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ABSTRACT

This research focuses on providing findings on the level of income disparity among construction workers in Kenya. The research has placed much of its emphasis on laborers working within the Nairobi metropolitan area and its surrounding areas, which have the largest groups of people representing construction workers in Kenya. It galvanizes mathematical principles to calculate income disparity gaps that result from economic policies and business practices in Kenya. This research seeks to contribute to the body of knowledge that can be used to establish a minimum wage for the construction worker in Kenya, by demonstrating how awareness of the existence of oppression as well as knowledge about the need to have collective bargaining labor rights can help to curb the exploitation of human capital in any given industry. The importance of this study is to present initial evidence on exploitation in the construction sector in the Nairobi metropolitan area, with the intention of creating the need for more research into the economic welfare of construction laborers. Finally, it is anticipated that conclusions of this study will further drive the agenda of the existing construction workers' organizations and instigate the formation of initiatives that are geared towards protecting construction workers from exploitation and oppression.

CULTURE AND PRACTICE WITHIN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY IN KENYA AND
ITS CONTRIBUTION TO INCOME INEQUALITY

by

Zachary Obwora Osolo

BPSM, Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology, 2012

Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Pan African Studies.

Syracuse University

August 2021

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to God Almighty, for His sustenance, strength, and grace to complete. Also, to my wife Thalma, my son Keon and daughter Kini, for being my pillars of motivation and strength. To my parents Francis Osolo and Phanice Osolo for their enormous wisdom and advice that have made me who I am today. My siblings Boniface, Allan, Brian, Rachel and Philis for their tremendous support. My mother-in-law Dr. Grace Orado, who encouraged me to apply to this program, my Late Grand Mother Oda Auma Osolo- who taught me the essence of humility, family and friends: for their emotional support throughout this journey.

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SUMMARY

The construction industry plays a vital role in the economic development of any given nation or society; economic and infrastructure development result from employment opportunities provided by the construction sector ¹. The potential for economic development necessitates the need for potential objectives and policies that ensure the industry thrives for the good of all, be it the government, cooperatives and individuals working as laborers within the industry ².

Even though there are institutions such as labor unions, construction authorities and legal structures, these organizations tend to focus on addressing other factors, and as result, these systems negate or even ignore the real concerns of the laborers who, I propose, are the most critical and fundamental source of production within the construction industry ³. Few researchers have attempted to provide information that relates to income inequality in the construction industry in Kenya; specifically, information that concerns the Kenyan construction labor force ⁴. These groups of people provide the industry with the enormous resource of human labor, which greatly contributes to the industry growth ⁵. The research includes both skilled and semi-skilled workers in the construction industry.

The study also aims to contextualize the African philosophical understanding of society. This level of consciousness can be used as a backdrop in the development of a culture that

¹ Beryl Mwandale, "THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY," n.d., 43.

² Sven Bertelsen, "Construction as a Complex System," in *Proceedings for the 11th Annual Conference of the International Group for Lean Construction*, 2003, 11–23.

³ Stefano Bellucci, "Wage Labour and Capitalism: A Comparative and Historical Analysis of Eritrea and Kenya," *Labor History* 58, no. 2 (March 15, 2017): 154–69, <https://doi.org/10.1080/0023656X.2017.1285517>.

⁴ Winnie V. Mitullah and Isabella Njeri Wachira, "Informal Labour in the Construction Industry in Kenya : A Case Study of Nairobi," ILO Working Papers (International Labour Organization, 2003), <https://ideas.repec.org/p/ilo/ilowps/994869303402676.html>.

⁵ Bellucci, "Wage Labour and Capitalism," 58.

emphasizes collective bargaining efforts, which advocate for better living conditions ⁶. This research does not intend to elucidate the negative effects of exploitation, instead it places its emphasis on the need for adopting an African culture ⁷. It is intended to further develop consciousness which contributes to revolutionary thinking among the masses, as we veer away from the dominant culture that thrives by subjugating people. This contribution is achieved by placing the construction worker in Kenya at the center of the investigation ⁸.

The dehumanization of African workers necessitates the need for reasserting calls for centralization of African understanding, characterized by the need to advocate for Ubuntu to be adopted and embraced within spheres of influence, such as education systems. Ubuntu furthers the importance of humanity in our societies and contributes to a healthy society ⁹, which embraces an understanding of society that gives priority to community as opposed to an individual. Ubuntu is an indigenous African moral theory tool which is a step towards the decolonization of knowledge within education spheres. Mainstream education within institutions of higher learning have been successful in perpetuating colonially motivated notions which suppress, subjugate, and exploit. It has helped to disenfranchise by negating and replacing the *others'* cultural understanding of society. Its imperialistic perspicacity has characterized the need for imposing its approach on any form of socio-political development of society. The education realm has been greatly affected by

⁶ Molefe, "Ubuntu and Development: An African Conception of Development," *Africa Today* 66, no. 1 (2019): 96, <https://doi.org/10.2979/africatoday.66.1.05>.

⁷ N. N. Mabovula, "The Erosion of African Communal Values: A Reappraisal of the African Ubuntu Philosophy," *Inkanyiso: Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 3, no. 1 (2011): 38–47, <https://doi.org/10.4314/ijhss.v3i1.69506>.

⁸ Reiland Rabaka, *Africana Critical Theory: Reconstructing The Black Radical Tradition, From W. E. B. Du Bois and C. L. R. James to Frantz Fanon and Amilcar Cabral*, Reprint edition (Lanham, MD Boulder, CO New York, NY Toronto Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2010).

⁹ Thandika Mkandawire, *African Intellectuals: Rethinking Politics, Language, Gender and Development* (Zed Books, 2005).

this approach. The epistemological understanding and perception of other societies as ‘uncivilized’ has been perpetuated.

Therefore, the goal of the research is not only to analyze the extent of exploitation that contributes to income inequality among construction workers in Kenya, but also to identify, reclaim, and celebrate the importance of collectivism as an African philosophy that offers our societies alternatives in resolving problems in contemporary Africa. Thus, the research will describe the practices, systems, and procedures governing the construction industry in Kenya and determine their associations with income inequality among construction workers, with an aim of contributing to the need of upholding the importance of an African construction worker.

RESEARCHER'S POSITIONALITY

As a graduate student pursuing a Masters in Pan African Studies, I am concerned with the wellbeing of Africans in any part of the world. Also, my experience with construction workers in Kenya gives me some understanding of the issue at hand and has largely influenced the research question. I am well versed with the shared realities of construction workers' lives; thus, this places me as an “insider”- a position that influenced the research questions.

A focus on the democratization of knowledge offers new paradigms for marginalized individuals and societies. I wish to undertake this noble course as I try to veer away from the dogmatic understanding of society and to exhibit independence of thought for the good of all. This research does not in any manner belittle the efforts that have been made to bring transformation in our society; rather it is on account of these efforts that we can do more or even break away from the normative.

The research adopts an expository nature that disembarks from the normative and Eurocentric view of society. Going through Pan African Studies led to the knowledge I am bound to expend and that is necessary to destinies of African peoples, who have been greatly affected in the past five centuries by the negative effects of economic and political institutions which have distorted and disparaged African traditions through the adoption of Western customs. I presume this might have some negative implications due to subjectivity.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Background

The new labor movements of workers in the global south, which are known to be democratic and militant, have centered their activism to protect the rights of workers and to improve workers' standards of living¹⁰. One of the major concerns for workers is usually with regards to their payments for the services they have rendered to their employers¹¹. Despite the development experienced within the labor unions in the global south, construction workers in Kenya have failed to organize themselves and to express some form of resistance to the expansive form of economic deprivations using the available construction workers' organizations¹². The formalization efforts of the industry by the Kenyan government have also fallen short of addressing the concerns of workers who are operating in different capacities, whether in the formal and informal sectors of the industry¹³. Workers in both the informal and formal sectors are involved in some form of employment, but lack appropriate structures that are essential to address their concerns as laborers, in spite of the continued improvement that the sector has experienced¹⁴.

The strategic macro-level and micro-level contributions of the construction worker in Kenya are in sharp contrast to the economic development that is perpetually supported by the construction industry¹⁵. This has been evident in many developmental sectors that foster

¹⁰ "Pan-Africanism and the Trade Unions in the Post-Colonial Era," Global Research, April 23, 2019, <https://www.globalresearch.ca/pan-africanism-trade-unions-post-colonial-era/5675315>.

¹¹ Arne Bigsten and Dick Durevall, "Openness and Wage Inequality in Kenya, 1964–2000," *World Development* 34, no. 3 (March 2006): 465–80, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.worlddev.2005.08.005>.

¹² Socrates Mbamalu, "Plight of African Workers under Chinese Employers," *African Liberty* (blog), September 27, 2018, <https://www.africanliberty.org/2018/09/27/plight-of-african-workers-under-chinese-employers/>.

¹³ Alfred Oseko Nyanchoka, "An Outline of Construction Law in Kenya," SSRN Scholarly Paper (Rochester, NY: Social Science Research Network, March 16, 2011), <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.1787820>.

¹⁴ Tim Bartley, *Rules Without Rights: Land, Labor, and Private Authority in the Global Economy* (Oxford University Press, 2018).

¹⁵ Mark Obegi Kenyatta, Ahmad Omar Alkizim, and Titus Kivaa Mbiti, "Recapitulating The Payment Default Effects to Contractors in The Kenyan Construction Industry" 5, no. 4 (2015): 9.

neoliberalism as an economic strategy for growth ¹⁶. Most African nations have adopted capitalistic systems as means for development, which has led to a continuation of business practices that were similar to the colonial times ¹⁷. The negative effects of colonialism, the continual use of the capitalistic system and the living conditions of Black people are clear indicators that this economic system does not serve the interests of Black people, and in this case, the Kenyan construction worker.

Efforts to end these forms of exploitation are feasible through advocacy that seeks to transform the lives of Black peoples who labor in different sectors of the society ¹⁸. This research addresses a system of labor exploitation and attempts to further a consciousness for the benefit of construction workers in Kenya ¹⁹.

¹⁶ Hisako Kai and Shigeyuki Hamori, "Globalization, Financial Depth and Inequality in Sub-Saharan Africa," *Economics Bulletin* 29, no. 3 (2009): 2025–37.

¹⁷ Bernard Magubane, "A Critical Look at Indices Used in the Study of Social Change in Colonial Africa," *Current Anthropology* 12, no. 4/5 (October 1, 1971): 419–45, <https://doi.org/10.1086/201229>.

¹⁸ W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk*, Original edition (G&D Media, 2019).

¹⁹ Cedric J. Robinson and Robin D. G. Kelley, *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition*, 2nd edition (Chapel Hill, N.C: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

Statement of the Problem

Socioeconomic inequality is the unequal distribution of economic resources, usually in terms of income or wealth, access to credit, opportunities to build human capital (e.g., from education, technology, and job training), and social resources (e.g., access to social capital and information)²⁰. Moreover, income inequality is mostly measured using the Gini coefficient, which captures inequality across the entire society rather than simply comparing groups. In a given society, maximum inequality tends to occur when the society's income goes to one person, and the rest get nothing. In that case, the Gini coefficient would be 1²¹. On the other hand, if income was shared equally with everyone getting the same, the Gini would be 0. Therefore, the lower the Gini value, the more equal a society is.

Even though African countries have been registering steady economic growth, this level of economic growth has been insufficient in resolving inequities within African societies. Thus, the masses hold the notion that foreign investment in their respective countries does not necessarily result in their economic uplift²². In addition, it is estimated that almost 40% of the population in Africa lives on \$1.9 or less a day²³.

Kenya is at a critical stage of infrastructure development that is largely dependent on the construction industry. The 2014 economic survey by the Kenyan National Bureau of Statistics reported that approximately 148,000 people were formally employed at the time in the construction

²⁰ Prudence L. Carter and Sean F. Reardon, *Inequality Matters* (William T. Grant Foundation New York, NY, 2014).

²¹ Sudhir Anand and Paul Segal, "What Do We Know about Global Income Inequality?," *Journal of Economic Literature; Nashville* 46, no. 1 (March 2008): 57–94, <http://dx.doi.org.libezproxy2.syr.edu/10.1257/jel.46.1.57>.

²² John C. Anyanwu, "International Remittances and Income Inequality in Africa," *Review of Economic and Business Studies* 4, no. 1 (2011): 117–48.

²³ Hiroshi Daisaka, Taiji Furusawa, and Noriyuki Yanagawa, "Globalization, Financial Development and Income Inequality," *Pacific Economic Review* 19, no. 5 (2014): 612–33, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-0106.12086>.

industry. To date, the Kenyan construction sector has been a key driver in the economic growth of Kenya, contributing an average of 7% annually to Kenya's gross domestic product (GDP) ²⁴.

According to the World Bank (2019) almost 36% of the Kenyan population lives under the international poverty line and 56% of the population lives on a maximum of \$1.00 each day ²⁵. Indeed, the majority of construction workers form part of these statistics. Consequently, despite the economic progress observed within the construction sector, most of the population who work within the formal and informal sectors still grapple with abject poverty. Income inequality is a key issue for these construction workers, and has a myriad of socio-economic impacts, which may include conflict and social tension, declining investment and growth, poor health and wellbeing, crime, etc. In addition, justice and equity are always concerns for any society ²⁶. In this industry, the use of human capital is fundamental for its development, yet a high level of exploitation persists.

The economic stagnation among construction workers in Kenya can be deemed as a precipice to antagonistic relationships between construction workers and their employers. These constrained relationships manifest from time to time due to differences between the construction worker, who provides the contractor with their labor service and the contractor who purchases the services of the laborer. One such incident was recorded on Aug. 2, 2016, when residents of Narok county, (southwestern Kenya), stormed a construction site belonging to a contractor, China Road and Bridge Corporation (CRBC). They attacked their Chinese counterparts with clubs and knives

²⁴ Super KNBS, "Exploring Kenya's Inequality: Pulling Apart or Pooling Together?," *Kenya National Bureau of Statistics* (blog), November 6, 2014, <https://www.knbs.or.ke/exploring-kenya-s-inequality-pulling-apart-or-pooling-together/>.

²⁵ Michael Breen and Robert Gillanders, "Political Trust, Corruption, and Ratings of the IMF and the World Bank," *International Interactions* 41, no. 2 (March 15, 2015): 337–64, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03050629.2014.948154>.

²⁶ Edward Anderson et al., "Does Government Spending Affect Income Inequality? A Meta-Regression Analysis," *Journal of Economic Surveys* 31, no. 4 (2017): 961–87, <https://doi.org/10.1111/joes.12173>.

and chanted “*haki yetu*” (“our rights”). According to those working at the site and locals, they were promised jobs, but not enough have appeared and even for the few, the pay is not enough, and the working conditions are awful²⁷. Despite these two groups of people (contractors and construction laborers) working together, they have different objectives that need to be met. The contractor’s aim is to make profit and on the other hand, the laborers’ objective is to earn wages that he/she deems relative to the work done. The symbiotic nature of the parties requires conducive interaction. The need to make sense of this intractable dispute is of much importance²⁸.

Numerous foreign direct investment programs have been rolled out across Africa. However, the reception of foreign contractors by the African workers has been tumultuous, creating room for poor employee employer labor relations. With capitalism as the dominant economic development system that has been adopted by most African nations²⁹, in many instances, production in this system is largely dependent on the wage labor. The people produce goods and services and typically they are employed for wages or salaries,³⁰ as a means of economic development that is dependent on the relationship between capital and wage labor³¹. The change in wage labor is usually a result of open sharing of information, capital-labor ratio, the level of education achievement and the relative productivity of the labor. An increase in capital labor will lead to an increase in the demand of labor and as a result lead to wage increase³².

²⁷ Lily Kuo, “Kenyan Rail Workers Are Protesting against Their Chinese Employer for a Raise—to \$5 a Day,” Quartz Africa, accessed September 15, 2020, <https://qz.com/africa/749177/kenyan-rail-workers-are-protesting-against-their-chinese-employer-for-a-raise-to-5-a-day/>.

²⁸ Louis Kriesberg and Bruce W. Dayton, *Constructive Conflicts: From Escalation to Resolution*, Fifth edition (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2016).

²⁹ Bellucci, “Wage Labour and Capitalism.”

³⁰ Pierre Jalee, *How Capitalism Works: An Introductory Marxist Analysis*, trans. Mary Klopper, 0 edition (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1977).

³¹ Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Revised edition (Washington, D.C: Howard Univ Pr, 1981).

³² Bigsten and Durevall, “Openness and Wage Inequality in Kenya, 1964–2000.”

On July 10, 2017, the Central Organization of Trade Union of Kenya (COTU(K)) issued a press statement through their Secretary-General Mr. Francis Atwoli, to weigh in on the dehumanizing conditions that the Kenyan construction workers were subjected to while working for foreign contractors. The statement indicated that various private entities had warned their workers to desist from contacting or being members of a union. Mr. Atwoli accused the Kenyan government of providing companies with selective protection, contrary to the Kenyan constitution. The union termed this as neo-colonialism and slavery in the 21st century ³³. Through the press statement, the Secretary-General of (COTU) reminded government officials that their core business is to protect Kenya's citizens.

There is a definite repercussion when a society embraces a system that dehumanizes workers, while obstructing them from having a conscious and an understanding that labourers and their antagonistic employers do have fundamentally opposing goals and desires. Further, the desertion of an African culture by an African society can lead to the subjugation of peoples who are of utmost value. Therefore, it is in the best interest of the masses to investigate the nature and the characteristics of the construction industry to be able to develop and adopt policies and procedures that bring desired reform to the industry or the sector at large ³⁴.

³³ "PRESS STATEMENT ON DEHUMANIZING WORKING CONDITIONS AT THE SGR. – Central Organization of Trade Unions (COTU-K)," accessed September 29, 2020, <https://cotu-kenya.org/presstatement-on-dehumanizin/>.

³⁴ Carole Veitich, "The Construction Industry in Kenya 2017," *Plus Company Updates*, July 18, 2017, http://bi.gale.com.libezproxy2.syr.edu/essentials/article/GALE|A513065006?u=nysl_ce_syr.

Research Questions

This study seeks to estimate the level of income inequality in the construction sector in Kenya. The research questions are:

1. What is the extent of income inequality among laborers in the sector?
2. What factors have contributed to income inequality?
3. What are implications on the livelihoods of construction workers?

Primary Objectives

The purpose of this research is to describe the practices, systems, and procedures governing the construction industry in Kenya and determine their associations with income inequality among construction workers. The aim is to contribute to upholding the importance of the working African.

1. To quantify the level of income inequality among construction workers in the Nairobi area.
2. To determine the macro and micro level factors influencing this disparity.
3. To determine implications of income inequality on workers' livelihoods.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretical Understandings of Development in Africa

Pan African theory is concerned with contemporary issues affecting African people. It examines issues of income inequality and how it has been made possible. Pan African theory critically inspects the phenomenon of exploitation and how to formulate different tactics and strategies that are geared towards emancipating peoples of African descent from any form of exploitation. Correspondingly, it reinforces the idea that a sustained form of development of peoples of African descent will be made possible with a break from the international capitalist system that has adversely affected African nations ³⁵. It does this by demonstrating the need to fashion policies for the good of the people as opposed to material profit.

In addition, Pan African theory raises fundamental questions as to who and what are responsible for the underdevelopment of the African people. It asserts that exploitation takes place in two stages. The first stage is within the imperialist ideological system which is a large contributor in taking away the wealth of African people. The second stage is within an exploitation system that has been made possible by those who manage the system and become the agents of the system ³⁶. However, its hypothesis is not intended to exonerate Africans from their shared responsibility of overthrowing these imperialistic ideological systems. It places its focus on those who have found themselves at the will of exploiters and it assumes that only a radical break will challenge the world order.

³⁵ David W. Lutz, "African Ubuntu Philosophy and Global Management," *Journal of Business Ethics* 84, no. 3 (October 8, 2009): 313, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10551-009-0204-z>.

³⁶ Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*.

Pan African theory assumes that the pillars for transformation will occur within political, cultural and economic forces that continue to dominate the world ³⁷. There is a need for people centered perspectives in our research that focus on the ongoing life of the people. This approach helps the researcher to focus on the discontent and unrest that have filled the life of the Kenyan construction worker. The theory addresses the ravages of colonialism and the impact of passive participation in speaking against exploitative systems that continue to disenfranchise Africans in the post-colonial years, and how the lack of collaborative initiatives can actively or passively continue to disenfranchise the people wherever they are on the face of the earth ³⁸. The use of this theory in spaces of education acts as an agent in resisting the destructive individualism that is perpetuated in both formal and informal education spaces. Black intellectuals have the following social responsibility of liberation and development of the people ³⁹.

The emphasis of the theory on the ultimate essence of humanity necessitates the need for redefining and discovering new ways of reaffirming our humanity as African people. The assumption is that courageous and creative attempts that respond to the call for humanity will break the chains and shake the very foundations that have enabled exploitation to take place ⁴⁰.

In the text *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Rodney emphasizes that to understand development within societies, one has to account for dependency and underdevelopment. Proponents of this approach, Walter Rodney and Manning Marable, placed much of their emphasis

³⁷ Fabian Klose and Dona Geyer, "The International Discourse on Human Rights as Marked by the Wars of Decolonization," in *Human Rights in the Shadow of Colonial Violence*, The Wars of Independence in Kenya and Algeria (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 192–230, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt3fhw4p.10>.

³⁸ Magubane, "A Critical Look at Indices Used in the Study of Social Change in Colonial Africa."

³⁹ Rabaka, *Africana Critical Theory*.

⁴⁰ Laura Simpson Reeves, Cameron Parsell, and Shuang Liu, "Towards a Phenomenology of Poverty: Defining Poverty through the Lived Experiences of the 'Poor,'" *Journal of Sociology* 56, no. 3 (September 1, 2020): 439–54, <https://doi.org/10.1177/1440783319851204>.

on reviewing the terms of trade between African peoples' interactions with Western societies. They observed that developed countries take raw materials from these developing countries and that this type of extraction does not necessarily bring growth in the countries from which the raw materials are extracted. Economic activities in more advanced industrialized states often led to economic instability in the less developed countries ⁴¹.

Rodney's and Manning's scholastic work aims to empower the underdeveloped states that often play the peripheral role in the global arena as compared to the core peripheral role played by the developed states. Manning argues that underdevelopment in these states is spear-headed by the fact that in the new age of globalization, developed states which are industrialized capitalist economies put pressure on these developing countries, and this has affected growth. Rodney states that the resultant state on the African continent from European imperialist exploitation is in a state of dependence due to exploitation by the developed state.

Exploitation leads to underdevelopment of humanity which leads to loss of dignity. The theory advocates for the need to seek new means, new forms of struggle, and new pathways that will lead to the liberation of people and lastly new understandings of what entails a truly humane society which provides new hope of how to redevelop our world systems.

The theory asserts that there are no short cuts to economic development. It raises fundamental questions as to why developing countries continue to remain underdeveloped and why their situation is worsening. A question is, are we going to replicate the same developmental processes that have existed from the past? Investigating these problems is necessary since

⁴¹ Klose and Geyer, "The International Discourse on Human Rights as Marked by the Wars of Decolonization"; Frederick Solt, "Economic Inequality and Democratic Political Engagement," *American Journal of Political Science* 52, no. 1 (2008): 48–60, <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2007.00298.x>.

economic conditions of the workers are dismal, and it will be an uphill task to develop a meaningful reconstruction process that will yield the desired results for those who participate in the system.

The theory enables the researcher to engage in discussions that will lead to findings on solutions to the problem that is at hand. A fundamental question that this research poses is what is the level of inequality and its contribution to the economic backwardness of those who are exploited by the existing system? The theory allows for investigation on how the adoption of foreign investment policies and procedures continue to further the vicious cycle of poverty.

The theory defines colonialism as a foreign investment process which contributed to the underdevelopment of African nations. Pan African theory raises questions regarding contemporary interactions of African people with the Western world, and trade relations that have been established and how they have impacted the lived experiences of African persons.

The involvement of African nations in a globalized market has led to the extraction of profits that return to these nations as charities. The theory asserts that this interaction impedes any form of investing for people's development, which results in poor and ineffective development efforts, simply because the development does not contribute to the technical and material development internally. The knee jerk reaction of African countries to economic renditions that are founded on colonial ideological underpinnings will eventually be of utmost benefit to developed nations.

The failure to have policies that respond to internal needs of the people leads to urbanization. Concentration of resources within urban areas has led to increased level of disparities between urban and rural areas. The urban areas are characteristically coupled with political instabilities that lead to inequalities, due to unequal economic practices.

The theory assumes that for economic transformation to occur, African nations need to break away from colonially motivated developmental processes. It questions the understandings of leaders of developing countries who adopt economic systems which fail to improve the lives of peoples of African descent. The theory questions whether the developmental process takes into consideration the wants of the people or caters to the supply and demand of the global market. These questions help to inform whether the construction industry in Kenya functions as a proxy to this global economic endeavor.

Dependency theory critiques modernization theory, which posits that developing states should go through the same processes the developed states went through to reach modernity, in that the developing countries can develop if they prevent exploitation and focus on value addition and industrialization rather than depending on the developed states which thrive when development is stagnated in the developing states.

Dependency theory critically scrutinizes the results of class struggle, often a creation of the dominant class established to protect its own interests ⁴². This conception of the state views the state as inherently vile and that its ultimate destiny is defined by the internal contradictions of liberalism, that states with all their vestiges will suffer the fate of the unity, organization, and revolution by the people ⁴³. Robinson asserts that the history of human beings has been a struggle to obtain material needs and to resist class domination and exploitation. He focuses on the modes of production and the political institutions of states.

⁴² C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, 2 edition (New York: Vintage, 1989).

⁴³ James.

This is symbolic since the notion of a failed state is brought about by inefficient modes of production and weak political institutions which affect the economic performance of a country ⁴⁴. Robinson focused on the economics rather than the state of anarchy brought by military interventions. He emphasized the capitalist mode of production and how the capitalist focused on their own development at the expense of the proletariat ⁴⁵. This is significant since most regimes in power and the ruling class are mostly concerned with accumulation of individual wealth, and the absence of empowered political institutions in the developing state has enabled the complete growth of the ruling class with the help of the bourgeoisie in “developed” states ⁴⁶.

The theory also analyzes social formations and the way these formations either breed development or underdevelopment. This is because it views a state as a creation that was brought by the inherent need of individuals in society to escape the state of anarchy ⁴⁷. In essence it views the state as an outcome of negotiated statements resulting from contract arrangements between citizens and the sovereign entity on how to escape the state of anarchy ⁴⁸. This perspective views the state as an entity that exists to protect life and property, while on the other hand the population or rather the citizenry are to surrender part of their property to the state in the form of taxes. In protecting life and property, the state must be able to penetrate, organize and control society. The protection of life and property in this theory is not necessarily physical security but the wellbeing of the citizenry through provision of basic services such as healthcare, sanitation, education and

⁴⁴ Rabaka, *Africana Critical Theory*.

⁴⁵ Jalee, *How Capitalism Works*.

⁴⁶ Ng'weno Osolo-Nasubo, *A Socio-Economic Study of the Kenya Highlands from 1900-1970: A Case Study of the Uhuru Government* (Washington: University Press of America, 1977).

⁴⁷ Brent Hayes Edwards, *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism* (Harvard University Press, n.d.).

⁴⁸ Ajuma Oginga Odinga, *Not yet Uhuru: The Autobiography of Oginga Odinga*, 1st American ed. (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967).

water ⁴⁹. With this perspective, the state must therefore be the entity that defines the life of the citizens, in essence from the time a child is born, they must be known as a citizen of a particular sovereign state ⁵⁰.

Modernity is a neoclassical model for economic development which evaluates how development influences income distribution ⁵¹. For example, an increase in foreign investment will at first worsen income distribution, however there will be some later balance ⁵². Modernization economic policy did not auger well with natives of Kenya and this led to the Mau Mau resistance to liberate the people of Kenya from colonial domination; the Mau Mau resistance movement sought to establish self-rule for the people of Kenya ⁵³. Many African countries have been skeptical of the concept of development. During the colonial period, the colonialists introduced class stratification mechanisms that focused on introducing Africa into a global capitalistic system ⁵⁴.

The events involving the evolution of trade unionism and organized worker activity in Africa reflects the political trajectory of the continent since the rise of independence movements during the post-WWII period. With fluctuations in the economic performance of independent African states over the last two decades, the continent remains largely dependent upon the exigencies of the world capitalist system ⁵⁵. In this regard, the dilemma of workers in regard to the distribution of real wages and national wealth is often overlooked in evaluations of growth and

⁴⁹ Molefe, "Ubuntu and Development."

⁵⁰ Osolo-Nasubo, *A Socio-Economic Study of the Kenya Highlands from 1900-1970*.

⁵¹ Alvin Y. So, *Social Change and Development: Modernization, Dependency and World-System Theories*, n.d.

⁵² Teresia Kaulihowa and Charles Adjasi, "FDI and Income Inequality in Africa," *Oxford Development Studies* 46, no. 2 (April 3, 2018): 250–65, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13600818.2017.1381233>.

⁵³ Odinga, *Not yet Uhuru*.

⁵⁴ Hoschild, "Hoschild Social Class - Google Scholar," accessed January 28, 2020, https://scholar.google.com/scholar?hl=en&as_sdt=0%2C5&q=hoschild+social+class&oq=hoschild+social+cla.

⁵⁵ "Pan-Africanism and the Trade Unions in the Post-Colonial Era."

development⁵⁶. The individual wealthy of Africa and the rising salaries of the middle- and upper-income strata do not necessarily correlate with the status of the majority, still made up of the working class, farmers and youth⁵⁷.

Africa can only achieve genuine development when the proletariat and farmers are empowered to make the necessary decisions guiding the future of the continent⁵⁸. Within the existing framework of neo-colonialism, the people of Africa will remain second-class citizens to the dominant position occupied by the Western industrialized states utilizing their domination of the global markets⁵⁹. To achieve the goal of "leaving no one behind" by 2030, UNDP's Regional Bureau for Africa asserts that inequality levels, trends, determinants and consequences must be analyzed closely - producing a holistic policy approach which matches the integrated and indivisible nature of the 2030 agenda. It is through addressing the challenge of inequality that progress towards achieving poverty reduction, to be specific, and the SDGs in general, can be accelerated⁶⁰.

⁵⁶ John C. Anyanwu, Andrew E. O. Erhijakpor, and Emeka Obi, "Empirical Analysis of the Key Drivers of Income Inequality in West Africa," *African Development Review* 28, no. 1 (2016): 18–38, <https://doi.org/10.1111/1467-8268.12164>.

⁵⁷ Kai and Hamori, "Globalization, Financial Depth and Inequality in Sub-Saharan Africa."

⁵⁸ Magubane, "A Critical Look at Indices Used in the Study of Social Change in Colonial Africa."

⁵⁹ Yakubu M. Azindow, "Beyond Promise: Politics, Institutions and Neoliberal Economic Reforms in Four African Countries" (Ph.D., United States -- Massachusetts, University of Massachusetts Amherst, 2011), <http://search.proquest.com/docview/910887108/abstract/BD6C4170B2204848PQ/1>.

⁶⁰ Ayodele F. Odusola et al., *Income Inequality Trends in Sub-Saharan Africa: Divergence, Determinants and Consequences* (United Nations Development Programme, Regional Bureau for Africa, 2017).

CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

Structural Systems for Inequality in the Construction Industry

In an unequal society, increased GDP growth corresponds to even higher inequality. Although GDP tends to increase in these types of societies, the negative implications of income inequalities outweigh its benefits ⁶¹. Societies that record large economic disparities in most cases end up recording low GDP growth rates in the long run. Social problems such as high crime rates, deplorable public health systems, poor civic participation in politics, as well as lower average education levels characterize most African nations, despite their increased GDP levels ⁶². In as much there has been increased economic growth, this level of growth has proven to be insufficient in resolving income inequalities among the people ⁶³.

Global surveys suggest that growing inequality is among the most significant concerns facing the world economy ⁶⁴. Further, the rise in economic growth in the last decade in Africa has not translated into an improvement in the distribution of income ⁶⁵. According to the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the share of national consumption going to the poorest quintile of the sub-Saharan African population in the 2000s remained unchanged from its 1990s level of 3.4%, while in North Africa it increased very marginally from 6.2% to 6.3% ⁶⁶. The data also suggested that the southern African sub-region has the least egalitarian income distribution in Africa. Eight countries from the sub-region (Botswana, Namibia, Angola, South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) rank in the top ten of the most unequal

⁶¹ Odusola et al.

⁶² Anyanwu, Erhijakpor, and Obi, "Empirical Analysis of the Key Drivers of Income Inequality in West Africa."

⁶³ Anderson et al., "Does Government Spending Affect Income Inequality?"

⁶⁴ Miriam F. Elman et al., eds., *Overcoming Intractable Conflicts: New Approaches to Constructive Transformations*, Illustrated edition (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2019).

⁶⁵ Kwabena Gyimah-Brempong, "Corruption, Economic Growth, and Income Inequality in Africa," *Economics of Governance* 3, no. 3 (November 1, 2002): 183–209, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s101010200045>.

⁶⁶ Kai and Hamori, "Globalization, Financial Depth and Inequality in Sub-Saharan Africa."

countries on the continent. Ironically, most of these countries are mineral-producing states where economic challenges led to the closure of several mines, resulting in large job losses and hence the prospect of worsening income inequalities ⁶⁷.

Since the 1950s, the gap between rich and poor countries had started to decline and at the time, economically deprived nations were catching up to richer nations, however, the level of income inequality within these countries recorded a recent increase in their income gaps ⁶⁸. Not only have the rich been getting richer since the 1980s; the tendency of an increased level of inequality is representative of many countries around the world. In short, the ultra-wealthy have gained much prominence in both developed and developing countries ⁶⁹. Typically, a population's poorest half controls less than 10% of a nation's wealth, and this gap is getting larger.

Irrespective of the data type and measurement method, poverty and inequality in Africa are high and have been persistently high for a long time. Moreover, and importantly, the structure of the economy has not changed sufficiently to make a real dent in poverty levels. At the beginning of the new millennium, Kenya remained an agrarian economy, with a large and rapidly expanding informal sector ⁷⁰. The capital/labor ratio is still declining, and the manufacturing sector is small and stagnant, which is why few good jobs are being created for the rapidly increasing labor force⁷¹.

⁶⁷ "UN DESA | United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs |," UN DESA | United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, accessed October 16, 2019, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/en/>.

⁶⁸ Hilary McD Beckles, *Britain's Black Debt: Reparations for Caribbean Slavery and Native Genocide* (Kingston, Jamaica: The University of the West Indies Press, 2013).

⁶⁹ Anand and Segal, "What Do We Know about Global Income Inequality?"

⁷⁰ Kenneth King, *The African Artisan: Education and the Informal Sector in Kenya* (London : New York: Heinemann ; Teachers College Press, 1977).

⁷¹ Annette Bernhardt et al., "Broken Laws, Unprotected Workers: Violations of Employment and Labor Laws in America's Cities," 2009.

The main labor market problem is that of the working poor, rather than that of the openly unemployed ⁷².

In the 1970s and early 1980s, Kenya underwent dramatic alterations in the structure of its economy and the sectoral allocation of its labor ⁷³. In this period, the majority of its labor force was found in agricultural related activities. This has changed significantly, given that more than half of the labor force is within the formal or informal non-agricultural activities. There has been an even more drastic shift in the structure of the output. The share of agriculture in the gross domestic product has fallen from above three-quarters to about one-quarter. This structural transformation has driven changes in incomes, income distribution, and poverty ⁷⁴.

The practice of commercialization of African agriculture continued and quickened during World War II ⁷⁵. At the time, labor movements also gained importance ⁷⁶. Inequality among African smallholders increased, and the major distinguishing factor was access to land. Individuals who had large landholdings in regions where horticulture could be produced improved their relative positions ⁷⁷. Rural-urban differences in living standards surfaced, as a rural elite bought up land for commercial farming, and an African trade and business class was established. The most rapidly changing regions in the country were the Central and Nyanza ⁷⁸.

⁷² David Schwam-Baird, "Poverty and Exclusion in a Global World / Structural Adjustment, Global Trade, and the New Political Economy of Development / Do World Bank IMF Policies Work? / The New Global Economy and Developing Countries: Making Openness Work," *Journal of Third World Studies* 20, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 315–23.

⁷³ Eric E. Otenyo, "Politics and the Lack of Labor Militancy in Kenya: Trade Unionism after Independence," in *Kenya After 50: Reconfiguring Historical, Political, and Policy Milestones*, ed. Michael Mwenda Kithinji, Mickie Mwanzia Koster, and Jerono P. Rotich, African Histories and Modernities (New York: Palgrave Macmillan US, 2016), 107–33, https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137558305_6.

⁷⁴ "Pan-Africanism and the Trade Unions in the Post-Colonial Era."

⁷⁵ Martin S. Shanguhya, *Population, Tradition, and Environmental Control in Colonial Kenya* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2015).

⁷⁶ Otenyo, "Politics and the Lack of Labor Militancy in Kenya."

⁷⁷ Osolo-Nasubo, *A Socio-Economic Study of the Kenya Highlands from 1900-1970*.

⁷⁸ Odinga, *Not yet Uhuru*.

After independence, many smallholders experienced noticeable improvements, but there were substantial differences among them ⁷⁹. Nevertheless, there remained a group of rural poor consisting of smallholders with little land or with land of low potential; with inadequate access to off-farm income or urban markets. There were also dispossessed workers and pastoralists who had little or no education. During the first decade of independence, Kenya experienced steady economic growth, but this form of development was unsustainable since it was centered on a colonial framework. It was during the said period that growth stemmed from productivity from the masses as opposed to mechanized growth. Most of the investments were public, which would in turn make private domestic firms stash money in foreign accounts overseas ⁸⁰.

In recent years, although many African countries have attained economic development through globalization, negative impacts from globalization, such as the widening of inequality have also occurred ⁸¹. For instance, foreign direct investments by China have led to involvement of Chinese companies in government-led infrastructural developments in Kenya ⁸². Consequently, income inequality has been a concern for local workers for the companies, as they earn much lower wages compared to their Chinese counterparts ⁸³. Moreover, most jobs completed by the Chinese on these projects could be done by Kenyans. In 1978, China, a communist country, adopted a strategy to liberalize its economy, which is closely associated with capitalist societies. This system can sustain unparalleled economic growth because of its dynamic economic guiding principles that pave way for, “curbing of labor powers, deregulating industries and liberation of finance powers

⁷⁹ Klose and Geyer, “The International Discourse on Human Rights as Marked by the Wars of Decolonization.”

⁸⁰ Bigsten and Durevall, “Openness and Wage Inequality in Kenya, 1964–2000.”

⁸¹ Kai and Hamori, “Globalization, Financial Depth and Inequality in Sub-Saharan Africa.”

⁸² Newcomb, “The Impact of Chinese Investments on the Kenyan Economy.”

⁸³ “Chinese Dominance over Kenya’s Construction Industry,” Construction Review Online, January 31, 2019, <https://constructionreviewonline.com/2019/01/chinese-dominance-over-kenyas-construction-industry/>.

within a country and outside ⁸⁴.” This brings about a myriad of socio-economic impacts, including conflict and social tension, and declining investment and growth ⁸⁵.

The construction industry in Kenya is a highly labor-intensive activity, absorbing much skilled and semi-skilled human power ⁸⁶. The capital invested in the construction industry is much larger than in any other industry in the country ⁸⁷. Admittedly, the industry covers a wide spectrum of activities ranging from construction for housing, institutions, commercial and industrial purposes, to the construction of infrastructures such as airports, roads, and bridges. It also includes the construction of large developmental structures including dams, barrages, tunnels, power plants, sewerages, railways, pipelines, cables and ropeways, erection of towers, chimneys, and so on. It also includes demolition and maintenance of structures and services ⁸⁸. Moreover, it supports other closely linked ancillary industries such as brick kilns, tile factories, stone quarrying, sand dredging, wood, glass, limestones and paints, cement, steel, electrical constructional fixtures, furnishing, and fittings ⁸⁹.

Inarguably, open and unregulated markets are the most significant contributors to income inequality in Kenya today ⁹⁰. In the mid-1980s, Kenya adopted neoliberal practices which would later allow for the market to make political and social decisions. The government of Kenya reduced

⁸⁴ David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁸⁵ Joseph Goldstein, “Kenians Say Chinese Investment Brings Racism and Discrimination,” *The New York Times*, October 15, 2018, sec. World, <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/10/15/world/africa/kenya-china-racism.html>.

⁸⁶ Donatus Mathenge Githui, “Ethical Issues in the Construction Industry in Kenya: A Critical Analysis of the Professional Conduct in Engineering Technology Management,” 2012, <http://repository.dkut.ac.ke:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/85>.

⁸⁷ Candice S. Newcomb, “The Impact of Chinese Investments on the Kenyan Economy” (M.A., United States -- California, Chapman University, 2020), <http://search.proquest.com/docview/2444729240/abstract/EB5CF8CCA7C04657PQ/1>.

⁸⁸ Antonio Estache, “Africa’s Infrastructure: Challenges and Opportunities,” February 2006, 53.

⁸⁹ Hezekiah Gichunge and Marvin Musungu, “Motivation and Its Effect on Productivity of Workers in the Kenyan Construction Industry,” 2010, <http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/handle/11295/15948>.

⁹⁰ Jeremiah Owiti, “Political Drivers of Inequality in Kenya,” *Development* 57, no. 3–4 (December 2014): 547–58, <http://dx.doi.org.libezproxy2.syr.edu/10.1057/dev.2015.38>.

its influence on the economy and allowed corporations to enjoy free competition. The implementation of this ideology would predominantly be associated with self-employment by individuals participating in this economic setting ⁹¹. The production methods would be highly labor-intensive and would lead to lower productivity and eventually yield low income for individuals participating in nation-building initiatives. For most countries to qualify for donor funds, it was the responsibility of their respective states to roll out structural adjustment programs ⁹².

For this purpose, having a job is not a guarantee for a decent living, which is the case for workers within the construction sector in Kenya. Income inequality occurs when there is overdependence on investors, who have an abundance of financial capital, skilled laborers and advanced technology, which supplement the investee's abundance of nonskilled laborers ⁹³. The problem occurs as skilled labor in developing countries is always deemed unskilled in the developed world, hence creating income disparities ⁹⁴.

Additionally, corrupt practices within Africa have also been the largest contributing factor to income inequality. Corruption is ranked as the number one societal problem in Kenya, that gravely affects the poor more than the rich. Increased corruption directly or indirectly affects income distribution, and at the same time, it decreases economic growth and contributes to poverty, low economic growth, and unequal distribution of resources. According to Transparency International (2019), on the scale of most corrupt countries, out of 183 countries, Kenya ranks at number 143, with higher ranks corresponding to countries that have high rates of corruption. Corruption is partially attributed to the corrupt judicial system in Kenya. The judiciary has the

⁹¹ Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*.

⁹² Breen and Gillanders, "Political Trust, Corruption, and Ratings of the IMF and the World Bank."

⁹³ Osolo-Nasubo, *A Socio-Economic Study of the Kenya Highlands from 1900-1970*.

⁹⁴ Gyimah-Brempong, "Corruption, Economic Growth, and Income Inequality in Africa."

legal obligation within a given nation to practice impartiality. However, this has not been the case since most laborers have encountered difficulties in seeking remedy through the available channels of justice ⁹⁵.

Corruption decreases physical capital and as result, decreases economic growth. In many instances, the poor are most adversely affected by these corrupt practices. It is estimated that an increased level of corruption decreases the economic growth of a given nation by a percentage between 0.75% and 0.9% ⁹⁶. At the same time, the competitiveness of a given sector is usually lessened by high levels of corruption. The lack of governing bodies and corrupt public officials have increased the cost of business operations for many investors. Lack of effective leadership has led to continued deplorable living standards for many people in Africa. Slow development is not only taking place in the most under-resourced parts of Africa; it is also observed in countries that are endowed with enormous resources. Corruption is rampant in many African countries; the systemic nature of corruption is partly due to the fragility of institutions such as the judicial system.

Further, African countries with high foreign direct investment typically have high rates of inequality ⁹⁷. Since the Kenyan construction sector is highly dependent on foreign direct investments, this qualifies Kenya as one of the most unequal societies ⁹⁸. Structural adjustment programs, together with the privatization of state-owned enterprises, are measures that have been put in place by world-leading organizations such as the World Bank and the IMF, whose major concern is to enhance developmental progress ⁹⁹. However, the restructuring process is bound to fail if weak institutions persist, and bureaucracies may result that form a state of corrupt leaders

⁹⁵ "Kenya Corruption Report," GAN Integrity, accessed March 2, 2021, <https://www.ganintegrity.com/portal/country-profiles/kenya/>.

⁹⁶ Bertelsen, "Construction as a Complex System."

⁹⁷ Gyimah-Brempong, "Corruption, Economic Growth, and Income Inequality in Africa."

⁹⁸ Bigsten and Durevall, "Openness and Wage Inequality in Kenya, 1964–2000."

⁹⁹ Kai and Hamori, "Globalization, Financial Depth and Inequality in Sub-Saharan Africa."

holding positions of power within a state¹⁰⁰. A weak private sector and corruption tend to worsen the situation by exacerbating inefficiencies within state-owned enterprises¹⁰¹.

Urbanization is another cause of widening economic inequalities. A rapidly increasing number of people live in urban areas. It is estimated that by 2050, 64% of the global population will live in urban areas¹⁰². Many developmental programs are centered within urban areas, which has led to an increased number of people within these areas due to the migration of populations in search of new job opportunities¹⁰³. Similarly, in many cases, development in Africa is largely centered in urban areas. In as much, many African nations have posted an increased level of development; nevertheless, this does not translate into the lives of people. Urban areas are increasingly becoming places for increased levels of poverty in Kenya, as is evident from the high level of insecurity in these areas¹⁰⁴. One of the challenges for many people living in urban areas such as Nairobi, Kenya, is their inability to afford or build a home¹⁰⁵. It is estimated that 2% of the Kenyan population in urban areas live in informal settings. Approximately 6.4 million people live within informal settings, with a substantial number of construction workers forming part of this population¹⁰⁶.

¹⁰⁰ Azindow, "Beyond Promise."

¹⁰¹ Bartley, *Rules Without Rights*.

¹⁰² M. Todaro and S. Smith, *Urbanization and Rural-Urban Migration: Theory and Policy (Eds.)*, *Economic Development* (New York: Addison-Wesley Series, 2009).

¹⁰³ Tiffany Ruby Patterson and Robin D. G. Kelley, "Unfinished Migrations: Reflections on the African Diaspora and the Making of the Modern World," *African Studies Review* 43, no. 1 (April 2000): 11–45, <https://doi.org/10.2307/524719>.

¹⁰⁴ Arne Bigsten et al., "Incomes, Inequality, and Poverty in Kenya," in *Growth and Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa*, ed. Channing Arndt, Andy McKay, and Finn Tarp (Oxford University Press, 2016), 343–69, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198744795.003.0015>.

¹⁰⁵ Christopher J. Colvin et al., "Understanding Careseeking for Child Illness in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Systematic Review and Conceptual Framework Based on Qualitative Research of Household Recognition and Response to Child Diarrhoea, Pneumonia and Malaria," *Social Science & Medicine* 86 (June 1, 2013): 66–78, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2013.02.031>.

¹⁰⁶ M. M. Majale, J. Morumbasi, and D. A. Mutuli, "Occupational Safety and Health in the Construction Industry in Kenya," *Proceedings of the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society ... Annual Meeting* 3 (2000): 666.

The effectiveness of social programs is usually affected by the increased level of corruption since resources can be diverted to set up institutions or programs that may end up benefitting the rich. The adoption of poor developmental strategies by most African countries has enabled the uneven distribution of resources ¹⁰⁷. Some government agencies tend to provide tax havens to big corporations as opposed to labor, which has increased uneven distribution of resources. These practices burden the poor with more taxes as they are responsible to pay tax subsidies ¹⁰⁸. The complexities associated with measuring corruption makes it difficult to quantify because it is usually deemed as an illegal activity in most countries, making it difficult to quantify the extent that corruption is rampant within a given area.

Similarly, informal practices within a sector can be a leading cause for income inequality. The informal construction sector has been defined as comprising of “unregistered and unprotected individuals and small enterprises that supply labor and contribute in other ways to the output of the construction sector” ¹⁰⁹. According to Mitullahl, the informal sector of the economy is traditionally held to have several distinct characteristics, such as ease of entry, the predominance of self-employment, labor-intensive production methods, low levels of organization, low productivity, and low income. Individuals working within the sector work in an environment of uncertainty. However, unlike the formal economy, the sector is highly flexible, and entrepreneurs can quickly change their activities to respond to a particular market need ¹¹⁰.

¹⁰⁷ Gyimah-Brempong, “Corruption, Economic Growth, and Income Inequality in Africa.”

¹⁰⁸ Ezekiel Mbitha Mwenzwa and Joseph Akuma Misati, “Kenya’s Social Development Proposals and Challenges: Review of Kenya Vision 2030 First Medium-Term Plan, 2008-2012,” 2014, <http://localhost:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/7164>.

¹⁰⁹ Mitullahl, “Informal Labour in the Construction Industry in Kenya: A Case Study of Nairobi.”

¹¹⁰ Paul Asamoah, “Assessing the Need for Entrepreneurial Training at the Higher Educational Institutions in Ghana” (Ph.D., United States -- Texas, University of the Incarnate Word, 2012), <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1283226224/abstract/D73F5BC9A111467APQ/1>.

Many informal construction workers operate without protection from the labor law, which governs relations between employers and employees ¹¹¹. The Employment Act provides regulation of remuneration and conditions of employment, and empowers the Minister of Labor to issue wage regulations, including fixing the basic minimum wage which is revised each year ¹¹². The orders may also include a basic house allowance for employees not accommodated by their employers. However, even in the formal sector, the high rate of unemployment gives employers power over employees, with most employers exploiting the situation. Most employees cannot question their terms of work since the employment is offered on a willing worker and willing employer basis ¹¹³. Further, the informal construction market is competitive and often workers are willing to accept less income than the legal minimum wage. In some cases, this is targeted at establishing a relationship with a client who is likely to be a source of work in the future.

Informal construction workers do not have benefits such as sick leave and annual paid leave. For every two consecutive months of service, an employee who is formally employed is entitled to sick leave of not less than seven days. Formally employed construction workers are also entitled to an annual paid leave of not less than 21 working days, and one rest day every one week. These entitlements and benefits are denied to informal workers. Informal construction workers are also not entitled to health insurance. This leaves such employees with no form of health insurance or social security. Consequently, they are exposed to very difficult circumstances when they fall sick, jobless or when they retire ¹¹⁴.

There are no relevant policies and regulations aimed at addressing the problems facing this sub-sector. This lack calls for joint efforts of the government, informal construction workers,

¹¹¹ Bellucci, "Wage Labour and Capitalism."

¹¹² Nyanchoka, "An Outline of Construction Law in Kenya."

¹¹³ Jalee, *How Capitalism Works*.

¹¹⁴ Mitullah and Njeri Wachira, "Informal Labour in the Construction Industry in Kenya."

international organizations, civil society, and other agencies which protect formal construction workers. The government has failed to provide the needed support for the construction sector in Kenya. Its failure is due to the lack of the implementation of policies and programs that are geared towards ensuring the sector has been cushioned from the risks involved in this industry. Under the big four agenda as a social pillar for the Vision 2030, Kenya's government aims to build affordable housing that would eventually improve the living conditions of Kenyans, most of whom live in impoverished conditions. To deliver 500,000 housing units across major cities in the country, it is estimated that this has increased Kenya's construction sector operations ¹¹⁵. In the recent past, Kenya has witnessed a population increase which has created the need for the government to increase spending on infrastructure development and has contributed to an increase in the competitiveness of the industry ¹¹⁶. In turn, this increase necessitates the need to enhance the welfare of individuals working within the industry and ensure that unfair labor practices are averted at all costs. Espousing principles that can be employed regionally and locally to ensure that the laborers' value is protected allows for labor efficiency and effectiveness.

The Kenyan construction industry contributes to almost all developmental programs in the fields of health, education, food production, and transport. Hence, the construction industry underpins development and provides the brick and mortar of progress ¹¹⁷. However, the industry is characterized by aspects like instability, wide range of undefined roles and skills, poor management of complex interactions, and blatant exploitation of construction workers. In addition, no special concern appears to have been shown towards these workers either by the central or

¹¹⁵ "The Origins of Informality: The ILO at the Limit of the Concept of Unemployment | Journal of Global History | Cambridge Core."

¹¹⁶ O. A. K'Akumu, "Construction Statistics Review for Kenya," *Construction Management and Economics* 25, no. 3 (March 1, 2007): 315–26, <https://doi.org/10.1080/01446190601139883>.

¹¹⁷ Mwandale, "THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY."

county governments or trade unions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)¹¹⁸. Ensuring construction workers are treated well at the worksite has been a very difficult and extremely frustrating task for the existing national labor union. The Central Organization of Trade Union (COTU) has concentrated on the industrial workers or those in the organized sector who are employed directly by a principal employer. For COTU, stakes are higher and gains in power politics are therefore more lucrative. The task of organizing construction workers would be much easier since they are steady in their employment and fixed in their location. NGOs seem to be cautious of advocating for this group as it involves complicated issues, such as informalities which yield few concrete long-term results ¹¹⁹.

Within the social dimensions, inequality may manifest in who gets access to quality health care, quality education, and being able to afford a decent life ¹²⁰. The difference transcends political participation of citizens in matters of public affairs such as voting and is marked by who gets to access real power and public resources within the society ¹²¹. Understanding the lived experience of those living under poverty goes beyond providing facts and figures as it allows for researchers to have a clear picture of the situation ¹²². It is well known that colonialism had a negative impact on the economies of African countries, including Kenya. Colonialism enforced capitalism on the indigenous peoples of Africa, especially in countries settled by Europeans. Researchers have investigated the resultant socioeconomic changes, in terms of aspects such as education,

¹¹⁸ Kuo, "Kenyan Rail Workers Are Protesting against Their Chinese Employer for a Raise—to \$5 a Day."

¹¹⁹ Christine Bonner and Dave Spooner, "Organizing in the Informal Economy: A Challenge for Trade Unions," *Internationale Politik Und Gesellschaft* 2, no. 2011 (2011): 87–105.

¹²⁰ Bigsten et al., "Incomes, Inequality, and Poverty in Kenya."

¹²¹ Azindow, "Beyond Promise."

¹²² Simpson Reeves, Parsell, and Liu, "Towards a Phenomenology of Poverty."

occupation, and income. According to Zine Magubane, the white settlers were "elite" and African imitation of them partially explains the formation of status groups and classes among Africans ¹²³.

Trade unions have been in existence for a century in one form or another and were initially given form by the changing work styles and industrial pressures of the first industrial revolution ¹²⁴. Currently, the second industrial revolution, sparked off by computer innovation and robotics, is causing a rethink of the unions' modus operandi and their relationships with the construction industry ¹²⁵. Trade unionism in Kenya had a shared history with its European colonial antecedents. Its national origins were rooted in colonial capitalism, which had been characterized by use of cheap or forced African labor. The colonial government established administrative systems that ensured control of labor resources. Then, in the pre-independence era, an African working class and migrant labor with deep ties to the rural enclaves assumed a militant posture, in part because of being dispossessed of land. Militancy was also a reaction to repressive practices by European settlers who strongly opposed trade union formation ¹²⁶.

For example, Indians formed groups such as the Indian Trade Union while Africans worked through Associations including Kenya African Civil Servants Association and the Railway African Staff Association. In 1922, Sudh Singh formed the Railway Artisan Union, uniting African and Asian workers ¹²⁷. These union were regulated and registered at the whims of the colonial administrators, especially the Trade Unions Labor Officer after 1947. Between 1947 and 1952, the growth of labor unions was curtailed through deliberate government policy of control through denial of registration and importantly, curtailment and lack of fundraising capabilities. Tom

¹²³ Magubane, "A Critical Look at Indices Used in the Study of Social Change in Colonial Africa."

¹²⁴ Bonner and Spooner, "Organizing in the Informal Economy."

¹²⁵ Otenyo, "Politics and the Lack of Labor Militancy in Kenya."

¹²⁶ Odinga, *Not yet Uhuru*.

¹²⁷ Tom Mboya, *The Kenya Question: An African Answer*. (London: Fabian Colonial Bureau, 1956).

Mboya, a pioneer unionist, observed that the registrar had powers to “deregister any union if, in his opinion, that union is undesirable.” In addition, the registrar had powers to “examine trade union books, accounts, and files at will ¹²⁸.”

Therefore, poor economic performance for many African countries can be attributed to how corruption, open and unregulated markets, urbanization, informality and trade unionism correlate, since most African countries are largely dependent on foreign direct investments for economic development. Corrupt practices allow for the rich to evade their tax obligations, thus relegating the tax burden primarily to the working poor. This has allowed for assets to concentrate in the hands of the wealthy few as they have been able to use their economic power to also attain political power.

¹²⁸ Mboya.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODS

The research objective is to contextualize the Kenyan construction industry by estimating the state and the level of income disparity among workers.

Study Area

For this study, the entire metropolitan area of Nairobi was sampled for construction projects during 2019. Nairobi is the capital and largest city in Kenya. With a population of 4,397,073, according to the Kenya Bureau of Statistics (2019) and an area of 694.9Km², the population density of Nairobi is 4,850 people per square ¹²⁹. Nairobi has one of the highest rates of urbanization in Africa. Nairobi is a key business and trade hub in East and Central Africa, and the regional location of and headquarters for various international companies and organizations. Many of Kenya's big businesses, learning institutions, commercial institutions as well as central government are in Nairobi. These organizations are driving forces of increased population density in the city. As a result, there is an upsurge in demand for housing and infrastructure to meet the needs of the increased population. Since this study examines construction projects, the Nairobi metropolitan area is the most appropriate location. Nairobi is surrounded by small towns that are within other counties which together with the city form the Nairobi metropolitan area. These towns are hot spots for increased housing and infrastructural developments.

¹²⁹ Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 1 34 MB Kenya National Bureau of (last), "2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census Reports," CAHF | Centre for Affordable Housing Finance Africa, 2019, <http://housingfinanceafrica.org/documents/2019-kenya-population-and-housing-census-reports/>.

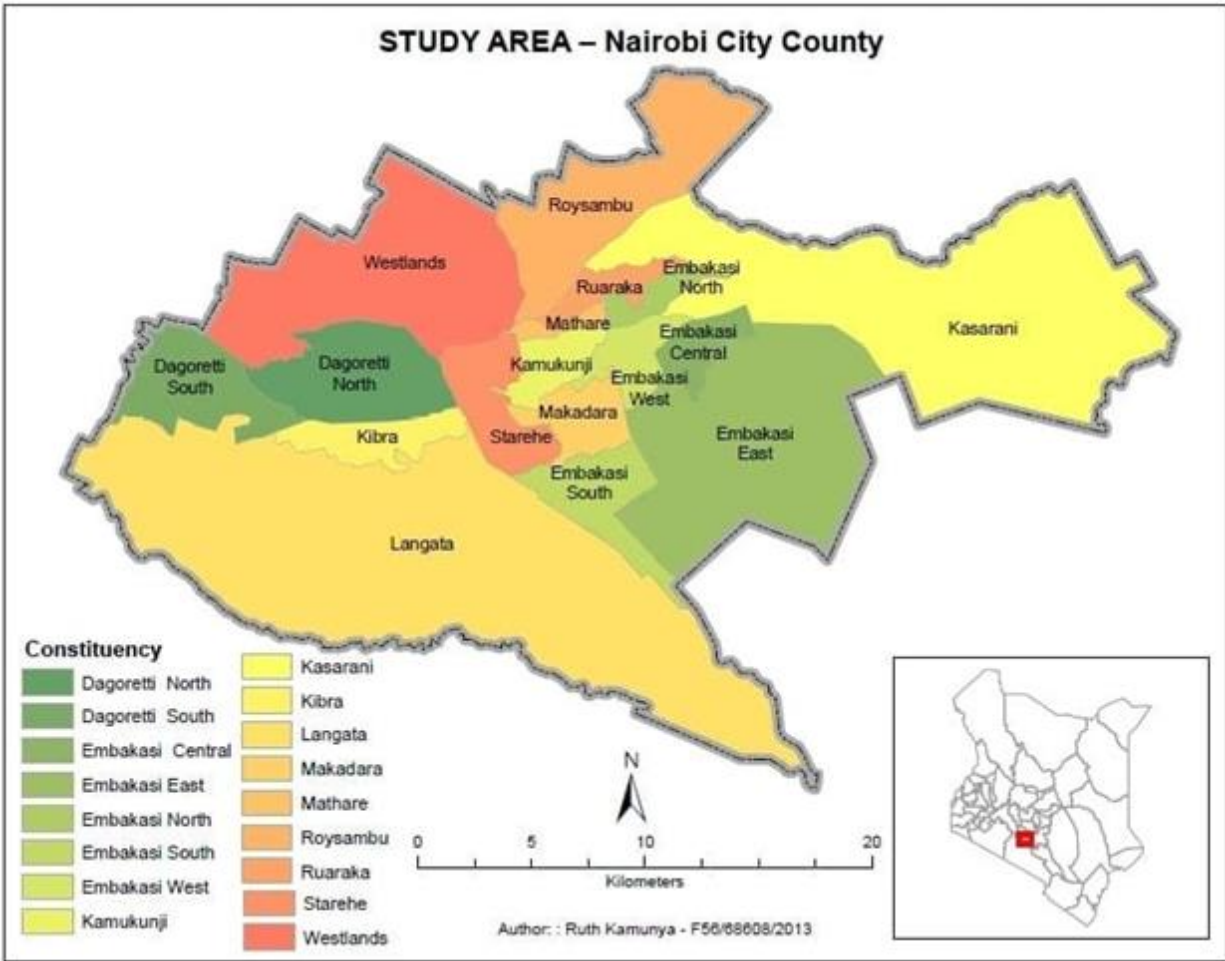


Figure 4-1: Map of Nairobi County. Source: (Liza & Mwaura, 2016)

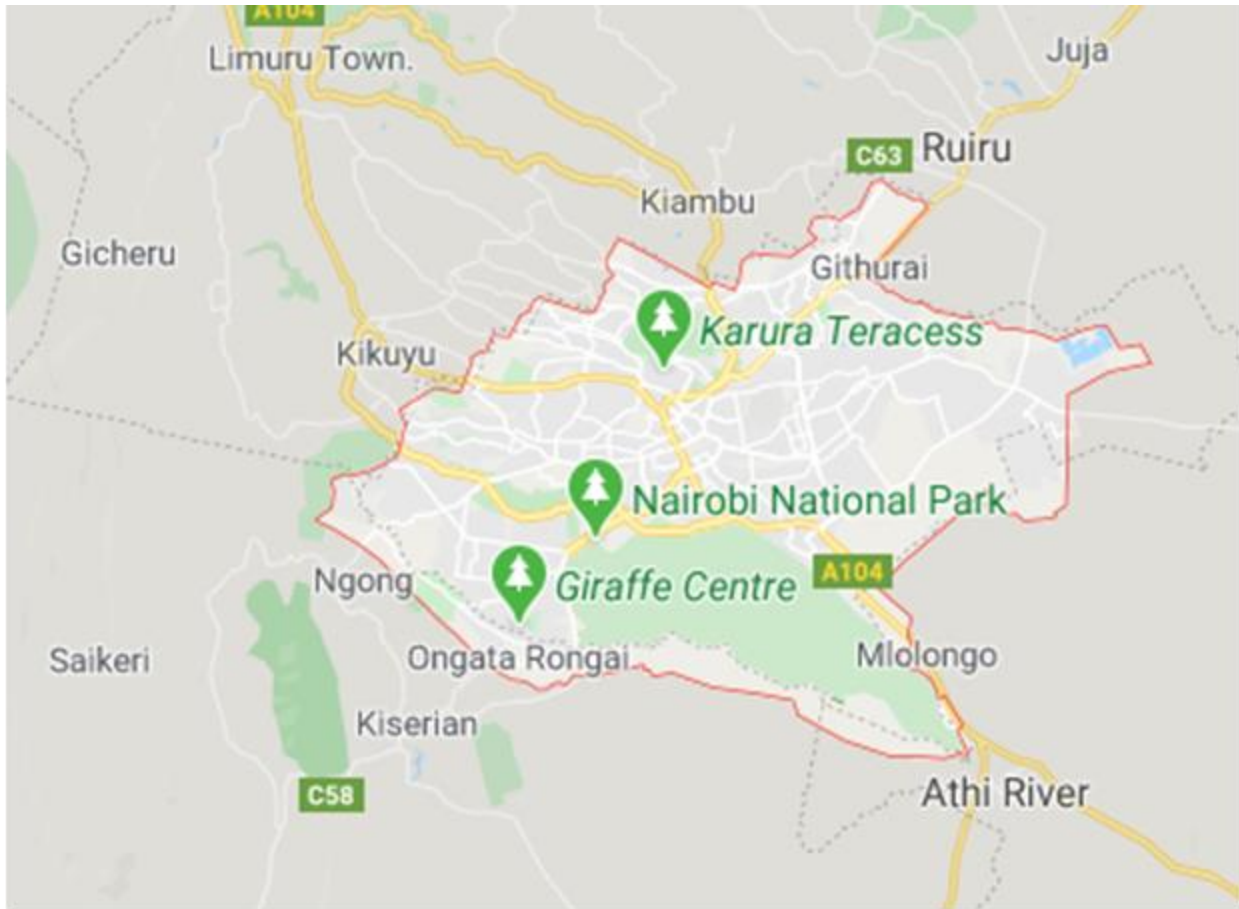


Figure 4-2: Map of Nairobi Metropolitan (source: Google maps)

Sub-urban neighborhoods such as Langata, Westlands, Roysambu, and Kasarani within Nairobi County, and Mlolongo, Ongata Rongai, Kiserian, and Ngong within the Nairobi Metropolitan area were selected for the study. These neighborhoods are popular for the construction of residential properties by both private and public developers. Within the City, the Uperhill area, located in Starehe Sub-county was selected due to the high number of commercial properties under development because of its proximity to the City center.

Construction Projects Sampled

This study examines construction projects taking place within the Nairobi metropolitan area. In the year 2019, between January and June, 957 permits were approved by the local government. Construction cost quotations for construction projects completed within the Nairobi

area were solicited from private contractors, quantity surveyors, and construction company websites as well as online from the local government.

Study Design

This study adopted a quantitative methods approach. It involved an examination of construction projects' quotations and final reports for information on project types, the amount of time they took to complete, the types of laborers required, the labor, and total project costs. Construction laborers doing the actual manual work at construction sites within the Nairobi Metropolitan area include masons, carpenters, electricians, and plumbers; both the skilled and the unskilled. This information was tabulated and analysed using statistical software for trends.

Sample Size Determination

The sample size was determined using online software Creative Research Systems. The rationale behind the software is the Cochran formula, which allows the calculation of an ideal sample size at a level of precision, the confidence level that is desired, and the estimated proportion of the attribute present in the population. The formula is:

$$n_0 = \frac{Z^2 pq}{e^2}$$

Where:

n is the sample size,

e is the level of precision desired (the margin of error),

p is the (estimated) proportion of the population (construction projects) that has the attribute in question,

q is 1 – p.

The Cochran formula is typically appropriate in cases of a large, indefinite population; it allows for one to calculate an ideal sample size ¹³⁰. The sample size can be adjusted if the whole population is known and is relatively small. In this study, it was known that 957 building permits were issued by Nairobi City County Government between January and June 2019. This means an average of 160 permits were issued monthly. Therefore, the sample size was reduced using this formula as follows:

$$n = \frac{n_0}{1 + \frac{(n_0 - 1)}{N}}$$

The total sample size calculated was 114 construction quotations (or project reports).

Sampling Techniques

This study employed convenience sampling procedures. Construction records such as quotations and project reports that were included in the study were either readily available online or obtained from contractors, quantity surveyors, and local government officials who were convenient to contact, based on their willingness and agreement to release these records. In addition, historical literature that was accessible and available from online journals, books, libraries, and archives were included for the qualitative research.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The criteria for inclusion of available construction records were records on any construction project that started, ended, or were ongoing in the Nairobi Metropolitan area in 2019. Incomplete

¹³⁰ William Gemmill Cochran, *Sampling Techniques*, 2. ed, Wiley Series in Probability and Mathematical Statistics (New York: Wiley, 1963).

construction records, such as lacking data on labor costs, which was crucial to the study, were excluded.

Dependent Variables

The main outcome of interest in this study was the level of income disparity among laborers working in the construction sector in Kenya. Therefore, the main dependent variable was income inequality, which was measured using the Gini coefficient. This coefficient ranges from 0 (or 0%) to 1 (or 100%), where 0 means there is perfect equality in the given population, and 1 means perfect inequality. In a population where everyone has the same income, the Gini coefficient is 0, whereas in a population where few earn most of the income, while everyone else earns a small portion of the share, the Gini coefficient is closer to 1.

Independent Variables

The most important independent variable for this research was wages and salaries. The actual amount of money paid to construction laborers versus the cost and value of construction projects is a major factor contributing to income and wealth disparities in the sector.

Intervening Variables

The main reason why laborers in the construction sector have different levels of wealth is that people are paid different wages. There are several reasons why some in the sector gain millions from construction projects, while others merely earn a minimum wage. Factors identified and studied in this research were the nature of the labor market, skills and education, technology, and economic neoliberalism at the macro level.

Data Collection Methods

This study relied on secondary data sources that provided an already existing body of information that was relevant to the study objectives.

Contract Documents Records

Construction quotations and reports from companies were examined and raw data collected. This data otherwise referred to as documentary or archival data, was in the form in which it was originally intended, for business transaction purposes. Information relevant to this research including project type, project length, and labor costs were extracted.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data obtained from contract records and documents were validated by screening as per research criteria and checking for completeness. It was then tabulated into Microsoft Excel sheets. Afterward, it was cleaned and edited after checking for outliers and missing values. Finally, data was coded by grouping according to the different independent variables (time, cost, size, etc.) and assigning meaningful values that could be analyzed using statistical software. Statistical tests were then carried out using both Excel and IBM SPSS software.

Why the statistics?

In as much as some data are used to highlight information concerning the construction industry in Kenya, they only focus on the social impact in general. The data from the Kenya Bureau of Statistics are intended to highlight current economic conditions. However, in this case, a bill of quantities was analyzed by evaluating the project's type (residential or commercial), the length of time for the project to be completed, and the cost of the project. In limited cases, table excerpts were used, for example, to ensure a proper illustration has been provided.

States have the responsibility of providing statistics that can be used for economic planning purposes. Based on the economic impact of the construction industry, it is essential for the government to provide adequate statistics, which will eventually improve the industry. This

information is paramount for both public and private decision-making ¹³¹. These statistics are relevant for ever-changing economic conditions. In contrast, most of the data that is used is usually based on data that had been compiled a long time ago. The statistics provided are reliable since the general macrolevel contribution of the industry is well tabulated, which can justify the information that is shared. For instance, the foreign direct investment (FDI) project by the Chinese government towards the construction of various infrastructure projects in Kenya is open to public review ¹³². Therefore, this information can be obtained for analysis purposes. The statistics aim to capture the scope of the construction industry.

This will give an account of the level of income inequality within the sector. Most of the statistics provided fail to narrow down to examine the laborers' contribution as they focus on providing information of the macrolevel contribution to the industry. The information demonstrates the role of the construction industry in socio-economic development in Kenya, taking into account the workers' contributions by using raw data to make inferences of the importance of the laborer ¹³³.

Statistics is defined as an anthology of designated numerical facts about the status of a specific sector. In any given country, data is usually analyzed to draw inferences within a sector ¹³⁴. Therefore, having statistics that are numerical presents the society with a particular timeframe and recommendations for policymaking.

¹³¹ Breen and Gillanders, "Political Trust, Corruption, and Ratings of the IMF and the World Bank."

¹³² Robert I. Rotberg, *China Into Africa : Trade, Aid, and Influence* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Inst. Press/World Peace Fdn, 2008), <https://libezproxy.syr.edu/login?url=http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=276845&site=ehost-live>.

¹³³ "FDD | Below the Belt and Road," FDD, May 6, 2020, <https://www.fdd.org/analysis/2020/05/04/below-the-belt-and-road/>.

¹³⁴ Ibrahim Yitmen, Ilknur Akiner, and Khaled Marar, "Reviewing Building Construction Statistics in Turkey: Stakeholders' Perspective," *Habitat International* 36, no. 3 (July 1, 2012): 371–79, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.habitatint.2011.12.002>.

Geopolitical decisions may help address factors that might affect the industry locally, regionally, or even globally. Building and civil engineering works characterize an economic activity that is referred to as the construction sector. The construction sector is the most critical sector of capital investment, based on the amount of construction-related expenditure within the country. The strategic importance of the construction industry leads to economic advancement for the country. Its macroeconomic impact on the gross domestic product and other sectors of the economy necessitates the need for providing vital information for economic development. However, data has proven to be a challenge for most societies. Further, the quantitative data analyzed was not fully adequate because it cannot fully address the construction workers' needs.

Descriptive Statistics

The first level of data analysis involved descriptive statistics including measures of central tendency (mean, median, and mode), frequency distributions, and percentages to summarize the data and find preliminary patterns.

Inferential Statistics

Gini coefficient (statistical dispersion intended to represent income inequality) was determined using Excel software in order to compare incomes earned by construction laborers versus wealth created by construction contractors.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze differences in income inequality between and among groups with regards to the different categories of construction laborers working at construction sites.

Ethical Considerations

Most of the data used for this research was obtained from online sources. Since it was readily available, permission to utilize was implied. The data were evaluated for criteria such as

methodology of recording, accuracy, the period of data collection, the content of the data, and the purpose for which it was collected. Verbal consent was sought to utilize records obtained from organizations and individuals. The data obtained was kept only for as long as was necessary for its purpose. It was kept safe from unauthorized access, accidental loss, or destruction as encrypted files in a computer. While reporting, it was mandatory to cite all sources and authors for published literature.

CHAPTER 5: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This section maps out dimensions of income inequality in the construction industry. It does this using the analyzed data. Wherever possible, income data from various sources provide a consistent picture. The analysis uses the Gini coefficient to examine the impact of capital in driving income inequality within the construction industry. The results show the uneven distribution of capital is the key driver of income inequality within Kenya.

These results present us with information on how frequently people fall in and out of economic deprivation and how stagnation of social mobility is sustained. There are several implications in understanding the level of inequality in this industry. In addition to indicating the level of income inequality within the construction industry, the results also indicate that the distribution of income changes such that the workers' social mobility and the contractor's mobility are relative to the amount of capital involved. The results suggest that the contractors are the biggest gainers in the construction industry.

Looking forward, these results highlight the need to focus on change at all points of distribution of income as opposed to focusing on a summary of income inequality measures alone. As opposed to adjudicating among the accounts provided, we examine the information that informs discourses affecting income inequality within the construction industry in Kenya. The research objective was to demonstrate income distribution patterns within the construction industry. The examination processes will help to account for the existing gap within the industry, where it will demonstrate the current reality vis a vis the vision that the sector has for the manpower.

The construction projects in this study were drawn from Nairobi County. The findings can be extended to other parts of the country because Nairobi is a metropolitan area where a large

number of construction projects are taking place. In this study, a total of 76 quotations was analyzed, representing 70% of the calculated sample size of construction projects. This was sufficient to make inferences about the study population based on the data analyzed. Data analysis is based on the Cochran formula, which allows the calculation of an ideal sample size at a level of precision, the confidence level that is desired, and the estimated proportion of the attribute present in the population.

The results in Table 1 indicate that the level of inequality increases depending on the amount of money involved in the project. The findings support previous scholarship which indicate that foreign direct investments and an increase in private companies' operations within a country will lead to an increased level of income inequality. It can therefore be understood that the three categories (length, cost and project type) affect levels of income inequality.

Descriptive Statistics

75% of the projects were constructions for commercial purposes.

Purpose for Construction Project		
	Frequency	%
Commercial	57	75.0
Residential	19	25.0
Total	76	100.0

Table 5.1: Number of commercial and residential projects

The majority (55%) of the construction projects were carried out in Nairobi's central business district.

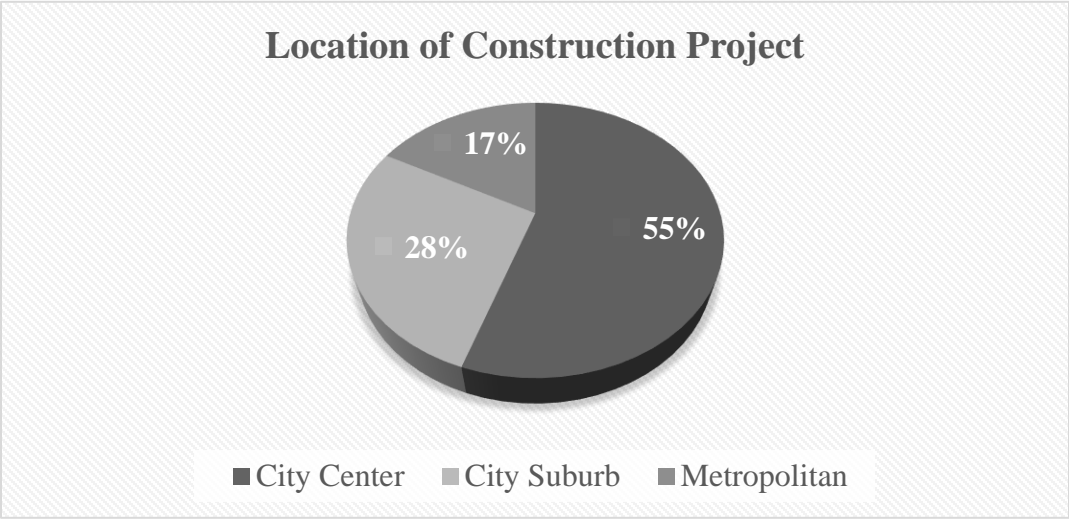


Figure 5-1 Location of Construction Projects

The majority of works carried out on the construction projects were completed by masons. Almost half (42%) of the projects involved masonry.

Type of Construction Work		
	Frequency	%
Masonry	32	42.1
Plumbing	9	11.8
Electrical	26	34.2
Painting & Decoration	4	5.3
Other	5	6.6
Total	76	100

Table 5.2: Types of construction work

(36%) of all the projects in this study lasted between 10 and 12 months.

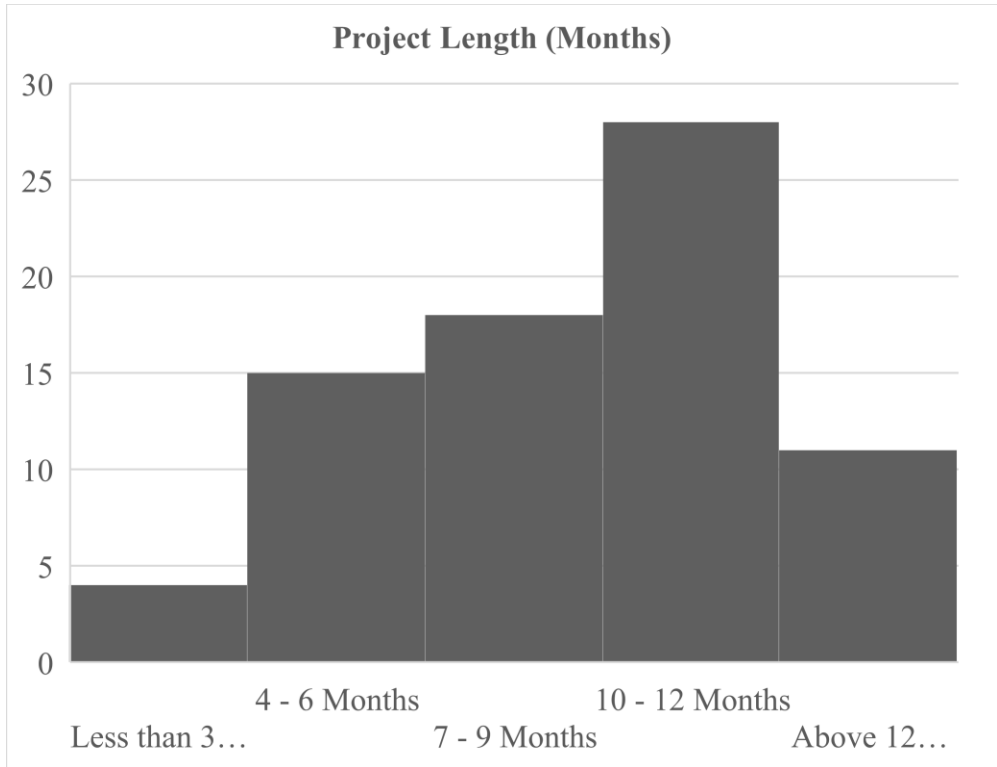


Figure 5-2: Project Length

The largest number of projects (40%) cost between USD 100,000 and USD 1, 000, 0000.

Project Cost (USD)			
	Frequency	%	Cumulative %
\$101 - \$1000	4	5.3	5.3
\$1001 - \$10000	9	11.8	17.1
\$10001 - \$100000	18	23.7	40.8
\$100001 - \$1000000	31	40.8	81.6
\$1000001 - \$10000000	11	14.5	96.1
\$10000001 - \$100000000	3	3.9	100.0
Total	76	100.0	

Table 5.3: Total cost of projects

Incomes and Gini Coefficient

Data from the projects studied indicate that there is income inequality among laborers in the construction sector in Nairobi with a Gini index of 0.48 (48%). In addition, as the project size (in terms of total cost) increased, the level of income inequality also increased. The findings regarding project length and type were also consistent as lengthy projects and those for commercial purposes had more income inequality.

Project	Incomes per Month				Gini Coefficient
	Skilled	Semi-Skilled	Contractor	Total	
Overall	23311	19725	194296	18037210	0.48
Grouped by Project Cost (KES)					
10,001 - 100,000	1300	1100	4875	29101	0.33
100,001 - 1,000,000	2668	2258	4810	87630	0.15
1,000,001 - 10,000,000	5212	4410	9297	359474	0.14
10,000,001 - 100,000,000	15464	13085	22154	1673214	0.09
100,000,001 - 1,000,000,000	39289	33244	161121	1869231	0.35
1,000,000,001 - 10,000,000,000	42250	35750	1011744	3269231	0.59
Grouped by Project Length					
Less than 3 Months	4874	4124	11505	574062	0.22
4 -6 Months	9877	8357	21756	719830	0.20
7 - 9 Months	8534	7221	12781	228286	0.10
10 - 12 Months	28817	24383	91953	2612753	0.29
Above 12 Months	39488	33413	766042	3355769	0.42
Grouped by Project Type					
Commercial	24631	20841	208181	14204576	0.48
Residential	5462	4622	6550	332690	0.04

Qualitative Data

Characteristics of the Construction Industry in Kenya	References
1. Employment is temporary and depends on how long it takes to complete a project.	Veitich, 2017
2. The construction process is complex and functions in multiphases.	<i>Ibid</i>
3. Employees are paid in wages which are usually delayed. Although the industry is labor-intensive, the principal employer remains mostly invisible to a laborer on the site.	Mitulla & Waichira (2013)
4. Entry into the construction industry is relatively easy due to poor regulations.	<i>Ibid</i>
5. There are many contracting firms with low survival rates.	<i>Ibid</i>
6. The government accords special treatment to construction companies owned by foreign nationals and entities.	Mbugua, (2020)
7. Women working in the industry bear the most discrimination with regards to payment	<i>Ibid</i>
8. The industry is also characterized by a general lack of training facilities.	Mbamalu, (2018)
9. The construction workers in cities such as Nairobi mostly are of two categories: migrant labor from other counties and local labor available in the slums.	<i>Ibid</i>

Table 5.4 Characteristics of the Construction Industry in Kenya

Why Organization of Workers Is Difficult	References
1. The labor force is fragmented in terms of regions, skills, and locations of work. They do not form a homogeneous group.	Hyman, (2007)
2. The labor force, although large, is mostly employed in smaller groups and for short durations. This leaves very little time for coming together.	Bonner & Spooner, (2011)
3. The cost of the labor force, especially on the site, consists of the poor. Illiteracy and a feudal relationship with the contractor make them vulnerable and fearful of seeking or accepting external help.	<i>Ibid</i>
4. The isolation of workers is systematically perpetuated as the workers stay on the site and remain alienated from the local population.	<i>Ibid</i>
5. The principal employer and contractors keep a close watch on the workers and do not encourage any outsider attempting to work on any issue. It is sometimes difficult to even collect information or talk to construction workers.	<i>Ibid</i>

Table 5.5: Why Organization of Workers Is Difficult

Discussion

How the Kenyan Construction Industry Enables Inequality

The construction industry is one of the largest absorbers of the majority of the Kenyan labor force in the informal sector. Kenya's informal sector is large and covers mainly semi-organized and unregulated activities. In 2019, roughly 15 million individuals were engaged in the informal sector in Kenya; this increased from 14.2 million in 2018¹³⁵. Activities associated with different construction projects within a country play a vital role in its economic growth and development. These developments are triggered by infrastructure building projects and employment opportunities provided in the process of construction of the said projects. According to the International Labor Office (ILO), construction is one of the principal industries in all countries¹³⁶.

Economic deprivation is a violation of human rights and can also lead to denial of human rights, which leads to poverty. This level of lack makes it difficult to get access to critical services such as housing, education and health because they are unaffordable. Poor people have the least capacity to defend and/or demand rights, including a decent standard of living, access to food or basic healthcare. Furthermore, poverty causes an individual to have a low and sometimes nil purchasing power and therefore cannot afford basic human needs¹³⁷. In most cases, the problem

¹³⁵ "The Origins of Informality: The ILO at the Limit of the Concept of Unemployment | Journal of Global History | Cambridge Core," accessed February 21, 2021, <https://www-cambridge-org.libezproxy2.syr.edu/core/journals/journal-of-global-history/article/origins-of-informality-the-ilo-at-the-limit-of-the-concept-of-unemployment/5784F429875BA8151575AA5010D3712A>.

¹³⁶ "The Origins of Informality: The ILO at the Limit of the Concept of Unemployment | Journal of Global History | Cambridge Core."

¹³⁷ Valentin F. Lang and Hildegard Lingnau, "Defining and Measuring Poverty and Inequality Post-2015," *Journal of International Development* 27, no. 3 (2015): 399–414, <https://doi.org/10.1002/jid.3084>.

of poverty in Africa is a result of corruption and exploitation and one that can be tackled when Africans realize that fighting poverty is a matter of obligation and not charity ¹³⁸.

The Kenyan Vision 2030 development blueprint aims for Kenya to become a global competitor and provide a high quality of living standards for its citizens. The vision seeks to transform Kenya into an industrialized middle-income country by 2030. It aims to attain an economic growth of 10% per annum that can be sustained by a just and cohesive society that allows for equitable development for all in a secure and clean environment. This vision would be supported by a political understanding that is a human-centered, result-oriented, and accountable democratic political system. The construction industry is deemed as an effective option for sustained economic growth to address poverty, unemployment, and industrial growth. However, due to the increased number of construction projects that are carried out within the country, it is expected that the industry will register steady growth.

This study showed there is glaring income inequality that suggests higher cost projects tend to have higher contrasting income inequality between contractors and workers. Projects of lower costs have lower income inequality among the two categories, as measured by the Gini Coefficient. In unprecedented ways, African countries engaged in borrowing loans to finance developmental programs that would later be coupled with the global oil crisis of the 1970s. These loans have resulted in heavy burdens for most countries in Africa ¹³⁹. During the administration of President Daniel Arap Moi, the Kenyan government engaged with progressive institutions at the time such as the World Bank and the IMF to find solutions to the problems the country was facing ¹⁴⁰. In the 1980s, globalization presented an alternative to the developmentalism that would eventually be

¹³⁸ Gyimah-Brempong, "Corruption, Economic Growth, and Income Inequality in Africa."

¹³⁹ Kai and Hamori, "Globalization, Financial Depth and Inequality in Sub-Saharan Africa."

¹⁴⁰ Otenyo, "Politics and the Lack of Labor Militancy in Kenya."

embraced as a premier solution to the failed economic and political policies of many countries in the global South¹⁴¹.

Since the 1980s, the construction industry in Kenya has undergone major changes. From the 1980s to the 1990s, the industry registered a decline in its contribution to the nation's gross domestic product. However, this changed under President Mwai Kibaki, who revitalized the industry through various infrastructural development projects that were flagged by the government¹⁴². In 2018, the labor market registered an improvement because of an improved global economy. The global economy grew by 2.4% from 3.6 in 2017 to 3.8 in 2018. Locally, Kenya's gross domestic product rose to 6.3% compared to the previous year, which was 4.9%. The growth was largely due to improved transportation and well-performing service sectors, improved manufacturing industry, and increased agricultural productivity. Conversely, the improved economy was because of job creation, with the informal sector contributing 76% of job creation¹⁴³.

Employment in the Kenyan construction industry is usually temporary. This can be attributed to the unique nature of this industry, where the product remains static, and the production unit is variable. Therefore, when the product (building/structure) is complete, it remains stationary while the entire unit (workers, machinery, etc.) involved in the construction process moves to a new site, depending on the availability of new work. These temporary jobs tend to be associated with low pay which, in turn, has negative consequences for the household income of construction workers. These workers are therefore usually unable to meet their financial obligations, such as decent housing, food, clothing, healthcare, and education for their families, especially when there

¹⁴¹ Schwam-Baird, "Poverty and Exclusion in a Global World / Structural Adjustment, Global Trade, and the New Political Economy of Development / Do World Bank IMF Policies Work?"

¹⁴² Bigsten et al., "Incomes, Inequality, and Poverty in Kenya."

¹⁴³ Bartley, *Rules Without Rights*.

are no new projects. Besides economic implications, the temporary or unstable nature of this work hurts the mental health of these workers. Research has shown that people who have experienced temporary work status often reveal depressive symptoms, and that employers find that temporary workers are less productive than their permanent counterparts ¹⁴⁴. The construction industry consists of both the informal and formal sectors. Skilled and semi-skilled workers undertake most of the work and in some instances, unskilled workers conduct this work. Skilled workers acquire their expertise through university, college, polytechnic, and vocational training institutions. The unskilled learn their skills by on-the-job training.

The construction process is complex in nature and functions in different phases. Each phase involves a different set of skilled and semi-skilled labor. The exchange of crews and thus the group's nature and attitudes (culture), and their adjustment to project dynamics indicate a degree of unpredictability. Since new participants enter the system, it may destabilize in a completely unforeseen way and may turn chaotic. According to Bertelsen, construction should be considered as a complex dynamic system. As a result, the management of construction projects in practice can be challenging in a primarily informal sector ¹⁴⁵.

Although the construction industry is labor-intensive, the principal employer remains invisible to a laborer on the site. The process of employment is informal and ensures that the laborers are hired for a short time and are not aware of who the main employer is. Employer characteristics are strong determinants of workplace contraventions. The majority of workplace mistreatments (such as not paying a minimum wage or overtime, not giving workers meal breaks, not responding to complaints about working conditions, etc.) are ultimately the result of decisions

¹⁴⁴ J. Atkinson and And Others, *Temporary Work and the Labour Market* (BEBC Distribution, 15 Albion Close, Parkstone, Poole BH12 3LL, England, United Kingdom., 1996), <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED397247>.

¹⁴⁵ Bertelsen, "Construction as a Complex System."

made by employers ¹⁴⁶. Further, commonly in the industry, employers may disguise pay-related abuses by using non-hourly pay arrangements and/or paying workers in cash without providing a statement of earnings and deductions. Informal pay systems in this sector may facilitate minimum wage violations while making it harder for workers to claim their rights. As this research showed, payment violations are not limited to small projects managed by individual contractors. Conversely, the larger the construction project, the more likely there were payment breaches ¹⁴⁷. Workers at these projects are more likely to work overtime and are usually underpaid or not paid at all for the extra hours. Similarly, workers paid a flat weekly rate or paid in cash had much higher minimum wage violation rates than those paid a standard hourly rate and paid by company cheque.

It is also important to note that the project construction regulatory framework in Kenya is not clearly defined and features a wide range of laws, policies, and institutions ¹⁴⁸. Capital required for entry into the construction business is not of a high magnitude, hence there are many small and large contractors engaged in construction activities ranging from one-man teams to multi-entity companies employing hundreds of people. Inevitably, the impermanence rates of contracting firms are very high. In the absence of satisfactory regulatory requirements, entry into the building and construction industry is relatively easy. Inadequacies in minimum standards in the construction industry fail to allocate and distribute risks amongst the various stakeholders. There are inadequate policies and regulations in thematic areas related to adherence to safety, healthy, and commercially sound standards, among others. The industry is subject to a diverse range of vague policies formulated by various government bodies and agencies, limiting policy implementation. Therefore, mitigating the risks towards the many players involved, including construction workers,

¹⁴⁶ Bernhardt et al., "Broken Laws, Unprotected Workers."

¹⁴⁷ Kenyatta, Alkizim, and Mbiti, "Recapitulating The Payment Default Effects to Contractors in The Kenyan Construction Industry."

¹⁴⁸ Nyanchoka, "An Outline of Construction Law in Kenya."

and protecting and preserving public interest, without a proper regulatory framework in place proves difficult.¹⁴⁹

The industry is also characterized by a general inadequacy of training facilities. Most workers are semi-skilled; skills are acquired from learning on the job and workers barely have any form of formal education. Women working in the industry mostly remain unskilled with few opportunities for education or skill improvement. Therefore, they are left to perform menial tasks which are low paying. Those who acquire skills gain them through an informal apprenticeship with other skilled workers. Construction-specific technical training or contractor training programs are inadequate and expensive to afford for the majority of the laborers in the industry¹⁵⁰. Further, an inventory of skills required in this industry is usually largely missing as workers are employed informally without the need to prove their skills and abilities through a due diligence process of recruitment.

Similarly, in other parts of Africa, studies on construction industries have shown that most workers usually have little or no formal education. For instance, in his research on ways to ensure effective communication with small contractors on construction projects, Ofori established that most construction firms in Ghana were led by people with little or no education, which results in ineffective and improper contracts documentation¹⁵¹.

In Kenya, a state cooperative under the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development is the National Construction Authority (NCA), which is responsible for overseeing the construction sector and ensuring synchronized development of the sector in the wider

¹⁴⁹ Githui, "Ethical Issues in the Construction Industry in Kenya."

¹⁵⁰ M. A. Dindi, "Quality Management: A Challenge for the Kenyan Construction Industry" (Thesis, University of Nairobi, 2004), <http://erepository.uonbi.ac.ke/handle/11295/65842>.

¹⁵¹ Abena Ofori, "CHALLENGES OF CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRIES IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES: LESSONS FROM VARIOUS COUNTRIES," n.d., 13.

economy. The authority was established under the National Act of Parliament No. 41 in 2011. Through this authority, construction workers are categorized in different classes that range from NCA 1 as the highest category; a category that assumes the company involved in these types of construction activities has the technical capacity to conduct a high-end construction project. The lowest category of these classes is NCA 8. The work involved within this class includes mechanical, electrical, water, building, and roads.

A substantive number of foreign direct investors have expressed interest in the industry. The construction industry consists of commercial and residential infrastructure development as a significant contributor to Kenya's gross domestic product. It is considered a primary economic driver of the country in the last decade. Since 2016, it is estimated that the industry has increased. Vision 2030 is a developmental policy embraced by the Kenyan government to industrialize its economy to provide all Kenyans with a "quality life." It is expected that the construction industry will contribute 10% of the nation's GDP annually. The construction sector is capable of creating employment, which is a catalyst for economic advancement in most industries in the country. Part of the plan is to ensure there is a revamp in existing and additional construction projects that would allow for this change to occur; some of these projects include roads, ports, houses, factories, etc. ¹⁵².

Consequences of Inequality for Construction Workers

This study showed that the strategic macro-level contribution of the construction sector was in sharp contrast to the living conditions of construction workers in Kenya. The research objective was to highlight the state of workers within the construction industry in Kenya. This research recognizes that people do know the circumstances under which they work. It further

¹⁵² Mwenzwa and Misati, "Kenya's Social Development Proposals and Challenges."

proposes that a theoretical understanding will augment ideas that contribute to social change that is all-inclusive and relevant for learning and advocacy purposes in both the social, political and economic structures that are complicit in reaping profits from working individuals, who are the largest contributors to developmental programs rolled out in Africa. Lack of income mobility and opportunity for a particular set of people in a given society is a typical indicator of high income inequality, attributed to the continued deprivation of a particular segment of people. As a result, growth is hindered in both the macro and micro levels of society.

The underutilization of available human resources leads to social, political, and economic conflict. The long-term adverse effects of income inequality may include lack of investors in human developmental programs and adoption of policies that could adversely affect health and well-being. Current social upheavals can also be attributed to income inequality. Discontent is evident by the amount of social unrest in a society. We have witnessed increased crime, mass violence, revolutions, coups, disobedience, and public disturbance, which are significant inhibitors of economic growth. Income inequality is the unequal distribution of income within an industry or a country. Policies formulated tend to be less effective in reducing poverty because of high income inequality, which also leads to social tensions, as lobbyists manipulate policies for economic gain. Understanding the drivers of conflict is key in formulating policies that enhance people's lives.

The plight of the construction workers, and especially their social-economic status, was of special interest in this study. To start with, although most trades in the construction industry are covered under the Minimum Wages Act, the workers do not receive minimum wages. Cheating and exploitation are rampant. Often the principal employer does not pay minimum wage and usually the contractor deducts his cuts from the amount paid by the employer/client for labor.

The movement of people from rural areas to urban centers in Kenya has led to the rise of infrastructure development in Kenya that is dependent on the cheap labor of the populace. Many young people are leaving rural areas in search of employment opportunities. The group working within the construction industry serves in servile capacity. The freedom they enjoy is not commensurate or relative to the substantive financial hardships that they endure. Kenya's economic prosperity is fundamentally related to the extensive exploitation of individuals who provide this cheap labor. The increased interest by the government for infrastructure development has led to an increase in interest in trying to understand what is at stake for individuals working within this industry.

If working conditions are bad, the living conditions of these workers are even worse. Their housing consists of shanties or make-shift sheds within informal settlements in urban areas. There is usually limited and uncertain access to clean water for household use. Latrines are rarely available in these areas. Further, food and other necessities are expensive and inaccessible for the workers and their families. Often, they skip meals to save on costs to fend for themselves and their families.

In addition, their work hours are long and uncertain. Even though the workers may not live on the construction site, they are usually available for work if and when required by the client. Some workers are not paid wages, as such, they are paid a subsistence allowance after every seven or fifteen days. The final account is settled only after the culmination of the work for the season. Also, there is lack of documentation to the workers to show that they are engaged for work, or what wages they have earned, or how much they must recover from the employers. Further, the safety measures are minimal, and many times remain unused.

It is also crucial to examine the construction workers' problem from a gender perspective. Due to unbearable economic conditions, women have been forced to work in the same capacity as men in an industry that requires heavy lifting of materials. If these circumstances are bad for male construction workers, women working in the industry suffer doubly or more than the men. Women endure the threefold burden of work, home, and children. Women's work is deemed as unskilled and channels for skill up-gradation are non-existent. Women assist in carrying debris dug up at the excavation stages, carry various types of building material, help in the erection of scaffolding, and cure concrete by watering it until it sets. At times, the wives of male skilled workers work as assistants to their husbands. Since women do not have a well-defined role to play and no chance to carry out skilled tasks, their work is usually considered as menial, non-essential, and of the lowest category in the industry. Therefore, they are paid less and sometimes go without pay, thus experiencing more job insecurities than men.

Health problems such as injuries, dermatitis, hearing loss, and respiratory diseases are constant recurring phenomena of the construction workers' lives. These conditions have led to diminished health conditions among workers. It has been noted that Kenya's medical and social diseases are mostly because of accidents within the industry.

Another area of concern is the high accident rate in the industry. Even though there are safety guidelines and codes prescribed regarding operations such as excavating, blasting, working on heights, use of scaffolds, safety belts, ladders, and so on, these are poorly implemented or enforced. Therefore, workers continue to work unguided and unaware of hazards, and protect themselves by instinct or intuition. Since they are constantly under the threat of unemployment, the workers' primary concern is to earn as much as possible, even at great personal risk. The contractor does not implement prescribed procedures to ensure the safety of the workers. As a

result, workers suffer chronic health problems which can be termed as occupational health hazards. In addition, accidents do take place. Most accidents, including fatalities, are not always reported to the authorities. Workers injured on construction sites rarely get compensation. When a worker is incapacitated by an accident, they not only lose their job but also have no means to subsist or sustain themselves during the period of incapacitation. In most cases of accidents, the typical reaction of the contractor is to disown responsibility. On many occasions, the affected person lies in the hospital with helpless relatives or alone without any follow-up by the contractor. Sometimes they may die because of lack of timely financial and medical aid.

Educational services offered by the government and NGO sectors do not have alternative models for construction workers. Although primary school education is offered by the government, construction workers are usually unable to afford secondary and tertiary education for their children, who are forced to remain out of the education arena, thus sealing their futures as unskilled or semiskilled construction workers.

Construction workers in Kenya are totally out of the scope of the banking system coverage. Irregularity in payment of wages, and the hand to mouth situation perpetuated by the contractor prohibit construction workers from saving. The banks also do not have savings plans that meet the needs of these mobile construction workers.

Defending Construction Workers

The world over, people have been grappling with issues of equitable distribution of resources. It has become one of the most discussed issues in different realms of global society. Addressing income inequality is essential for the world to realize its sustainable development goals in the 21st century. Income inequality is a violation of human rights and is ethically intolerable

because of its systematic nature in depriving others. It tends to create instability that inhibits growth for all stakeholders.

A negative effect necessitated by income inequality is the marginalization of people. It hinders efficient resource allocation, underutilizes productive prospects, and damages formal developmental programs. Sustainable initiatives need to be formulated by policymakers to address disparities associated with unequal distribution of resources.

Since the colonial period, income inequality has been a concern within Kenya's academic and political discourses, consequently affecting the political economies and cultural trajectory of the society. In many instances, inequality occurs to gain control of state resources influenced by political manipulation. Many conflicts and problems emanate from labor productivity within the sector, which affect total project costs. The workers' skills also affect income levels for workers within the industry. The most critical factor for project owners and contractors usually is the labor cost, which in most cases is in wage form. The contractors' major focus is to make a profit, while the project owners aim to complete the project at the lowest cost possible. The third dynamic is the worker who seeks to receive wages.

In absolute terms, the Kenyan construction labor cost is low relative to its high construction cost. Campaigning for the rights of the construction workers through unions in Kenya is an uphill task, but one that is necessary if the socioeconomic conditions of these workers are to change. Unfortunately, there is only one workers' union currently existing in this sector.

Historically, trade unions have played a key role in campaigning for the rights of workers in the organized sector in Kenya. However, construction workers do not form a popular target group for unionizing, due to informality in the sector. The informality within the construction industry provides the formal low-cost labor that is affordable for middle and large enterprises

which compete to secure and employ desperate individuals seeking work. The contribution of the construction industry to the nation's GDP is significant. It has been estimated that the informal sector in Kenya contributes 35% of the GDP.

CHAPTER 6: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Recommendations

Developing strategies and models of intervention is a priority so that the rights of the workers can be protected.

Phase 1

At this initial phase, a non-controversial approach is adopted. The objective is to develop a rapport with construction workers through welfare activities and also study various problems of their lived and work experiences. The attempt in this phase is to explore the living conditions of construction workers and study the dynamics of the construction industry. Through programs such as pre-school education, adult education, health education, and recreational activities, the objective is to establish rapport at a few sites. This phase is typically marked with geographical area-wise intervention with the aim of understanding the nature of the exploitative system. In addition, creating a strong need to bring workers from different sites together is important, and attempts should be made in this direction. The seeds of developing a trade union for workers are sowed in this phase.

Phase 2

This phase requires intense work with construction workers and the launching of a trade union movement. The objective in this phase would be to identify specific issues and mobilize workers to fight for their rights. Problems such as non-payment of minimum wages and equal wages for equal work need to organize these workers in campaigning for their right to 'just' wages. The new union could obtain a stay order from the court and file a petition which results in job security to some extent, assuring minimum wages and equal wages. The welfare activities for

adults and children would continue. Basic amenities like water, toilet, electricity, and so on, would be ensured on sites.

The need for legal expertise is important. Activities should not be limited to micro-level interventions but also reach out at the macro-level for policy changes. The involvement of other interested organizations, trade unions, and concerned individuals for central legislation for construction workers may also be useful.

Lobbying for the formation of Construction Labor Boards to regulate employment conditions of workers would address issues such as compulsory registration of employers and employees, equitable distribution of work, resources, and responsibility, regulation of employees' working conditions and the inclusion of benefits, minimum wages and social security for the employees.

Phase 3

Another part of campaigning is conducting intensive research and developing rich documentation on the construction industry. This research would focus on the socio-demographic and health profiles of construction workers. Research helps in reflection and rethinking regarding intervention strategies adopted to date. The construction workers need to be made more visible to various service sectors, government machinery, and general masses. The end goal would be to help build the bridge between various services and workers' needs, to boost the morale of the workers. Creating a relationship with managers, engineers and builders would also be valuable, with the following objectives:

- Develop different models of problem-solving interventions with construction workers.
- Create a network of supportive programs involving various government and non-governmental organizations to address different needs of construction workers.

- Network with various government and non-governmental agencies at the micro and macro-levels to advocate for suitable policies and programs.
- Create a strong database by conducting research and collecting extensive information related to this field.

Various activities could be taken up with workers directly. These include organizing a first aid training program, malaria awareness, and AIDS awareness programs. Training programs could be accompanied by special medical camps to detect occupational diseases. In addition, orientation visits to government facilities available in the vicinity need to be organized regularly. This is a major step in bringing workers out of their isolated status. The workers gain the confidence to make decisions about treatment independently. This would also mean breaking one of the chains tying them to the contractor.

In addition, introducing interventions around skill up-gradation of workers would be valuable. This would involve playing an active role in identifying skill areas and approaching existing training institutes to design programs suitable to the construction workers' needs. Also, making an effort to work with neighborhood schools is a worthwhile venture. Joint meetings should be organized involving construction workers, their children, and schoolteachers, to work out viable education patterns for children of construction workers. Negotiating with farmers' cooperatives would also be a viable option to help workers get better food items at cheaper rates. In addition, introducing ration cards/shopping vouchers for construction workers on a subsistence basis would be useful. Working with banks to help workers open accounts is an uphill task but would be very much appreciated by workers. In addition, introducing various group insurance facilities and other financial schemes can lessen the dependence of workers on money lenders who are generally the contractors. Various social and cultural programs, outings, and even sports

competitions can help bring workers from different states together and reduce the tension between engineers, contractors, and workers.

Study Limitations

Quantitative research requires a large sample size. The lack of adequate data available to extract from acted as a hindrance to the researcher despite the researcher's attempt to apply appropriate sampling size for this study. This was largely because the information presented here was dependent on probability distribution. Hence, the results presented in this study should not be generalized.

Conclusion

The problems associated with the construction industry are enormous across the entire globe. This becomes even more complicated for developing countries whose socio-economic conditions are strenuous for the populace. Globalization of the industry presents complex challenges, and the culture and practices within this industry increase the complexity of the industry's effective and efficient functionality. Research in these areas presents societies with opportunities that can allow for the desired changes to occur. Many nations in the global south are largely dependent on building and construction activity for sustained socio-economic development. The construction industry increases the value for money and the viability of local enterprises. Some agencies have been formed to ensure seamless implementation of rules and regulation of the industry. However, the formation of these agencies does not guarantee success. The process of evaluating the industry should be deliberate, which will assist in meeting the needs associated with workers within the industry.

Campaigning for the rights of construction workers will be effective and yield results if construction workers actively participate in the process. Several issues like health, education, and skill up-gradation need to be tackled not as welfare activities but as part of the campaign for rights at their workplace. Struggles for better wages and better working conditions cannot yield results only by the formation of trade unions or cooperatives. Thus, viable, workable solutions must evolve. Non-governmental organizations can play an active role in developing demonstrative models of intervention that can be adopted by governmental agencies and construction companies. The trade union movement can gain impetus in the informal sector if such NGO interventions take place. The actual participation of workers at all levels in organizing is possible if they have informed choices, they are not fearful of the contractors and can draw strength from the broader base of the labor force.

Restructuring and reassessing processes and procedures continuously would improve the industry. However, some confusion may arise as different institutions try to implement policies and procedures geared towards solving problems within the industry. The complexities may be due to the rapid technological changes and globalization of the industry. Examining the construction industry and sharing the vision and role that the industry should play in the 21st century is critical in advancing the agenda of workers going forward.

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Zachary Obwora Osolo

Address: 523 Clarendon street, Syracuse, New York. Phone: +1 (315) 395 7194 E-mail: zoosolo@svr.edu LinkedIn: [zacharyosoloLinkedIn](#)

Education

Syracuse University

August 2019

Master of Arts

Major in PanAfrican Studies

Conducted independent research on culture and practice within the construction sector in Kenya.

GPA 3.58/4.0

Relevant course work: Histories, Societies, and Political Economies of the Pan African world, Research methods in African American Studies

Syracuse University

January 2020- Present

Certificate of Advance Studies in Conflict and Collaboration

- The Program for the Advancement of Research on Conflict and Collaboration (PARCC); Maxwell School of Syracuse University

Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture & Technology

April 2009- November 2012

Bachelor's Degree

Major Purchasing and Supplies Management

An interdisciplinary field emphasizes crossfunctional links that seek to manage an organization's competitive advantage.

GPA: 3.28/4.0

Experience

Syracuse university- Syracuse, NY.

September 2019- Present

Teaching assistant (African American studies department)

- Teaching Assistant, Revolt of the Black Athlete, Fall 2019
- Teaching Assistant, Images of Blacks in Art and Film, Spring 2020
- Teaching Assistant, Introduction to African American Studies, Fall 2020
- Teaching Assistant, African American politics, Spring 2021

Kawi Elevators Construction Company Machakos, Kenya

October 2017- May 2019

Operations Manager

- Determined labor requirements and dispatch workers to construction sites.
- Managed and oversaw production and/or completion of construction projects from start to finish.
- Inspected and reviewed projects to monitor compliance with building and safety codes, and county regulations.
- Planned, budgeted, made key decisions, ensured construction projects fall within proposed budget, and ensured all duties are executed and completed on time.

Sidian Bank- Nairobi, Kenya.

September 2013- September 2017

Relationship officer

- Evaluated loan applications and made recommendations to higher authority
- Maintained a loan portfolio included gathering relevant financial data and maintained customer relationships
- Complied with bank policies and county regulations dealing with Commercial Lending

Vision 2030 Delivery Secretariat Nairobi, Kenya

April 2013- June 2013

Position: procurement assistant

- Negotiated with various suppliers to acquire the right quality products for the organization, at the best price in the market
- Prepared and solicited for competitive bids, quotations and proposals and assure compliance