

Changing images of *Nyumba Kumi* in Tanzania: Implications for youth engagement in countering violence at community level

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to examine the resilience of community security (infra) structures by teasing out new images of Nyumba Kumi and the implications for youth involvement in countering violence in Tanzania. Drawing on empirical qualitative case studies from seven regions in Tanzania, this paper seeks to defend the argument that Nyumba Kumi has taken diverse forms in different contexts in order to remain a relevant community (infra) structure for addressing practical issues. The paper concludes that the diverse representations of Nyumba Kumi reflect both continuity and change in the effort of building institutional resilience. Importantly, emerging forms of Nyumba Kumi accommodate needs and interests of youth among other groups in the community, hence allowing for active engagement in countering violence at community level. The paper calls for strengthening various forms of community level structures such as Nyumba Kumi as spaces for formal and informal engagement of youth and other actors in countering violence in Tanzania.

Keywords: *Nyumba Kumi*, violence, youth, community (infra) structure, Tanzania

Introduction

It is beyond doubt that as a problem solving community infrastructure, *Nyumba Kumi* has practically failed to fade away in Tanzania. This is despite its detachment from the formal government and security arrangements following the (re)introduction of multiparty politics in the country more than two decades ago. Besides its original political configuration, *Nyumba Kumi* has been instrumental in addressing a wide range of issues for the welfare of community members regardless of the social and spatial contexts across Tanzania. The available literature on *Nyumba Kumi* is reflective of how the latter has evolved both in Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda and other parts of Africa (Ingle, 1972; Cross, 2013; Purdeková, 2016; Andhoga and Movole, 2017; Kioko 2017). During its heydays in Tanzania, scholars from different disciplines analyzed the dynamics and potentials of *Nyumba kumi* (see Ingle, 1972; Rigby, 1977). With reference to Tanzania, scholarly and policy discussions on *Nyumba kumi* often take different views on the same grassroots institution. Some approach it as a political institution of the ruling party machinery¹ (Rigby, 1977). Other scholars treat it as a

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hybrid institution that performs political function and addresses diverse matters of concern at the community level (Ingle, 1972; Campbell, 2009; Levine, 1972; Cross, 2013).

Having evolved as part of the ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) during the era of single party political system, the comeback of multiparty politics in Tanzania is considered to mark the confinement of *Nyumba Kumi* activities and their legitimacy within the realm of the party. This view, however, shall be problematized in this paper by showing that apparently, in many parts of Tanzania, *Nyumba Kumi* has remained functional in local government affairs as well as in the handling of the day to day matters of concern at the community level. I contend that, the spirit of *Nyumba kumi* has re-surfaced in different forms or images that allows for fulfilling its roles in a dynamic political landscape. It is important to stress here that, the intention is not to reduce all forms of grassroots initiatives as offshoots of *Nyumba Kumi* but rather explain how such initiatives fit into *Nyumba Kumi* as an ideal type.

According to Max Weber, an ideal type is an analytical construct that serves as a measuring rod for social observers to determine the extent to which concrete social institutions are similar and how they differ from some defined measure (Weber, 1978; Coser, 1977). An ideal type never corresponds to concrete reality but always moves at least one step away from it. It is constructed out of certain elements of reality and forms a logically precise and coherent whole, which can never be found as such in that reality (Coser, 1977). Max Weber's application of the notion of ideal type has produced remarkable intellectual reflection in studies of religion, economy, and bureaucracy (see Weber, 1978; 2011). From an institutional resilience point of view, *Nyumba Kumi* embodies both processes of change and continuity in order to remain relevant in the society. I return to this discussion later in the conceptual framework.

The importance of *Nyumba Kumi* in addressing security concerns is hard to ignore especially when it comes to dispute settlement at the community level and early warning mechanism against violence. Cross (2013) provides a potent treatment of the security intelligence or what Purdeková (2016) would refer to as surveillance, and dispute management mandates of *Nyumba Kumi* in the 1960 and 1970. Drawing heavily on Shivji (1990), Bienen (1965) and Levine (1972), Cross (2013:45-46) underlines that the by-laws which governed the functioning of *Nyumba Kumi* established that;

(...)ten-cell leaders were required to gather detailed information about other residents, and citizens were obliged to provide notification of any guests received and births, marriages and deaths in the family (...). In urban areas like Dar es Salaam the *balози* "were specifically intended to aid the City Council to eradicate

'hooliganism, idleness ,lawlessness and delinquency'(...) a *balози* was thus expected to become, 'the eyes of the nation (...) expose dangerous characters like thieves and other infiltrators who may poison our nation and put its safety at stake' (...) ten-cell leaders assumed an important dispute resolution role, particularly in areas where the nearest police posts or courts were distant, and it was common for a case to be taken to the cell leader before it could be referred to the police...

Certainly, the above passage eludes a number of security and peace building potentials inherent in the configuration of *Nyumba Kumi* especially in terms of community early warning systems. Indeed, efforts to harness the potentials inscribed in *Nyumba Kumi* are much more needed in Tanzania today given the emerging incidences and threat of violent conflicts within the country and the East African region (LeSage, 2014; Patterson, 2015). According to the Institute for Economic and Peace (2016), Tanzania has moved to 45th position in 2015 from the 103rd position in 2012 as far as Global Terrorism Index is concerned. Although such global assessment may often present skewed picture on the real situation on the ground, reported incidents of violence in some pockets of Tanzania in recent years leave a lot to be desired (Walwa, 2017; Kazungu, 2013). In that respect, this paper offers critical reflections on how to harness opportunities posed by emerging forms of *Nyumba Kumi* for youth engagement in countering violence in Tanzania and beyond. Thus, three immediate but pertinent questions are at the centre of the discussion in this paper.

First is how did communities and the government of Tanzania accommodate security potentials of *Nyumba Kumi* when the latter was delinked from the (local) government administrative structure following the introduction of multiparty politics in the 1992? Second, what other forms of community mobilization have emerged in communities in Tanzania, which mimic the spirit of *Nyumba Kumi* in addressing security and other challenges at the community level? Third, how such images attract youth participation in addressing various forms of violence at the community level in Tanzania? A closer inspection of the literature on *Nyumba Kumi* in Tanzania indicates that the above questions have not been accorded with due attention.

Informed by empirical qualitative data from seven regions in Tanzania and sound conceptual reflections on institutional resilience, the main argument in this paper is that the spirit of *Nyumba Kumi* has taken diverse forms in different local contexts and has remained a relevant community structure in addressing practical issues at the community level. Moreover, the diverse forms of *Nyumba Kumi* accommodate needs and interests of youth among other groups in the community hence allows for youths' active engagement in countering violence at community level.

Analytically, the thrust behind the paper is two folds, it challenges the dominant tendency in research and programmes to privilege state based and formal mechanism for addressing violence at the expense of community driven initiatives. This is in response to the growing interest in community mechanisms for early warning and prevention of violent conflicts. Global initiatives against violence acknowledge that in order to achieve meaningful outcomes, “future work on preventing violence ought to work with and support the idea of using local structures in early warning in prevention of violence” (Fink *et al.*, 2013:5). This is vital because most of the violence incidents are organised locally and often through informal structure.

Equally important, the paper goes beyond the reductionist tendency of approaching youth as either victims or perpetrators of violence by illuminating how they participate in community structures for early warning and prevention of violence such as *Nyumba Kumi*. This attends to the credible appeal by Fink *et al.* (2013:5) that, identifying, establishing, and sustaining local partnerships remains a challenge for many actors concerned with addressing violence. In line with Fink *et al.* (2013:5), the analysis of empirical data in the subsequent sections of this paper shed light on how youth and women as “local partners, members of families, local communities and local institutions,” engage in (or can be engaged in) the existing institutional infrastructure for “community-based problem solving, local partnerships, and community-oriented policing”.

I return to the two analytical points in the subsequent section on conceptual framework, but before I do so, I will first reflect on the epistemological and methodological issues pertinent for this paper. I will then provide a brief historical account of *Nyumba Kumi* in Tanzania in order to understand why *Nyumba Kumi* has remained relevant at community level in the country.

Methods

The paper draws on a large-scale multi-sited qualitative research study, which generated data from diverse but relevant sources during its first phase of fieldwork in 2017. Beyond the challenges that small-scale qualitative studies face because of limiting themselves into one or two study sites, this study benefited from the multi-sited fieldwork. It allowed for juxtaposing multiple views and experiences of diverse actors with a stake in the phenomenon under study. Although the idea was not to arrive at a generalized understanding of images of *Nyumba Kumi*, the approach allowed for a differentiated analysis of the same. Besides reviewing existing and relevant documents, two fieldwork methods were key in generating data namely in-depth interviews with key informants and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with different categories of participants. As for the research setting, the study focused on seven regions from the mainland Tanzania. The regions were selected on the basis of

registered incidences of violence in recent times. These included, Arusha, Tanga, Pwani, Kagera, Mwanza, Dar es Salaam and Mtwara. Within the regions a rural and urban district were selected to capture the rural-urban dynamics. Within a district, one ward was selected on basis of having experienced incidences of violence. A wide range of informants and research participants were covered to capture diversity in views and experiences in order to grasp the nuances inherent in the research subject, and also to ensure validity of the findings. The research subjects for this study included, but were not limited to, officials from security agencies especially the police force; government leaders at regional, districts, wards and village/mtaa level; representatives of youth and women groups including *bodaboda*; religious leaders, and a section of other community members both male and females.

Determined by the saturation point, the sample size included 153 interviews with the key informants and 43 FGDs involving women (16), youth groups (17) and *Nyumba Kumi* and/or community-policing leaders (10). In addition, one FGD involving high-ranking police officials in Kagera was also conducted. For the sake of maintaining quality and originality, each of the field research assistants and researchers processed the data by transcribing the recorded interviews and FGDs in verbatim. Through content analysis, themes were generated capturing key issues emerging during the field engagements with the aid of MAXQDA software.

History and evolution of *Nyumba Kumi* in Tanzania

In his article *'The Ten-House Cell System in Tanzania: A Consideration of an Emerging Village Institution'*, Clyde Ingle (1972) provides a sound historical account of *Nyumba Kumi* as a governance institution at the community level. He shows that deliberations that led to the establishment of *Nyumba Kumi* as "a part of political organization in Tanzania" started in August 1963 (Ingle, 1972: 214). For the first time, the National Executive Committee of TANU² discussed the political rationale for establishing *Nyumba Kumi* throughout the country as the party's leadership infrastructure at the community level. The primary motive was to strengthen the leadership of TANU. It was not until December 1964 when National Executive Committee of TANU agreed that "TANU Cells, each consisting of ten houses should be established and consolidated all over the country" (ibid: 215, See also Rigby, 1977; Levine, 1972; Cross, 2013). The ten cell system established in Tanzania is considered to have been adopted from China (Cross, 2013; Purdeková, 2016).

The original structure of *Nyumba Kumi* was meant to be a constellation of 10 houses but this was often invariable across contexts; all TANU members in these houses would be members and from them would be chosen a cell leader (*balози*). Rigby (1977: 90) conceives of *Nyumba Kumi* as a system of one representative for every ten homesteads whereby the *balози* serves as a liaison between the members of the unit,

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the party and local government officials. Taking into account the fact that *Nyumba Kumi* evolved at a time when the party was hegemonic; it has been argued that *Nyumba Kumi* was conceived to be an instrument of both governance and party organization. As argued in this paper, the functions performed by *Nyumba Kumi* have been both diverse and dynamic because they have varied in time and place throughout the country. Based on interviews with the then TANU's spokesman, Dr. Wilbur Klerruu, Ingle (1972: 215) underlines the functions of *Nyumba Kumi*.

First, it was a platform for "people to express their views and opinions to TANU and government and to communicate the policies of TANU and government to the people". Second, it was a mechanism for consolidating "unity and extend leadership to the village level so that leaders can easily be accessible to the ordinary people". Third, it linked community with the government and party organs by "obtaining information regarding social and economic development in the villages and forward it to the branch organs of TANU". Fourth, it ensured the security and survival of the Party, Government and the nation by enforcing laws and regulations at the community level. The second Vice-President Mfaume Kawawa was also quoted in 1965 summarizing three functions of *Nyumba Kumi* namely; facilitating communication between the people, the party, and government; coordinating development projects at the community level; and promoting the security of the nation (Ingle 1972, Bienen 1965). When addressing the leaders (*mabalozi*) of *Nyumba Kumi* in Nachingwea on the 24 May 1965, Rashid Mfaume Kawawa, and the then Second Vice President reiterated the role of *Nyumba Kumi* in promoting unity and social cohesion, bridging the people with their government and party, maintaining order and national security. He also underlined the intelligence function of the *balози* as quoted in the *Ngurumo* Newspaper;

Nyumba kumi enhances unity, therefore the system will be a vehicle to bring leadership to the people to allow people to interact easily with their leaders(...)the aim of the government of TANU is to extend the party organization as far down as possible (...) Besides, *Nyumba kumi* will ensure the security of government and the nation (*usalama wa serikali na Taifa*) and ensure that laws are observed (*sharia za nchi zinafuatwa*), so every ten cell leader is obliged to identify new people coming in their areas and report to the respective authorities (*Ngurumo*, 25 May,1965).

Among other roles, the *balози* of *Nyumba Kumi* was responsible for fostering good relationship and cooperation among the members. These entailed resolving disputes, referring conflicts that he/she finds difficult to a council of cell leaders (see Rigby, 1977; Levine, 1972; Cross, 2013). It must be noted that communities in different parts of the country have been appropriating the concept of *Nyumba Kumi* to suit their

needs and contexts. For instance, Maruo (2007:25) analyzed *Nyumba Kumi* as vital mechanism for land tenure among the Nyakyusa. Unlike the political configuration of *Nyumba Kumi* as constituting ten households, Maruo documents a form of *Nyumba Kumi* with 30 households which were responsible for land management in the studied communities as he aptly puts;

(...) were under the control of cell groups called *nyumba kumi* ('ten houses' in Swahili), a cooperative unit that consists of about 30 households (...) all of the householders and their wives belong to a group that requires contributions to a group fund. Each *nyumba kumi* manages more or less communal lands within the territory, which are occasionally distributed among the members (Maruo, 2007:25).

Nonetheless, the success stories of ten cell units do not mean the system delivered in all areas of its mandate. It is fair to argue at this point that more was achieved in the political and security realm but less on development management, and in different parts of the country. For instance, it is well documented that ten cell unit leaders did not perform well in spheres like tax collection and mobilizing people in compulsory communal labour to mention but a few (see Ingle, 1972; Levine, 1972).

Resilience of *Nyumba Kumi* and youth engagement in Countering Violence: towards a conceptual framework

Conceptually, the arguments advanced in this paper are inspired by a refined understanding of institutional resilience³ advanced by Herrfahrtd-Pähle and Pahl-Wostl (2012) and the conception of the creativity of human action by Joas (1998). While on the one hand, the concept of institutional resilience allows for analyzing processes of continuity and change in the configuration of social institutions like *Nyumba Kumi* when faced with a shock or adversity; on the other hand the creativity of action proposed by Joas offers sound insight into the nuances of young and women engagement with countering violent related activities through emerging forms of *Nyumba Kumi*.

Grounding their conceptualization of institutional resilience within the socio-ecological resilience framework, Herrfahrtd-Pähle and Pahl-Wostl (2012:1), contend that institutional resilience is not about "preserving conventional patterns and focusing on continuity" because adversities/shocks/crises "could be used as an opportunity for learning, adapting, and entering onto more sustainable pathways". Put differently, when exposed to challenging situations, institutions do not always desire to regain their previous structures but may transform such moments into opportunities for developing new patterns for better ends. This way of approaching institutions like *Nyumba Kumi* and its associated forms emerging in Tanzania, I argue, opens

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possibilities for grasping the nuances of institutional change and continuity at the community level. As argued by Herrfahrdt-Pähle and Pahl-Wostl (2012:1) an analysis of how processes of change and continuity “interact, and how they build or degrade institutional resilience” sheds light on key analytical questions in the present paper i.e. Whether and how the decision to delink *Nyumba Kumi* from the local government structure in 1992 altered the structure, functions and performance of the institution’s mandates.

Herrfahrdt-Pähle and Pahl-Wostl (2012:2) take a sociological and anthropological conception of institutions whereby institutions, from the anthropological point of view are sets of “rules and norms that govern human interaction”. Following Gupta et al, (2010), it is argued that by their nature, institutions are inherently conservative and yet dynamic. This is regardless of whether they are formal or informal. Therefore the ambivalence of institutional resilience is well captured here whereby resilient institutions must have both the ability of an institution like *Nyumba Kumi* to “withstand disturbances and thus provide stability and reduce uncertainty”, and the “ability to change (and thus provide flexibility) in the medium. In the long term it reacts to the uncertainties of a changing environment and/or changes in the social system” (Herrfahrdt-Pähle and Pahl-Wostl, 2012:1). In line with Huitema et al. (2009), the above conception of institutional resilience credibly assumes that institutional diversity is increased where there is institutional resilience. This is to say the multiple functions that *Nyumba Kumi* has been performing at the community level and beyond, illuminate the resilience of *Nyumba Kumi*. Accordingly, it can be argued that different forms of community mobilization emerging to cater for roles that were directly attended by the conventional structure of *Nyumba Kumi* in Tanzania today mimic the spirit of *Nyumba Kumi*. Following Folke et al. 1998, it has been affirmed that institutional resilience is therefore “about managing continuity and change in order to adapt an institutional system while not changing it so often that stakeholders lose their trust in the institutional setup” (Herrfahrdt-Pähle and Pahl-Wostl (2012:2).

To avoid reifying resilient institutions like *Nyumba Kumi*, it is important to interrogate how individuals and group interests and needs are negotiated through the institutions. In other words, to assume that resilient institutions drive themselves independent of the interests of individuals and groups at stake is to assume too much. This is because institutions are enacted to serve certain purposes, hence subject to manipulation by social actors be they individuals or groups. Here, concepts that address the ability of individuals to actively and creatively relate with institutions are required in order to grasp the nuances of youth engagement in *Nyumba Kumi* as an early warning mechanism against violence. To that end, I follow a theoretically intriguing concept of creativity⁴ advanced in the current micro sociology and anthropology. Joas (1996: 4) affirms that there is a creative dimension to all human action⁵. As a concept⁶, creativity

is differently approached by scholars in the social sciences, yet three major views are dominant.

The first view conceives of creativity as actions geared towards changing or reshaping the pre-established structural constraints (Leach, 1977; Rosaldo et al 1993). The second view emphasizes that creativity is a *cultural imperative* not against, but reproducing the conventions or pre-established structures (see, for example, Hallam and Ingold, 2007; Hastrup 2007). Lastly is the view that combines the first and second perspectives and approaches creativity as constituting both reproductive and transformative dimensions of social action (Joas, 1996; Förster and Koechlin, 2011). In order to understand how youth participate in *Nyumba Kumi*, and the interests and motives they project into the institution, I follow the last understanding of creativity. This view allows for capturing ways in which youth strive to achieve goals behind various forms of *Nyumba Kumi* but also how they project new ends into the same.

***Nyumba Kumi* in Tanzania today**

The major finding of the study is that the presence of *Nyumba Kumi* as an important community infrastructure is evident both in the everyday practices and/or in people's/institutions' memories and imaginations. Put it differently, *Nyumba Kumi* is still performing some functions both within the party and in some if not many places, within the local government structures. Analytically, it is hard to ignore both elements of continuity and change in the different images of *Nyumba Kumi* emerging from the analysis of data. The findings suggest that diverse images of *Nyumba Kumi* have emerged across the studied regions but the discussion in present paper considers three typologies of image of *Nyumba Kumi*. First, *Nyumba Kumi* as a party infrastructure which continues to function along with the local government structures at the community level. Second, *Nyumba Kumi* is emerging as a community security infrastructure within the local government framework. Third, *Nyumba Kumi* manifests itself in the form of community initiatives to address pressing public demands such as security- neighbourhood watch and *bodaboda* associations or groups.

***Nyumba Kumi* as an important structure for the party and the government**

This is the old image of *Nyumba Kumi* which was expected to disappear following the comeback of multiparty politics in Tanzania but empirical evidence suggests that it has not. This is in keeping with the expectation that CCM has continued to be the ruling party in the country. Despite the fact that some of its functions have been taken over by the local government structures at the community level, countless evidence confirms the participation of *Nyumba Kumi* in the local governance in many parts of the study areas. From the findings, it is clear that *Nyumba Kumi* has remained an important party infrastructure at the grassroots level but its structure has changed recently from being a constellation of ten houses to 30/50 houses on the one hand,

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and the change of its leader from *balози was shina* (ten cell leader) to *Mwenyekiti wa shina* (Chair of the cell), on the other. Although the change amounts to more work on the part of the former *balози* who is still unsalaried, the change in title translates to symbolic incentives i.e. increased honour/respect/influence. Below are but a few extracts from key informant interviews and FGDs across the seven regions that confirm the salience of *Nyumba Kumi* in the governance of public affairs at the community level;

(...) things have changed, we recently had a meeting with the Deputy Chair of CCM, Hon. Mangula who among other things explained the structural reforms within the party but emphasized on the strategic role that we are expected to play in building the party (...) I now have 50 houses to lead I am no longer a mere *balози* but now the chair of the cells (...) of course there are still no financial incentives but we have been promised that once the financial management of the party projects in our respective areas is improved we shall benefit accordingly(...). But you know what (...) the emphasis on taking stock of what is going on in our areas has now been more stressed (...) so even though the chairman of the *Mtaa* government comes from CHADEMA, I am working closely with the Local government office of the Mtaa Executive Officer on this and other matters (...) definitely I am now very busy in resolving disputes in my area and I am holding meetings at least once per month (In-depth interview, Chair of the Cell unit, Dar es Salaam, 25.8.2017).

There are ten cell leaders (*wajumbe/mabalози*)...now leading up to 50 households not 10 as before. They are very helpful, as you know that the ten cell unit maybe a place of peace or crimes. Although it is a volunteer work sometimes there are conflicts between them and the village executive officers but they are doing a good job such as providing information that helps us to arrest criminals. We work with them nicely and we do not mind their political affiliation because crimes and threats to community peace are beyond politics... (In-depth interview, official-RPC office, Arusha, 20.8.2017).

(...) we work together with ten cell leaders and they also participate in community security groups but also influence people to take part in night patrols. Although the village executive office is directly involved in safety and security of people, it is ten cells leaders who play big role since they are the one's staying close to people (In-depth interview, Community Policing Official, Arusha, 22.8.2017).

From 1992 the structure of ten cells system remained within CCM. However it is still strong. Trust goes beyond the principles of electoral democracy. I believe

these institutions are strong. Currently in every CCM branch you have 50 houses but has taken political preference rather than social conflicts resolutions (...) Since 50 cells leaders are not paid but have to work with a *Mtaa* executive officer who is salaried (...) They can start to compete for power and influence (In-depth interview, District Official, Mtwara, 26.8.2017).

The above passages suggest that *Nyumba Kumi* has remained both an active and passive player in local government affairs depending on the context and ability of its leader to negotiate space. While the above informants hint at the continuity of *Nyumba Kumi* as a result of the community and governments' interest in utilizing its security potentials, it is also clear that both the party and government machinery acknowledge the past achievement and aspire for the possibility of harnessing such potentials in the present situation.

Apparently, the resilience of *Nyumba kumi* is evident in continued significance of the *Balozi* (TCL) in facilitating important activities often filling gaps in the present local government machinery. Empirical findings from across the seven regions studied show that the salience of *Nyumba Kumi* particularly the central role played by the *balozi* has remained both in the imaginations and actual governance practices at the community level both in rural and urban areas.

An informant at the district level in Mtwara appraised the potentials of *Nyumba Kumi* in terms of addressing conflicts and security challenges at the community level compared to the current local government structure. Pointing to the commitments of the *balozi/mjumbe* in delivering services at the community level, he commented "the problem is that unlike community structures like *Nyumba Kumi*, the local government officials are salaried except for elected officials (...) It has working laws". In addition, the informant hinted at the effectiveness of *Nyumba Kumi* compared to Village Executive Officers (VEOs) by noting that;

(...)The *balozi* used to work 24 hours. It was common to find that in case the *balozi* is the head of the household, the partner would attend issues in case the husband/wife is not around. The *balozi* was and still is a resident unlike the Village or *Mtaa* Executive Officer, and was less mobile no transfers (...) there is also a notable shift in the working style of the VEO/MEO whereby unlike the *balozi*, they are not interested in reconciliatory dimensions but more on formal legal aspect looking at what the laws says (...) and their Royalty is not on the people but to the hiring authority or electorate (In-depth interview, District official, Mtwara, 18.8.2017).

Underlining change in the functions of *Nyumba Kumi* at the community level, a senior leader of a Beach Management Unit (BMU) in Dar es Salaam reminisced that in the past “the *balozi* mobilized between 7 and 10 community members for night security patrol. This was done in the spirit of volunteerism but today such mobilization is done by the police and local government” (In-depth interview, BMU leader, Dar es Salaam, 25.8.2017). Acknowledging the continuity dimension in the resilience of *Nyumba Kumi*, the senior citizen remarked “ (...) because in our areas there are many new comers (*wageni ni wengi*), the ten cell leaders (*wajumbe*) still have the responsibility of identifying them (*kuwatambua*) and communicate with the local government” (In-depth interview, BMU leader, Dar es Salaam, 25.8.2017). Stressing the strategic early warning role that *Nyumba Kumi* has continued to play in some parts of Tanzania, the informant noted, “(...)when there are suspects who might threaten the security situation it is the *balozi/wajumbe* are expected to be the first to detect (*ndio wa kwanza kufahamu*). Illustrating the new forms of *Nyumba Kumi* at the community level, the BMU singled out *bodaboda* groups (*vijiwe vya bodaboda*) as an important hub of information needed for early warning against violence. In particular, he said, “at the *bodaboda* posts (*vijiwe*) youths exchange a wide range of information (*wanapeana habari nyingi sana*)” and, these guys know each other (*wanafahamiana*) and they also know who are strangers and who are residents (*wanajua wageni ni wapi na wenyeji ni wapi*) (In-depth interview, BMU leader, Dar es Salaam, 25.8.2017).

Similar observations have been made by Kelly and Lezaun (2013:93) with reference to Dar es Salaam, noting that, *Nyumba Kumi* and their leaders have remained the smallest section of territorial organization in Dar es Salaam. Despite the fact that their official administrative role was eroded with the abolition of the one-party system in 1992, “they proved essential; (...) can encompass anything from the nominal 10 to several dozen households; and are headed by an elected leader, or *mjumbe*, who for several decades played the double function of party representative and municipal administrator”. However, elements of competition between the local government and *Nyumba Kumi* leaders are evident even in regions where *Nyumba Kumi* has remained more active like Dar es Salaam. It was reiterated by study participants and informants that the local government leaders do not always consider the *balozi* as partners but the latter struggles to negotiate space, as noted by a participant in an FGD;

Local government leaders are often appealing to us when they want easy mobilization of our community members in our areas (...) there is no good collaboration between us and the local government leaders, something that complicates our participation in local government affairs but we are trying. Often we are not invited to most of the leaders meetings except few of them especially ones that are convened by VEO. As a result, the local government have not been very successful in mobilizing our residents to participate in public affairs for

instance to make contribution to *ulinzi shirikishi* (FGD, Ten Cell Leaders, Dar es Salaam, 23.8.2017).

Nonetheless, other informants from the local government circles acknowledge the utility of *Nyumba Kumi* today by pointing at the practical challenges in rendering services to the community. In particular, the large size of geographical area covered by the *Kitongoji* or *Mtaa* leader was mentioned to affect the efficiency of local governance especially when it comes to early warning against violence and the general reach out. In that respect, some of the informants called for the need to re-introduce the *balazi* within the local government structure as reflected in the interview excerpts below;

In my view the *balazi* of *Nyumba Kumi* are much more relevant in the running of local governments today because they latter suffers from inability to fully reach out to the community (...) for that matter we wait for people to report to our office what is going on in the community. For instance, incidents of crimes including violence are often detected after they have been committed (*Uhalifu unagundulika ulishafanywa*) because the *balazi* are not there while the administrative areas are too large... (In-depth interview, Local government official, Mwanza region, 22.8. 2017).

The *Nyumba Kumi system* is no longer in place but it was big mistake to delink the system from the government structure and leave it in the hands of the party. At the moment the resident register stays with the chair of *Kitongoji/Mtaa* for them to register names of strangers and all residents in the community but it not as effective as the *Nyumba Kumi system* (In-depth interview, District official, Arusha, 20.8.2017).

Some of the *Vitongoji* are too large (*vikubwa sana*) with an average of between 80 and 120 households. So it is not possible for the chair of the *Kitongoji* to follow us closely on what is going on in the community and attend to his or her responsibilities. For instance, it the last time to update information in the residents register in my wards was in 2014 (In-depth interview, Local government official, Tanga, 25.8.2017).

(...) some of the violent incidences are coming up because we have abandoned our traditional *nyumba kumi* system which used to make sure that all people with the area of jurisdiction are known to the ten cell leader and any new comer had to be identified and introduced to this leader before even being allowed to stay...this is no longer happening and to me this explains why violence is

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increasing beyond control (In-depth interview, Religious leader, Kagera, 20.8.2017).

Certainly, the above sentiments illuminate the fact that the relevance of *Nyumba Kumi* persists because the functions that the *balazi* execute are not attended by the alternative local government structures to the expected levels. Especially in regards to the re-emerging need for early warning mechanisms against violence, the strategic importance of *Nyumba Kumi* cannot be overstated.

Clearly, the persistence of *Nyumba kumi* in the imaginations and memories of security stakeholders is evident even in the regions where the structure is considered by many to have been confined to the ruling party. With a few exceptions, even in areas considered to be strongholds of the opposition parties, there is a strong expression of a desire for a different formation of *Nyumba Kumi* outside its present political inclination and belonging. The question here is not whether *Nyumba Kumi* was an effective community early warning structure or not, but rather how to harness the security potentials embedded in *Nyumba Kumi* in the present context of multipartism. Thus, it is not surprising that findings from across the study regions in Tanzania indicate growing interests towards (re)embedding *Nyumba Kumi* as a community security infrastructure within the local government. It is this 'desired' image of *Nyumba Kumi* to which I now turn in the next section.

***Nyumba Kumi* as a community security structure aligned with the local government**

In order to effectively harness the potential of *Nyumba Kumi* as an early warning mechanism in contemporary Tanzania, it is important to consider an appropriate formation. In line with the major argument in the present paper, the immediate question is whether it is possible to establish a parallel system of *Nyumba Kumi* aligned with the legal framework for local governance in Tanzania. Analytically, the move towards delinking *Nyumba Kumi* from the ruling Chama cha Mapinduzi (CCM) and attempting to (re)connect it with the local government structure entails a high degree of transformation. As provided in the conceptual framework, and particularly with respect to its security potentials, this is possible because stakeholders of security acknowledge the potential of *Nyumba Kumi* in addressing security challenges prior to the 1990s. As such, institutional resilience of *Nyumba Kumi* is reflected in the ongoing attempts to create a fundamentally new institutional system.

As noted earlier, empirical findings from present study not only shed light on desired form of *Nyumba Kumi* but also possible image(s) of *Nyumba Kumi* that can be reconnected to the local government structure. The Coordination of *Nyumba Kumi* (*Uratibu wa Nyumba Kumi*) in Mwanza region is a case in point. Pioneered by the then acting District Commissioner of Nyamagana, now retired DC, Dr Leonard Mosses

Masale, this is a form of *Nyumba Kumi* which mimics the old structure of *Nyumba Kumi* but delinked from any political party. It is formed by ten households in a given Mtaa for urban setting or Kitongoji in rural areas.

The leader of this type of *Nyumba Kumi* is not called a *balozi/mjumbe* but a Coordinator of *Nyumba Kumi*. This person is elected by all members living in the respective ten households. The Coordinator should flag up (*atapeperusha*) the flag of the District/City/Council at his/her home as a means of announcing/identifying the Coordination role. In terms of functions, the Coordinator is supposed to keep the ten house counter book/register with similar content to the register of residents. The coordinator will submit the ten-house counter book to the Mtaa Executive Officer (MEO) for update monthly. The ten house counter book will be used register all residents and their occupation. Equally important, all guests' movements in and out the area must be documented by the Coordinator. For purposes of intelligence, the Police and Migration officers will check ten-house counter book from time to time in order to capture intelligence information.

Apparently, the above image of *Nyumba Kumi* upholds all security functions of the conventional *Nyumba Kumi* but fundamentally changes the structural configurations⁷ to allow for its operations in the context of multipartism along with Local Government (District/Urban Authorities) Act of 1982. The act allows for Local government authorities to put in place such by laws. Indeed, this is a window opportunity through which this model of *Nyumba Kumi* can be up scaled across the country.

Concretely, the draft by law which provides for the establishment of *Coordination of Nyumba Kumi* in Mwanza City Council is among the ground breaking move towards resolving the dilemma of reconnecting *Nyumba Kumi* in the current local government structure in Tanzania. It was observed through key interviews and FGDs in Mwanza that two wards in Ilelemela district namely Buswelu and Kahama have been used to pilot the implementation of *Uratibu wa Nyumba Kumi*. Interestingly, the justification for the new system is thought in the challenges of ensuring security in the *Mtaa*. As reiterated in the previous section, it is claimed that *Mtaa* is too big for *Mtaa* leaders to ensure security hence the need to have a few households organize to carter for their security. To what extent has this been successful in Mwanza and whether there is a potential for up scaling the system across the country are open empirical questions calling for further research. Nonetheless, there have been other forms of *Nyumba Kumi* manifesting themselves in what is popularly known in Tanzania today as *Ulinzi Shirikishi* as discussed hereunder.

Nyumba Kumi as Neighbourhood Watch and Bodaboda associations

Findings from the studied regions shed light on the argument that the spirit⁸ of *Nyumba Kumi* manifests itself in the form of community initiatives to address pressing public demands such as security. Taking the spirit of *Nyumba Kumi* as an ideal type, allows for approaching, neighbourhood watch and *bodaboda* groups as among diverse images of *Nyumba Kumi* in contemporary Tanzania. This does not, and should not mean that the aforementioned grassroots initiatives are a by-product of *Nyumba Kumi* because they are not, but it means that the initiatives are reviving the role, and importance of community structures such as *Nyumba kumi* especially in urban contexts. These initiatives have generally been framed as *ulinzi shirikishi* in the growing literature⁹ on community-based or 'participatory' policing in Tanzania (see Cross, 2016). In essence, *ulinzi shirikishi* is considered to be one of the models for hybrid security governance in Tanzania (Cross, 2013; Cross, 2016) which involves the state police, local government and communities. The model was institutionalized by the community policing strategy introduced in 2006 (TPF, 2006; Scher, 2010). Through *ulinzi shirikishi* citizens are encouraged to participate in local and national security through security committees, which "organize night patrols, investigate reported crime and resolve disputes" (Cross, 2016:1103). Although the literature acknowledge the fact that these initiatives were not entirely new in Tanzania, it only confines them to the 1960s doctrine of *Ujamaa* and self-reliance, and the 1980s framework of local policing through *sungusungu* vigilantism (Cross, 2016). However, when approached from an institutional resilience lenses, and by extension invoking the notion of ideal type by Max Weber, community security initiatives in Tanzania, I contend, mimic the spirit of *Nyumba Kumi* i.e. security potentials both in terms of early warning and crime investigation to a greater extent, and dispute management to a lesser extent.

Furthermore, a differentiated analysis based on micro sociological and anthropological perspectives suggests that the mentioned community initiatives provide space for youth to creatively engage in countering violence. Interestingly, findings show that youth transform community security initiatives into opportunities to negotiate livelihood sources and identities in the community. This, from an institutional resilience perspective, is a reflection of institutional diversity i.e. ability to perform multiple functions which in turn contribute to the resilience of community security initiatives in the midst of several constraints as discussed below.

Neighbourhood night watch groups

Neighbourhood watch groups are a common feature of community organization, especially in urban settings of Tanzania. The notion of neighbourhood in this context is not limited to households sharing a physical location but includes members from distant households who happen to share physical space by virtue of their occupation or livelihood activities such as motorcyclist (*bodaboda*) and drivers of tricycles (*bajaji*).

Findings from the seven regions indicate that regardless of the nature of the groups' formation, security is the main but not the only focus of the actors involved. Ideally, these groups emerged to address security threats posed by incidences of theft and robbery in neighbourhood but some of the groups extend to other community needs such as fixing infrastructures like roads, and attending to adversities such as death of a family member.

These groups are comprised by community members who are always selected by the hamlet chair in collaboration with his security committee (...) they walk around the hamlet during the night to make sure that people and their properties are safe from any violence, theft/robbery and any other bad behaviours (FGD, Youths, Kagera, 27.8. 2017).

In Kisosora street in Tanga city, through community meeting it was agreed that all men will take part in night patrol activities and for those women without husbands, they were supposed to pay Tshs.1000/= to Street chairpersons for buying security torches and batteries to facilitate smooth night patrols, and this it is taken very seriously by taking to police those who fail to comply to that regulation (In-depth interview, Local government official, Tanga, 25.8.2017).

In terms of structure, the group may or may not be coordinated by the local government authority but the latter is often involved in and/ or informed about the formation of the groups especially neighbourhood night watch groups. Groups that operate outside the local government structure have some kind of leadership often formed under the spirit of volunteerism. Just like the *balazi*, the chair of the group along with other leaders makes some efforts to identify members of the group for mobilization purposes. Recently, this is made easier through social media especially *WhatsApp* groups. The same is also used to communicate security alerts among members besides other issues of concern to the neighbourhood.

Unlike in the *bodaboda/bajaji* groups, it is also important to note that there can be two groups within the neighbourhood night watch group. One is the group of residents who contributes a certain amount of money on monthly bases to carter for expenses involved in night patrols in the neighbourhood. Depending on the economic profile of the group members, the amount can range between 1000 and 30,000 Tanzania Shillings or more. This group does not directly engage in night patrols but are obliged to share security information to the contact person(s) who directly interact with the patrol team.

The second group is the one which directly engages in the night patrol either as volunteers especially in rural area and/or with some form of compensation particularly

in the urban area. Basically, the group is dominated by youth who are often member of the neighbourhood but not always as indicated in the case of Oysterbay in Dar es Salaam. It must be stressed here that, this group not only provides space for youth to actively participate in containing insecurity in their neighbourhood but also means of livelihood. However, FGDs with youth involved in the actual patrol in Dar es Salaam suggest that the expectations that youth project in such initiatives are not always fully realized as remarked by one participants, “This is employment for us because we don’t have any other job apart from this one...it is now two years but our allowance (posho yetu) is meagre (...) it is like we are volunteering” (FGD, Youth patrol group, Dar es Salaam, 30.8.2017). The same was also reiterated by a Local government officials in Dar es Salaam acknowledging that; “we have youth who participate in community security patrols and most of them consider this as employment opportunity” (In-depth interview, Mtaa leader, Dar es Salaam, 29.8.2017).

The above explains a temporal dimension to the operations of neighbourhood night watch groups. Whereas many groups that were initiated by local governments have ceased to operate as reported in Tanga, Dar es Salaam and Mwanza, some groups organize patrols around their neighbourhood in situations when they anticipate an upcoming danger of insecurity such as increased incidences of theft. This was reported across the seven regions. It was also noted that there are ten dormant community engagement security groups which operate only in case there is an occurrence of violence in the community. Few others were reported to be more stable in a sense that they have maintained operation throughout their lifetime. A good example is a neighbourhood group in Oysterbay and that of Changanyikeni in Dar es Salaam, whereby the youth involved in night-watch are compensated monthly. In Tanga city, active community engagement groups were reported to exist in four wards only. This, calls for a better understanding on how to sustain grassroots initiatives in ways that accommodate interests of young people and other community stakeholders (see also Cross, 2016).

Bodaboda and bajaji groups

The presence of motorcycles and tricycles¹⁰ in the public transport system in Tanzania is a recent social transformation that has opened both opportunities and challenges in the security realms. To cope and/or proactively avoid some of the problems associated with the *bodaboda* phenomenon, youth involved in the sector have been mobilized to join hands through what is commonly referred *bodaboda* associations. In search for proper management of the sector, the Surface and Maritime Transport Regulatory Authority (SUMATRA) established regulations to govern both *bodaboda* and *bajaji* in 2010, which among other things, demanded for the formation of *bodaboda/bajaji* associations. The emphasis is that *bodaboda* grouping with members or licensees should organize themselves locally and get registered by a local government authority

so that their operations should observe public transport regulations (SUMATRA, 2010; Bishop and Amos, 2015). However, the police, local government and youth involved appropriated the same association for multiple ends including but are not limited to security, negotiating acceptable identities in the community, and self-help benefits during adversities like sickness, injury and theft. Indeed, there has been a multiplication of sub-associations based on *bodabodas'* areas of operation.

Throughout the studied regions, *bodaboda* associations were reported in cities and main towns. Both the local government and security agencies acknowledged the fact such association have become important vehicles for early warning, security information, crime investigations and at times identifying criminals as aptly put in the following extracts from a Key informant interviews;

Bodaboda youth have been victims and at the same time are seen as perpetrators of violence. This is because most theft cases reported to us involves *bodaboda* transport which make them the primary suspects. So to help them help themselves, there was a need to involve them and they have been provided with a very good support so far. They provide information and sometimes help police to track down the suspect. This pushed me to come with the idea of using these youth as intelligence personnel and I have targeted seven of their permanent stations (In-depth interview, Ward Police officer, Dar es Salaam, 17.8.2017).

In one of our meetings with leaders of *bodaboda* association based in our area, we discussed how to clean the image of *bodaboda* as perpetrators of insecurity and make them agents of peace and security (...) we agreed that that my office should facilitate the process of linking the with the Ward Police so as sensitize and train them on basics of security and formally recognize them as partners in controlling insecurity (In-depth interview, Local government official, Arusha, 24.8.2017).

In Dar es Salaam, the Police department mentioned that most of the crimes in the area are associated with *bodaboda* transport and this has created a negative perception towards them. Consequently, the department finds essential to involve them as a security structure so that they could monitor each other and prevent any misconducts. It was also recounted that, as a result of formally registering their stations, it has become easier for *bodaboda* members to recognize each other, and even being used as secret intelligence personnel by the police. Similar examples were cited in relation to the Nyamanoro and Igogo Darajani *bodaboda* groups in Mwanza. As noted earlier, this community structure shares some features with *Nyumba Kumi* as an ideal type. For instance, in terms of functions, just like *Nyumba Kumi*, *bodaboda* associations

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perform functions related to early warning, intelligence, and conflict management among its members just to mention a few. Other scholars would refer to this as the means by the police to penetrate into, or put the *bodaboda* community under surveillance (see Purdeková, 2016).

Nonetheless, as agents endowed with creativity in their actions, *bodaboda* youth confirmed that through the associations, they are able to negotiate a wide range of opportunities. Besides improving their own security and working conditions which would in turn boost their earnings, membership to the association is considered to allow for re-claiming desired identities, as captured in the following excerpts;

(...) three *bodaboda* were stolen in different occasions in Changanyikeni (...) it was *bodaboda* youth who helped chasing the thieves and we were able to recover the motor cycles and apprehend the thieves. Also, sometime back, at the University of Dar es Salaam community leaders in collaboration with Changanyikeni community decided to patrol the forest area to find out the whereabouts of thieves (...) we were part of the patrol team together with the police and auxiliary department (...) Sometimes people come to us for help because we are reliable and responsive (FGD, Leaders of *Bodaboda* and Bajaj, Dar es Salaam, 12.8.2017).

(...) You see we are parking here at the beach where different people come over (...) it is easier for us to report information about strangers whom we are suspicious about. Mind you among ourselves we know one another (...) we often report to the police especially the ones on patrol (FGD, *Bodaboda* youth, Dar es Salaam, 12.8.2017).

(...)Unfortunately criminals are increasingly using *bodaboda* especially with regards to theft (...) as a result there is wrong perception that all *bodaboda* youth are thieves(*wezi*) hence the government and police to consider *bodaboda* youth as criminals(*wahalifu*) (FGD, *Bodaboda* youth, Mwanza, 15.09.2017).

Against the view that *bodaboda* youth are perpetrators of crimes, youth have been striving to acquire desired images in their communities. Findings suggest that through their associations, *bodaboda* youth creatively seize whatever opportunity to redefine their identities in the eyes of the community as illustrated in the passages below;

(...) we provide security information and we even support the community. For instance, it happened that a house caught fire at night close to where we are parking ... it was us the *bodaboda* youth who were the first to assist in controlling the fire and evacuating some of the properties. Through such things the people

around us value our presence (*wanajali uwepo wetu*) in one way or the other (FGD, *Bodaboda* youth, Dar es Salaam, 15.9.2017).

You see we are born here and our life is typical of the coastal people valuing good neighbourhood (*ujirani mwema*). So as youth we also feel some sort of responsibility that we are obliged to safeguard our homes (*kulinda nyumbani kwetu*). But we are already tainted by the fact that *bodaboda* is involved in criminal acts so we feel responsible to clear our name (*kusafisha jina letu*) and we do so by collaborating with the police and where necessary undertake thorough search to get the people responsible (FGD, *Bodaboda* youth, Dar es Salaam, 15.9.2017).

The above passages shed light on what motivates youth to actively participate in community security initiatives. As noted earlier, security is one of the reasons but not the only one. Struggling to maintain a good name in the community is another motive. In the manners of Bourdieu's conception of capitals, youth are also concerned with their symbolic and social capital (Bourdieu 1990). The findings corroborate with sound perspective in contemporary youth studies which approach youth as agents capable of navigating constraints towards realizing their potentials in the society (See Christiansen et. al., 2006; Durham, 2000; Honwana and De Boeck, 2005, Sambaiga, 2017).

Conclusion

The above exploration of changing images of *Nyumba Kumi* as a community security infrastructure in Tanzania, and the implications for youth engagement in countering violence at community level, suggests several tentative conclusions about the resilience of this institution. The most outstanding conclusion is that there is both great change and continuity of the core structure and functions of *Nyumba Kumi* in Tanzania. These dynamics have allowed for communities and the government of Tanzania to harness security potentials of *Nyumba Kumi* in a context where the latter is ideally 'delinked' from the (local) government administrative structure. Indeed, the potential and framework for (re)aligning *Nyumba Kumi* in the local government structure is provided by the existing Local Government Act of 1982, and it has been creatively harnessed in Mwanza. Consistent with the institutional resilience framework it is further concluded that the spirit of *Nyumba Kumi* is evident in the present community security initiatives such as neighbourhood watch and *bodaboda* groupings. Beyond the discourses that freeze youth into the category of perpetrators of violence, it is also affirmed that young people can strive for desired and socially acceptable images through their engagement in community security infrastructures. Given the emerging trends and patterns of violence in Tanzania, and the East African region at large, it is important to promote various forms of community level structures such as

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Nyumba Kumi as spaces for formal and informal engagement of youth and other actors in countering violence.

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Notes

1. For a critical reflection on the ambivalence of *Nyumba Kumi* and how it can be manipulated for different ends, see Andrea Purdeková (2016) “Mundane Sights of Power: The History of Social Monitoring and its Subversion in Rwanda”
2. Introduced in the 1960s by the ruling party TANU (the Tanganyika African National Union, currently in power as CCM, or ‘Party of the Revolution’)
3. Although the concept of resilience is increasingly dominating, scholarly and policy discourses in the field of counter violence and peace building, it is often used in a less reflected and partially problematized fashion. Originating in field of ecology, resilience has recently been extended across disciplines both in the natural and social sciences. The concept of resilience has been applied in a variety of settings (e.g., psychology, psychiatry, ecology, social science, economy, and engineering) for several decades (Renschler et al. 2010, Rose 2009). Resilience can be defined as: “the ability of an entity — e.g., asset, organization, community, region — to anticipate, resist, absorb, respond to, adapt to, and recover from a disturbance.”
4. For an anthropological perspective on the creative dimensions of human action, see Hallam and Ingold’s (2007) *Creativity and Cultural Improvisation*.
5. For a rigorous sociological treatment of the creative character of social action, see Joas’ (1996) *The Creativity of Action*.
6. As a popular term in the contemporary times, creativity is frequently used in the field of business and organizational management to imply novelty or innovation (Hallam and Ingold, 2007; see also Sambaiga 2013:55-6).
7. *Nyumba Kumi* has been adapted in Kenya in the strict sense of adapting it, whereby it has been aligned in the local government structure. This was justified by the successes realized by *Nyumba Kumi* in addressing security challenges especially in terms of early warning and proactively addressing insecurity in Tanzania (see Andhoga and Movole, 2017; Kioko 2017).
8. Following Max Weber’s conception of the spirit of capitalism in the Protestant ethics, I consider the notion of the spirit of *Nyumba Kumi* to as a useful ideal type in tracing new forms of *Nyumba Kumi* in community security initiatives in Tanzania.

9. For a thorough and critical overview of the dynamics of *ulinzi shirikishi* in Tanzania, see Cross (2016). *Ulinzi Shirikishi: Popular Experiences of Hybrid Security Governance in Tanzania*.
10. According to Bishop and Amos (2015: 8), the number of motorcycles in Tanzania was estimated at about 800,000 in 2014 while number of motorized tricycles was over 50,000. "Many motorcycles and motorized tricycles are used as taxis, and are known as 'boda-bodas' and 'bajajis' respectively"

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