

A Kenyan Contextual Analysis of Convergent Vulnerabilities in Femicide, Human Trafficking, Displacement and the Role of Digital Intervention

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Abstract

In this paper, the gap existing in the study of victimology shall be filled by the analysis of overlapping vulnerability of the following categories of victims that remain confined to separate discourses: femicide, trafficking, and displaced populations due to war or natural disasters. These populations, although with diverse causes, are common in that they suffer from being invisible within overstretched or otherwise ill-prepared aid mechanisms. The chaos associated with the displacement process and the secrecy involved in the act of trafficking provide an ideal environment for these victims to slip through the net and become invisible within the conventional aid and justice mechanisms. This study is anchored in the theories of Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological system theory and Galtung's (1969) structural violence theory. A qualitative desk research method will be used to review academic journals on victimology and criminology articles dating from 2017 to the present, regional human rights records, and pertinent Kenyan legislation. This paper contends that while vulnerability is not an attribute but something that results from system failures that lead to the marginalization of certain genders, classes, and nationalities, technological interventions, which in most cases become instruments used against victims, can serve as effective mechanisms for identifying and helping victims. Through an analysis of the fragmented state response in Kenya, recorded cases of femicide, high-risk areas of trafficking in refugee camps, and forced displacements due to climate change, the paper highlights some of the gaps in governance.

Keywords: Femicide, Human Trafficking, Displacement, Convergent Vulnerabilities, Digital Intervention, Structural Violence, Ecological Systems Theory, Kenya, Victimology

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1. Introduction and Background

Internationally, the matter of gender-based violence, human trafficking, and displacement has emerged to be a difficult challenge for governments, security agencies, as well as humanitarian organizations. Kenya currently stands at a crossroads when considering its development as far as technology and economic development are concerned; however, despite all such advancements, there are numerous challenges that continue to arise in the country which include gender-based violence, human trafficking, and migration due to conflicts as well as natural disasters arising from climate change (KNBS, 2019). Femicide is an act of killing women owing to their gender and is considered the worst kind of gender-based violence. Kenya ranks among nations that have high cases of femicide as a silent killer in its communities which are not reported in overall crime reports (Africa Data Hub, 2024). Simultaneously, Kenya is known as a source, transit, and destination country for human trafficking involving labour exploitation and sexual abuse of victims and refugees who are highly vulnerable to trafficking and smuggling (US Department of State, 2023).

Kenya is characterized by displacement in various forms. One form is through individuals fleeing from war-torn states like South Sudan and Somalia and living in places such as Kakuma and Dadaab. Another one is when individuals are internally displaced due to electoral violence as well as droughts and floods due to climatic changes. Individuals falling under this category of vulnerable populations face a higher risk of exploitation, including human and labour trafficking.

In the past, efforts aimed at addressing these problems have taken a different approach. The issue of femicide has been handled by the criminal justice process, trafficking by the police force combined with NGOs, while displacement has been managed by humanitarian organizations. The approach does not recognize the vulnerability that exists in relation to all these different cases. A lady who escapes from domestic abuse within an urban slum setting, a young refugee girl in Dadaab, or a lady displaced by floods in Turkana can all experience similar challenges related to trafficking, sexual abuse, and ultimately, femicide.

2. Problem Statement

The presence of existing legislation in terms of the Counter-Trafficking in Persons Act (2010), the Protection Against Domestic Violence Act (2015), and the National Policy on Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence (2014) and multiple stakeholders' efforts has not made much progress with regard to

addressing the needs of femicide victims, human trafficking survivors, and displaced persons in Kenya. The current strategy for addressing the issue is plagued by a lack of integration: governmental institutions, police, NGOs, and other involved parties work separately without sufficient coordination and information exchange. Consequently, there emerge tragic flaws in the system that lead to people's death.

The criminological importance of this issue cannot be understated. A survivor of domestic abuse who is also an internally displaced person may contact a health facility as well as a humanitarian organisation, but without access to a common digital database, her high risk of femicide may remain unnoticed by both of them. Likewise, trends of trafficking recruitment within the refugee camp will be visible to the local community organisation but will be inefficiently conveyed to the anti-trafficking unit in the police force for further investigation. Consequently, the main issue that this paper deals with is the following one – the lack of a united approach, powered by technological advancements, which allows for proactive identification of high-risk individuals as well as collaboration among different parties and provision of support within the spheres of femicide prevention, anti-trafficking actions, and displacement assistance (Norwegian Refugee Council, 2022). The inability to take advantage of digital innovations leads to an ongoing spiral of violence and exploitation, where the most defenceless citizens and residents lack protection due to what will be referred to as a 'protection black hole.'

3. Research Objectives and Questions

Objective 1: To analyse the shared vulnerabilities and weaknesses within the system that result in the victimisation of women experiencing femicide, human trafficking, and displacement in Kenya.

Research Question 1: What are the shared vulnerabilities and weaknesses within the system that lead to increased chances of femicide, trafficking, and exploitation faced by women who have been displaced in Kenya?

Objective 2: To critically assess the ability and limitations of relevant stakeholders (governments, NGOs, CBOs, and police force) in Kenya when it comes to the effective application of digital technology in their joint efforts to help and identify victims.

Research Question 2: What are the existing applications of digital technology on behalf of relevant stakeholders in Kenya, aimed at helping victims, as well as the limitations involved in using a digital solution approach, from a technological, ethical, and operational point of view?

Objective 3: To formulate policy recommendations based on the gathered evidence for creating an integrated digital platform to encourage inter-stakeholder cooperation and provide pro-active victim-centred support.

Research Question 3: Which particular changes in legislation, institutions, and participation are needed, together with necessary components and safeguards of ethics, for setting up a realistic digital structure to connect data and other resources from different actors to avert femicide and trafficking cases amongst displaced and vulnerable communities in Kenya?

4. Theoretical Framework

This research paper is based on the two theories, whose combination provides the theoretical framework for discussing the concept of convergence in relation to victims' experiences of femicide, trafficking and displacement. These theories include Bronfenbrenner's (1979) theory of Ecological Systems and Galtung's (1969) Structural Violence Theory. The selection of these two theories was based on the following factors: their prominent academic presence; relevance to the topic of convergent victimization; and complementary nature of the theories, where the first highlights the impact of layers of the environment causing vulnerability while the second explains violence in social systems.

4.1 Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979)

The ecological systems theory developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner is one that describes how an individual's risk of problems and subsequent development is affected by multiple interacting systems of environments. These environments include the microsystem, which are environments that directly relate to the person or in other words close relationships, such as family and peers; mesosystems, which include interrelations between microsystems, for example relations between the family and school; ecosystem, where external environments, which have an indirect effect on the individual, such as the availability of social services or parent employment, apply; and the macrosystem, which refers to culture, society laws and policies, gender roles, and nationality of the individual. Finally, the chronosystem includes changes in the individual's life and experiences due to displacement and climate change, among others.

As it can be applied in studying the intersection of femicide, human trafficking, and displacement, ecological systems theory serves as an effective theoretical tool. Indeed, vulnerability is not an inherent feature of certain individuals or groups; rather, it stems from the processes of interactions of systems within different levels. This was confirmed by studies conducted by Adekola & Adedini (2024), Sexual Violence, Disclosure Pattern, and Abortion and Post-Abortion Care Services in Displaced People's Camps in Africa, and Offia (2020),

Human Trafficking in Kenya. According to the results of the demographic survey conducted by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics in 2014, 45% of women aged between 15-49 have ever been subjected to physical or sexual violence.

The ecological systems theory therefore shows how there is an underlying mechanism of convergence that results in the vulnerable state of individuals in Kenya: disasters or conflict situations (macrosystem and chronosystem) create displacement (exosystem), which in turn creates a situation where there is destruction of the means of living and social safety nets (microsystem), hence vulnerability to sex trafficking and gender violence and in the worst-case scenario, femicide (Jayawardhan, 2017). Moreover, the ecological systems theory highlights the reason why isolated solutions to vulnerability do not work as such solutions can only work when they consider aspects from all the systems.

4.2 Structural Violence Theory (Galtung, 1969)

Galtung's theory of structural violence is another theoretical approach to convergent vulnerabilities. In his 1969 article "Violence, Peace, and Peace Research," Johan Galtung identified two types of violence, direct and structural violence. The former refers to physical violence committed by identifiable perpetrators while the latter is related to systemic violence inherent in the very social structures that hinder people from meeting their basic needs. Structural violence is perpetuated by means of institutions, laws, resource allocation, and social stratification. The result is inequality among people that cannot be traced to one person, yet it can cause just as much death.

The theoretical framework takes on new analytical strength within the issue of femicide, trafficking, and displacement within Kenya. The lack of a coordinated process for identifying victims does not amount to mere operational negligence; it is a structural act of violence, which systematically deprives the most vulnerable from protection, resulting in unnecessary death and exploitation as a result of institutional negligence rather than intentional actions. The lack of coherence within data collection systems among governmental departments, NGOs, and humanitarian aid groups is a structural impediment that stands in the way of effective action.

Within victimology, the concept of structural violence poses a dilemma about whether it is a matter of case management or something else entirely, that is, whether the justice process is designed in such a way that creates an invisible category of victims and how its perpetuation serves the interests of a certain group. In the context of Kenya, a country where refugee communities, internally displaced people, and women in informal settlements have traditionally lacked sufficient protection from justice and social systems, the problem of invisibility lies not only in the absence of digital tools but also in a systemic approach. The neglecting of proactive measures to address the problem of identifying victims leads to a state of structural violence. The use of Galtung's theory provides insights into how violence can be embedded in the normal functioning of society, as is the case in a country where female murder is prevalent on an annual basis.

5. Literature Review

5.1 The Concept of Convergent Vulnerabilities

This relationship is clearly defined in the literature where vulnerability is neither innate nor natural, but rather is socially constructed. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), for example, an individual's risk is socially constructed through systems of interaction starting at the immediate family unit up to the policy-making level. The theory of Galtung (1969) further supports this by illustrating the potential for institutions themselves to create violence without any actual actors committing violent acts. In terms of application to Kenya, Adekola and Adedini (2024), in their work entitled *Sexual Violence, Disclosure Pattern, and Abortion and Post-Abortion Care Services in Displaced People's Camps in Africa*, found that the process of displacement eliminates safety nets within communities and makes the displaced women engage in survival tactics, such as transactional sex, which leads to increased risks of sexual violence. As it turns out, later works have validated this finding through research that demonstrates how the refugee camp environment is one that creates opportunities for human trafficking recruitment due to the presence of several factors (Offia, 2020).

Strohmayer et al. (2019), analyzing the topic from technology and social justice perspectives, claimed that technology initiatives that neglect structural dynamics of the place where they operate may end up reinforcing the very inequities they seek to counteract. The point made by Strohmayer et al. (2019) was elaborated upon in an article published in a book by the University of California Press. Strohmayer et al. (2019) found out that when there is a structural violence dynamic at play, technology may either disrupt such dynamics or reinforce them depending on how well the governance mechanisms are managed as well as the involvement of the community in designing technology.

5.2 Stakeholder Capacity and Digital Limitations in Kenya

The existing studies related to the anti-trafficking efforts and gender-based violence management in Kenya highlight the lack of proper coordination as one of the major concerns. As reported by Plöen in an article

on policing and technology written for the Strathmore University Law Journal, although the Directorate of Criminal Investigations is currently utilizing technologies such as crime mapping techniques, the approach has largely been reactive rather than proactive, and there are barriers to information sharing across various departments due to a lack of interoperable platforms. Similarly, according to HAART Kenya's research report in 2019 on trafficking in persons in Kenya, although there are hotlines and applications available to assist in reporting crimes, they have been created in isolation in specific organizations.

The issues of ethics related to digital victim assistance programs in Kenya have received much attention. For instance, according to Privacy International (2021), in its assessment of data protection at a country level, the use of an integrated victim database in a situation with a recorded history of ethnicity issues and government monitoring gives rise to questions concerning the privacy of data, its safety, and the risk of function creep, where victim information could be used to facilitate migration control, prosecution of vulnerable people, such as sex workers, or even political surveillance.

5.3 Global Models for Integrated Digital Frameworks

Internationally, scholarly research indicates that coordinated community response mechanisms are effective in dealing with gender-based violence and can be greatly improved through technology. As per Sharma & Joshi (2020) in "Digital Humanitarians: How Big Data is Changing the Face of Humanitarian Response", the rise of crowdsourced crisis maps like Ushahidi, which originated in Kenya, has been shown to be effective in disaster responses and documenting human rights violations. Nevertheless, Hanna (2017) has highlighted several shortcomings such as their being event-specific instead of ongoing, and their open-source system that makes their security problematic for storing information on victims.

In a policy note regarding digital government as a means of inclusivity and resilience, the World Bank (2020) developed the notion of interoperability layer as an alternative form of governance by linking various separate systems without changing or centralizing these systems. In this case, institutionally autonomous system will be linked by creating an environment for secure and permission-based exchange of information where only essential data is shared. Interoperability layer approach can easily be applied to the context of the stakeholders in Kenya. Literature reveals four common elements of a digital framework that works effectively and sustainably, namely, existing system utilization, stringent data minimization and purpose limitation, community inclusion in governance, and the legal framework (World Bank, 2020).

5.4 Kenya's Legal Framework: Gaps and Reform Imperatives

The existing legal framework in Kenya designed to safeguard victims consists of various pieces of legislation pertinent to converging vulnerabilities. The Counter-Trafficking in Persons Act (2010) criminalizes activities like trafficking and establishes a Counter-Trafficking Advisory Committee; but its implementation is impeded by lack of funding and coordination structures (HAART Kenya, 2019). The Protection Against Domestic Violence Act (2015) provides an avenue for seeking protection orders and establishes a process for reporting; yet, as it only deals with individual cases and not exposure to harm, it has a constrained preventive approach (Muteti, 2024). The Data Protection Act (2019) introduces vital principles of lawful, fair, transparent, minimal, and specific personal data processing and forms the Office of the Data Protection Commissioner. On the other hand, according to Plöen (2023), this legislation poses risks through its numerous exceptions for national security and law enforcement in the very fields where vulnerable individuals need to be protected.

Data from the 2019 census conducted by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics highlighted the magnitude of the displacement problem and vulnerabilities among the population, whereas the "National Policy on Prevention and Response to Gender Based Violence" published in 2014 laid out a coordination policy that is yet to be implemented at the county level. Jayawardhan (2017), in his analysis of the issue of "Vulnerability and Climate Change Induced Human Displacement," brought out the linkage between displacement due to climate change, economic collapse, and vulnerability to exploitation and GBV.

5.5 Community Accountability and Victim-Centred Digital Governance

On the role of democracy in victim-centric digital governance, much scholarly literature emphasizes that legitimacy cannot be derived from functionality alone; instead, democratic accountability and trust within the community must be established. In her study of *Unveiling Hidden Truths: Methodological Challenges in Documenting Conflict-Related Sexual Violence Among Trafficked Persons and Refugees in Kenya*, Odhiambo (2025) pointed out that initiatives which fail to meaningfully involve refugees are inherently less likely to succeed and can even lead to further harm through retraumatization and institutional betrayal. Similarly, in a comparative study on *The Invisible Victims: a comparative analysis of protection for vulnerable adults with intellectual disabilities in the Kenyan legal framework and beyond*, Muteti (2024) showed that victims' lack of engagement with the system should come as no surprise considering the fact that they had been previously revictimized by it.

Further, Adekola & Adedini (2024) contended that actual protection demands participation and not only technology in the sense that the participation of concerned communities in decisions on technologies that dictate access to protection is essential. The call for such participation can be extended to the residents of refugee camps, informal settlements, and climate-threatened pastoralists in Kenya, who have continuously been excluded from discussions of the protection technologies in use within their communities.

6. Research Methodology

6.1 Research Design

This research uses the qualitative approach to desk research methodology, which is alternatively known in social sciences as systematic documentary analysis methodology (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Desk research is a proven methodology in victimology and criminology, especially suitable for analytical purposes where one can use desk research to synthesize existing information, discover trends within existing scholarly literature, and develop evidence-based models for governance reforms. The desk research methodology allows thorough examination of existing scholarly information while avoiding the moral and practical challenges of primary data collection among vulnerable groups like trafficked victims, displaced persons, or people subjected to gender-based violence.

Moreover, the desk research methodology chosen for this study can be considered justified taking into account the character of research questions. In particular, since the primary goals of the paper are to analyse the convergent vulnerabilities, to estimate the potential of existing approaches and frameworks and develop certain recommendations in the area of governance, such questions are clearly analytical and normative questions that require careful consideration of the existing literature rather than generating any new primary evidence. This research question-based decision is consistent with the methodological choices made in other high-profile papers in the field, namely the one written by Adekola and Adedini (2024) about Sexual Violence, Disclosure Pattern, and Abortion and Post-Abortion Care Services in Displaced People's Camps in Africa and Muteti (2024) regarding The Invisible victims: a comparative analysis of protection for vulnerable adults with intellectual disabilities in the Kenyan legal framework and beyond.

6.2 Data Sources

Sources employed in the study are classified under four broad types of secondary sources of information. The first type includes academic journal articles published since 2017 concerning victimology, criminology, and socio-legal theories and are available on Google Scholar, JSTOR, and university libraries, among others. Such journal articles are selected on the basis of their relevance to the study questions posed in the paper, citation frequency, methodology used, and access through Google Scholar. However, seminal books on Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (1979) and Galtung's peace theory (1969) will not be included in the selection for sources published since 2017, as both texts are relevant to the paper's objectives.

Second, the literature regarding displacement, human trafficking, and gender-based violence through scholarly works such as Adekola and Adedini (2024) and Jayawardhan (2017) which contain empirical evidences that are essential to discussing the case contextually within Kenya.

Third, primary legislation and policy such as the Counter-Trafficking in Persons Act (2010), Protection Against Domestic Violence Act (2015), Data Protection Act (2019), and National Policy on Prevention and Response to Gender-based Violence (2014). Analysis of these documents will be carried out using legal doctrine research to determine the shortcomings of the existing governance mechanisms.

Fourth, the policy and institutional analysis done by academics and practitioners specializing in digital governance and victim protection; HAART Kenya (2019); and the World Bank (2020), who offer crucial background information for the analysis done in this paper.

6.3 Analytical Approach

Analysis of sources involved thematic content analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2019), which is an advanced methodology used to identify and analyse thematic codes within a textual corpus systematically. The steps of thematic analysis involved in this research included familiarising oneself with the sources; generating thematic codes; identifying themes among codes; reviewing and defining themes; naming themes; and developing the analysis presented in this report. Four broad thematic domains formed the thematic content analysis framework employed for analysing the literature: vulnerabilities and gaps, stakeholder capacity and limitations in the use of technology, governance deficits, and participation.

The reflexivity of the analysis process, including the researcher's positioning as a criminology PhD student within the East African institutional setting, is noted to be an important methodology issue. The decisions made throughout this paper, such as the adoption of specific theories, preference for some sources over others, and focus of interpretation of findings, show how the researcher's background training in victimology

and criminology, which is a rights-based perspective and victim-centered approach, informed this particular work. This information is deliberately brought into the open instead of being hidden in order to maintain methodological integrity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

6.4 Limitations

Given the nature of this study as a desk-based research project, it should be noted that several limitations exist which must be considered. While the review process undertaken by the researcher has been comprehensive, it has not included all works within the scope of the research topic – namely, due to the fast pace at which the fields of digital victim support and convergent vulnerabilities are developing, it is possible that new works of significance were published during the research period. Moreover, while the focus on Kenya in this work was analytically sound, it does limit the possibility of conducting an equally detailed comparison between countries from East Africa as regards digital victim protection measures. Lastly, it should be emphasized that the lack of any empirical primary source material in this work limits the scope of the research conducted.

7. Findings and Discussion

7.1 Convergent Vulnerabilities as Structural Injustice in the Kenyan Context

It is also evident in the literature review that vulnerability to femicide, trafficking, and exploitation stems from the failure of multiple systems working in tandem. It is particularly evident in the case of Kenya, where the combination of displacement, either conflict-induced or induced by environmental factors, gender inequality, failure on the part of the institutions to collaborate, and lack of accurate data collection leaves vulnerable people out of reach of protection mechanisms (Muteti, 2024).

Galtung's (1969) theory on structural violence brings this issue into clear focus. This lack of an interlinked process for victim identification goes beyond being an organizational problem and becomes structural violence which results in the death and exploitation of individuals who have suffered abuse in the past and where such occurrences have been reported but not addressed properly – an example of structural violence at play. According to the analysis carried out by Africa Data Hub (2024), more than 500 cases of femicides were committed in Kenya between 2016 and 2024.

However, the ecological system theory by Bronfenbrenner (1979) provides more insight into the process. First, displacement or exosystemic dysfunction destroys the community's protective social networks or microsystem, thereby pushing individuals into actions that make them more vulnerable to the traffickers' activities (dysfunction of the mesosystem), all within a macrosystem characterized by normalized gender-based violence according to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2014). The Dadaab and Kakuma refugee camps have been found to be major recruitment hubs for human trafficking, where girls who have been offered job opportunities in Nairobi are forced into sexual exploitation by the traffickers (HAART Kenya, 2019). As such, the realization of systemic interactions of convergent vulnerabilities results in the following conclusion.

7.2 The Digital Protection Gap: Institutional and Legislative Deficits

A major gap that has been established through literature review and analysis of Kenya's legal framework in this regard is that of digital protection in terms of governance within the support for victims. There is currently no organization in Kenya that has the mandate and competency to coordinate digital victim identification in all three sectors – femicide, trafficking, and displacement. The Data Protection Commissioner does not have the sectoral mandate to force organizations to share data for protective purposes, while the Counter-Trafficking Advisory Committee has no mandate for digital coordination (Plöen, 2023).

This lack creates what this study calls 'protection by default,' meaning that the victim gets assistance only if they can make their way through disconnected and unclear systems. While the National Gender-Based Violence hotline (1195) plays a vital role, it does not communicate with the counter-trafficking hotline run by the civil society organisation, nor does it interact with the database of the Department of Refugee Services. A call by a woman who lives in a refugee camp and reports domestic violence against her by her husband will not be matched with information indicating that her name has already appeared on the list of potential trafficked people provided by a community-based organisation (World Bank, 2020).

As indicated by Privacy International (2021), the basis for making recommendations regarding the establishment of integrated victim databases must lie within the terms specified in the Data Protection Act (2019). Moreover, such measures as reducing the amount of data collected, restricting the purpose of data use, and obtaining consent from individuals must be taken into consideration. Additionally, the U.S. Department of State (2023) included Kenya in the list of countries in Tier 2 Watch List due to its lack of progress in combating trafficking during the last year.

7.3 Participatory Exclusion and the Victim-Centred Deficit

A consistent theme throughout the literature is that the groups facing the greatest challenges related to femicide, trafficking, and displacement are systematically excluded from the governance mechanisms responsible for designing protection mechanisms (Offia, 2020). In Kenya, the exclusion of these groups is institutionalized; the inhabitants of refugee camps, slums, and climate-impacted areas inhabited by pastoralists, which represent the populations experiencing converging vulnerability, lack an institutionalized voice regarding the development of digital protection tools used in these communities.

The consequence of such a participatory deficit is significant. Mechanisms for the design and implementation of systems without the participation of relevant stakeholders will consistently fail to identify and thus perpetuate the most damaging aspects of the systems (Strohmayer et al., 2019). Community-based organizations in remote locations or refugee camps are more likely to record information on paper, whereas organizations operating out of Nairobi will employ the use of mobile apps, thus entrenching the technological disparity that already exists in favor of victims' oppressors (HAART Kenya, 2019). Lack of digital forensics capability coupled with weak internet connectivity in field offices is one reason why law enforcement efforts remain hampered (Plöen, 2023). However, the common denominator remains the same: the current intervention framework is reactive. It is only when the crime has been committed in the case of femicide, for instance, or where a victim escapes trafficking that action is taken.

7.4 Towards an Integrated Digital Protection Framework

These results suggest that there is a paradigm shift from reactive and isolated action to proactive and integrated protection enabled by technology. One can imagine an integrated platform for digital use based on the principle of interoperability layers (World Bank, 2020), and founded on the principles of the Data Protection Act (2019) – which would make it possible for a health care worker in Kalobeyi Settlement to send anonymous data about trafficking-related issues for further investigation. Such a platform could allow for minimal but important data exchange, such as sharing data about patients at risk of femicide between clinics and related organizations within communities.

There are also requirements in the literature that must be met in order for the platform to work without doing damage. There should be inclusive governance, where there are people from communities that would be affected who will participate in the governance process (Offia, 2020). In addition, the technology used must be accessible using a simple mobile phone (USSD) since not everyone can afford smartphones and have knowledge about it (Strohmayer et al, 2019). Standard operating procedures on data sharing must be established along with proper training that highlights the importance of informed consent and confidentiality (Privacy International, 2021). Moreover, the platform must be first piloted in two regions, which are one county and one refugee camp (Muteti, 2024).

8. Conclusion and Recommendations

8.1 Conclusion

This study has posited, based on a comprehensive review of relevant literature, informed by Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory and Galtung's (1969) Structural Violence theory, from scholarly sources published from 2017 onwards, that victims caught up in the nexus of femicide, human trafficking, and displacement in Kenya face neglect at the hands of a fractured support framework. The interwoven vulnerabilities of such victims necessitate an interweaving of solutions. Technology, an industry in which Kenya is recognized as being a pioneer, offers a solution, albeit one which is largely neglected. The significance of the recent literature (Muteti, 2024), the particularities of Kenya's displacement and trafficking problem (HAART Kenya, 2019; US Department of State, 2023), and the weakness of its current system of coordination contribute to the existence of circumstances wherein victimization is preventable and yet remains common practice.

The title of this paper, A Kenyan Contextual Analysis of Convergent Vulnerabilities in Femicide, Human Trafficking, Displacement and the Role of Digital Intervention, represents an authentic normative decision that should be addressed by all stakeholders including the legislature, regulators, civil society organisations, humanitarian actors, and the academic community. Digital technologies are not automatically emancipatory; the right digital interventions, properly regulated, openly used, co-designed with the community, and subject to democratic accountability, may allow for proactive victim support where previously vulnerable communities are rendered safe and protected. Without proper regulation, however, the question remains whether digital intervention enhances or reduces protection in the Kenyan context; and the answer, in light of the evidence presented here, is unequivocal.

8.2 Policy Recommendations

Recommendation 1 — Pilot an Integrated Digital Protection Platform: The national government via the Ministry of Gender, in collaboration with innovative technologists and civic society, can undertake funding and implementation of a pilot project of the interoperable platform within one high-risk county and one refugee camp. This will entail employing easy-to-use technology like USSD and SMS technology for allowing secure permission-based communication between authorized health professionals, police personnel, and NGOs' workers based on interoperability layer model as described in World Bank (2020).

Recommendation 2 — Strengthen Legal and Ethical Frameworks for Data Sharing: The Data Protection Commissioner's Office must provide standard operating procedures on how to share data based on the Data Protection Act (2019). All stakeholders must ensure that they understand that consent, confidentiality, data minimization, purpose limitation, and the rights of the victims are emphasized through their training sessions (Privacy International, 2021).

Recommendation 3 — Build Digital Capacity for Frontline Stakeholders: There is need for both the national government and development partners at an international level to equip frontline CBGs and government institutions with the right technologies, including gadgets and internet connectivity, in order for them to be able to contribute to digital protection ecosystems (HAART Kenya, 2019).

Recommendation 4 — Mandate Community-Led Co-Design: A technological response must come after proper co-design workshops conducted with community leaders, survivors, and field experts to guarantee that the technological intervention is culturally acceptable and meets practical needs. There must be proper involvement of communities affected by gender-based violence within the governance framework of the proposed platform (Offia, 2020).

Recommendation 5 — Establish Independent Ethical Oversight for Digital Protection Tools: The National Gender and Equality Commission must be authorized and adequately funded to undertake an audit for the purpose of establishing whether these digital victim protection measures used by the various government bodies are ethically sound, particularly focusing on aspects such as data protection, non-discrimination, and avoiding function creep (Privacy International, 2021).

Recommendation 6 — Fund Victimological Research on Digital Intervention Impacts: National Research Fund and development partners are advised to consider giving priority to victimological studies of protection interventions in digital space in Kenya, especially studies that focus on the long-term effects of such interventions on survivors and comparisons between integrated and non-integrated approaches (Adekola & Adedini, 2024).

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