the way the group participated in political wars, received the political patronage from the politicians and even funding on their operations.
3.9.4. In the Battle Field

Once in the field Chinkororo could organize themselves into eight distinct groups normally referred to as chindwaro (Ex-member, KII, 18/12/2015). Each group was made up of 10-12 members. Accordingly, in a battlefield 80-100 fighters from Chinkororo movement were present. Each group could take positions with the most coward group being in front.

The group in front could engage with the enemy thus keeping the enemy busy and making them tired. As this continued, the group behind it could move forward while the front moved backward strategically. This continued until the last group came forward and the most coward became the hind most (Ex-member, KII, 18/12/2015). Usually the most coward group comprised of the new recruits who had not gained the full warfare tactics training.

It is important to note that these groups stood in curves but in an alternate manner. A former commander to the group revealed that such a position helped them to avoid cases of one arrow from rival fighters (Morans or Kipsigis warriors) hitting two people at the same time (Former Chinkororo commander, KII, 5/1/2016).

In addition, the front coward group usually could not throw arrows to the enemy. The experts shot arrows, slings and spears from the hind groups. The war tactic of moving backward and forwards enabled the teams to rest in turns without bringing the war into a standstill. This enabled them to reenergize and even take food with ease. Such a move made them strong against their weak and tired enemy thus ensured victory.
Sometimes the battle could take place in mountain slopes where such positions were not easy to arrange. In such cases, each group went to a different side of the slope or mountain to engage the enemy. Again, in such situations the war language played a key role.

A cry of jubilation from an enemy’s side was a sign that an enemy had been hit and they are deceiving the Chinkororo fighters to relax. A cry of pain from the enemy’s side was a sign that one of the Chinkororo members had been killed. All efforts had to be made to ensure that the enemy did not escape with the body of such a member dead or alive. An ex-member noted that:

“At no point we would allow our member to be dragged away dead or alive by our enemies as this would easily make us weak and even lead to our defeat. Allowing our member be taken away by an enemy was not only betraying our group but also it meant political suicide in our region as he could be easily interrogated to give out our secrets. The death of our member would intensify the war. We had to ensure that our dead or injured men are taken home. After this, we could then fight to revenge. Our hunger could intensify and the thirst to see their blood increased (Ex-member, KII, 4/01/2016).”

In the battlefield, the fighters had only one option, to win. Women played a key role here. At times, they could scream to confuse the enemy. A group of women dressed as Maasai women could be sent to the border. Once there they could scream sending a wrong message to the Morans that their women have been attacked hence rush to help them. This confusion could lead to the loss of concentration leading to an easy victory over the Morans.
In case their enemies overwhelmed them, Chinkororo fighters could seek the support of Mura a movement of the same strength among the Abakuria. One elderly man noted that the Mura fighters were so strong and dangerous and they never used arrows, spears or slings (Elderly Man, KII, 3/1/2016). Their main weapons were guns. In addition, their war tactic was different from that of Chinkororo since they only fought at night. Despite the fact that the Mura fighters aided Chinkororo fighters especially during the 1992 ethnic clashes, there is no record showing occasions when Chinkororo went to help the Mura. This is an indication that although not supported by substantial evidence, the Mura fighters are stronger than Chinkororo fighters are.

There are occasions when not all the Chinkororo members went to the battlefield. At times during ethnic clashes, two Chinkororo members could be sent to the war fronts to engage the enemy. According to participants in a focus group discussion in Borabu, the two fighters could drive away the Maasai Morans and Kipsigis warriors deep into the Rift valley with ease (Residents, FGD, 8/1/2016). This ratio of two Chinkororo fighters against many Morans and Kipsigis warriors was an indication that Chinkororo was a stronger group than the former.

Once the Chinkororo had defeated their rivals, they could drive away their stolen cattle combined with the enemy’s cattle home with jubilation. The Gusii women welcomed them home with heroic songs. These songs always glorified the Chinkororo fighters while at the same time ridiculing the Morans. Below is an example of the songs that were sung.

Abamura ne bisora eya eya,
Abamura ne bisora eya eya,

Abamanyi ee Abamanyi, mwesokereire,

Abamanyi ee Abamanyi, mwesokereire,

Aboria chingoba chiano momanye gochisiba, mwesokereire (Old Woman, KII, 4/12/2016).

Translated:

Our men are heroes with vision,

Morans shame on you,

Remove your attires and dry them before you put them on.

The recovered cattle could be given back to their owners while stolen cattle could be distributed among the Gusii residents at the border free. One significant aspect to note is that during political and ethnic clashes the fighters from both sides not only targeted at killing opponents and property destruction but also stealing cattle and looting valuables from the enemy’s territory (County Administrator, KII, 21/12/2015). This agrees with IRIN (2015) which reports that cases of cattle raiding are highly reported during electioneering period and ethnic clashes.

Occasionally, Chinkororo fighters could capture a Maasai or Kipsigis warrior alive depending on whom they were fighting. The captured man could be tortured and interrogated to give the war secrets of the enemy. Such information comprised of
where stolen cattle are kept, the political leaders who funds them, his residence and operations, who their leaders are and how they communicated during the war.

After getting information to their satisfaction, *Chinkororo* could then kill the man and then behead him. A diviner in a key informant interview remarked that the tongue of the killed man and part of the genitals could be buried along the path at the border (Diviner, KII, 31/12/2015). The burial of these parts in such location was believed to make their rivals afraid whenever they crossed the spot thus never think of attacking the Gusii. The rest of the body was left in the forest to rot or for the owners to pick for a burial (Diviner, KII, 31/12/2015). However, these practice changed as time went by.

By 1997, such an act of mutilating and burying the tongue and genitals had changed. The above was attributed to the negative attitude that had cropped up towards killing and rituals. A priest at Nyangusu attributed the above to Christianity and modernity where traditional rituals and cultures had no space in the society (Catholic Priest, O.I, 19/1/2016). However, a politician interviewed noted that such acts portrayed the community as witches and barbaric thus had to be done away with (Political Leader, KII, 12/1/2016). Concisely, regardless of the driver behind the change, it is evident that by 1997 acts of mutilating bodies of enemies had been abandoned.

**3.9.5. After the War**

After the battle, a cleansing ritual presided by the elders was conducted. The fighters were not allowed to enter their houses before the ritual was conducted as previously discussed in section 3.3 of this chapter. Here again, women prepared brew and
cooked for the celebration. After the ceremony, normal life began. Given the fact that in battlefield sometimes, the Chinkororo fighters could lose one of their own, it is significant to close this section by looking at the burial ceremony of a fighter who died in battlefield.

**3.9.6. The Burial of Chinkororo Member**

One of the major rules of the Chinkororo movement was taking home their colleagues whether death or alive. Writing on the Chinkororo Kegoro (2009) notes that:

> If a member of Chinkororo dies in a battle, everything has to be done to retrieve the body and ensure that the enemy does not go with it. The entire group would rather die than allow the body of a fallen colleague to be taken by the enemy. The loss of the body of a fallen colleague is a great insult to the entire group since without the body it was difficult to bring close to the death (Kegoro, 2009.48).

In case one of the Chinkororo fighters died in the battlefield, his body was taken home without wailing and a Gusii traditional burial ceremony for a man and a hero was done. In this mourning period, women sat with the widow and gave her moral support. In addition, they cooked fetched water and served the visitors who came to console the family. In this ceremony, a large gathering in a funeral was sign of prestige (Hakansson, 1996). Normally for the Gusii, a man was buried on the right hand side of the house and beyond the cattle pen and animal sacrifices were common (Hakansson, 1996). However, special aspects were incorporated to mark the life of this member.

One of the elders interviewed noted that:
“The burial of Chinkororo member was like that of a police man. The only difference is that they do not throw arrows like the police shoot the bullets (Clan Elder, KII, 31/12/2015).”

Chinkororo members participated in every aspect of the burial. This was done with the help of the clan elders and diviners. The members of the groups would mourn in a special way normally referred to as ogotwara (Ex-Member, KII, 4/1/2016). This way of mourning was so different from other forms of wailing that neither women nor men were allowed to shed tears in such a ceremony.

A large herd of cattle was taken out for grazing by the Chinkororo members. They could then return the cattle to the homestead of the deceased man teasing each other as in the war field. The cattle were part of this ceremony because; the main role of Chinkororo was to protect the community against cattle raiding by their enemies. Once at home, the cattle were then allowed to step on the grave of the deceased an indication that even the cattle were also mourning the death of their defender. After his burial, the weapons of the deceased man could be left in his house but pointed down wards, a sign of sorrow.

Additionally, politicians from the Gusii region made their appearance in the funeral of the member. A focus group discussion with the ACE revealed that majorly, the politicians supported the community in organizing the burial of the deceased through funding various programs of the entire exercise (ACE, FGD, 21/12/2015). Moreover, they would heap a lot of praise on the deceased as hero who has died not only protecting the Gusii territory but also ensuring that the Gusii political voice is heard in Kenyan politics (ACE, FGD, 21/12/2015). Other politicians could offer to educate
the little children left behind by the deceased man. Remarks by an ex member of the movement revealed that such political support even in times of sorrow gave the movement a motivation to participate in political wars more and more (Ex-member, KII, 4/1/2016).

After the burial, women prepared a traditional brew known as Ebusa and placed at the sitting room. Chinkororo members and clan elders would then be invited to drink it. As they drunk the brew, one elder could then turn the weapons to point up. This ceremony was known as Okogororokia chingoba translated to raising the attires (Ex-member, KII, 4/1/2016). This ceremony marked the end of the mourning period of the deceased Chinkororo member.

3.10 Conclusion

In this chapter, the transition of Chinkororo movement from neighborhood group to a political movement was discussed. In so doing, the recruitment, training and organization of the Chinkororo movements was discussed. It was established that the democratization wave that hit the nation in 1990s had an impact on the manner in which the movement organized itself. The ethnic clashes that followed the 1992 multiparty elections led to the reorganization of the Chinkororo movement in order to protect the Gusii who had been evicted from the Rift Valley. The group became political and begun participating in political wars as well as receiving the patronage and support of the politicians from Kisii County.

Recruitment in the group was established to be voluntary. The socialization process of the youths along the border made it easy to promote voluntary membership in the
movement. However, in case of intensified war, forceful recruitment was done. Only circumcised men aged 18-35 years were recruited.

In terms of training, the training took three weeks to six months. The leaders were responsible for giving the training. Training entailed being taught how to use weapons like the arrows, slings, spears, machetes and shields as well as the fighting stick. They were taught also how to manufacture such weapons and how to poison their arrow tips. Other aspect of the training was on how to extract poison from dangerous snakes.

As part of their training, the fighters were introduced to the movement’s basic rules as well as how to decode the war alerts. They were also taught the war language, movement, and coordination in the battlefield.

The chapter also looked at the changes in the organization of the movement. It was established that the need to have an organized hierarchy was driven by the need to have an overall leader who could link the movement to the political elites of the region. As such, it was established that the movement became pyramidal in nature with the leader (coach) at the top and the weapon makers, messengers and spies at the bottom. The role of women in the group was also discussed and it was noted that Chinkororo never recruited women as fighters. However, the women played domestic roles in the movement, which included preparation of food, alerting Chinkororo fighters in case of an attack as well as taking care of the homestead when men were away fighting.

It was also noted that Chinkororo prepared well before, during and after the war through the performance of various rituals and ceremonies presided over by the clan
elders and diviners and funded by politician from the Gusii region. In the battlefield, it was established that they organized themselves in curves with the most coward group put in front of the battlefield. The burial ceremony of a fighter who died in war was seen to be a special one and entailed a number of rituals before and after the funeral. Women also prepared brew that was used for cleansing rituals and celebrations.

Throughout the discussion, one distinct aspect emerged out. This is the beliefs and belief system in the movement. As noted in this chapter, Chinkororo had certain beliefs and taboos that were part of their daily lives. They also carried out certain rituals, which they believed could cleanse them or grant them victory in war. In a way, this movement believed in a supernatural deity although it is not outspoken directly. This is evident in the rituals and ceremonies they conducted and the beliefs they held. The fact that the Gusii elders and diviners presided over these rituals and practices shows that this deity was a Gusii God normally referred to as Enkoro.
CHAPTER FOUR

FROM A POLITICAL MOVEMENT TO A CRIMINAL GANG; 2003-2010

4.0 Introduction

One of the major focuses of this study was to interrogate the changing trends of Chinkororo movement. In this chapter, we discuss these changes in terms of belief and belief systems, recruitment, training and organization as well as their life style. Additionally, the chapter discusses why the tenacity and vibrancy of the group despite the ban in 2003 and 2010. In this chapter, we seek to answer the following questions; what changes has Chinkororo movement undergone and what factors informed such changes? Why is the movement vibrant despite the ban and what are the current manifestations of the movement in Kisii County?

4.1 The 2005 Referendum and Gang Formation in Kenya

The ban of illegal movements and groups is not a new phenomenon in Kenyan history. As early as 1975, some illegal groups’ activities had been placed as motion for discussion in parliament (KNAOR, 1994). IRIN (2015) notes that in 1990s, several ethno-regional groups, such as Mungiki and Chinkororo were, banned by the Moi government. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, the ban intensified and widened the activities of these groups with majority of them becoming political in nature. In 2002, there was political change in Kenya, the KANU regime collapsed with the rise of NARC under Kibaki as the president (Kabira and Kamau, 2013). However, a politician interviewed noted that before retiring, the Moi regime banned
all illegal groups in Kenya and *Chinkororo* was not left out (Politician, KII, 12/12/2016). These remarks concur with Katumanga, Mitullah and Maupeu (2005) who note that in 2002 the Police commissioner outlawed vigilante groups and private armies including *Chinkororo*. These groups were linked to politicians from both KANU and Opposition who used them to settle political scores.

Between 2002 and 2005, two major things happened in Kenya’s politics. The NARC coalition collapsed and re-ethnicization of Kenyan politics began (Katumanga and Ngunyi, 2014). A chief interviewed noted that as the ethnic polarity increased, the militia formation to protect the ethnic groups also increased since the climate of violence had been created in the nation (Chief, 21/12/2015). Furthermore, a county administrator at Kisii County remarked that the already existing security movements revived their operation into criminality and *Chinkororo* was not an exception (County Administrator, KII, 21/12/2015). In 2005, Kenyans went for a constitution referendum where the orange group led by Raila Odinga won (Andersen and Tosteen, 2006).

In a focus group discussion held at Kisii town, the participants noted that the referendum results were more of an ethnic census and that they played a key role in accelerating the rise of ethnic groupings for defense (Gusii Residents, FGD, 16/1/2016). The same views are echoed by Andersen & Tosteen (2006) who note that the 2005 referendum confirmed that Kenyan politics was characterized by ethno political cleavages and political loyalism based on ethnicity. Accordingly, 2005-2007 was characterized by gang formation ready for defense. This agrees with Katumanga and Ngunyi (2014) who note that the period 2005-2007 was the period marked with the most militia activities in the history of Kenya only compared to the 1992-1997.
After the referendum, Liberal Democratic Party members (LDP) led by Raila was expelled from the Cabinet (Omari, 2005; Okombo, 2010). Aggression grew in the country, especially in Nyanza and western Kenya, that later ushered in the 2007 post-election violence (Katumanga and Ngunyi, 2014).

4.2. Chinkororo in the 2007/2008 Post-Election Violence

The 2007 general elections in Kenya were marked by contested results that threw the nation into a political turmoil. A county administrator remarked that December 2007-February 2008, the contested elections saw the activation of moribund militias, formation of new ones and re-commissioning on the already existing ones (County Administrator, KII, 21/12/2015). This agrees with Waki (2008) and the KHRC (2010) who note that militias who unleashed violence to the pre-supposed enemies characterized the post-election violence. In addition, Okombo (2010) asserts that 2007/2008 war in Kenya was characterized by expulsions, massacres and outright militia warfare along ethnic lines with youth militias accounting for 54.88 percent of the violence. Other scholars also argue that in 2007 the government and other politicians were accused of financing youth militias to cause mayhem (Tathia, 2014).

It is against this background that Chinkororo wore a new garb, operating both as a political group and as a criminal gang.

In a key informant interview a county administrator noted that during this time Chinkororo were mobilized to defend the Gusii against the Kalenjin (County Administrator, KII, 21/12/2015). This agrees with Katumanga and Ngunyi (2014) who note that ethnic groups of Kalenjin clashed with Mungiki who were mobilized
by the kikuyu while the Sungusungu and Chinkororo were mobilized to defend the Gusii. However, as noted by a security officer in Kisii County sometimes these groups killed innocent people without even interrogating them on their political stand and Chinkororo was not an exception (Security Officer, KII, 10/1/2016). The same was echoed by a GSU officer who noted that at times the attack and destruction of property by these groups was not political, it was mainly for personal gain since most of the destroyed property were the big businesses (GSU Officer, KII, 10/1/2016). He further noted that these youth in the name of Chinkororo could first loot before setting the houses on fire (GSU Officer, KII, 10/1/2016). Briefly, the Chinkororo movement changed to criminality instead of defense. This agrees with Spergel (1995) who notes that crimes are carried out for a purpose not for fun. Each member understands his or her role and his or her activities are motivated by the profit motive. Chinkororo began forcing young boys to join in the fight and sometimes forced the border residents to hide the stolen cattle and property after looting their enemies. One woman resident in Gucha stated thus:

“These people (Chinkororo) have become criminals. Initially, this was not the group I knew, which used to give us defense. They beat me during the 2007 post-election violence when I refused to help in hiding the cattle they had stolen from the Kalenjin. My husband was also forced to join them or else he could be killed. They have no mercy at all (Elderly Lady, O.I, 27/12/2015).”

An old man (a sisal seller) at Kisii town who noted that echoed the same remarks:

“These boys have become ebibago (a Gusii term for thugs). There is no difference between them and Sungusungu that is killing innocent people. I realized their criminal trait when they forced me to hide several bags of maize they had stolen from Sotik during the 2007 post-election violence.
They had threatened to kill me if I ever refused or reported to the police (Sisal seller, O.I, 16/1/2016).”

The remarks by the two participants above agrees with Katumanga and Ngunyi (2014) who note that Chinkororo in Kisii have become ebibago and that during the post-election violence they engaged the Kalenjin in Sotik, Bureti, Gucha, and Trans Mara. Additionally, the criminal element in the movement is depicted in the manner in which the group was hired to disrupt an ODM rally in Nyamarambe in 2007. Although, the supporters of the movement argue that it is Amachuma another security movement in Kisii County that was responsible for the disruption, a good number of sources indicated that the perpetrators were Chinkororo members. This is because they dressed like the Maasai Morans and had bow and arrows. Additionally, they had decorated their heads with red ochre. This is the typical dress code of Chinkororo fighters. A politician interviewed noted that Amachuma do not have an address code that is distinct nor do they make use of arrows and bows. Their main weapons are stones and sharp and blunt metals (Political Leader, KII, 12/1/2016). Accordingly, they could not be the ones who disrupted the meeting. The foregoing discussion agrees with Onuru (2009) who notes that Chinkororo members disrupted the ODM rally in Nyamarambe in 2007. In addition, the commission of in inquiry into the post-election violence in Kenya holds that Chinkororo disrupted the ODM rally on 22/9/2007 at Nyamarambe. This piled up the anger that was poured out in the 2007/2008 post election violence.
4.3. *Chinkororo movement outside Gusii Borders*

It is significant to note that initially *Chinkororo* activities were centered on cattle rustling. They therefore came to the limelight each time the Gusii cattle had been stolen. However, as noted by a chief in Gucha, in the period 2008 the group’s activities were greatly felt during the election period (Chief, KII, 27/12/2016). The remarks concur with Katumanga and Ngunyi (2014) who note that militia and gang activities are in peak season during the election time. Spergel (1995) echoes the same remarks and argues that even recruitment in gangs is heavy in times of crisis or threat. Perhaps this explains why *Chinkororo* movement at times forcefully recruits members, especially at a time of war. With this then, it is evident that *Chinkororo* had changed into a criminal gang.

Scholars have documented it that territory is an essential component of a gang identity as well as a basis for gang dynamics (Spergel, 1995). An oral source revealed that the geographical region of operation of *Chinkororo* movement had expanded to other regions (*Chinkororo* member, KII, 29/12/2015). In defining *Chinkororo*, Katumanga and Ngunyi (2014) described *Chinkororo* movement as an ethno regional group that operates in Gusii region for community defense. Oloo (2010) and Angwenyi, (2011), echo the same definition. From the definitions, *Chinkororo movement* was formed with sole purpose to defend the Gusii region against external aggressors.

In a focus group discussion it was revealed that *Chinkororo* are supposed to operate within Gusii and defend the community against external attack (Clan Elders, FGD, 29/12/2015). However, by 2008 this was not the case. The movement had spread its
activities to other regions like Nakuru and Nairobi. In their study of militias in Kenya Katumanga and Ngunyi (2014), map out that *Chinkororo* are found in Nairobi and they accounted for 1.7% of the crimes in the city. Additionally, the group is found in Nakuru and account for 4% of the crime conducted in the region. Further, in Kakamega, *Chinkororo* accounts for 3.4% of the crimes with zero percent community legitimacy and 5% community illegality. This is an indication that the movement is operating in these regions as a criminal gang or illegal group.

The statistics above is an indication of a group that had developed other splinter groups who conduct crime in other regions outside Gusii region. This agrees with Kegoro (2009) who notes that *Chinkororo movement* uses two other splinter groups called *Chintuboka* and *Motoriro*. *Chintuboka* are those who appear suddenly, execute quick-fire attacks aimed at surprising and causing loss on the enemy. On the other hand, *Motoriro* are made up of young fighters considered too young to engage in conflicts. Normally these are used to confuse the Morans, as they believe that among the Gusii community children do not take part in adult fights and conflicts. However, on the side of the *Chinkororo* these has changed and children are being used as military strategic tools to win over their enemies; thus, the age of recruitment into the group had dropped to incorporate children. In addition, the statistics conforms to National Crime Research Centre (2012), which notes that organized crimes ignore borders creating a problem to law enforcers in states and nations. In a focus group discussion, a member of the Abagusii council of elders noted that as a council they do not know any other *Chinkororo* group operating outside Gusii region (ACE, FGD, 21/12/2015). He remarked thus:
“Those are thugs and criminals. Whom are they defending in those far regions? I swear those are criminals who are supposed to be arrested. Again, we do not need community defense anymore, even the boys who are identifying themselves with Chinkororo have gone against the initial will of the community. They even attack their fellow Gusii and innocent people. They threaten people to give them money and chicken. Our warriors (Chinkororo) were not commissioned to do so in our times. The boys are becoming criminals day by day (ACE, FGD, 21/12/2015).”

From the remarks it was noted that although formed for community defense, at times Chinkororo turn against the community members. This agrees with the National Crime Research Centre (2012), which asserts that organized criminal gangs are a product of the society. They come and develop because society accepts them but the society turns against them only when their negative effects begin to weigh too heavy on it. As noted by National Crime Research Centre (2012), Chinkororo carries out murder and defense. However, a key informant interview with a county administrator revealed that the group even murders Gusii people who go against its will thus the role of defense is partisan and biased (County Administrator, KII, 21/12/2015). This agrees with Maingi (2014) who notes that at times gangs turn against the community evident in the manner in which Mungiki turned to slaughter those who were regarded as betrayers.

Furthermore, Chinkororo have had cooperation with other militias. For instance, in 2007/2008, they not only defended the Gusii but also the Kuria in an alliance with the Mura. This agrees with scholars who argues that gangs can be turf or ethnic gang depending on the region they operate (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2002). Criminal gangs have structures, size, activities identity and level of violence, political influence, penetration into legitimate economy, level of cooperation with
other gangs and trans-border operations (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2002). In this regard, Chinkororo cannot be assumed. The movement has embraced trans-border operations and collaboration with the Kuria.

A security officer who was based in Kisii in 2009 noted that Chinkororo was among the gangs that caused a security challenge in Gusii region and its neighborhood (Security Officer, KII, 10/1/2016). He further noted that as much as the community tries to defend the group, such defense comes only during the election clashes as it was in 2007. However, many are people who lived in fear since the group at times forced them to give chicken and money for defense (Security Officer, KII, 10/1/2016). The remarks agrees with a report by the Centre for Human Right and Policy Studies(CHRIPS) and African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum (APCOF) (2015), which notes that community led security and neighborhood watches are prominent in shaping insecurity in Kisii, Kirinyaga and Eastleigh.

4.4 The Prevention of Organized Crime Act (POCA) 2010 and the Criminality in Chinkororo movement

With the promulgation of the Kenyan constitution, in 2010 the Prevention of Organized Crime Act (POCA) was enacted. A county administrator noted that the act banned all the ethnic and regional groups that were operating in Kenya (County administrator, KII, 21/12/2015). This concurs with Ombati (2010) who notes that the state outlawed 33 militias under the POCA. Accordingly, most of the criminal groups went underground and Chinkororo was not an exception. Scholars and security reports indicates that gangs have a tendency of going underground where they buy time after
the law is ruthless on them before resurfacing again and mutating continues to present law enforcement agencies with a challenge (National crime research center, 2012). The report further notes that gangs generally operate in a closed system. They operate in secrecy to avoid police detection and risk to probing outsiders.

In this regard, to hide their identity and discovery, *Chinkororo* had to drop some of their rituals and beliefs, their residence as well as their dress code. In focus group, discussion held at Kiango it was noted that it is difficult to tell who is a *Chinkororo* member from their dress code or physical look. The members no longer dress like the Maasai as they initially did (Elders, FGD, 29/12/2015). The fighters wore long trousers and if need arose the long trousers were folded. In explaining this change a member from the border security committee (BSC) noted that these members wear cotton cloths and dress normally like any other member of the society (Member of BSC, KII, 22/12/2015).

The need to conceal their identity led to the fighters doing away with the past hairstyle. The ex-members explained that the changes in Morans’ hairstyles informed the change in one way or another (Ex-member, KII, 4/1/2016). Instead of dying their real natural hair, the Morans began making headgears and dying them and the headgears would be put on during the war times. Accordingly, given the fact that the dress code of *Chinkororo* was supposed to resemble that of the Maasai, any change in Morans could lead to changes in *Chinkororo* and so was the hairstyle.

Respondents posed several factors for the change in dress code. In Kiango, focus group discussion participants noted that the change was due to the change in Morans
who were the main rivals to the movement (Elders, FGD, 29/12/2015). It was also revealed that fashion was another drive behind the change. However, in all the focus group discussions held, it was noted that the strict government laws on illegal groups in Kenya was the main driver behind the change in the movement.

It is important to note that the change in dress code facilitated the rise in the criminal activity of the group. A security officer in Kisii County remarked that the changes in the dress code in the movement made it difficult for the security officers to trace them and bring them before the law (Security Officer, KII, 10/1/2016). A chief interviewed noted that given the idea that these Chinkororo members no longer wore skin cloths nor do they stay in the forest, it is difficult to distinguish between the activities of the group and that of Sungusungu (Chief, KII, 21/12/2015). In a way, Chinkororo took advantage of Sungusungu group in the region to carry out criminal activities in the region without identification. This agrees with Mahubook (2012) who notes that at times gangs carry out mollification, arm others and divert the blame by questioning the motive of other gangs.

In the recruitment, training and organization changes occurred. The recruitment and training is no longer under the control of the elders. Explaining the nature of the movement in the period 2002-2010, ex-members noted that there are no rules for entry and exit in the group (Ex-members, FGD, 8/1/2016). The change in the membership strategy in the group led to the shrinking nature of the group membership. Anybody becomes a member if he wishes. Even the school dropouts as young as 15 years can become a member. Additionally, an oral source revealed that the group members are no longer organized and blessed by the community elders (Clan Elders, FGD,
29/12/2015). They are not commissioned to go to a fight nor are they guided by the
diviners on the outcome of the activity they are set to do even if it a communal thing
(Clan Elders, FGD, 29/12/2015). Additionally, an elderly woman interviewed noted
that most of the youth who enter the group now are those who are social misfits and
have been disowned by the society (Elderly woman, O.I, 3/1/2016). With such a
composition in the movement, the findings agree with Achuka (2015) who notes
that most of the people who enter gangs are those who are victimized and disowned
in the society and are thus are looking for survival and belonging.

The youths in the movement regard themselves as more powerful and untouchable.
They do not listen to the elder. An administrator interviewed noted that the group
members considered other people as weak (County Administrator, KII, 21/12/2015).
This agrees with Mahubook (2012) who identifies power orientation as a
characteristic of criminal gangs where they regard others as weak. Additionally, the
age composition of the group has changed. Youths mainly 15 years to 30 years make
up majority of the members. A security officer remarked that many of these are school
dropouts and mainly boys. The observation concurs with Maingi (2014) who notes
many students are joining cults and gangs. Accordingly, Musindanyi (2013) asserts
that the number of boys joining criminal gangs is consistently higher than that of girls.

Similarly, the initial hierarchical structure of the movement no longer exists. A
member of the movement revealed that there are no such things like the coach,
commander among others (Chinkororo member, KII, 29/12/2015). He noted that the
topmost members are those who are bold in killing and executing the group intention
in whichever situations (Chinkororo member, KII, 29/12/2015). This agrees with
Centre for Studies on New Religions (CESNUR) (2004) report on Mungiki noting that the highest in the hierarchy are the killers who take the oath of ablution after paying some amount of money. Unlike initially where leadership in the group were appointed by the clan elders depending on one’s ability to organize the group, and longevity in the group, by 2010, leadership was based on one’s ability to attack and kill anytime he has been ordered by the group members. The member further noted that the leader is not the sole controller of the group, and at times he is controlled and ordered on what to do by members (Chinkororo member, KII, 29/12/2015). This was never the case in the movement in the period 1961-2000.

An oral source revealed that in case an ethnic war erupts, different leaders are chosen to lead the Gusii fighters against their enemies and that during such moments; other Chinkororo non-members join them in the fight. After the war, their leadership ceases to be because the group becomes scattered (Chinkororo member, KII, 29/12/2015). In response to the reasons behind the change, a clan elder noted that the hierarchical organization of the group started staggering when Chinkororo was listed among the illegal militias in Kenya in 2002 (Clan Elder, KII, 3/1/2016). The following years, especially during the reign of Michuki as Minster of Security, strict laws on illegal groups were passed and many Mungiki members were killed mercilessly, including the suspects (Mail Guardian, 2006). With this, the young generation of fighters that took over the movement, were not very bold and persevering as their forerunners. None wanted to be identified as leader of the group, especially after the ban since they feared the law. The passing of the POCA in 2010 worsened the situation. Henceforth, the group has never had such a hierarchy. This agrees with Ombour (2010) who notes
that there is no leadership in Chinkororo movement since their actions are dictated by
the spur of the moment.

In focus group discussion with the members of Abagusii council of elders it was
revealed that the hierarchy ceased to be with the shift in the lifestyle of the fighters
(ACE, FGD, 21/12/2015). Leadership and hierarchy were crucial as far as the forest
life was concerned. Nevertheless, given the fact that they no longer stay in the forest
the hierarchy also lost meaning.

In addition, the rituals and beliefs in the group have changed, especially in the burial
ceremony of a fighter. An elderly man interviewed noted that in case one dies in war,
the normal burial ceremony for a man is done (Clan Elder, KII, 18/12/2015). This
entails wailing and screams from the relatives and friends, speeches and sermons
before the body is laid to rest. Cattle are no longer part of the ceremony and mourning
is not restricted. People are free to wail. Additionally, the Okogororokia chingoba and
the esasi ceremonies are no longer carried out.

However, as noted by a member of the current Chinkororo movement, once one kills
a human being, a cleansing ritual is done (Chinkororo Member, KII, 29/12/2015). The
ritual entails the licking of blood of the deceased and the sprinkling of a chicken blood
on the body of the killer. At times, a goat is used for cleansing. The meat from the
animal or the hen is eaten raw by the members (Chinkororo Member, KII,
29/12/2015). Nobody presides over these cleansing rituals apart from the members of
the group alone. The clan elders are no longer part of the cleansing ritual. All the
members have to be present as sign of common knowledge and all must be seated in
a circular form for visibility and sign of equality (Chinkororo Member, KII, 29/12/2015). This agrees with Skerbek and Wang (2015) who note that in gangs’ rituals are carried out with all members seated in a circular manner, and that each member must be present during the ritual exercise.

The use of spies in the movement has changed to that of ensuring that the security officers do not know about their whereabouts. Instead of war language, the residents in Gusii note that the youths in the movement adopted their own ways of communication through gestures and greeting styles (Gusii Residents, FGD, 16/1/2016), and these gestures are only understood by the group members. The member interviewed noted that the language is secretive such that even if one is with them they can easily communicate without him or her understanding anything and even recognizing that they are communicating (Chinkororo Member, KII, 29/12/2015). This agrees with Erick (2013) who notes that criminal gangs have unique set of language, handshake, hand gestures, tattoos and Graffiti. This secret language enables them not only to avoid other criminals ripping them off but also avoiding the law agencies (Hamilton, 2012).

The weapons used also changed. In an interview, a county administrator noted that the Chinkororo members no longer rely on arrows, slings, and spears. There is use of sophisticated weapons like guns, in the period 200-2010(County Administrator, KII, 21/12/2015). This agrees with the Prevention of Organized Crime Act 2010 that identifies criminals as groups that make use of illegal arms. With this classification, the Act outlawed 33 groups and Chinkororo was among the outlawed groups (Ombati, 2010). Similarly, Osman (2015) asserts that there is proliferation of sophisticated arms
that have replaced the homemade weapons among gangs. An ex-member interviewed notes that the *Mura* fighters introduced the use of guns from the Kuria in 1992 during the tribal clashes. Since then, the use of homemade guns has been common in the group (Ex-member, KII, 4/1/2016). However, a security officer interviewed noted that most guns used since 2000s are acquired from Somalia and South Sudan through illegal gun dealing and sometimes from corrupt police officers who led them out in exchange for money (Security Officer, KII, 10/1/2016). This agrees with Panpress (2016), which reports that war tone Somalia is a major source of arms in Kenya followed by Ethiopia and South Sudan. Furthermore, Osman (2015) articulates that most arms used by gangs in Kenya come from conflict-ridden nations that border the nation.

A police commissioner interviewed noted that some of the arms used by *Chinkororo* and other gangs in Kisii County are as result of Kenya being a transit point of arms to Burundi and other conflict areas (Police Commissioner, KII, 10/1/2016). As such, it becomes easy for these illegal arms to enter in the hands of civilians. This agrees with IRIN (2001), which reports that Kenya lacks explicit legal criteria for determining shipment of weapon yet it is the major transit region for weapons through the port of Mombasa.

In nut shell, as noted by Mwangi and Ndeda (2010) militias undergo mutation such that the way they present themselves today is not the same way they presented themselves at a time of their formation. In this case, *Chinkororo* are not an exception. In the period 2002-2010, the group mutated from just being a political gang to a criminal gang that even turned against the community members who could not
subscribe to its will. The group underwent several changes in terms of lifestyle, beliefs and rituals. As noted by the county administrators most of the group members are among the perpetrators of criminal activities in the region and majority are known to be alcohol abusers with many having broken family ties (County Administrator, KII, 21/12/2015).

As noted by the community elders interviewed in Nyangusu, unlike the initial Chinkororo members who had to be real men before entering the groups, the movement of this period was characterized by the presence young boys aged between the ages of 15-30. Majority of these are not married and at many times with no intention of ever keeping a family (Clan Elder, KII, 5/1/2016). The rituals were replaced by new ritual ceremonies done in a manner that never existed before and in the absence of the clan elders. The main drive of this change was the strict laws on illegal groups in Kenya coupled with the ban of these groups during the Kibaki regime. They had to go underground and change their tactics.

Responding to the ban of illegal groups in Kenya as criminals, youths in Kisii County noted that the fact that the government termed Chinkororo as criminal gang was itself enough to make the movement mutate into a gang (Youths, FGD, 16/12016). They remarked that:

“"When somebody calls you a criminal and you are not, sometimes you are forced to be one to meet his other standards and Chinkororo did the same (Youths, FGD, 16/12016)."

There remarks are a reinforcement of the labeling theory of crime by Tennenbaum (1938), which notes that the society identifies who are criminals and who are not. As
such, if the society labels one a criminal, he or she automatically becomes one. In way, crime is socially constructed through reaction instead of an action (Crowel, 2016). In a focus group discussion with members of a women group in Nyacheki, the participant noted that to some extent Chinkororo are criminals (in the eyes of the government) but to the community they are not. They emphasized that the criminality of the group depends on who is talking and who are the audience (women group, FGD, 13/1/2016). These views agreed with the ideas of Crowel (2016) who notes that since crime is socially constructed, an act can be a crime to one group but not a crime to another group. Also echoing the same remarks is Owaahh (2013) who notes that in Kenya, group of youths organized to do something outrageous shifts from militia to gangs to vigilantes and back depending on when you are assessing it and who is paying you at that time.

As such, it was noted that the Chinkororo movement is a criminal group in the eyes of the government and a few individuals in the society. However, in times of war with their neighbors, the movement enjoys the support and good will of the Gusii community. Therefore, even with the ban in 2010 the group is still vibrant in the community.

The categorization of chinkororo movement as a criminal gang was based on its activities, areas of operation and the weapons used. The movement stretched beyond Kisii County to other regions where it was reported to cause crime. Additionally the member begun attacking innocent Gusii residents whom is ts was initially supposed to defend against external attackers. Chinkororo changed its rituals to resemble those done by the modern criminal gangs and even begun using sophisticated weapon such
as modern firearms. Membership changed to include the social misfits in the Gusii society were out to get an identity and a way of earning living.

4.5. The Current Manifestations of *Chinkororo* Movement

Despite the fact that the prevention of organized crime act was enacted in 2010, the *Chinkororo* movement never vanished. A substantial amount of evidence from the field indicated that the group was still operating. Participants to this study noted that it could not be concluded that *Chinkororo* will be extinct even with the introduction of Border Security Committees and the ban of the group. This is because in many cases the communal operation of the group is felt during the electioneering period. This agrees with Katumanga and Ngunyi (2014) who note that militias’ operation is at the peak during the election period in Kenya. As such, it is difficult to conclude that the movement is likely to be extinct.

A report by Ogoti (2015) reveals that the group is still vibrant among the Abagusii. She notes that there were chaos in the Gusii/Trans Mara border after the Maasai stole cattle from the Gusii. The *Chinkororo* fighters vowed never to stop fighting until the Maasai returned the stolen cattle. Furthermore, a chief interviewed noted that the movement is still operation in Gusii, especially along the borders (Chief, KII, 21/12/2015). He noted that in early 2016, fighting broke out between the Gusii and Maasai after two men a Gusii and Maasai vote in a bar at Kiango. This was followed by several days of fighting with *Chinkororo* fighters engaging the Maasai Morans (Chief, KII, 21/12/2015). This agrees with Nyagesiba (2016) who reports that the Gusii and Maasai held a cultural festival at Kiango to promote peaceful coexistence
after the two communities fought for two days burning and torching houses and sugar plantations.

Concisely, it can be concluded that despite the ban, Chinkororo movement is still vibrant and operational in Kisii county and can be mobilized any time the community clashes with its neighbors. This is evident in the manner the group comes into operation whenever the Gusii community is under attack. Additionally a substantial number of respondents in the field pointed out that chinkororo movement is still existence in Kisii County. To this end, it is important to examine the factors that inform the tenacity and vibrancy in Chinkororo movement.

4.6. Factors to the Tenacity and Vibrancy in Chinkororo Movement

Explaining the factors that informs the vibrancy in the group, a member of the ACE remarked that the ethnic nature of Kenyan politics cannot allow the group to be extinct (ACE, FGD, 21/12/2015). He further explains that in Kenya almost each ethnic group has its own security wing; thus the Gusii have to support the movement since there is no trust among Kenyans, especially during elections (Chief, KII, 21/12/2015). The remarks were echoed by a focus group discussion participants who noted that Kenyans do not trust co nationals from other ethnic groups thus at all times they are prepared for evictions. Thus Chinkororo has to remain vibrant in any form whether criminals or not to defend their own (Youths, FGD, 16/1/2016). From these remarks, it was noted that the negative ethnicity that drives the Kenyan politics seems to be the main why Chinkororo movement is still vibrant. This agrees with Ajulu (2002) who notes that the political activities in Kenya since 1992 are an ethnic construction where there
is ethnic mobilization and use of ethnic conflicts as the main instrument of political contestation. A county administrator interviewed noted that with such a climate of politicized ethnicity, it becomes difficult for one community to denounce its own security wing and so do are the Abagusii regarding Chinkororo (County Administrator, KII, 21/12/2015).

In addition, the existence of other movements in other communities seems to be another drive to the vibrancy in the movement. Despite the fact that these movements were banned, many of them are still operational such include Sungusungu, Amachuma and Bamba 40. With these groups surviving, the Chinkororo movement also has hopes for survival since the members can always carry out crimes and blame these other groups. Kegoro (2009) notes that the presence of militias in such in the region means that the culture of militia is alive and well in Kenya notwithstanding the cessation of hostilities in the post-election violence, the groups have only hibernated awaiting the emergence of the conditions that may lead to the need of their services.

In an interview, a county administrator noted that the security gap along the border areas is the main reason why Chinkororo movement has remained vibrant in the region (County Administrator, KII, 21/12/2015). The community cannot afford to live in a security vacuum thus they have to fill it by the use of militia like Chinkororo. This agrees with Katumanga and Ngunyi (2014) who note that failure by the underfunded, corrupt and ill equipped and understaffed police force to respond to security has seen the citizenry opt to turn to vigilantes and ethnic based groups for security. Raids between the two communities that lead to clashes, which in turn lead to property destruction, and constant fights mark the insecurity level in the region.
At times, fighting continues for even three days without the police doing anything to change the situation. Kegoro (2009) holds that although membership in the Chinkororo movement following its ban, the police do not ordinarily appear recognize this offence or done anything to enforce the ban. A security (police) officer remarked that it was not their duty to crack down membership in Chinkororo movement and that they will enforce the law equally regardless of membership in these movement. Other officers noted that there was a thin line between Chinkororo and Sungusungu. However, they could not explain the thin line. Moreover others security agencies argued that Chinkororo have a social cultural entanglement that makes it difficult to understand how they are organized. The same remarks are echoed by Kegoro (2009) who explains how police are confused in the handing of Chinkororo as an illegal grouped that was banned in Kenya in 2010. With such confusion, the movement still exists since not even the law enforcers have a clue on how it works.

Finally, conflict over resources between Abagusii and their immediate neighbors, the Maasai, is another reason that was identified driving the vibrancy in Chinkororo movement. Onuri (2012) notes that Abagusii are farmers who engage in agricultural activities, like animal husbandry and crop growing, for food and raw materials for industries. The Maasai on the other hand are pastoralists because they herd livestock around open areas of land according to season and water availability.

Accordingly, at times the two ethnic groups ensue in skirmish over natural resources particularly land related issues. The key participants in such battles are the youths from both communities who comprise Morans from the pastoral communities and Chinkororo from the Gusii side. The findings revealed that apart from political wars,
other times when *Chinkororo* comes into the limelight is when cattle has been raided from Kisii County, or when the Gusii and their neighbors have disagreed on land boundaries and at times water resources. With continued resource conflicts, each community is ready to arm their youths ready to defend their territory in case of an attack. Ideally, where the government is supposed to provide security and a solution to the conflicts, has been taken over by the community vigilantes and groups like *Chinkororo*. The Centre for Human Right and Policy Studies (CHRIPS) and African Policing Civilian Oversight Forum (APCOF) (2015) conform to these findings by noting that community led security and neighborhood watches are prominent in shaping insecurity in Kisii.

In a nutshell, it is the role of the government to provide security to the citizenry. However, studies indicate that at times the Kenyan government has failed to monopolize state violence. Archival sources consulted revealed that the security gap in Kisii County had widened so much as early as 1970s to an extent that the chiefs themselves assaulted the locals. This gap was still felt in the 1990s with the advent of multiparty politics where KANU youth wingers were used to unleash violence against the political opponents. The Commission of Inquiry Act (CAP) 102 reports that politicians used gangs to perpetuate the 1992 ethnic clashes and the government could not do anything to curb the situation. Through the 2000s the same gap is felt evident in constant cattle rustling, increase criminality and violence across the county. With such a fragile state of security, it becomes difficult for the *Chinkororo* movement to be eradicated in the county. Instead of eradication, the group has mutated into a criminal group attacking even the Gusii locals. From this security gap, other factors
like negative ethnicity, political patronage, conflict over resources as well as proliferation of arms and use of secretive languages have supported the continued vibrancy of *Chinkororo* movement in Kisii County

4. 7 Conclusion

In this chapter, the transformation in *Chinkororo* movement since 2000s was discussed. It was established that how *Chinkororo* manifested themselves in 1970s is not the same way they manifest themselves today. The movement was seen to change from a political group to a criminal movement that carries out murder, forceful recruitment and at times extortions in the name of community defense. It was noted that the referendum in 2005 affected the activities of the group. With increased armed groups and ethnicized politics, *Chinkororo* underwent change and started engaging in criminal acts, evident in their activities during the post-election violence in Kenya where they even carried out looting and threatened the Abagusii residents by death if they could not accept the stolen property.

Moreover, the movement is almost going national with elements of the group being responsible for some crimes carried out in Nairobi, Nakuru, Eldoret, and Kakamega towns. This was an indication of a criminal gang with splinter groups. Furthermore, *Chinkororo* movement during this period underwent several changes in terms of their lifestyle, rituals and belief as well as the weapons used. Their rituals were seen to be more of criminal gangs and their dress code was no longer like that of Morans. Their rituals were so secretive with only members being present during the occasion.
In terms of membership, the groups lacked the procedure for entry and exit but it was noted that youth aged 15 years and above were a majority in the movement. The hierarchy was seen to be revived with killer being the topmost in the hierarchy. However, it was noted that the movement becomes latent only to come into the surface during the election time and whenever the Gusii have clashes with their neighboring ethnic groups like the Maasai and the Kalenjin. The main reason for such latency was due to the strict laws on the illegal groups in Kenya during this period. As such, the movement went underground to strategize on how to come to the surface without being recognized by the security agencies.

However, it was noted that despite the ban and these laws, the movement still operates in Kisii County, especially along the borders. Security gap along the borders, existence of other groups, conflict over resources, political patronage and the ethnic nature of Kenyan politics were attributed to this continued operation and vibrancy in the movement.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of key findings of the study and the conclusions derived from the findings as well as the recommendations that we suggest. The summary provided here covers the previous chapters and the conclusions are given in relation to the study premises outlined in chapter one. In the recommendations, the areas that we felt are not fully studied in relation to this study were suggested for further research.

5.1. Summary and Conclusions

This study sought to examine the transformations in Chinkororo movement of the Abagusii of Kisii County in the period 1961-2010. In so doing, it looked at Gusii social-economic and military organization before 1961 as a background and the history of security related movements in Kenya. The specific study objectives were To trace the origin of Chinkororo among Abagusii from 1961-1990, to investigate the recruitment, training and organization of Chinkororo in the period between 1990 and 2002 and to analyze the changing trends in the recruitment, training and the organization of Chinkororo in the period between 2002 and 2010

Kisii County was chosen because it borders the Kipsigis and Maasai where Chinkororo activities have been greatly felt. The research was based on oral
interviews, key informant interviews and focus group discussions with the respondents.

In chapter one, the background upon which this study was contextualized was discussed. The background demonstrated that security related movements emerge due to individual, social, economic and political conditions in the environment. However, state security failure was seen to be the main cause of the emergence of such movements.

The chapter also demonstrated that although studies on security related movements have been undertaken in Kisii County, very little work has been done on Chinkororo movement and its history was yet to be written. In the same chapter, the research objectives, premises and questions that guided this study were clearly outlined.

The limitation section indicated that tracing the respondents for the study was typically a difficult exercise. The area of research was sensitive and dangerous such that even some of the respondent feared to give information to us. At some point, the researchers were even harassed by the Chinkororo members who mistook the researchers for government spies. However, the chapter demonstrates that use of community elders and assurance to the respondents that the study was only for academic purposes only enabled the researchers to collect data from them.

A review of literature was also given in this chapter together with the theoretical framework. The review of literature demonstrated that several gaps needed a serious scholarly attention as far as Chinkororo was concerned. From the review it was established that Chinkororo was only studied alongside other groups and no
localized investigation has been done in the study areas as far as the transformation in the movement were concerned. In addition, the research methodology that guided this study was given in the same chapter.

In chapter two, the study traced the origin of *chinkororo* movement in Kisii County. It was established that *Chinkororo* rose in response to state security failure along the Gusii/Maasai/Kipsigis borders coupled with negative ethnicity and the desire by the Abagusii to have their own military wing as the Maasai and Kipsigis did. State security failure was demonstrated through the ways in which the KANU youth wingers and the police mistreated and harassed people instead of the government providing protection to the people.

In addition, the meaning of the term *Chinkororo* was given. Three main explanations on the meaning of *Chinkororo* were discussed. However, based on the explanation that appeared most valid, it was noted that *Chinkororo* as a term is linked to the wild animal that resembles a monkey that is dangerous whenever its territory is under attack.

Moreover, it was established that the group emerged around 1971-1972 in Kiango before spreading to Bonchari and Bobasi. The formation was coined at a meeting held at Kiango by the Gusii border residents to seek a long lasting solution to the insecurity along the borders. This helped to address the notion presented by other scholars that *Chinkororo* were traditional warriors of Abagusii. It was established that given the fact that they emerged around 1971-1972, they could not be traditional warriors of
Abagusii. If they were traditional warriors, they could have existed in the pre-colonial period as well as be found in the entire Gusii land and not only along the borders.

*Chinkororo* was discussed as neighborhood group that operated within a closed space with no distinct hierarchy. The social economic organization and Abagusii military organization was discussed. It was noted that in the pre-colonial period the Gusii society was stateless and were mainly agriculturalist. Women did much of the cultivation while men and sons were responsible for herding. The sole responsibility of decision-making lay with the fathers. It was also noted that in the pre-1961 period Abagusii had no single military organization under one command. However, the young men who lived in *Ebisarate* had the duty to provide security to the clan. Again, the history of security related movements in Kenya was discussed.

The research findings indicated that with colonialism the duty of community defense shifted to the chiefs and the police. This trend continued even in post independent Kenya. It was established that the history of such movements is rooted in the formation of youth wingers, especially KANU wingers in 1961. The intimidation and coercion that the wingers unleashed with the help of the police to the political opponents of KANU laid the foundation for the formation of ethno regional security movements normally referred to as *Jeshi*. The Kenyan society witnessed security gap that needed an address.

It was noted that *Chinkororo* movement is typically affiliated to Abagusii, and it is mainly concentrated in Kisii County, especially along the Gusii/Maasai/Kipsigis borders. Its emergence was informed by state security failure along the borders, which
led to increased cattle raiding among communities living along the border. Ideally, its main purpose was to engage with the Maasai Morans who raided the Gusii cattle. The Merton strain theory that guided this study demonstrated that Chinkororo represented the rebels and victimized members of the society because they refuted the set goals of attaining security in the community and decided to come up with their own structure and rules to attaining the same security.

The lifestyle of the Chinkororo members at the time of their formation was also discussed and it was established that the fighters lived a Spartan lifestyle in the forest and kept off women. This lifestyle was adopted from the traditional Abagusii Ebisarate lifestyle. In addition, it was revealed that Chinkororo members had a distinct dress code that resembled the Maasai Morans’ attire. The main reason for such a dress code was to confuse their rivals and the government. It was difficult to reveal the identity of the movement. They also ate specific meals mainly bananas, roasted meat and milk. These were believed to be light, thus made one flexible in war.

In this chapter, the premise that state security failure informed the emergency of Chinkororo was proven as true. The movement emerged to fill the gap that the government had failed to address as the rebel members of the society suggested in the Merton strain theory of crime. In addition, it was established that Chinkororo are not a traditional warriors of Abagusii as argued by some scholars.

In chapter three, the study sought to investigate the recruitment, training and organization of Chinkororo in the period between 1990 and 2002. Here Chinkororo was discussed as a political movement. The 1992 wave of democratization and the
ethnic clashes that followed the 1992 general elections was revealed the main drivers behind the change in the group. The need for a leader who could link the group to the political sphere in the region led to the urgent need for a clear recruitment, training and organization of the movement. The findings showed that recruitment into the movement was a voluntary process and only those circumcised and aged 18 years and above were recruited. It was also established that *Chinkororo* had specific rules that each member had to follow strictly. The signaling theory of recruitment that guided this section revealed that while recruiting their member the *Chinkororo* members ensured that only those who had been circumcised according to the Gusii culture, bold and fearless men joined the movement.

It was also established that, in training the members were taught how to make, handle and use weapons. They further trained on war language and the special movements in the battlefield. Their main weapons included the arrows, slings, spears, machetes and the fighting sticks. Each was used depending on the distance from the enemy and ability of the fighter to use it.

The findings further indicated that the movement had a distinct pyramidal hierarchy with the coach as the overall leader. The commanders assisted the coach. Below the two, were the fighters who were also divided into three sections namely messengers, weapon makers and spies. Each of these had a specific role to play in the movement; therefore, specialization was observed in the movement.

It was also established that *Chinkororo* movement received the support of *Mura*, another security related movement among the Kuria. In the same chapter, the role of
women in the movement was discussed. It was established that women were not allowed into the movement as fighters. However, they prepared and provided food to the fighters. They also remained at home to take care of the family when men were away in the forest. Moreover, the women prepared brew that was important in the blessing, cleansing and burial ceremonies of Chinkororo fighters. In a way, the movement was found to be patriarchal in nature. Additionally, they alerted the village in case of attacks through their screams that normally followed the Enkoma. Given this, it can be concluded that the movement operated on the Gusii traditional beliefs where women were confined to the domestic sphere and men to the public sphere.

Furthermore, the chapter discussed the warfare preparation among the Chinkororo fighters. It was established that Chinkororo carried out a ceremony and rituals before departing to the battlefield. The ceremony was presided over by the clan elders, conducted by the diviners and funded by politicians from the region. In the field, it was noted that the fighters organized themselves into eight groups and that their war technique ensured that each member at least rested and ate while the war was on. However, cases of two or three members being sent to the war points were noted. It was also established that a special burial ceremony of a fighter who died in war was conducted. In this, the cattle were part of the burial ceremony and the politicians funded every aspect of the burial. In this way, it was revealed that, Chinkororo had beliefs and belief systems that were linked to Gusii traditions because the clan elders always presided over these rituals and ceremonies.

In this chapter, the second premise to this study that Chinkororo had a distinct recruitment, training and organization was proved as true. In addition, it was noted
that the group was political, refuting Angwenyi (2011)’s ideas that Chinkororo are apolitical in nature.

Chapter 4 sought to interrogate the changes that Chinkororo movement has undergone. It was established that the way Chinkororo present themselves today was not the same way they presented themselves when the movement was first formed. In this chapter, the movement was discussed as a criminal group whose activities were termed as illegal before the Kenyan law although some community members gave it support. It was noted that the tough laws on illegal groups in Kenya were the main driver behind the changes in the movement. The changes have occurred in their lifestyle, rituals and beliefs as well as their recruitment, training, and organization and weapons used. The changes were attributed to tough laws on the illegal groups in Kenya. Additionally, it was noted that the criminal element in the group increased after the 2005 referendum that triggered the re-ethnicization of Kenyan politics. Furthermore, it was established that the movement was expanding beyond Kisii County with elements of the movement being found in areas like Nairobi, Nakuru, Kakamega and Eldoret.

The government ban of illegal groups in Kenya 2010 led to the latency in the group only to emerge in way that is more vibrant. Despite the ban, it was noted that the movement is still vibrant as is evidenced in the fights that the members have engaged with the Morans in the post 2010 period. The vibrancy was attributed to ethnic politics in Kenya as well as state security failure along the borders, existence of other groups in the region, political support of the movement and conflict over resources.
5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings above, the study recommends the following. The government should address security gap along community borders. In addition there is need to address the perceived economic and political marginalization of other ethnic groups. This will aid in curbing the emergence of security related movements to fill the security gaps left by the government.

Secondly, the public ought to be sensitized on security related movements and the implications of using such groups in Kenya’s political arena. All efforts ought to be made to ensure that these groups do not continue to recruit new members and participate in political incitement and fights in Kenya.

Finally, there is need to solve the resource-based conflict along community borders in Gusii region as well as control the circulation of small arms and light weapons in the country. Additionally efforts should be made to eradicate all security related movements in Kenya. This is because the above are the primary factors that explain the tenacity and vibrancy of chinkororo movement in Kisii County. Thus dismantling such cultivating factors will lead to the total extinction of the movement in the county and Kenya as a whole.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Study

From the study, the researcher felt that the Mura movement is a possible area of future study, especially concerning the history of inter-ethnic security movement cooperation in Kenya. In addition, the researcher felt that the area of security related
movements has a lot to be studied, especially on the gender dimension and role of religion in the daily life of these movements.
REFERENCES

PRIMARY SOURCES

a) Archival sources

Rw 967.6203.MAX: Early Gusii Resistance to the British

Rw 967.628 MAX: Gusii Oral Texts and Experience under Colonial Rule

Rw 967.629 MAX: Gusii and British Rule 1907-1963

Rw 976.628.WIP: Gusii Rebels.

GP 418.02 WHL: A practical Introduction to Gusii

KNA/DC/KSI/1/1/1909: Annual Report South Kavirondo 1909

KNA/DC/KSI/1/1/1910: Annual Report South Kavirondo 1910

KNA/DC/KSI/1/1/1911: Annual Report South Kavirondo 1949

KNA/DC/KSI/1/1/1912: Annual Report South Kavirondo 1912

b) Security Record Newspapers Obtained from the Kenya National Archives

The East Africa standard in 29 September 1972. Retrieved from the Kenya National Archives on 21/12/2015


Daily Nation 7 April 1975. Retrieved from the Kenya National archives on 17/12/2015

Daily Nation 4 April 1975. Retrieved from the Kenya National archives on 17/12/2015

Daily Nation 18\textsuperscript{th} May 1975. Retrieved from the Kenya National archives on 17/12/2015

Daily Nation 6\textsuperscript{th} May 1975. Retrieved from the Kenya National archives on 17/12/2015


Daily Nation 27\textsuperscript{th} May 2, 1975. Retrieved from the Kenya National archives on 17/12/2015


c) **Oral materials**

These are transcriptions made by the researcher in the study site in December 2015 and January 2016. The materials include key informant interviews, focus discussion groups and individual narratives. They are organized according to the individuals providing the information. However, for security and privacy purposes, the names of
the respondents are not given. We decided to identify the respondents with their title, occupations and relationship to the group (*Chinkororo*)

i) **Key Informant Interviews**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BSC member</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>Kiango</td>
<td>22/12/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Kisii town</td>
<td>21/12/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Gucha</td>
<td>27/12/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinkororo member</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>Kiango</td>
<td>29/12/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clan elder</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>Bomachoge</td>
<td>31/12/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clan elder</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>Kiango</td>
<td>29/12/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clan elder</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Nyacheki</td>
<td>3/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clan elder</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Nyangusu</td>
<td>5/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clan elder</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>Gesusu</td>
<td>18/12/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County administrator</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Kisii town</td>
<td>21/12/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diviner</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>Bomachoge</td>
<td>31/12/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diviner</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Nyangusu</td>
<td>5/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly man (trader)</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Nyacheki</td>
<td>3/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-member</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Kiango</td>
<td>4/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-member</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>Borabu</td>
<td>8/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-member</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Gucha</td>
<td>27/12/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-member</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Gesusu</td>
<td>18/12/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-member</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>Nyangusu</td>
<td>5/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Category</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Place</td>
<td>Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Chinkororo coach</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Kiango</td>
<td>4/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Chinkororo commander</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>Nyangusu</td>
<td>5/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former Chinkororo spy</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>Kiango</td>
<td>4/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former District officer</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>Kisii</td>
<td>19/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Former politician</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>Kisii town</td>
<td>10/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSU Officer</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Kisii town</td>
<td>10/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old woman</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>Kiango</td>
<td>4/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Police Commissioner</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>Kisii town</td>
<td>10/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political leader</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Gesusu</td>
<td>12/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired Chief</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>Bomachoge</td>
<td>31/12/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired Police Commissioner</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>Kisii</td>
<td>10/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Security officer</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>Kisii town</td>
<td>10/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife of diviner</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>Gesusu</td>
<td>9/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife to an ex-member</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>Kiango</td>
<td>4/01/2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ii) **Focus Group Discussions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A women group</td>
<td>Kiango</td>
<td>4/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A women group</td>
<td>Nyacheki</td>
<td>13/1/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACE members</td>
<td>Kisii</td>
<td>21/12/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A cattle trader</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Kiango</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business lady</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Kiango</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic priest</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>Nyangusu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clan elder</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>Gucha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly lady (shopkeeper)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>Gucha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly lady</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>Kiango</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly lady</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Nyacheki</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oral interviews</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

iii) Oral interviews

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Area residents</td>
<td></td>
<td>Borabu</td>
<td>6/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clan elders</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nyangusu</td>
<td>5/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clan Elders</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kiango</td>
<td>29/12/2015</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-members</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bomachoge</td>
<td>17/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-members</td>
<td></td>
<td>Nyacheki</td>
<td>3/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex-members</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kiango</td>
<td>11/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gusii, Maasai and Kalenjin Clan elders</td>
<td></td>
<td>Borabu</td>
<td>8/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gusii residents</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kisii town</td>
<td>16/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youths</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kisii town</td>
<td>16/01/2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondent</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gusii residents</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kisii town</td>
<td>16/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youths</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kisii town</td>
<td>16/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Old man (Cattle trader)</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>Gesusu</td>
<td>12/01/2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>----</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sisal seller</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>Kisii town</td>
<td>16/01/2016</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECONDARY SOURCES

a) Published Books


b) Articles in Journals


Anderson, R &Bourne, a (2013).*Gangsters in Jamaica, Mexico and Brazil: Evolution, Structure, Social Political Similarities and Functionalities*. Kingstone, Social medical Research Institute


**b) Theses**


c) Reports


*Kenya National Assembly Official Record*, 14/061994.

*Kenya National Assembly Official Record*, 14/10/2010


d) Internet sources


APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR THE ABAGUSII COMMUNITY IN KISII COUNTY.

Gender  male ( )  female ( )

Age 18-29 ( ) 30-39 ( ) 40-49 ( ) Above 50 ( )

1. What could you comment about security related movements in Kenya?

2. In your own opinion what are the defining features of such movements in Kisii County?

3. Are you aware of any movements by the name *Chinkororo*? Yes ( ) No ( )
   If yes, what do you think led to their rise in Kisii County?

4. Do you think the government is right to outlaw *Chinkororo*? Give reason for your answer.

5. In your opinion what are the current trends in *Chinkororo* movements? What factors do you think are informing the changes?

THANK YOU
APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW GUIDE QUESTIONS FOR THE EX-MEMBERS AND MEMBERS

Gender: Male ( ) Female ( )

Age:  18-29 ( ) 30-39 ( ) 40-49 ( ) Above 50 ( )

1. What is your opinion concerning Chinkororo in Kisii county?

2. What factors do you think triggered the rise of Chinkororo in Kisii County?

3. What age is preferred for recruitment and why?

4. How is the movements organized? Does it have a set structure? How do you raise your finances?

5. Are there specific training grounds for Chinkororo? If yes, give details please.

6. How long does it take one to be trained as an Enkororo?

7. What was your experience in the movements?

8. Do women participate in the movements? Give details please.

9. Do you have their specific set of rules and rituals?

10. What is your area of operation?

11. Do you have any political connection?

12. Which kind of weapons do you use and how do you get them

13. Are there changes that the movement has undergone? Give details please

14. What is your opinion concerning the outlawing of Chinkororo by the government?
APPENDIX III: QUESTIONS TO THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATORS

CHIEFS AND CLAN ELDERS

**Gender:** Gender: Male ( ) Female ( )

**Age:** 18-29 ( ) 30-39 ( ) 40-49 ( ) Above 50 ( )

**Rank:** County Commissioner ( ) Chief ( ) Sub Chief ( ) Clan Elder ( )

1. What was the nature of the Abagusii social-economic and military organization?
2. What is your perception concerning *Chinkororo*? Are they a recent phenomenon or has existed since the pre-colonial period?
3. What factors do you think informed their emergency?
4. What can you comment about their training grounds or recruitment?
5. What can you comment about Chinkororo and security in Kisii county?
6. What can you comment about the weapons used by the group members?
7. Is the movement still operational? Please give details.
8. If the group is still operational, what factors do you think informs such tenacity?
9. Do you think that the government ban of illegal groups in 2010 changed their operation system? How?
10. Where do you see Kisii County in the future in terms of such movements?

THANK YOU
APPENDIX IV: QUESTIONS TO THE NON ABAGUSII COMMUNITY
MEMBERS IN KISII COUNTY

1. Do you know any movements by the name Chinkororo in Kisii County? If yes, what is your opinion concerning it?

2. Have you ever been affected by any of the activities of Chinkororo? If yes, please give details.

3. Do you think it was right for the government to outlaw Chinkororo? Explain your response.

4. Do you think the group is related to any political party? Please give details.

5. In your own opinion what do suggest as a solution to security related movements in Kenya?

6. Do you think that the government has done enough to tackle security related movements problems? Give details.

THANK YOU
APPENDIX V: MAP OF THE RESEARCH SITE

Source: IEBC 2009
APPENDIX VIII: RESEARCH PERMIT

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT
MISS. CATHERINE BOSIBORI NYABWENI of KENYATTA UNIVERSITY, 137-40506 KEBIRIGO, has been permitted to conduct research in Kisii County on the topic: TRANSFORMATIONS IN CHINKORO MOVEMENT AMONG THE ABAGUSI OF KISII COUNTY 1961-2010 for the period ending: 8th December, 2013

Permit No : NACOST/PP/15/99072/8822
Date Of Issue : 8th December, 2013
Fees Received: Ksh 1,000

Applicant's Signature

Director General
National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation

GLOSSARY

Abamanyi- A term used to describe the Maasai and Kipsigis by the Gusii border residents.

Amachuma- This refers to a youth movement in Kisii region that traces its origin from Nyaribari whose main function is to intimidate political opponents when and if hired by politicians.

Chindwaro- A set of groups that Chinkororo fighters divided themselves into in a battlefield.

Chinkororo- This refers to a movement that operates along Kisii, Maasai and Kipsigis borders and is typically affiliated to Abagusii.

Ebikoba/ Ebisarara- Chinkororo fighters’ hideouts.

Ebisenya- refers to skin made under garments worn by the Chinkororo fighters.

Ebusa- refers to a traditional brew among the Abagusii.

Ekebago- A Gusii term for a thug

Ekeranya- refers to a Gusii term for charm.

Enkororo- A wild animal that belong to the monkey family. The animal is gentle but dangerous when the territory where her young ones live is under attack.
Enuga- A skin belt that was used to tie the red upper garment of Chinkororo fighters to their waist.

Esasi- A Gusii traditional ceremony that was carried out to bless the Chinkororo fighter departing to the battlefield.

Etago- A Gusii term for red ochre.

Obororo- A term used to describe anger among the Abagusii.

Omochere- a skin pocket in which the arrows were put.

Sungusungu- Is a community policing movements in Kisii County that traces its origin in Tanzania whose main activities include punishing crimes such as theft, witchcraft, adultery and containing business competitors.