

Insecurity and Conflict Management in Urban Slums:

**Findings from a Household Survey
in Kawangware and Korogocho, Nairobi**

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Key findings and recommendations

This report summarizes key findings from a household survey in Korogocho and Kawangware, Nairobi. High insecurity is a key concern in both settlements, pointing to the need for sustained efforts to improve security in both areas. Residents in Korogocho were more likely to have experienced more violence in the neighbourhood, and they had witnessed or been victims of crime, than those in Kawangware. Conversely, more respondents in Kawangware than in Korogocho reported they had experienced violence during a public protest or march. This pattern is in line with the sense that Kawangware has been a more politically contentious area than Korogocho in recent years and also experienced large-scale political protest during 2023. Despite respondents' frequent experience with crime, they reported relatively low levels of fear of experiencing crime, pointing to a normalisation of insecurity.

1) The sources of conflict in the settlements are diverse, yet intersect

Conflicts between spouses, landlord-tenant conflicts, and conflicts involving gangs/vigilante groups are reported to be the most frequent forms of conflict in the settlements. The latter two often intersect with politics and can spill over into election-related violence. Economic interest, housing, criminal interests and political issues are listed as what the conflicts concern.

Given the intersecting nature of the issues that drive conflict and insecurity, there is a need to address these challenges with attention to how conflict dynamics are connected.

2) Trust in police is low, but the police is not irrelevant

Residents in Korogocho and Kawangware have low trust in official security authorities, echoing findings from other surveys in Kenyan slums. Notably, of the different actors relevant for local security, police enjoy the lowest trust. Few respondents were familiar with community policing, which stands in stark contrast to official government policy, which emphasises community policing as a key component of the security infrastructure. Comparatively, Community Policing Committees are more known and trusted in Korogocho than in Kawangware.

Despite low trust, 80% of respondents in Korogocho said people turn to the police in conflicts over crime. Only 61% responded so in Kawangware, whereas the local administration was considered more relevant for these conflicts in Kawangware than in Korogocho.

3) The fear of being evicted from the place of living is high, and more so in Korogocho where land ownership is less formalised and land not privately owned

Affordability is the most important positive aspect of living in both areas. Yet, tenure is seen as more secure in Kawangware than in Korogocho and 1/5 of the residents in Korogocho worry they may at any time be forced

to leave their accommodation. This could be due both to different levels of private ownership of land, which is much higher in Kawangware, and different dynamics around slum upgrading and evictions. While upgrading is ongoing in both areas, in Kawangware it is piecemeal and due primarily to private initiatives/investments, whereas slum upgrading in Korogocho has been government initiated and involves a complicated process of land formalisation as well as large-scale evictions.

Residents in both areas saw the local administration (such as the local chief or county commissioner) as most relevant for addressing conflicts related to land or housing.

4) More transitory areas pose challenges for conflict management

In Korogocho there is overall more familiarity with potential conflict management actors, such as Community Policing Committees, Nyumba Kumi and landlord/tenants associations, and in this area there is also higher trust in relevant conflict management actors. On average, people in Korogocho have resided longer in the settlement than people in Kawangware have. This pattern suggests that awareness-raising efforts about conflict management are particularly important in more transitory areas.

5) The experience of living in slum areas influences women and men differently

We see a persistent gendered pattern in that women rate their experience of living in the slum settlement more negatively than men. Women on average rated their living conditions lower than men, saw fewer positive developments in their area of residence, and expressed more fear of insecure housing conditions. Women also were more likely to have witnessed or experienced crime, and reported higher levels of fear.

Introduction

In the context of rapid urban growth, when cities expand without proper planning that can meet the needs of a quickly increasing urban population, many urban residents end up living in low-income, densely populated slum areas. Many settlements have grown organically due to population pressure, and display a mix of more developed parts and areas characterized by slums, but basic infrastructure and services are usually in a very bad shape. When you add the problems of insecure housing, poverty, and high unemployment rates, these conditions can become breeding grounds for increased crime and conflicts (Gizewski and Homer-Dixon 1995; Moser and McIlwaine 2014; Kunkeler and Peters 2011).

In such settlements, what do residents see as main sources of insecurity and conflict? And what type of conflict management structures do residents turn to, in order to address and cope with different forms of insecurities? These questions are critical to understand as urban residents are not evenly affected by insecurity and violence. Apart from individual-level factors such as gender and educational background, the coping strategies available are also dependent on how easily accessible existing conflict management structures are, and how legitimate they are in the eyes of the population.

In this report, we focus on findings from a survey carried out in two of Nairobi's settlements, Kawangware and Korogocho. These are large settlements in Nairobi, characterized, at least in part, as slums due to being low-income and densely populated. They exhibit varying level of informality: while Korogocho is an informal settlement built on government land (Kamunyori 2016), most of the land in Kawangware is privately owned. However, not all landowners in Kawangware are in possession of recognized title deeds, and plots have often been subdivided informally, without planning regulation (McDermott et al. 2021). Both settlements to a large part consist of low-quality houses without sufficient access to clean water, sanitation, and adequate living space, and thus mirror UN-Habitat's definition of slums and informal settlements (UN-Habitat 2015). In addition, both settlements are opposition strongholds. In the most recent election, 2022, opposition leader Raila Odinga gained 68% and 79% of the presidential vote, respectively, in the two constituencies that Kawangware and Korogocho belong to (Daily Nation 2022).

In the survey, we asked residents about their living conditions, and insecurity and conflict in the two settlements. We also asked about different conflict management structures and the respondents' trust in different state and non-state actors. In the following, we begin by situating our survey by describing results from previous similar studies. Next, we describe the context and procedure of our survey in Kawangware and Korogocho. The following sections summarize key results under three themes: General living conditions, insecurity challenges, and local conflict management structures.

Situating the survey: Insecurity in low-income urban areas in Kenya

Socio-economic exclusion, poverty and poor service delivery affect Kenya's population unevenly. It is estimated that around a third of the population live in poverty (Zikhali 2023), many of whom reside in densely populated urban settlements characterised by informality, absent or dysfunctional infrastructure, and substandard housing. In 2020, it was estimated that about 50% of the urban population in Kenya resided in slums, which is on par with the average share in Sub-Saharan Africa (UN-Habitat 2022: 248).

Nairobi, Kenya's capital, offers a suitable context to analyse insecurities in slum areas and the local conflict management structures residents resort to in order to address and cope with such challenges. Since independence from British rule in 1963, Nairobi has grown at a rapid pace, with the number of inhabitants increasing from around 340,000 at independence to 2,1 million in 1999 and 4,4 million in 2019 (KNBS 2019a; Mitullah 2003). More than half of these urban residents live in slums (UN-Habitat 2005; Wamukoya et al. 2020). According to a report from the African Population & Health Research Center, there are over 100 slums and informal settlements in Nairobi (APHRC 2014). Some of these – like Kibera and Mathare – have been major flashpoints of intergroup violence, in particular in connection to elections (Elfverson and Höglund 2019; Ruteere et al. 2013; Ondere 2022; Musya, Matanga, and Amutabi 2017).

Several surveys have mapped the vulnerabilities of the populations living in Kenya's poor urban settlements and the types of insecurity they face.¹ The Nairobi Victimization Survey (Stavrou 2002), a citywide survey that aimed to capture insecurity across Nairobi, documented high fear of crime and low trust in the police. Focusing specifically on slum residents, a World Bank survey covered two Nairobi settlements: Korogocho and Viwandani, with a total 894 respondents, in March 2009. The survey documented a high level of insecurity facing residents, with 44% of respondents being victimized by either a robbery, assault, sexual abuse, or arson in the one-year time period before the survey (World Bank 2011: 222). Crime and insecurity were reported as the most important problems in the areas, followed by unemployment and, at a lower scale, sanitation.

Interestingly, the qualitative results from the World Bank survey suggest important interlinkages between insecurity and other challenges. It also finds that limited policing capacity and lack of street lights raised the risk of crimes to occur (World Bank 2011: 230). Overall levels of trust among neighbours were low, with 55% of respondents reporting that they would not trust their neighbours to look out for them (World Bank 2011: 232). It can be noted that this survey was conducted only a year after the intense post-election violence (PEV) that erupted in 2007–8, and which heavily affected Nairobi's slums (Waki 2008). Respondents also had very little trust in the state institutions (administration police, Kenya police and the chief), and much more confidence in vigilante groups (56%) to address crime and insecurity (World Bank 2011: 234).

Another survey, conducted by the Security Research and Information Centre (SRIC), covered four slum settlements across Kenya: Kibera (Nairobi), Bondeni (Nakuru), Manyatta (Kisumu) and Mishomoroni (Mombasa) (Musoi et al. 2014). The survey found that nearly all the 654 respondents – 98.8% – had witnessed crime in the three months preceding the survey. The survey recorded high levels of mistrust in the police, and many were afraid to report crimes, either for fear of police abuse, or fear that reporting would put them at risk from the criminals. Many respondents relied on non-state security mechanisms, including vigilante groups and community self-defence.

Similar results are present in other Kenyan cities. For instance, a study of urban violence in Nakuru county

¹ We focus here on studies that have included a focus on physical violence and conflict. There are also many surveys in urban slums or among urban residents that address health-related or environmental issues, including in Kawangware or Korogocho respectively (see e.g. Wamukoya et al. 2020; McDermott et al. 2021).

(with focus on low-income settlements in Nakuru Town/City, Naivasha and Molo) indicated that around 20% of respondents had personally experienced physical violence in the past six months. Around half of respondents reported they felt unsafe in public spaces (on the streets, markets, and public transport) (Wairuri, Chemlali, and Ruteere 2018: 37). In the survey, which covered 1780 respondents, unemployment, poverty, drug trade, and crime were cited as the most important causes of urban violence. Among actors that could help prevent violence, police enjoyed the least trust, whereas religious leaders and elders enjoyed high trust (Wairuri, Chemlali, and Ruteere 2018: 49).

Several studies look into the causes of insecurity in urban slums and informal settlements and have found evidence that poverty and ethnic heterogeneity interact in shaping levels of violence and crime in urban slums (Parks, Dodoo, and Ayernor 2014; Obala 2011). Qualitative studies indicate that conflicts – and violent political mobilization – often evolve around disputes between landlords and tenants, which become intertwined with politics as the former tend to belong to the historically politically dominant class and the latter to the opposition (Amis 1984; Obala and Mattingly 2014; Elfversson and Höglund 2019). Most of those living in Nairobi’s slums and informal settlements are renting their accommodation from landlords who have constructed houses on privately or publicly owned land, many of whom are absentee landlords (Kamunyori 2016). A World Bank survey conducted across 15 urban areas in Kenya in 2013 found that in informal areas, 91% of residents rented their accommodation, 7% owned the land and the structure, and 2% only owned the structure only. In Nairobi, the percentage of the population renting was even higher (96%) and a smaller share (3%) owned both the land and the structure (Gulyani et al. 2014: 38-39).

In addition to the issue of housing, studies have interrogated the conditions that shape violent mobilisation. Parks (2014) focuses on neighbourhood characteristics to explain violence across slums in Nairobi, and uses survey data to assess the applicability of social disorganisation theory. He finds that ethnic diversity in itself is not a significant driver of violence by strangers, but that poverty and residential stability in a neighbourhood is associated with violent victimization by strangers, suggesting that prolonged isolation and marginalization may cause the emergence of social structures conducive to violence (Parks 2014: 1827). In a similar vein, Obala (2011: VIII) argues that “the persistence of urban inequity well beyond colonialism into the present time has produced reinforced inequity in access to and ownership [of land].” These conditions have engendered land allocation processes based on corruption and ethnic kinship, which in turn have produced land conflict.

Beyond these studies focused on insecurity, violence and conflict, research has zoomed in on particular issues of relevance for urban development and the conditions of informal settlements. One study on slum upgrading in Kibera, Nairobi, investigates how slum-upgrading interventions shape community resilience. Using a combination of a survey data and focus groups, it finds that communities’ ability to cope with conflict and environmental risks is improved when slum-upgrading interventions help to build or reinforce social cohesion and the social contract among communities. To maximise positive impact, interventions also have to be multi-sector due to the connectedness of different risks facing slum residents (Mitra et al. 2017).² The importance of social capital for the coping strategies slum residents have at their hands to deal with risks and vulnerabilities is reiterated in survey research carried out in Kawangware and Kibera, Nairobi (Mpanje et al. 2022).

Striking among the surveys that have been carried out in Kenya’s urban settlements characterised by poverty and high population density, is the high level of crime and insecurity reported across the studies. The surveys also note varying levels of trust in state institutions, and generally low trust in the official security providers, including the police. These studies also point to the intersecting vulnerabilities between political violence, crime and housing insecurity as well as the challenges associated with efforts to improve urban living conditions – such as slum upgrading – that at least in the short-term risks creating social and political friction. Our study aims to further shed light on the predicaments of Nairobi’s urban residents by drawing on insights from two settlements that so far have not been compared.

² In Durban, South Africa, Patel finds that community participation in slum upgrading and access to housing reduce violence by consolidating local leadership, but may also cause conflict when allocation of housing is partly based on identity and networks (Patel 2013, 2016).

Korogocho and Kawangware: The settlements and the survey

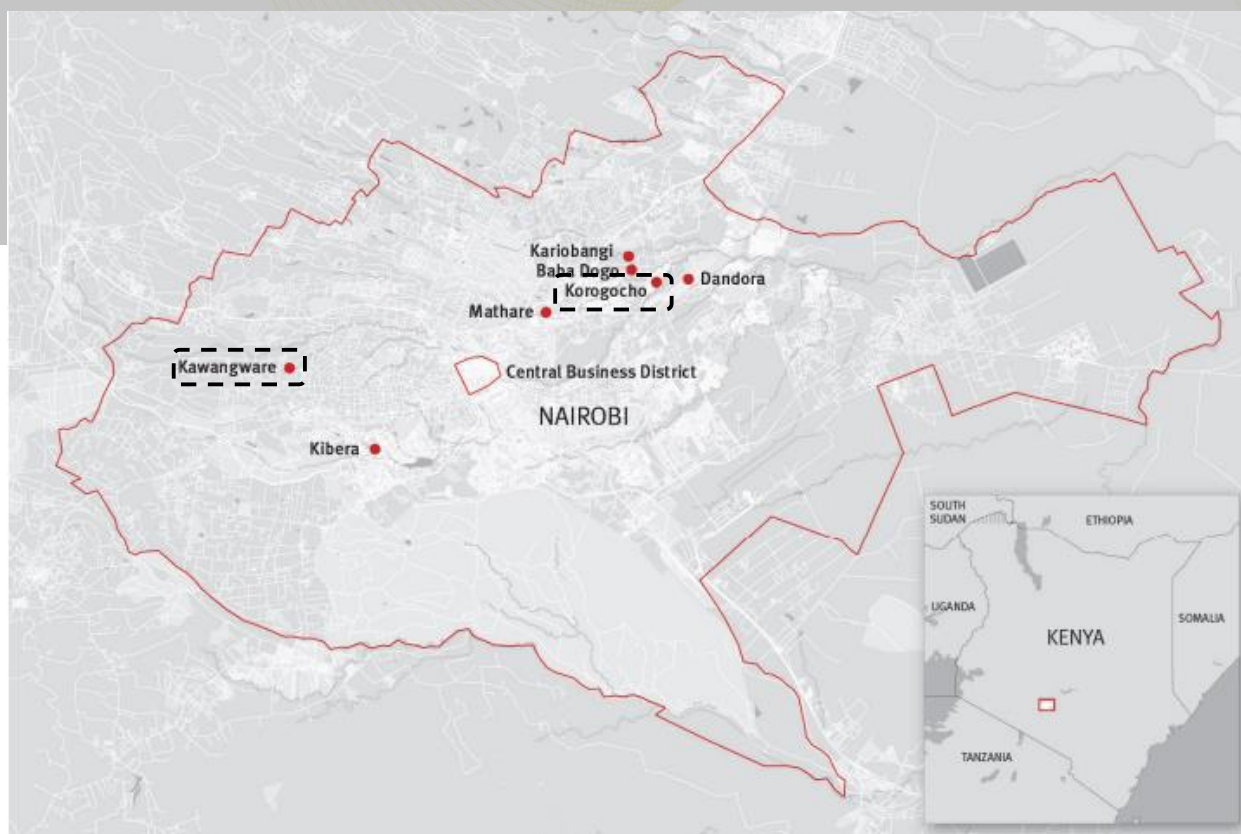
In this survey, we have focused on two settlements, Kawangware and Korogocho. They are similar in many regards, such as the distance from the city center and population density, but also differ on some dimensions, such as the extent of infrastructure and more permanent and multistory buildings, connectivity to nearby markets and other economic opportunities, and the historical origins of the settlements. Table 1 below provides an overview of the settlements, and Figure 1 shows their location within Nairobi.

Table 1. Case overview

	Kawangware	Korogocho
Size ⁴	Ca 4 km ²	Ca 1.5 km ²
Population (2019) ³	91 487	36 900
Density ⁴	38 762/km ²	42 401/km ²
Established	Around 1950	Around 1960
Land status	Primarily private, only small pockets of government land	Primarily government land, some private title deeds, and ongoing process of land formalisation
Government slum-upgrading program	No (only infrastructure like roads and sewerage)	Yes, 2008-(ongoing)
Subcity constituency	Dagoretti North (before 2013: Dagoretti, which was divided)	Ruaraka (before 2013: Kasarani)
Party with most votes in 2017 election	Opposition (ODM) Local MP: Paul Arati Simba	Opposition (ODM) Local MP: Tom J Kajwang'
Party with most votes in 2022 election	Opposition (ODM) Local MP: Beatrice Elachi	Opposition (ODM) Local MP: Tom J Kajwang'

³ Area size and population figures are from Kenya's 2019 census (Kawangware and Gatina locations, and Korogocho location, respectively) (KNBS 2019b). It should be noted that for various reasons linked to urban informality and politics of space, the census may not accurately reflect the actual size of the population; for instance, different sources have estimated the population of Korogocho much higher, between 60 and 120 000 (Informal discussion, Nairobi, 2023; Kamunyoru 2016: 79, 105). Marx, Stoker, and Suri (2013) argue that the population in informal settlements and slums is often undercounted, partly because it is not in the interest of those in power to recognize them.

Figure 1. Location of Kawangware and Korogocho



Based on original map from Amnesty and HRW (2017: i).

Kawangware is located within Dagoretti North Sub-county in Nairobi County. The name often refers to a larger area than Kawangware location only. Kawangware location – the focus of our survey – is divided into three sublocations: Kabiyo, Kawangware and Muslim, with the following breakdown illustrating the distribution of the population and households within the confines of Kawangware location:

Table 2. Kawangware population statistics (KNBS, 2019b: 236)

	Total	Male	Female	Households
KAWANGWARE	91,487	45,682	45,801	33,008
KABIRO	36,228	18,160	18,068	13,328
KAWANGWARE	30,587	14,581	16,002	10,893
MUSLIM	24,672	12,941	11,731	8,787

Kawangware is informally divided into ‘villages’ which is how most residents refer to where they live. Two main areas within the slum are called Kawangware 46 and Kawangware 56, named after old bus routes which are no longer in operation (Kahura 2017: 5).⁴ Kawangware is diverse; although it is overall a low-income area, the residents “range from low income residents to a lower tier of middle income tenants and fairly well off landlords and landowners” (Ayiera 2017: 33). Unemployment is high, but at the same time there are important economic interests at stake in Kawangware, in particular related to the market, which is the largest open-air market in Nairobi and where a lot of produce from rural areas is taken and sold (Ondere 2022).

⁴ Kawangware 56 borders Gatina location, which together with Kawangware location make up the larger settlement area that the name Kawangware frequently refers to.

Korogocho is located in Kasarani Sub-county in Nairobi County. Estimated to be Nairobi’s third or fourth largest slum, it is organised in nine villages: Ngomongo, Grogan A, Grogan B, Gitathuru, Highridge, Korogocho A, Korogocho B, Kisumu Ndogo, and Nyayo.⁵ Living conditions are dismal: Korogocho borders the largest dump site in Nairobi and population density is extremely high. The settlement has had “high levels of poverty and low levels of infrastructure development compared to other urban informal settlements” (MacAuslan and Schofield 2011: 13).

The Korogocho settlement is divided into three sublocations: Gitathuru, Korogocho, and Nyayo, with the following breakdown illustrating the distribution of population and households within Korogocho:

Table 3. Korogocho population statistics (KNBS, 2019b: 237)

	Total	Male	Female	Households
KOROGOCHO	36,900	18,967	17,933	11,757
GITATHURU	20,453	10,467	9,986	6,479
KOROGOCHO	8,351	4,304	4,047	2,567
NYAYO	8,096	4,196	3,900	2,711

Both Kawangware and Korogocho can be considered opposition strongholds, and host diverse ethnic populations, including large numbers of residents originating from Western Kenya (considered to be aligned with opposition leader Raila Odinga). In Kawangware, many landlords are Kikuyu (historically aligned with the ruling elite), reflecting the fact that the settlement has emerged on historically ancestral land, but there are also individuals from other communities who have leased or bought land to construct rental housing (Ondere 2022). In Korogocho, there are also many Kikuyu landlords, although the picture is more mixed (Kamunyori 2016: 96-97).

The survey

Data collection was carried out 8–22 June 2023. In total, 800 individuals participated in the survey, 400 in each location. The study employed a stratified random sampling approach, with the sub-locations of Kawangware and Korogocho serving as the primary sampling units (a more detailed description of the sampling and data collection procedure, including ethical concerns and how these were handled, is provided as an appendix).

Interviews were conducted face-to-face, and only under informed consent and on a voluntary basis. Only residents above the age of 18 were interviewed. Each interview was preceded by a consent procedure, where enumerators informed the research participant about the purpose of the project, that participation was voluntary, no direct benefits or compensation were forthcoming, and the interview would be discontinued if they so wished.

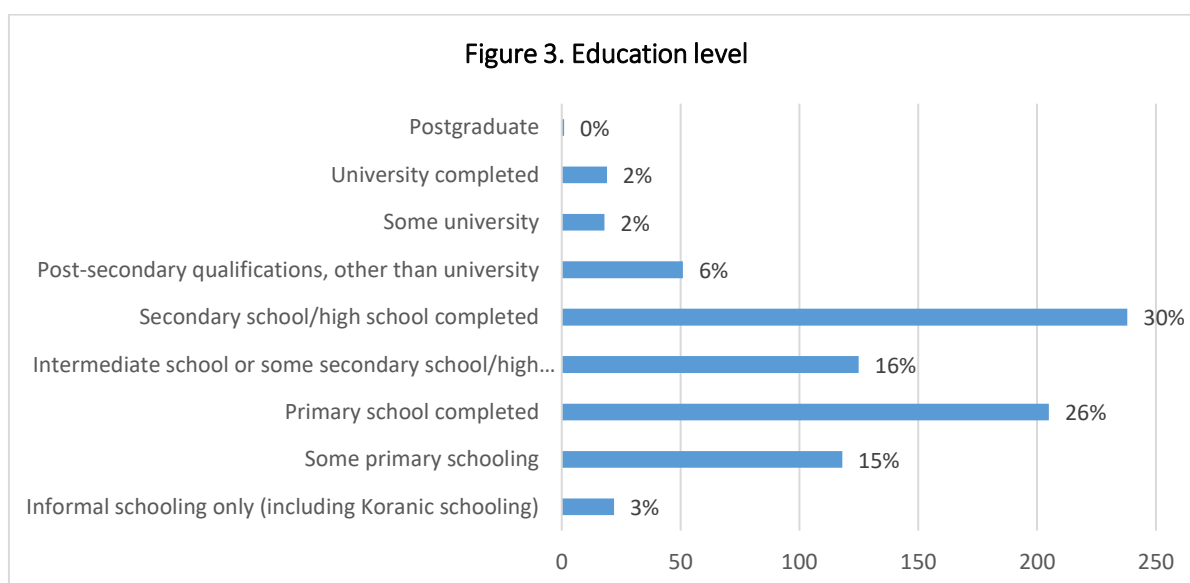
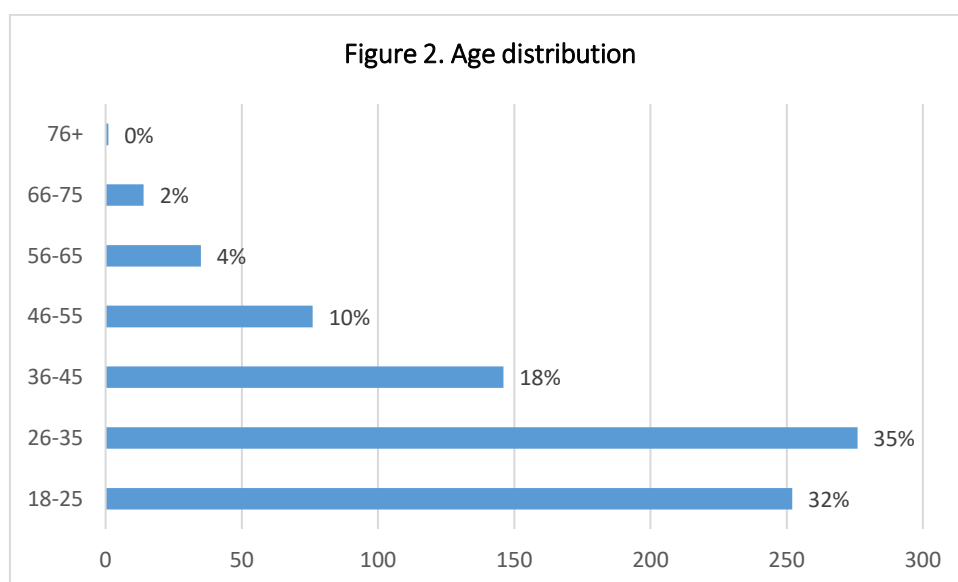
A survey validation meeting was held in Nairobi in November 2023, bringing together the project leaders and enumerators, as well as additional researchers with expertise on insecurity in Nairobi, to discuss the key findings and insights gleaned during the survey implementation. These insights have contributed to the analysis and interpretation of the findings.

⁵ Sometimes Ngomongo is excluded because it has more formal structures and is better off.

Descriptive characteristics of the respondents

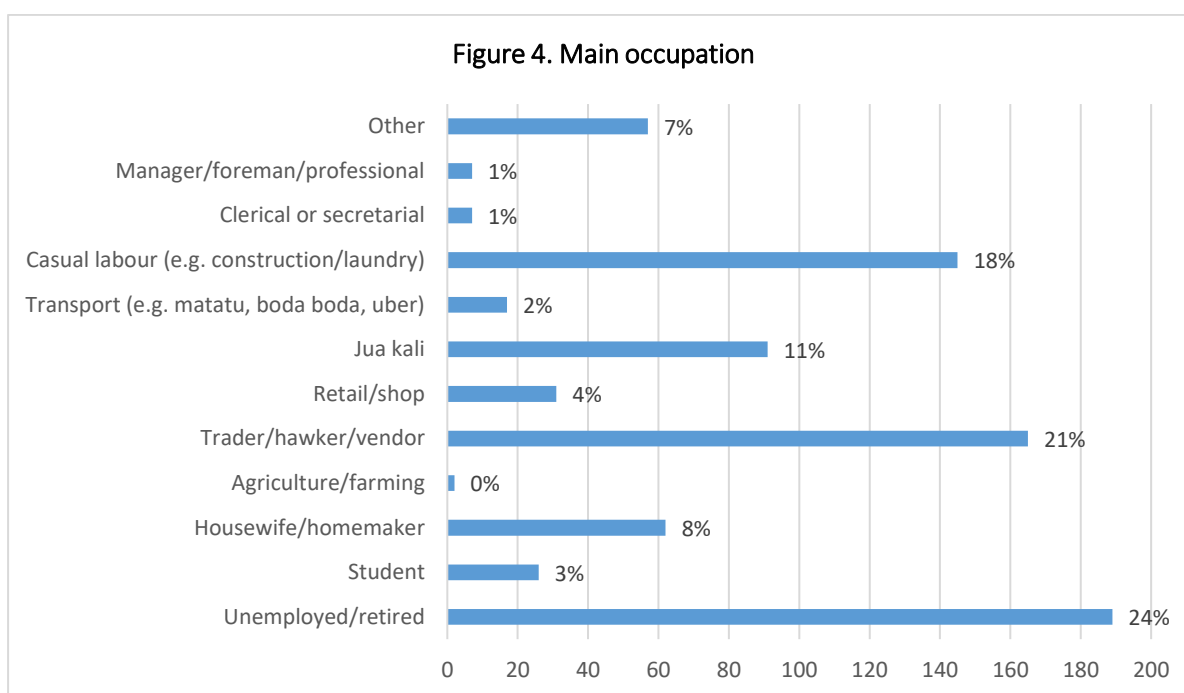
In this section, we describe the characteristics of the people who responded to the survey, both in graphical figures and in descriptive text. In all figures in this and subsequent sections, the distribution of responses is presented both as absolute numbers and percentages. Note that percentages are rounded and may not always add up to 100.

The age of respondents ranged from 18 to 80 (see Figure 2), with an average age of 33 years. In both settlements, slightly over half of the respondents were in the age category 18–34 years, that is youths according to Kenya’s constitution (Constitution of Kenya 2010, section 260). A majority of respondents had completed primary school and some intermediate/secondary schooling (see Figure 3). In terms of occupation status (Figure 4), a high proportion of respondents (24%) reported that they were unemployed or retired, while many worked in the informal sector – as traders/hawkers (21%), as casual laborers (18%), or in the jua kali sector (11%).⁶



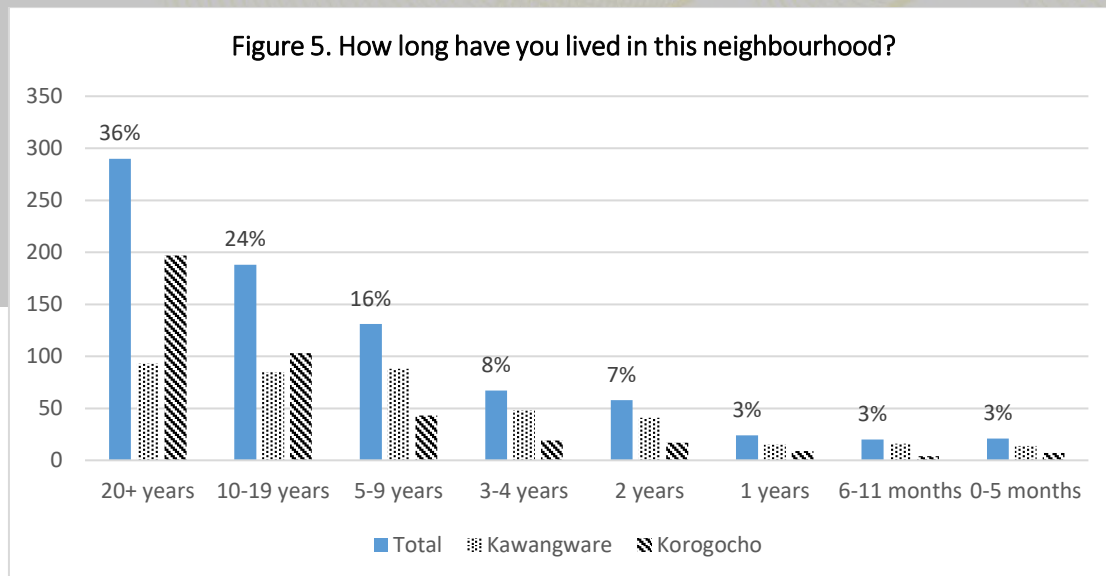
⁶ Jua kali literally means “hot sun” and refers to work in the informal sector operating outdoors, often on the streets.

The majority of respondents were women (two thirds, or 67%), although official figures indicate women make up about half the population in both settlements (see Tables 2 and 3 above). Deliberate efforts were made during the sampling process to enhance gender balance. Enumerators were instructed to follow the Kish grid selection method, which considers various demographic characteristics, including gender, to ensure a representative sample.⁷ Still, the end result suggests that male residents were more difficult to include in the survey, resulting in a somewhat skewed sample. The enumerators reported that especially young men were less likely to be found at home even with repeated visits, and also more often declined to participate in the survey. They also reported there were many women-headed households in the areas (out of the surveyed households with only one adult, 78% were women-headed). For these reasons, it is relevant to consider gender differences in responses to questions of interest.



We also asked respondents how long they have lived in the respective neighbourhood. As Figure 5 indicates, respondents in Korogocho had on average lived in the area for a longer period; notably, twice as many respondents in Korogocho had lived there more than 20 years. 19% of the respondents (108 in Korogocho, and 42 in Kawangware) reported they have lived in their respective area their entire life. Overall, these results indicate that Kawangware is a more transitory place of residence for many inhabitants.

⁷ Enumerators carried out household revisits when necessary due to the absence of all household members at once, aligning with the Kish grid selection. This involved up to four attempts per household, but some households were consistently inaccessible due to residents' work schedules.



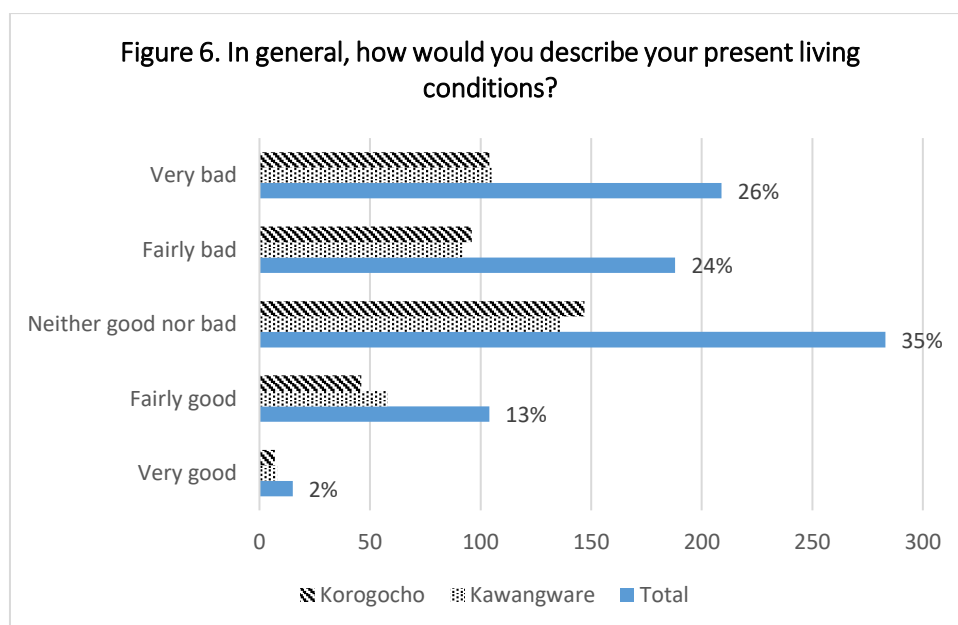
It is interesting to note that few of the respondents can be described as rural-to-urban migrants. Of those who had moved to the settlement, 47% had moved from another part of Nairobi, and 34% from another city in Kenya. Only 17% had moved from a small town or rural area in Kenya, while the remaining 2% had come from another country. However, many respondents had moved several times, and many of them may have initially moved from a rural area either to another part of Nairobi or to a secondary city. 544 of the respondents were born in another county than Nairobi, a majority of them in western Kenya.

The majority of those who had moved to the area (63%) had done so for work-related reasons, while others had moved for family-related reasons (26%), for education (4%), to get away from conflict or adverse climate conditions (1%) or other, individually-specific reasons.

Living conditions: What it is like to live in Korogocho and Kawangware

Few respondents in Kawangware and Korogocho are positive about their overall living conditions. As Figure 6 illustrates, half of the respondents rate their living conditions as fairly bad or very bad, 35% as neither good nor bad, while only 15% rate them as fairly good or very good. The perceptions vary somewhat by age, gender, and area. If the responses are considered as a scale from 1=very bad and 5=very good, youths (ages 18–34) rated their living conditions on average as 2.48 while those aged 35+ rated them lower, on average as 2.29. This difference between age groups is statistically significant.⁸ One reason could be that the younger group includes more respondents who have lived in the settlement their whole lives, whereas older respondents may to a higher degree compare to a previous life in a rural area or another settlement.

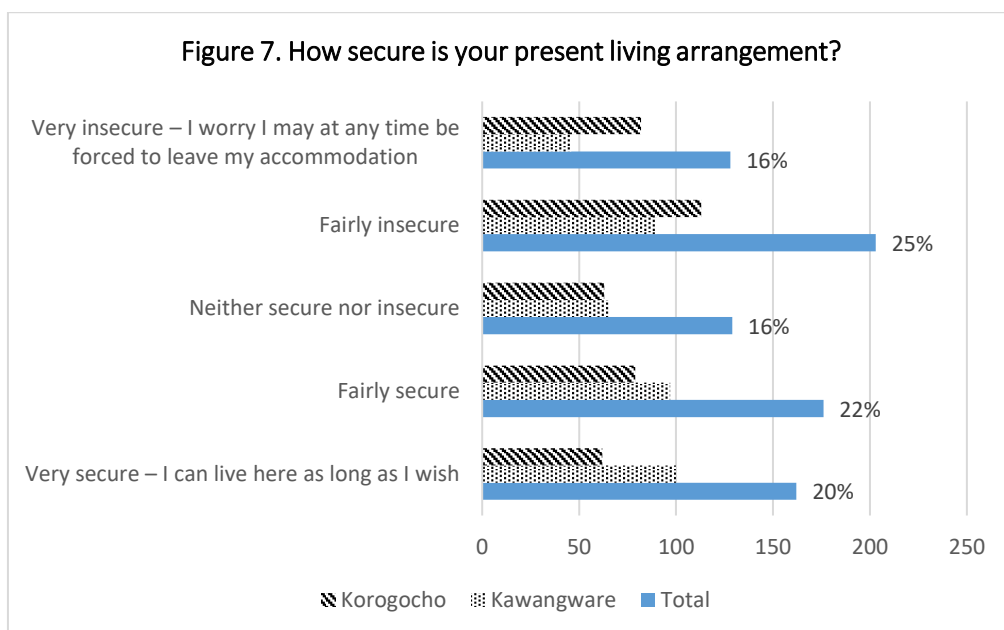
Considering gender, women on average rated their living conditions lower (average 2.38) than men (2.48), but this difference is not statistically significant. Finally, comparing the two neighbourhoods, respondents in Kawangware rated their living conditions slightly higher (average 2.43) than those in Korogocho (2.39), but the difference is very small and not statistically significant.



We also asked respondents about their tenure security, which revealed notable differences between the two areas (see Figure 7). More respondents in Korogocho than in Kawangware perceived their living arrangement as very or fairly insecure, and 21% of residents in Korogocho compared to 12% in Kawangware worry they may at any time be forced to leave their accommodation. The difference in perceived tenure security is statistically significant. These patterns are understandable given the different land status in the two areas: While land in Kawangware is private, Korogocho residents live on public land, and ongoing slum upgrading and recent forced evictions underline the risk of having to move. Notably, 600 households were evicted in 2021 (during the Covid-19 pandemic) from land belonging to the Nairobi Water and Sewerage Company bordering Korogocho (Nnoko-Mewanu and Abdi 2020). In addition, residents on public land are more likely to worry about future plans to develop the land, for instance, for the government’s Affordable Housing Scheme (Keya-Shikuku 2023).

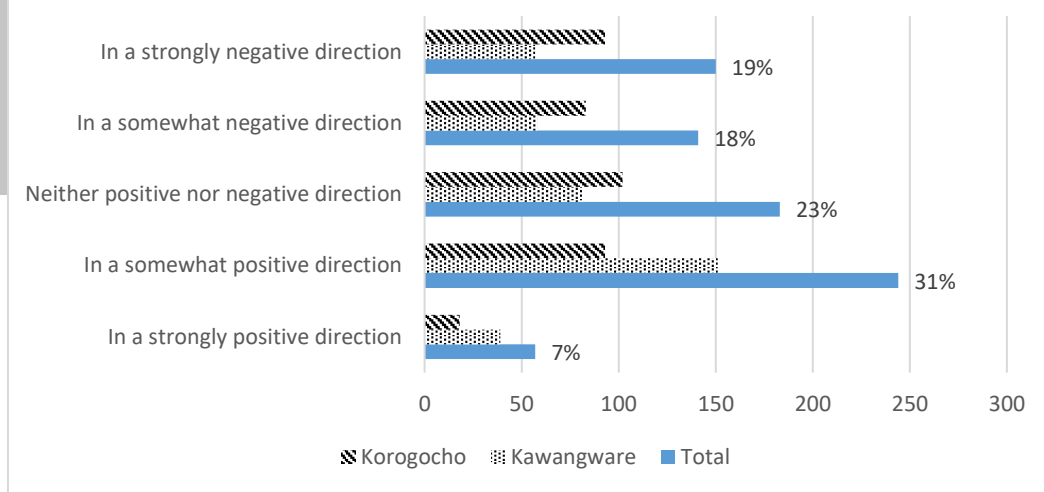
⁸ Statistical significance for difference in means was calculated in R using the rstatix package (Kassambara 2019).

Perceived tenure security also varied by gender and age: men and older respondents rated their tenure security higher than women and youths (the difference between men and women, but not between age groups, is statistically significant). In addition to the risk of mass evictions (due to slum upgrading or reclaiming of public land), many residents likely worried about the risk of household eviction due to inability to pay rent. In both areas, the vast majority of respondents (94%) stated that they were renting their accommodation. This pattern mirrors findings on tenure patterns across Nairobi documented by the World Bank (Gulyani et al. 2014). Due to the economic crisis in 2023, many households in these areas struggled to make ends meet and pay rent (Mburu 2023).



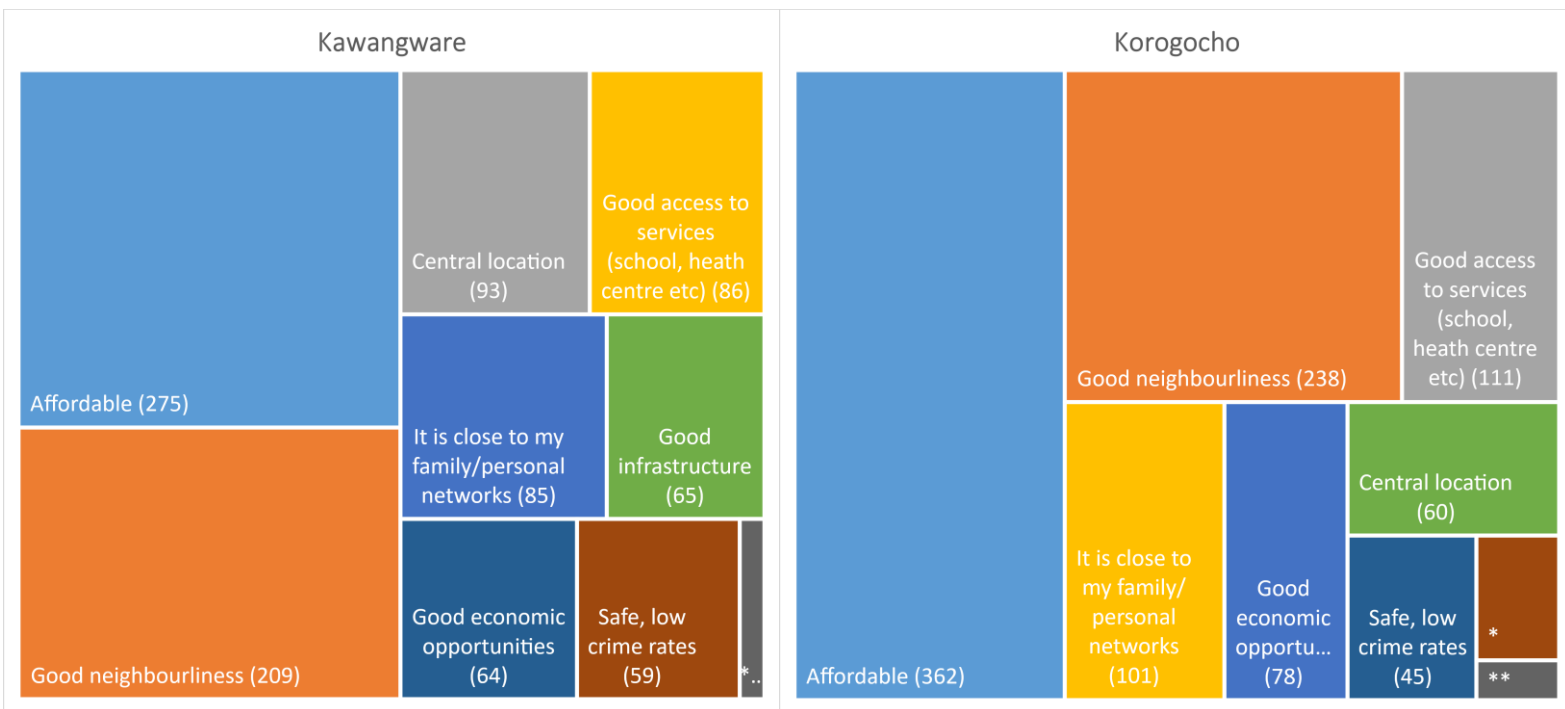
When asking respondents about how they felt the area they live in has developed over time, there are again quite clear differences between the localities, as shown in Figure 8 below. Respondents living in Kawangware were more likely to report that the area had developed in a positive direction, and vice versa. This difference is statistically significant. Women were overall more negative about the development (also a statistically significant difference), while there were less noticeable differences between age groups.

Figure 8. Looking back on the past five years, how do you think the situation in the neighbourhood has developed?



To get a more nuanced picture of residents’ perceptions about their area, Figure 9 and 10 shows what respondents reported to be the most positive, and most negative, aspects of living in Kawangware or Korogocho. Each respondent was asked to name up to three aspects for each question (the enumerators then coded the responses according to pre-set categories). In both locations, respondents cited affordability and good neighbourliness as the most positive aspects of living there. In third place, residents in Kawangware listed its central location, followed by good access to services, access to personal networks, good infrastructure, and good economic opportunities. In Korogocho, the third most listed was good access to services, followed by access to personal networks, good economic opportunities, and central location.

Figure 9. What do you consider the most positive aspects of living in Kawangware/Korogocho?



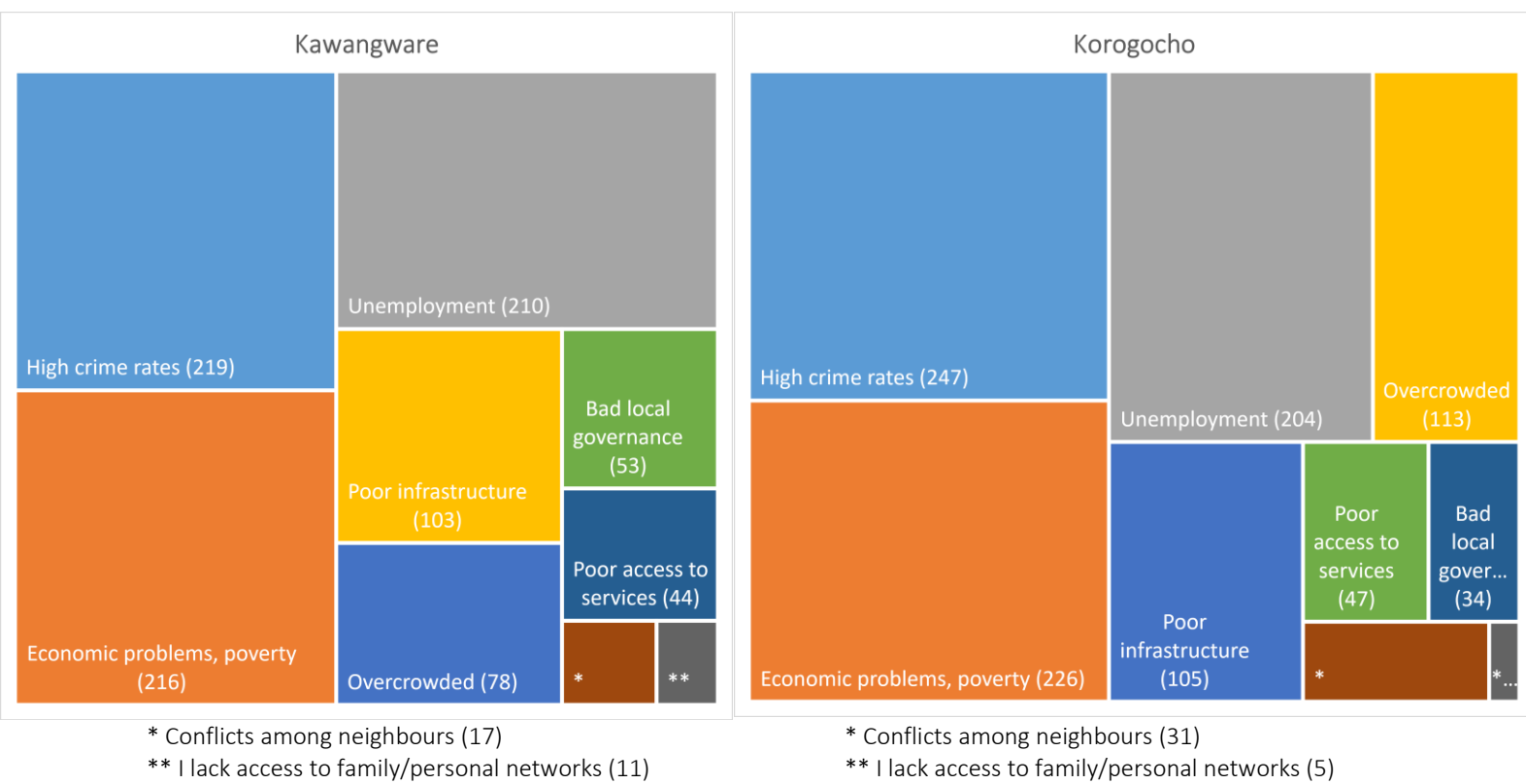
* Good local governance (eg local MP, MCA, administration) (9)

* Good infrastructure (22)
 ** Good local governance (eg local MP, MCA, administration) (7)

Least popular among the pre-defined categories was good local governance, which only very few mentioned as one of the most positive aspects of their area. During the survey validation, enumerators noted that most respondents did not seem to connect their overall living conditions to the performance of local governors. Among other responses that did not align with the pre-set categories were being close to places of worship and availability of water; some also responded that it was better than other places they had lived.

In terms of negative aspects, in both settlements, high crime rates and economic problems/poverty were the most cited issues (Figure 10). Also in both places, unemployment came in the third place, followed by poor infrastructure and being overcrowded (in the other order in Korogocho). Among other responses, many highlighted bad environmental conditions and high levels of drug and alcohol use in the area (the latter mainly in Korogocho).

Figure 10. What do you consider the most *negative* aspects of living in Kawangware/Korogocho?

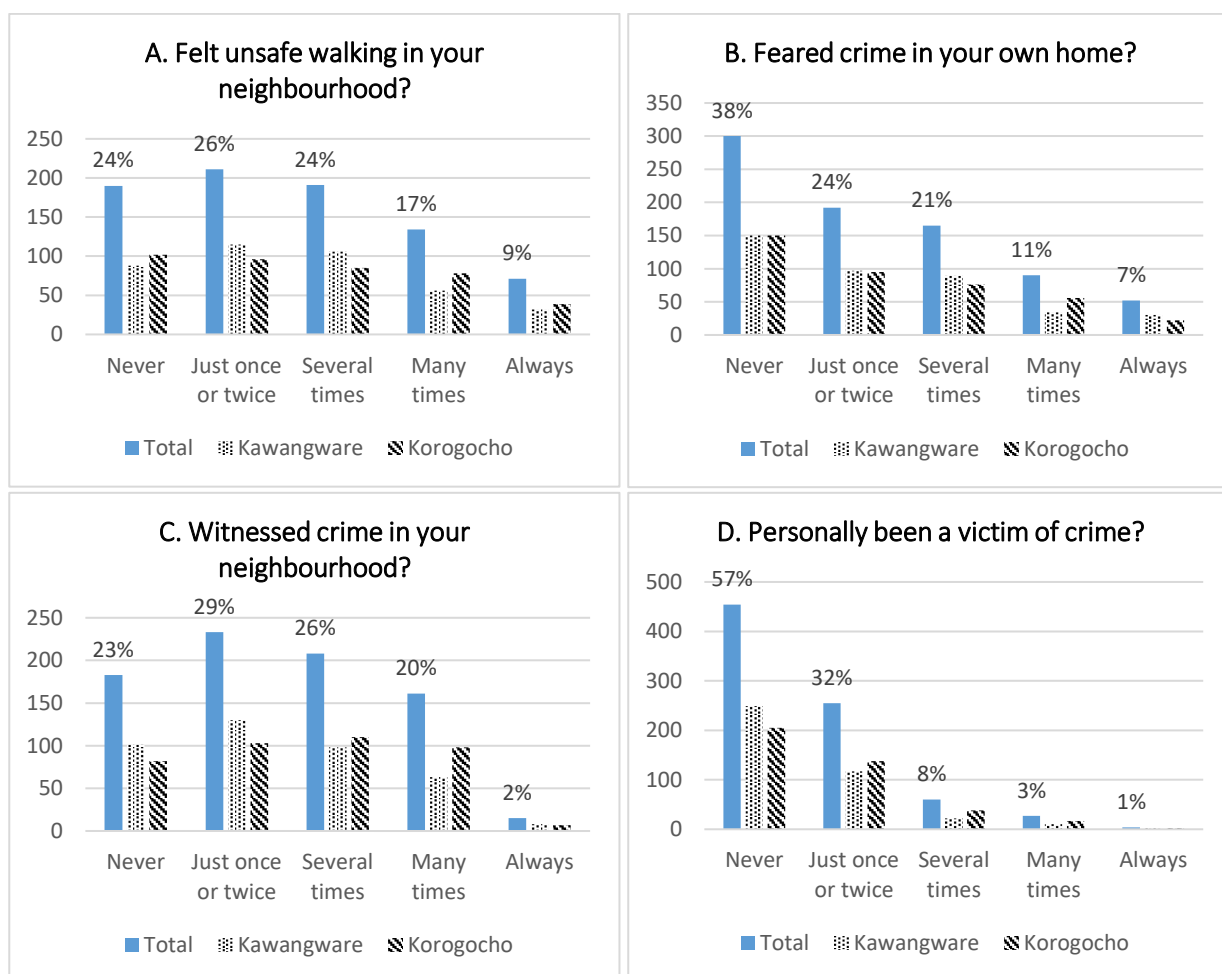


Security conditions and insecurities

Figure 10 above indicated that in both Kawangware and Korogocho, respondents cited high crime rates as the most negative aspect of living there. In this section, we focus on a series of questions that provide a fuller picture of how residents perceive insecurity and conflicts in their neighbourhoods.

First, we asked questions to understand the level of insecurity facing residents. We asked how often, in the past year, they had felt unsafe; feared crime; witnessed crime; and been a victim of crime. The results are presented in Figure 11. Overall, the results reflect a high level of insecurity in these areas: Around half of the respondents had felt unsafe walking in their neighbourhood several times or more, and a sizeable share had feared crime in their own home on numerous occasions.

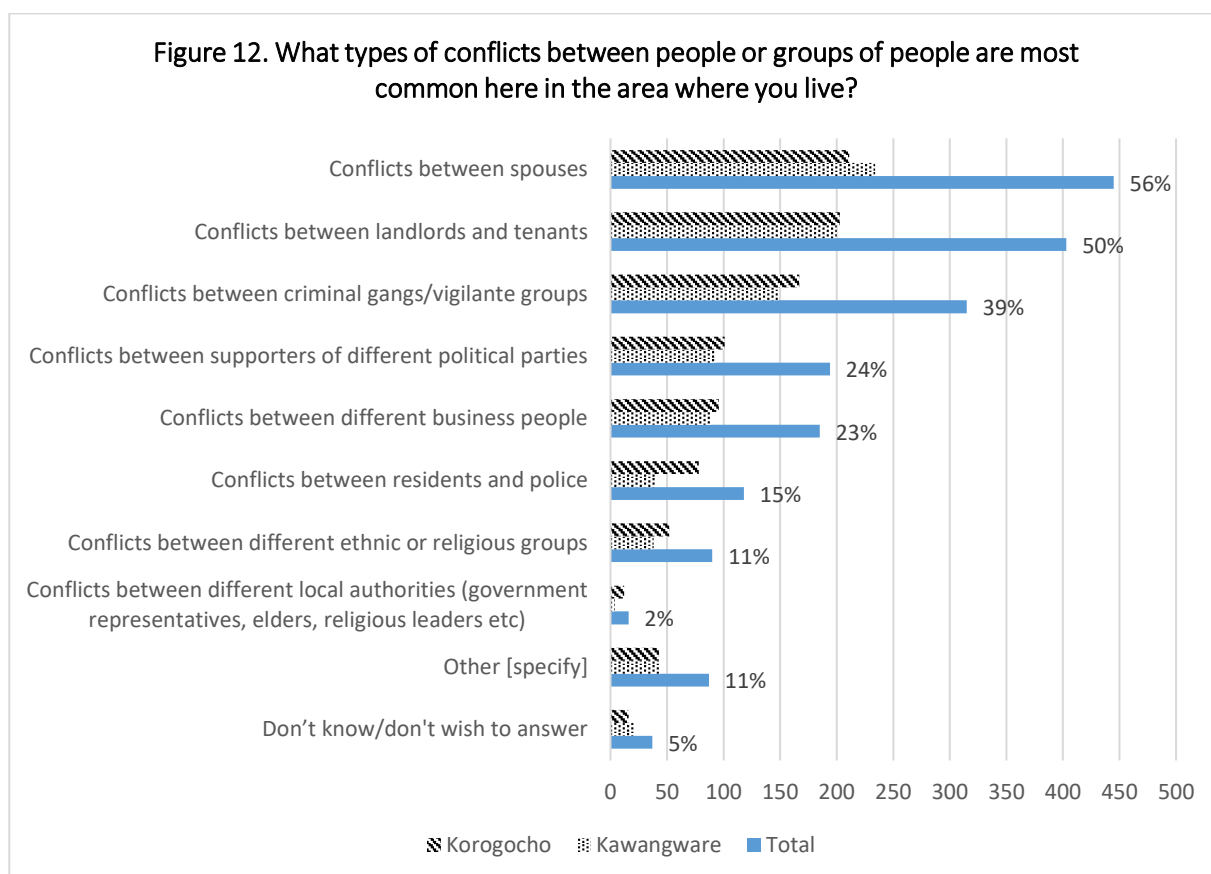
Figure 11. Perceived and experienced insecurity in the past year



Counterintuitively, the levels of reported insecurity were higher than the reported fears about crime reflect. 77% had witnessed crime in their neighbourhood in the past year, and 43% had personally been a victim of crime at least once. During the survey validation meeting, several enumerators recalled that when asked about crime, many respondents had remarked that it was something they considered as normal. This normalisation of insecurity in these settlements helps us understand why fear of crime was not reported to a higher degree, and also suggests that levels of witnessed crime may be underreported in the survey since it is considered routine and unremarkable.

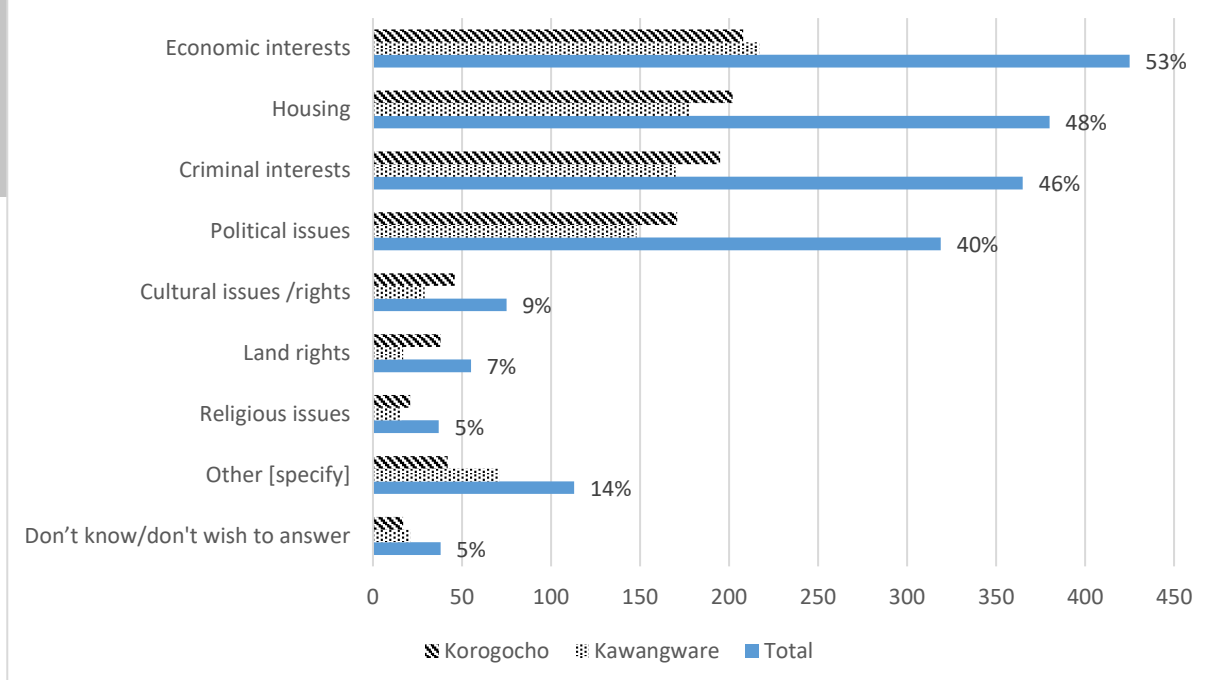
There are again some differences between the two neighbourhoods. Respondents in Korogocho reported slightly higher levels of fear (but the difference is not statistically significant), and were more likely to have witnessed or been victims of crime (these differences are statistically significant). There are no clear differences among different age groups, but women reported slightly higher levels both of perceived and experienced insecurity (but the difference is only statistically significant for fear of crime in the home).

To get a better understanding of the types of issues that could lead to insecurity and violence, we asked respondents about the nature of conflict in their neighbourhood. First, to get a sense of the actors and groups involved, we asked: “In any society, people will sometimes disagree with each other. What types of conflicts between people or groups of people are most common here in the area where you live?” Respondents could select up to three options (percentages denote the share of respondents that listed that option as one of their responses). The results are illustrated in Figure 12 below. In both areas, respondents report conflicts between spouses as the most common type of conflict, and conflicts between landlords and tenants as the second most common, followed by conflict between criminal gangs/vigilantes, conflicts between political parties, and conflicts between business people. Conflicts between police and residents, and conflicts between ethnic/religious groups are reported at a much lower scale, but for these types of conflicts it is notable that they are more frequently reported among residents in Korogocho.



We also asked about the issues of conflict: “When conflicts between people or groups of people occur here, what do they tend to be about?” The results are presented in Figure 13 and largely mimic the results above. Economic interest, housing, criminal interest and political issues are listed (in this order) as what the conflicts concern. The category “other” includes many who cited domestic issues, while a few mentioned drugs and “youth issues.”

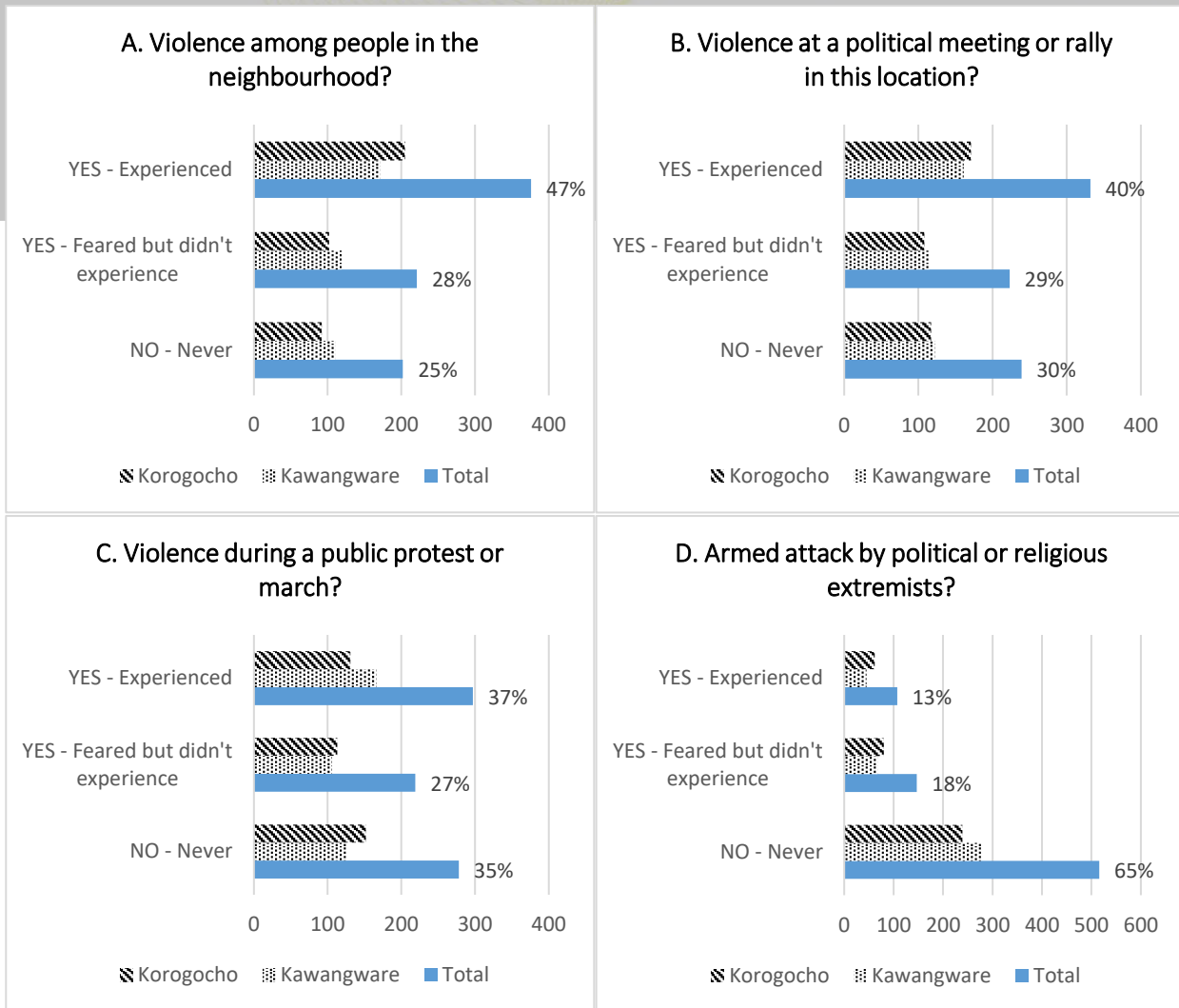
Figure 13. When conflicts between people or groups of people occur here, what do they tend to be about?



Only some tensions escalate into physical violence. To get a sense of violence dynamics, the respondents were asked the following: “In any society, people will sometimes disagree with one another. These disagreements occasionally escalate into physical violence. Please tell me whether, in the past two years, you have ever personally feared any of the following types of violence here in Korogocho/Kawangware?” Figure 14 shows that almost half of the respondents had experienced violence among people in the neighbourhood. More respondents reported they had experienced such violence in Korogocho than Kawangware. The question was framed in a broad way, and it is difficult to know if the pattern reflects higher level of domestic violence, street crime, political violence, or a combination of these. Previous studies have found robbery and assault to be the most frequent forms of crime in Nairobi’s slums (e.g. World Bank 2011). At the time of the survey, there had also been recent political protests in Nairobi, which had spilled over into violence between police and demonstrators as well as between residents, at least in Kawangware (Omulo 2023).

Focusing specifically on political violence, the results indicate that this form of violence represents a tangible threat: 332 respondents (42%) reported they had experienced violence at a political meeting or rally, and 297 of the respondents (37%) at a public protest, respectively, and many others expressed that they had feared such violence. More respondents in Kawangware reported they had experienced violence during a public protest or march, compared to Korogocho. By contrast, the clear majority reported they had neither feared nor experienced extremist attacks in the area, although the fact that over 100 people reported to have experienced such violence is notable.

Figure 14. In the past two years, have you feared, or personally experienced...?



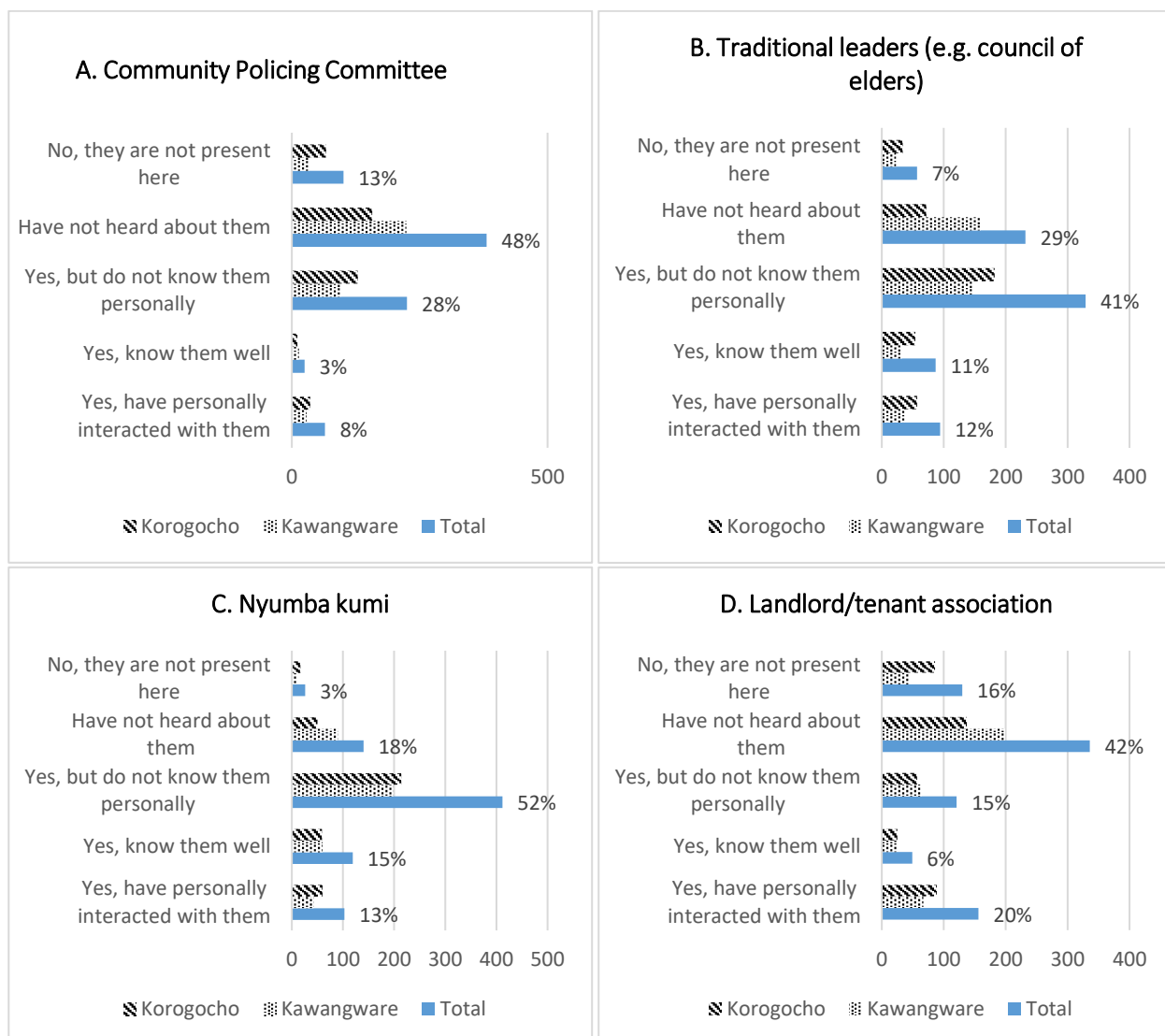
In a follow-up question, those who stated they had experienced violence were asked if that violence had influenced their political participation. Concerningly, 21% of respondents (23% in Korogocho, and 20% in Kawangware) stated that the violence had influenced them to vote for a specific party or candidate in an election, and 13% (15% in Korogocho, and 11% in Kawangware) reported that violence had prevented them from casting their ballot in an election.

Local conflict management structures: Who to turn to?

To understand the conditions for local conflict management and security better, we asked respondents about the presence of different state and non-state actors, who residents turn to, and their trust in different actors.

First, we asked whether respondents were aware of and whether they interact with some specific actors that engage in local conflict management: Community Policing Committees (CPC), Nyumba Kumi, traditional leaders, and landlords/tenants associations. CPC are organised by local police stations as part of an effort by the police to partner with communities in improving information sharing, responsiveness of the police to community needs and maintaining security, while Nyumba Kumi was launched as an initiative tasked with improving information sharing and collaboration at the neighbourhood level (Lid and Okwany 2020). Previous research and reports (e.g. Ayiera 2017; Mutahi 2021; Kioko 2017), as well as our own interviews in Nairobi, have indicated that these types of local state and non-state actors are important for handling everyday conflicts in settlements such as Kawangware and Korogocho, but not in any uniform manner.

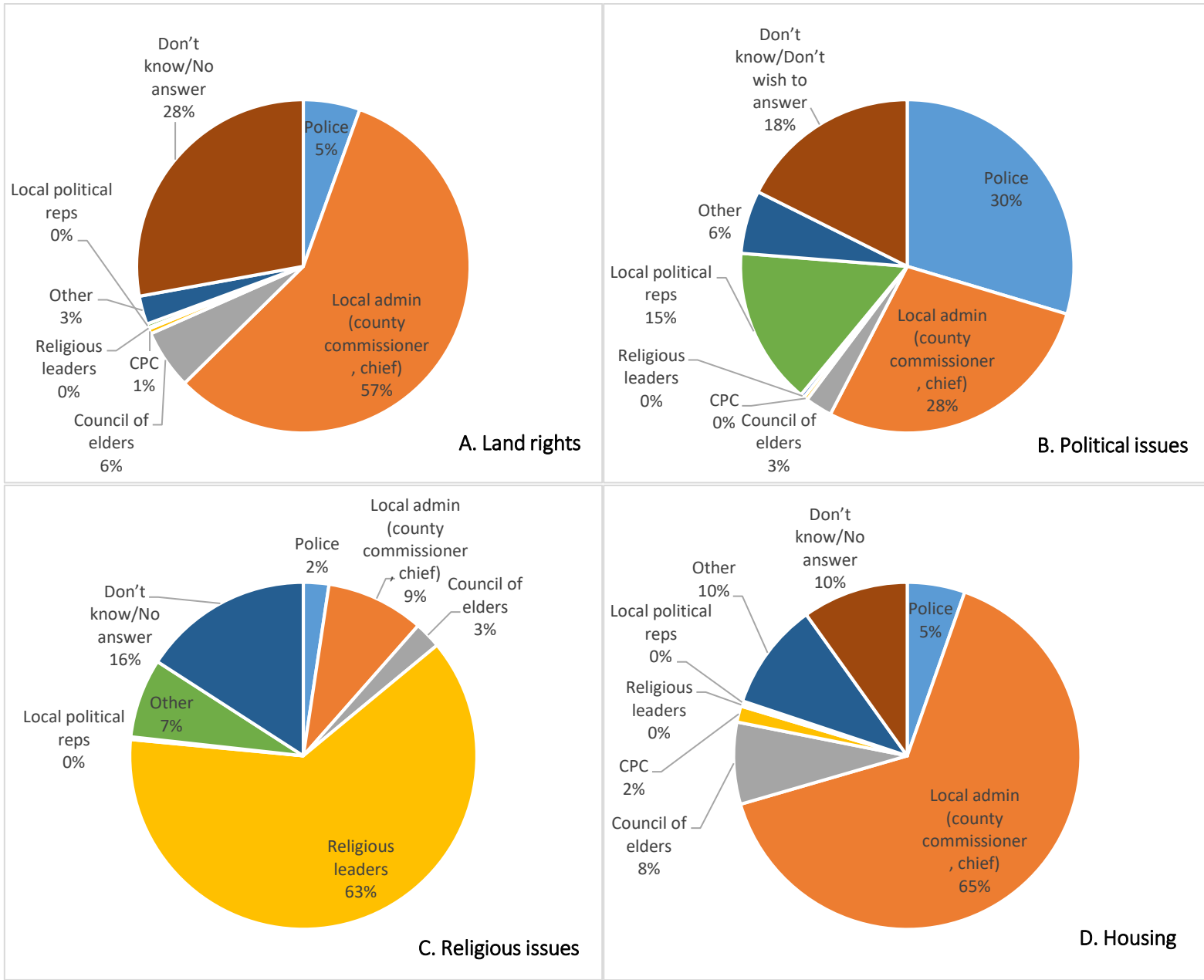
Figure 15. Do you know if the following actors are present in the neighbourhood?

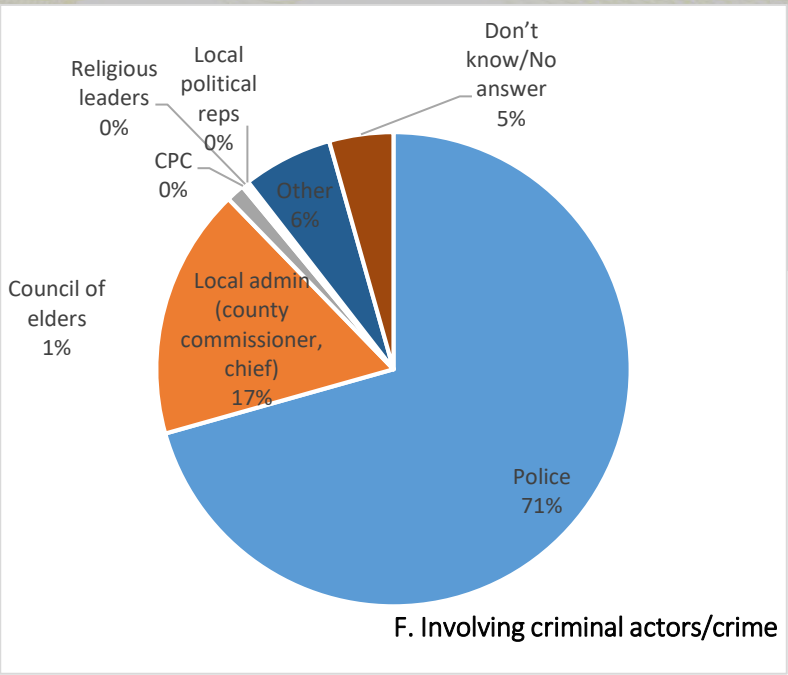
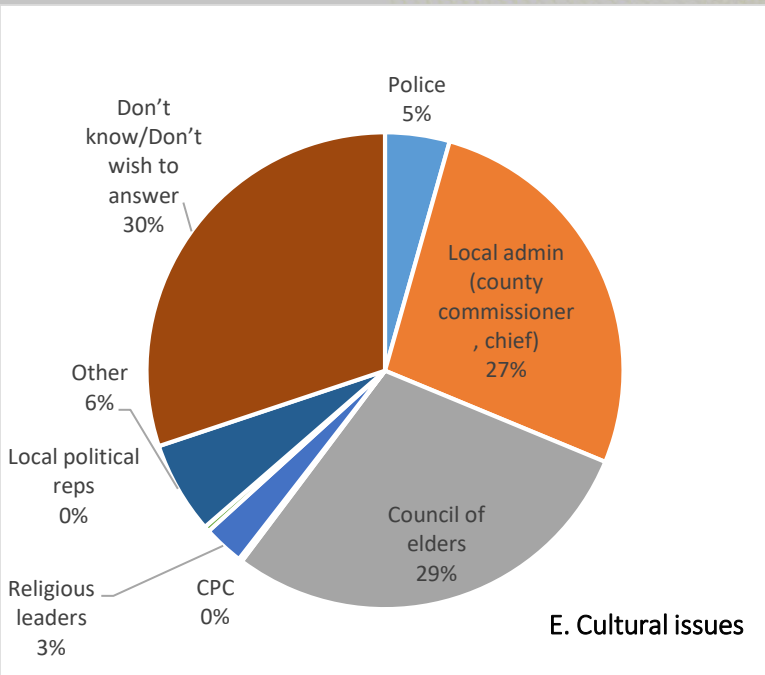


Overall, Nyumba Kumi and traditional leaders were most familiar to respondents, and few people reported they were absent in the area. As Figure 15 shows, all of the actors we asked about were more familiar to respondents in Korogocho than in Kawangware. 44% indicated they were aware of and/or had interacted with a Community Policing Committee in Korogocho, compared to 33% in Kawangware. Traditional leaders (in Kiswahili, formulated as “Viongozi wa kimila, e.g. Baraza la wazee”) were also more prominent in Korogocho, where 73% reported their presence, compared to 54% in Kawangware. 83% in Korogocho and 75% in Kawangware were aware of Nyumba Kumi, and 43% versus 39% knew about landlord/tenant association in their respective areas.

We also asked more directly which actors residents turn to in case of different types of conflict. Overall, the actors that stand out as most relevant for conflict management according to respondents are the local administration and the police. By contrast, few respondents indicated that locals would turn to community policing structures or local political leaders in any of the different conflict scenarios.

Figure 16. Who do people turn to in case of conflict over...?





Responses clearly indicated that residents saw the local administration, which here covers administrators at different levels such as the local chief or county commissioner, as most relevant for addressing conflicts related to land or housing. However, there are some differences between the areas; notably, 13% of respondents in Korogocho stated that people tend to turn to the council of elders, compared to only 2% in Kawangware. Perhaps unsurprisingly, religious leaders were identified as most relevant for handling conflicts over religious issues, and the police in cases of conflicts that involve crime or criminal actors. However, while 80% of respondents in Korogocho said people turn to police in conflicts over crime, only 61% responded so in Kawangware, whereas the local administration was more relevant for these conflicts than in Korogocho.

In conflicts over politics and cultural issues, the picture was most mixed. The police and local administration were reported as most relevant when conflict over political issues arose, while also local political leaders were highlighted here. Police were slightly more relevant in Korogocho, and the local administration in Kawangware. For cultural issues, the local administration and council of elders were reported to be most relevant in both areas, but there was also a high number of people who did not know, indicating that this is perhaps a less relevant type of conflict issue in these areas (in line with how locals described conflict patterns, summarized in Figure 12–13 above).

Closely related to who local residents tend to turn to for help in resolving conflict, is the issue of trust. We asked respondents how much they trusted different actors relevant for local security, with responses ranging from “Not at all” to “A lot” and the alternative response option “Don’t know/Not familiar enough with them.” We transformed the responses into a scale from 1 to 4, and in Table 4, we show the average level of trust for each actor. The table also shows the average level of trust broken down by different categories – gender, age, and neighbourhood. Numbers in bold indicate a statistically significant difference between the groups being compared.

The table indicates that overall, the level of trust in many of the actors we asked about is low. For instance, for the police, the average level of trust corresponds to around 2 or “Just a little.” In Kawangware, 39% responded they do not trust the police at all, and 38% reported the same in Korogocho. Community policing is intended to help improve police effectiveness and police community relations. Yet, only 13% in Kawangware, and 20% in Korogocho, answered that they trust the Community Policing Committee “somewhat” or “a lot.” Meanwhile, more than half (62% in Kawangware, and 42% in Korogocho) responded they do not know enough about the Community Policing Committee to answer the question. This stands in stark contrast to government policy, whereby “police officers by law bear the duty to bring together the stakeholders and facilitate the establishment of committees and structures to operationalize Community Policing at all levels throughout the country” (KNPS 2017).

Table 4. Trust in different actors

	Police	Community policing committee	Courts	Local MP	Local elders	Local religious leaders
<i>Mean - overall</i>	1.99	2.19	2.16	2.18	2.49	2.90
Mean - women	1.99	2.20	2.19	2.22	2.51	2.90
Mean - men	2.00	2.15	2.11	2.09	2.47	2.90
Mean - youth	1.95	2.14	2.20	2.07	2.49	2.83
Mean - 35+	2.06	2.26	2.10	2.35	2.50	3.01
Mean - Korogocho	2.03	2.21	2.25	2.21	2.57	2.97
Mean - Kawangware	1.96	2.15	2.08	2.14	2.40	2.82
<i>Non-responses</i>	8	436	45	76	160	22
<i>National average (Afrobarometer)⁹</i>	2.05	-	2.65	-	2.69	3.08

Residents in the settlements report low trust in the local Member of Parliament (MP), and as many as 33% did not trust the MP at all. Similarly, 31% of respondents did not trust the courts of law at all. While national surveys, such as the Afrobarometer, also suggest that Kenyan citizens have limited confidence in their elected politicians, the residents’ trust in the courts is much lower than the national average which in 2022 was 2.65¹⁰ (with 17% reporting they did not trust the courts at all) (Afrobarometer 2022). Meanwhile, local religious leaders enjoyed the highest level of trust. These findings resonate with other studies, for instance from urban areas in Nakuru (Wairuri, Chemlali, and Ruteere 2018), as well as with national results from the Afrobarometer survey.

Youths had lower trust in the local MP and religious leaders compared to older respondents. Women reported slightly higher trust in the local MP, courts, and community policing committees than men, but these differences are not statistically significant. Given that many studies have documented police profiling, harassment and even extrajudicial killings of male youth in Nairobi’s slums (van Stapele 2016; Mutahi 2018; Wairuri 2022; LeBas 2013), it is relevant to analyse this category specifically. The average level of trust in the police among male respondents below 35 was 1.93, i.e. slightly lower than the mean score for youth but not significantly different. A possible explanation is that even if male youth bear the brunt of police mistreatment in urban areas, such practices are observed by and inform the perceptions of the broader local community (cf. Elfversson, Ha, and Höglund 2023).

⁹ The Afrobarometer uses a set of questions about trust that are formulated in the same way, and include the same response options, as we had in our survey. However, in the Afrobarometer survey, the question asks about “traditional leaders” rather than “local elders.” Afrobarometer does not ask about community policing or the local MP (however, it does include questions about a set of other political actors – the President, County Governor, and Member of County Assembly) (Afrobarometer 2022).

¹⁰ Calculated in the same way, i.e. transforming the responses – ranging from “Not at all” to “A lot” – into a scale from 1–4.

There are some clear differences between the two areas: Overall, levels of trust in all actors were higher in Korogocho. The difference is particularly noticeable when it comes to the courts, local elders (in Kiswahili, formulated as “wazee katika eneo hilo”) and religious leaders (here, the difference between the two areas is statistically significant).

For local religious leaders, 35% in Kawangware, and 42% in Korogocho, responded that they trust them a lot. When it comes to elders, 49% in Korogocho – compared to only 31% in Kawangware – trust them “somewhat” or “a lot.” In Kawangware, but less so in Korogocho, a high number of respondents also said they didn’t know enough about local elders to answer the question. A possible explanation could be that respondents in Korogocho had lived there longer, and therefore had more time to establish a relationship with these types of local actors. Probing the data, some support is found for this notion; there is a positive and statistically significant relationship between the length of residence in either area, on the one hand, and trust in community policing and religious leaders, on the other.

Conclusions

Several important conclusions can be drawn from the survey. First, there are important differences between the areas in terms of how the residents rate living conditions, insecurity and local conflict management structures. For example, comparing the two neighbourhoods, respondents in Kawangware rated their living conditions slightly higher than those in Korogocho, and more residents in Kawangware reported that the area had developed in a positive direction. Notably, more residents in Korogocho have an insecure housing situation.

Overall, the survey results reflect a high level of insecurity in both Kawangware and Korogocho. But there are again noticeable differences between the two neighbourhoods. For example, residents in Korogocho report slightly higher levels of fear, and they are more likely to have witnessed or been victims of crime, than the residents in Kawangware.

In both areas, the actors that stand out as most relevant for conflict management according to respondents are the local administration and the police. By contrast, few respondents indicated that locals would turn to community policing structures or local political leaders in any of the different conflict scenarios. Trust in police is very low, although this is the actor most people report they would turn to in cases of crime and political conflict. Less than half of the respondents were aware of the existence of Community Policing Committees in their area, and only 33 % in Kawangware were aware of them or had interacted with them. Overall, levels of trust in all local conflict management actors were higher in Korogocho. This could be linked to people having lived longer in the area and being more familiar with relevant actors and networks.

While Kawangware and Korogocho are similar in many regards, important differences can help us make sense of the difference in how the residents in the two areas experience life in the settlements and ways to address insecurities. Respondents in Korogocho had on average lived in the area for a longer period, suggesting that Kawangware is a more transitory place of residence for many of its inhabitants. This feature helps to explain why many relevant conflict management actors are more familiar to residents in Korogocho than in Kawangware.

In addition, land in the two areas have different status: while most land in Kawangware is privately owned, land in Korogocho is primarily public. This condition has had a fundamental impact on how slum upgrading has transpired. While upgrading of roads and infrastructure in Kawangware has been in the hands of the government, upgrading of houses has been by private investment and on a smaller scale. In comparison, Korogocho has been the subject of large-scale slum upgrading programs, and has seen mass evictions as the government has reclaimed land for development of the area.

In conclusion, the survey findings suggest that perceptions of and the sources of insecurity are the partly dependent on ongoing interventions by government and broader political dynamics. However, they are also indicative of the importance of findings from previous research (Mpanje et al. 2022; Mitra et al. 2017): existing social capital and networks within communities are essential for the residents' ability to cope with insecurity and conflicts that arise. In our cases such networks appear to, for instance, shape the residents' trust in relevant local conflict management actors.

Appendix

Sampling, data collection procedure, and research ethics

The study employed a stratified random sampling approach, with the sub-locations of Kawangware and Korogocho serving as the primary sampling units. Households within these sub-locations were designated as Secondary Sampling Units (SSUs). Enumerators were given specific instructions to locate a fixed landmark within the chosen sub-location (e.g., a school or church). Enumerators would then follow the left-hand rule to identify the starting household for the survey. The starting household was determined using the date; for example, on the 28th day of the month, the starting household would be house number 10 (2 + 8) from the fixed point.¹¹

This initial household became the first unit for conducting interviews. Following completion of an interview (and abiding by the left-hand rule), the enumerators skipped the next 4 households, proceeding to the 5th household for the subsequent interview.¹²

The individual respondents, i.e. household members above the age of 18, were categorised as Ultimate Sampling Units (USUs). Only one interview was conducted per household, ensuring each household contributed a single set of responses to the study. In cases where a household contained multiple individuals aged above 18, a randomised method for respondent selection was employed. The Kish Grid method was used with the aim of achieving a representative and unbiased sample that accurately reflects the larger population's characteristics.

Data collection was carried out 8–22 June 2023. A total of 1075 households were contacted or visited during this time period. Among these, 800 successful completions represent 74% of the total attempts. Refusals accounted for 3% of attempts, while 5% of households were deemed ineligible to participate. Additionally, 17% of attempts were unsuccessful due to unavailability or closed doors.

Interviews were only conducted under informed consent and on a voluntary basis. Each interview was preceded by a consent procedure, where enumerators informed the research participant about the purpose of the project, that participation was voluntary, no direct benefits or compensation were forthcoming, and the interview would be discontinued if they so wished.

Given that the areas under study face high insecurity and periodically political violence, we considered several ethical challenges. Of key concern was ensuring that respondents understood the purpose of the survey, that their participation was completely voluntary, and that the information would be kept confidential. We also avoided posing detailed questions about personal experiences to avoid re-traumatization. The questions were discussed on several occasions among the project leaders as well as the broader implementing team, to ensure we did not include questions that were problematic. We also considered the amount of questions to include to achieve a balance between including the most important aspects while not making the survey unnecessarily lengthy.

The data collection has undergone ethics review in Sweden and in Kenya and is approved by the Kenyan National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (license no. NACOSTI/P/23/25540). Due to recent insecurities in Kawangware, there was a need to obtain additional permission from the local administration and local elders in the area to conduct the research. For this reason, the team started data collection in Korogocho and then went to Kawangware. Prior to embarking on fieldwork, a village elder with a deep understanding of the area and who was recognised by the residents was consulted and employed as a guide to pre-empt potential security concerns, which were elevated due to ongoing protests in Nairobi at the

¹¹ In this context, a household was defined as a group of individuals who share the same food resources rather than merely residing under the same roof. Interviewers verified this by asking about the number of individuals who live together and share meals.

¹² Enumerators maintained a call sheet, recording each household they visited, the success or failure of the interview, and reasons for unsuccessful interviews. The GPS points were recorded at a household level.

time of the data collection.

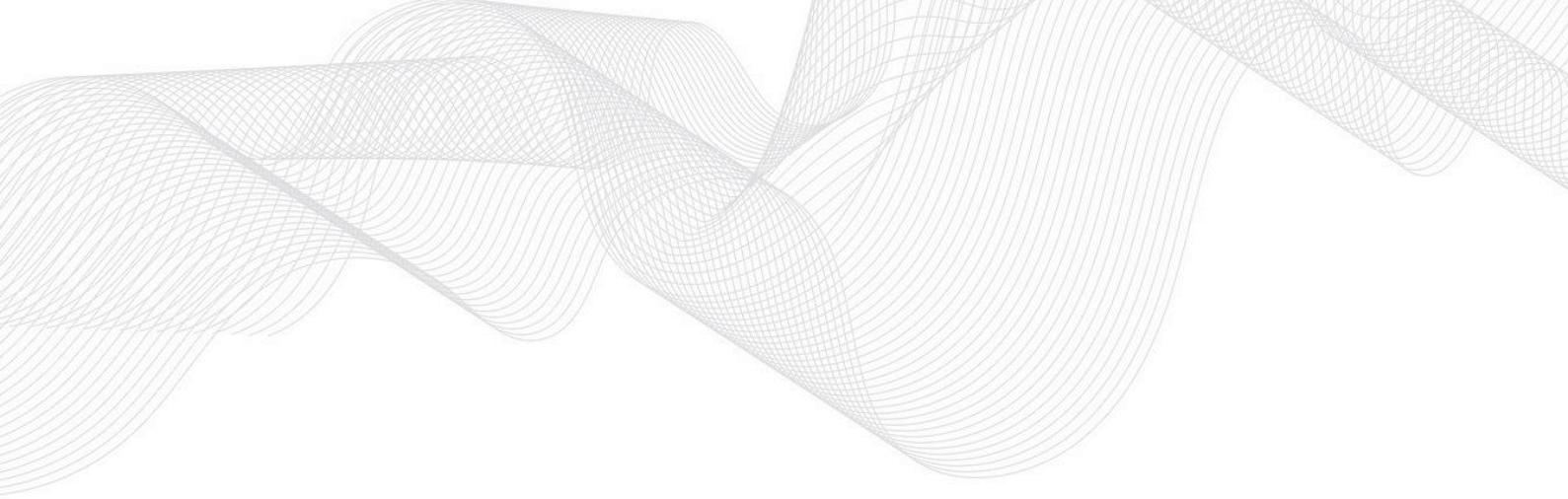
During the data collection phase, the team encountered different challenges. One was instances where requests for compensation were made by the respondents. Even though enumerators emphasised the voluntary nature of the interviews and the absence of immediate benefits, some respondents were in such dire circumstances that they appealed for as little as 50 Kenyan Shilling to cover their next meal. Additionally, there were areas that proved to be unsafe for our enumerators. A notable example is Gitathuru, where the local youth consistently insisted that one of their members accompany the enumerators as a guide whenever work was conducted in the area. This precaution was deemed necessary due to safety concerns. However, these guides were not able to listen in on the interview, which was conducted in private.

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