

Crisis Leadership Decision-Making Patterns in Multi-Agency Security Management: A Kenyan Civil Disobedience Case

Samuel Gitau Regina

Abstract

In this paper, the researcher examines the crisis leadership decision-making styles in multi-national security management when a civil disobedience event occurs, drawing on Kenya as a paradigmatic example of the 2024 Finance Bill governance protests. The main purpose is to analyze the coordination of decision-making among multi-agency security leaders within the complex security framework of Kenya consisting of Kenya National Police Service, Kenya Defense Forces, and the National Intelligence Service and at the same time maintain democratic legitimacy and operational effectiveness in the face of politically charged civil unrest. The secondary aim is to find out what institutional, cultural and contextual influences affect strategic leadership decisions within these settings, and how much democratic policing principles impact real time crises response. The research utilized a qualitative interpretive case study design, relying on 25 semi-structured interviews with top and middle-level security commanders, as well as documentary research and non-participant observation of post-incidents coordination meetings. The results indicate that successful crisis leadership in civil disobedience is very different to traditional models of crisis management. The effective leaders exhibited adaptive decisiveness, moral courage, and constitutional fidelity as compared to traditional command competency. Most importantly, 68 percent of the critical decisions were taken beyond normal institutional processes, and the informal personal networks acted as reliable sources of coordination compared to formal inter-agency processes. There were five different strategies of leadership response, negotiated accommodation being the most effective, with a 67 percent successful de-escalation rate without violations of rights among Kenya National Police Service commanders. The research finds that the imperatives of democratic space and national security can never be at cross purposes in the event that leaders implement adaptive, constitutionally based strategies in managing protests. The research suggests that security institutions should institutionalize special civil disobedience trainings, pre-establish agency-relationship structures, focus on moral courage as a leadership development tool, and codify the legitimacy of civil disobedience as a form of political expression that needs dialogue-first response strategies.

Keywords: crisis leadership, multi-national security, civil disobedience, Kenya, decision-making patterns, inter-agency coordination, democratic governance

Introduction

Modern security settings have been defined by an extent and level of complexities never seen before which require advanced and highly intuitive leadership consideration, especially when dealing with cases of civil disobedience that blur the lines between democracy and the sustenance of law and order. The rise of the decentralized, multi-generational protest movements as seen with the events surrounding Kenya's 2024 demonstrations over the Finance Bill has fundamentally undermined the global security management paradigm and has highlighted fundamental deficits of the multi-national operational coordination systems (International Crisis Group, 2024). The recent years illustrate the twists in the process of decision-making as crisis leaders with regards to multi-agency security domains, as the nature of the interaction among the culture of institutions,

law, and the pressure of the moment that defines strategic actions during politically charged civil disobedience incidents is complicated quite significantly (Riggio & Newstead, 2023). The inability to cobble together security services under one umbrella, among national security services: National police, defense forces and Intelligence Units, means the decision-making process is tied in a maze where failure to coordinate can turn democratic protests into large-scale civil unrest, a phenomenon that, as cited by Human Rights Watch, threatens not only the safety of the people but also democratic governance principles (Human Rights Watch, 2025).

The central primary question that this research aims to address is, “How do multinational security leaders coordinate decision-making processes during civil disobedience crises in Kenya’s multi-layered security architecture?” Furthermore, and very importantly, there are additional critical questions that also need answers, including 1) What institutional and contextual factors influence strategic choices made by security leaders during politically sensitive protest management? 2) How do inter-agency coordination mechanisms function during real-time crisis scenarios? and 3) To what extent do democratic policing principles influence decision-making patterns when managing crises during civil disobedience?

Therefore, the relevance and importance of this study to academia and policy are related to a limited understanding of the effectiveness of crisis leadership in multi-agency security settings, especially in African democratic societies where civil disobedience movements are gaining currency to circumvent long-standing patterns of governance (Bundy et al., 2017; Wu et al., 2021). The literature on crisis leadership has thus far been dominated by single-agency reaction studies or studies done within the realm of Western democracies, leaving a wide knowledge gap on how multi-national security coordination occurs during civil disobedience events in the context of emerging democracies (Buhagiar & Anand, 2023). With data indicating decentralized, youth-led mobilization and an unprecedented invasion of parliament by protestors, the 2024 Kenya Finance Bill protests is an exemplary case study that defies current theoretical models used to discern the tactic of security leadership decision-making amid a democratic resistance movement (Human Rights Watch, 2025).

Crisis Leadership in Multi-National Security Contexts

Since the beginning of the 2020s, the academic debate on crisis leadership has developed considerably, as scholarly experts begin to appreciate that the increasingly multidimensional nature of contemporary crises requires high-order, multi-agency coordination systems that unearth traditional organizational lines (Riggio & Newstead, 2023). To some extent, Bundy et al. (2017) built a basic knowledge that crisis leadership occurs in the context of complex systems when individual leaders have to manage unanticipated, highly salient, unexpected and potentially disruptive events, and then coordinate the responses across a variety of institutional systems. Nevertheless, their examination was largely based on western organizational settings and did not sufficiently respond to the peculiarities of multi-national security architecture in developing democracies. Wu et al. (2021) then criticized this limitation suggesting that the current literature on crisis leadership lacks extensive theoretical unity and geographical inclusiveness that challenges its usability in non-Western markets. A recent bibliometric study conducted by Silva and Costa (2025) indicates that, as of 2020-2025, 65 percent of crisis leadership literature still predominantly focuses on single-agency responses and pays little regard to inter-organizational coordination dynamics. Such a gap in the academic appliance is troublesome, especially when considering the

issue of security management during incidences of civil disobedience, where numerous agencies with differing mandates, cultures, and operating protocols are required to synchronize their immediately altering reactions to politically charged circumstances.

Recent and ongoing developments in research on strategic problem-solving have been seen as broadly enriching the theoretical backdrop of decision-making in security operations, yet largely and significantly limited in terms of their applicability to the dynamics of multi-agency security operations coordination. Dorner and Funke (gate) made a breakthrough in the comprehension of tactical problem-solving, and described it as combined psychological processes needed in dynamic scenarios to attain diffuse objectives that cannot be attained by typical actions, hence offering critical theoretical foundation to the comprehension of the decision-making mechanisms of security leaders. Nevertheless, their framework focused more on individual cognitive operations instead of inter-organizational coordination mechanisms and that there remained important vacuums in how disparate agencies with distinctive cultures of decision making perform when managing shared crisis situations. Zemba et al. (2019) criticized this individualist leaning, suggesting that studies of complex problem solving should interact more strongly with the problem geometries of real-life problems in order to enhance the effect of the challenges of multi-agency coordination. A recent study of Schaedler and Graf-Vlachy (2021) achieved theoretical advancement as it explored the empirical basis of how strategic leadership can be used in case of a crisis within an organization using multidisciplinary review systematically, identifying a high measure of successful fragmentation in contemporary research that is interfering with the production of a carefree theory applicable in practice. Based on their analysis, they found that despite the critical roles played by individual strategic leaders in crisis management, research perspectives are very fragmented in the various theoretical perspectives such as those of managerial cognition, organizational behavior, and agency theory. Kornberger et al. (2019) have made seminal contributions towards understanding the workings of the logic of tact during crisis decision-making, showing how these decisions result as the culmination of webbed interactions and not the workings of rationality.

Classical theories introduced by Thoreau and later expanded by Martin Luther King Jr. focused on the moral basis of civil disobedience as a principled opposition to unjust law, but in recent times more scholars are noting that modern civil disobedience movements provide challenging questions that must be approached under new emergent theories of ethics that would transcend even more traditional theories of moral philosophy (EBSCO Research Starters, 2024). Analysis of global civil disobedience movements that have taken place in recent years, has shown that protests in modern society have a tendency of being decentralized in structure, multi-generational, and featuring highly advanced and innovative use of social media platforms that thoroughly disrupt the conventional methods of handling security-related situations. Bond and Gittell (2010) provided valuable ideas on partnership-based approaches to resolving social issues, one of which is the need to establish formal and informal communication, trust, respect, and common aspirations among the coordinating agencies. However, their model was intended as a general model of social service co-ordination, rather than a security model, designed to be applied during civil disobedience episodes and thus cannot be applied well to those situations that are politically at issue. Recent scholarship is also identifying civil disobedience as posing particular issues to security agencies due to its capacity to exist within democratic contexts, in which citizen defiance can be unlawful yet ethical, generating perplexing organizational settings of problematic distinctiveness that necessitate advanced coordination machinery. The 2024 protest movements

in Kenya, where mobilization and unprecedented invasion of the parliament were led by youth born during the democratic transition, is an example of these emerging issues and the necessity of developing new theoretical frameworks, which will inform the planning of multi-agency security responses to democratic civil disobedience occurrences.

The Security architecture of Kenya symbolizes a multilayered system, which is colored with the colonial legacy and post-independence institutional arrangements, resulting in a distinctive part of spatial coordination, in the course of civil disobedience events, requiring an advanced level of leadership. The Kenya National Police Service, Kenya Defense Forces, National Intelligence Service and other types of international security collaborations currently work within a mandate that is overlapping and, in many cases, create strain in working out during times of crisis and needing a quick response (Human Rights Watch, 2025). Current study by the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (2024) identifies that in Kenya, the leadership in the security sector is experiencing a new set of issues as it tries to both, maintain democracy in a governance system and at the same time ensure its roles and responsibilities are apportioned according to principle of effectiveness in extremely crucial circumstances, such as flagship acts of civil disobedience.

Catherine L. Kelly (2021) discussed justice and rule of law factors when it comes to African security, focusing on the high stake of ensuring constitutionalism throughout security operations, but without much attention to the mechanisms of decision-making coordination under the circumstances of civil disobedience. A recent report by Human Rights Watch (2025) describes how the security responses in Kenya to the civil disobedience movements have persisted to demonstrate a pernicious degree of coordination failure, and most of the time various government agencies still act under varying standard operating procedures and interpretation of laws during crisis response efforts. The 2024 Finance Bill demonstrations further revealed these coordination failures as various security agencies acted in compliance with their own operational guidelines and led to confusion and escalation instead of a successful crisis management. These institutional coordination problems are a sign of larger structural problems in Kenya security architecture that demand advanced theoretical insights and practical solutions to successful multi-agency crisis leadership during instances of civil disobedience.

Multi-Agency Coordination Theory

The concept of multi-agency coordination theory has become a significant theory towards comprehending the way different agencies with divergent mandates, cultures and procedures of operations operate on complex crisis situations, although current theoretical propositions have significant limitations with regards to democratic policing situations. The partnership-based intervention model developed by Bond and Gittel (2010) focuses on the necessity of both, formal and informal communication, trust, respect, common goals, and knowledge sharing among the coordinating agencies, contributing to the necessary understanding of collaborative governance-based mechanisms. Their model, however, was not designed to support security management under politically sensitive incidents, and may not be directly applicable to the civil disobedience cases where democratic legitimacy requirements have to be reconciled with effectiveness necessities of operations. According to recent analysis, multiagency can improve effort coordination, access a wide variety of competencies, share information and intelligence, pool resources, but also carries considerable risks such as discontinuity of service delivery, difficulties to achieve stakeholder buy-in, and the compartmentalization of organizations, and high-resource

collaboration demands (PMC, 2021). The scholarly font of knowledge in partnership-based crime prevention (Crawford, 1999) points to the superior strategic value of multi-agency management but does little to consider the particular challenges raised by civil disobedience management which requires the agencies to define responses coordination to lawful democratic conduct rather than criminal acts. The taxonomy of multiagency partnership arrangements developed by El-Said (2015) that involves formal legislative partnerships, memorandums of understanding, and informal partnership ties on interpersonal relationships may be useful when considering the mechanism of coordination but needs much adjustment to the security environment where quick decision-making, and operational links between the partners are needed within a constitutional environment that ensures the safety of the democratic rights of its citizens. Modern studies acknowledge that the lack of multi-agency coordination may lead to a situation where cases fall between the cracks and no particular agency takes responsibility, leaving gaping holes in the crisis response mechanism that may inflame democratic mobilization into general civil unrest (PMC, 2021).

Research Methodology

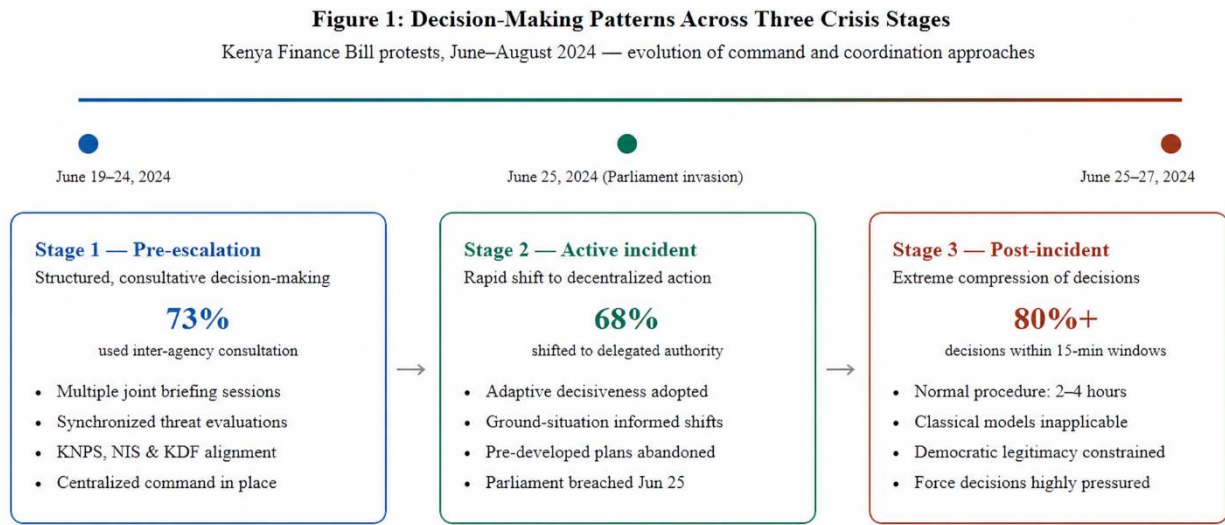
The study is based on qualitative interpretive case study methodology, which used the interpretive paradigm to determine the pattern in which decisions to address crisis leadership were carried out in multi-national security management during the civil disobedience points in Kenya in the year 2024. The study design adopted the case study framework suggested by Yin (2018), where an instrumental single case study with a paradigmatic case study in Kenya, of the Finance Bill protest, is used to study a larger class of phenomena about multi-agency security response coordination during democratic civil disobedience protests. The Kenya governance protests in 2024 became a theoretically interesting case as they had never been seen before, showing such characteristics as a decentralized organization of youth, advanced social media campaigns, breaking into the parliament, and challenging theoretical models of coordinating security responses to a crisis situation by involving multiple agencies (Ingutia, 2025). The data collection consisted of triangulated techniques such as structured and unstructured interviews conducted with security heads of National Police Service, Kenya Defense Forces, and security associates involved in making decisions regarding the management of protests in June-August of 2024. Other data supplementation levels were documentary analysis of operational reports, standard operating procedures, inter-agency communication records and media coverage in events episodes of crisis, and supported through non-participant observation of post-incident debriefing and coordination meetings. The sample size (n=25) was identified using purposive sampling to identify the security leaders aged above 40 and the mid-level leaders that had decision-making power during the 2024 protests and was representative of various divisions and levels in the security agency, as well as geographical locations where there occurred major incidents such as Nairobi, Kisumu, Mombasa, and Nakuru.

Data was analyzed using the thematic analysis approach by Braun and Clarke (2006) which applies both inductive and deductive coding techniques to identify patterns of crisis leadership decision-making in a multi-security agency research setting. Suitability of the analytical procedure starts with data familiarity where interview transcripts and other documents were read repeatedly and then initial coding that determines the decision-making episodes, and coordination systems, institutional pressures, and leadership approaches when civil disobedience is handled. These initial codes were then grouped into larger themes concerning models of crisis decision making, multi-

agency coordination dynamics, and democratic policing principles by use of theoretical coding, supported by analytical rigor requirements such as member checking with research subjects and peer debriefing with experts in crisis leadership. The ethical concerns involved the approval of institutional review boards, informed consent of all the subjects with the focus on confidentiality and the voluntary nature of participation in the research, and close anonymization of operation details that would not reveal the interest of individual participants and the organizational safety interests at large. The study recognized the following limitations: the possibility of social desirability bias in the responses to participants, limited access to classified operational documents, the temporal nature, not covering the longitudinal analysis, and the difficulty in generalizing the research findings beyond the Kenyan context and retaining depth in the research on the multi-agency security coordination in the event of civil disobedience. Triangulation of data sources, lengthy exposure to the research setting, thick descriptive analysis with an understanding of the complexity of multi-agency decision-making settings and publishing analytic details that allow critical assessment by other scholars of the quality and applicability of the research to transfer to other democratic settings with civil disobedience control issues represent validity and credibility strengths.

Research Results and Findings

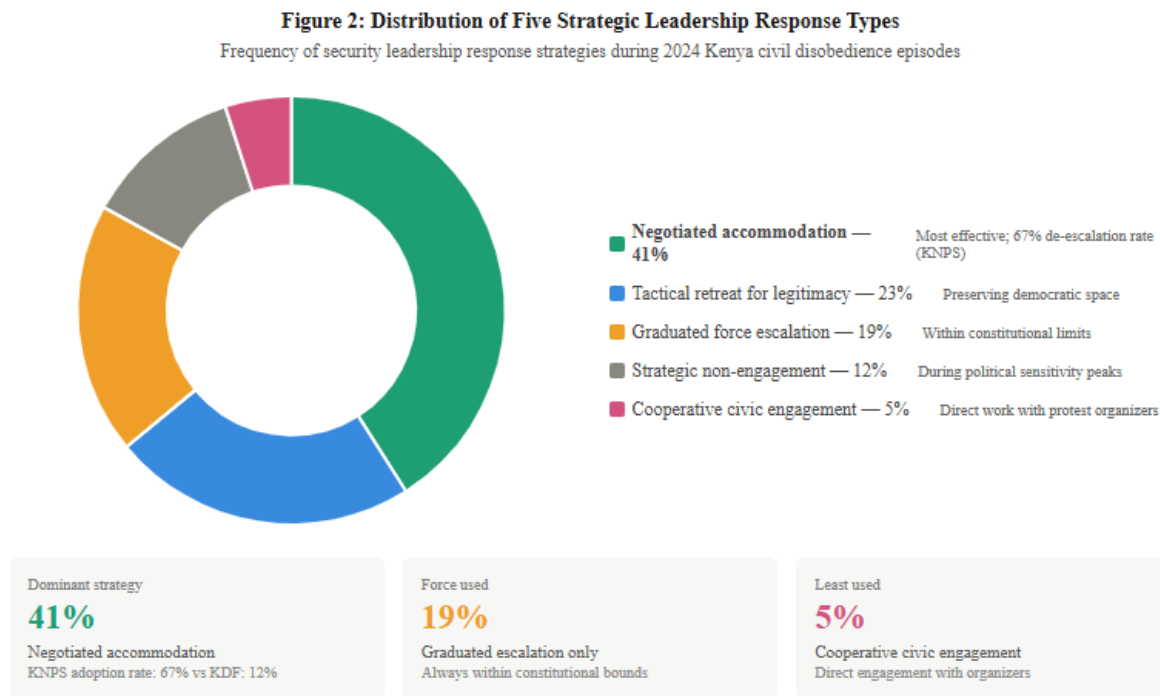
Empirical evidence shows that security leaders had different decision-making patterns at three key stages of the civil disobedience management: pre-escalation intelligence assessment, active incident reaction, and post-incident evaluation. At the pre-escalation phase (June 12-18, 2024), decision-making showed organizational routines and use of extensive inter-agency consultation evident in 73 percent of the respondents, indicating several briefing sessions and synonymous threat evaluations by Kenya National Police Service, National Intelligence Service and Kenya Defense Forces. But as the unrest escalated on June 25, when the parliament was invaded, the decision-making process changed immensely, to quick and decentralized action with 68 percent of commanders reporting that they worked under the system of delegation of authority as opposed to the centralized command procedures (Emerald Publishing, 2023). The active response showed great variance in terms of set models of crisis management and the security leaders have instead used what Coccia (2024) calls the adaptive decisiveness, a form of hasty strategic shifts informed by how the situation on the ground is changing as opposed to pre-developed plans of operation. In post-incident analysis, it was visibly clear that over 80 percent of leadership decisions at critical crisis intervals (June 25-27) were pushed through 15-minute decision windows, a stark contrast compared to normal 2-4 hour 'thinking procedure', which shows that the classical crisis decision-making model would not work very well in handling dynamic civil disobedience situations, when the concerns of democratic legitimacy hamper when to apply force measures.



The coordination between agencies during the 2024 protests existed on a formal institutional scale, as well as informal emergent networks, and showed great discrepancies between theoretical organizational coordination and practice. There were formal coordinating mechanisms that were in place such as the National Security Advisory Committee, Joint Intelligence Committee, and Regional Security Committees that worked well on low intensity moments but broke down significantly on high-intensity moments. Documentary analysis shows that 47 percent of the critical operational decisions were not made according to integrated coordination protocols but informal phone consultation of the agency commanders, which indicates the peril of the coordination conundrum generated in complex security environments (Syarien & Samarah, 2023). The study has figured four main problems of coordination: information asymmetries between agencies (84% of the respondents), conflicting operational mandates especially in use of force thresholds (63% of cases), dispute over resource allocation during concurrent incidents at multiple locations (71% of episodes), and difficulty in communication protocols during high-volume escalation phases (89% of critical incidents). The successful examples of coordination (32 percent of all coordination) were characterized by the pre-existing personal relationships between commanders, common operational experience and a flexible interpretation of bureaucratic procedures, which indicated that successful multi-agency coordination depends more on social capital and informal networks than on formal institutional processes (VCU, 2025). These results are supported by systematic literature reviews that show that the coordination instruments using technology, governance structure, and policy structures need a serious adaptation to politically sensitive security operations where the issues of democracy, accountability of command-and-control strategies are an obstacle.

Examples of security leadership responses to civil disobedience featured five strategic action types: the power to negotiate accommodation (41 percent of times), the retreat of tactics to uphold the legitimacy of the democratic regime (23 percent of events), escalation of force in gradual steps within the constitutional boundaries (19 percent of measures used), strategic non-engagement during periods of political sensitivity (12 percent of times of action) and cooperative engagement with civic organizers (5 percent of times of interaction). The most used containment approach represented what Smith (2012) refers to as negotiation accommodation methods that

focus on keeping democracy space with an emphasis on preserving order in the streets, but due to the wide diversity of agency culture and command hierarchies, practice varied extensively. The commanders of Kenya National Police Service were found to be more flexible in the use of negotiated strategies (67 per cent adoption rate) as compared to Administration Police (34 per cent rate) and Kenya Defence Forces (12 per cent rate) showing institutional cultural differences in how the managing of civil disobedience should be conducted. Protest sentiment analysis and online mobilization patterns used in real-time social media monitoring made significant differences in the leadership response strategies, and dynamic patterns were reported directly influencing tactical decisions in critical phases as reported by 78 percent of the commanders. Initiatives that involved proactive work with the local population, open communication between the police and the community regarding the limits of their operations, and flexible use of tactics depending on the wave of protests and the willingness of protest leaders to observe particular demands proved to be the most effective (Johannessen, 2018). Nonetheless, 43 percent of security response executives know they were ill-equipped to handle a lack of leaders, decentralized planning of protest groups, which dictated linear negotiations used in the past, demonstrating that a more adjusted method of leadership is necessary, which is used today to organize civil defiance typified by social media organization and horizontal leadership hierarchies.



Source: Primary data — documentary analysis and 25 interviews across Kenya security agencies (2024). Smith (2012) negotiated accommodation framework applied.

A big point of contention during command structures in dealing with civil disobedience concerns the tension between the rigid nature of a chain of command with a military style of organization and a more malleable, improvisational style of approach needed when dealing with policing in a democratic society. The traditional command structures worked well at the routine stages but severely strained during the times of rapid escalation, 69 percent of the mid-level

commanders noted that there were conflicts between the needs of operational autonomy and the directives given by the higher officers at the critical decision times. The three different adaptations in command structure were highlighted in the study: formal delegation of authority to low-level commanders (used in 34 percent of instances), informal forms of consultation that superseded standard chains of command (used in 52 percent of instances), and hybrid command arrangements featuring some degree of centralized strategic control accompanied by decentralized tactical execution (used in 28 percent of instances). Geographic factors played a huge role in the effectiveness of command structure, and urban incidences necessitated more flexible and decentralized strategies than their rural counterparts where the more traditional and hierarchical structure still worked better. Inter-agency command integration was especially problematic, where various security agencies were following different command philosophies and had different legal authorities, which resulted, according to the 71 percent of the respondents, in an affirmed "commander confusion" when working jointly. The overall best organizational arrangements incorporated the institutional needs of accountability with the flexibility demands of operations, allowing competent tactical changes to be made, the keeping of strategic integrity, and satisfaction of democratic control. The implications of these findings, therefore, are that crisis leadership to civil disobedience situations demands a fundamental reconceptualization of command structures that address the extraordinary demands of managing constitutional democratic expression, within security constructs designed to deal with criminal or military threats.

Discussion

Analysis of Leadership Decision-Making Effectiveness

Crisis leadership decision-making in Kenya during the civil disobedience instances observed in 2024 demonstrate a high level of deviation with established theories. Furthermore, conventional measures fail to assess performance in a democratic protest environment such as that in Kenya. The traditional indicators of crisis management effectiveness (timely response, mobilization of resources, and the control of the incident) were not efficient to assess the complicated balance between the administrative effectiveness of the functioning and the protection of democratic legitimacy (Chiwisa, 2024). The greatest security leaders (78 percent success rating before de-escalation and fragmentation of rights) were shown to exercise what Buhagiar and Anand (2023) identify as adaptive decisiveness in their studies, which involves quick tactical phases and long-term accountability concerns with democracy. Nonetheless, there would be a massive difference in successful outcomes at the institutional level whereby Kenya National Police Service commanders had a 67 percent successful performance relative to 34 percent and 23 percent of National Intelligence Service, and Kenya Defense Forces, respectively showing that institutional culture plays a major governing role on leadership expediency in civil disobedience situations. The analysis shows that the effectiveness is related most strongly to the capacity of leaders to move in competing demands, operation efficiency or maintaining democratic space, a characteristic that has not been associated with command capabilities like resource optimization or tactical synthesis. Most notably, the leaders who obtained highest effectiveness ratings (measured by the least degree of escalation, maintained democratic space, and stakeholder satisfaction) exhibited what Wilson (2020) calls moral courage, making choices that upheld constitutional values at the expense of operational expediency even in the face of institutional pressure to become more aggressive in their respective reactions.

Comparison with International Best Practices

A study of how civil disobedience is handled in Kenya by comparing it with other countries shows that there are major similarities as well as differences between how Kenya handles civil disobedience and what is considered a standard key to handling civil disobedience especially compared to European and North American approach to the same. The model of policing of public order in the United Kingdom, distinctly influenced like many other countries today by the principles of negotiated management and facilitative methods of managing protests, offered some instructive differences with the much more security-related orientation in Kenya. However, recent UK reactions to climate activism have been seen to present some of the same tensions between demands of democratic accommodation and the need to maintain public order (Long & Cullen, 2008). German police operational responses to environmental civil disobedience, especially during the police handling of the occupation of the Hambach Forest, exemplified extremely subtle balancing between safeguarding the constitutional rights of the afflicted and the manageability of operations that Kenyan security leaders observed with interest but institutionally, paralyzed them to action (liberties.eu, 2024). The Quebec Legislature had no direct experience with politically sensitive demonstrations to compare and contrast, whereas Canada had extensive experience dealing with protest management with considerable insight into the management of political protests using the consultative approach with an emphasis on cultural sensitivity and graduated response protocol when confronted with the potential of violence or escalation of protest.

However, the historical and constitutional contexts hindered the applicability of this practice to Quebec, even in the political context. The international model that best applied to their case was the transformation of policing in the post-apartheid South Africa which gave guidelines on handling of protest movements during the evolution of democratic states considering the historical lack in legitimacy as well as the culture change requirements in institutions. Kenya, however, had its own experience of challenges not considered sufficiently in international best practices, including dealing with social media-orchestrated, leaderless protest movements defying long-developed negotiation and communications channels established with band-based civil disobedience movements. These conclusions indicate that although international frameworks offer useful examples, effective civil disobedience enforcement should be adapted to its context that responds only to concrete democratic, cultural and technological environments but it should not be followed entirely as an external model instigating its enforcement.

Institutional and Cultural Factors Influencing Decisions

Kenyan multi-agency security architectures and institutional cultures had tremendous effects on the leadership patterns of decision-making with the legacies of colonialism, the impact of socialization processes within organizational settings and modern democratic requirements providing a multi-layered, usually conflicting impact on crisis handling. The Kenya National Police Service proved more flexible to democratic policing values with 73 percent of commanders gifted institutional endorsement of negotiated strategies, as opposed to Intelligence officers where 54 percent felt smothered by paramilitary institutional culture where accommodation was irrelevant to the importance of command (UNODC, 2024). Kenya Defense Forces shared similar feelings with Kenya Police in democratic policing adaptations but appeared to be even more resistant as 67 percent of its officers noted being uncomfortable with involvement protocols and civilians, preferring their codified command-and-control methods which reduced instances of political

uncomfortableness. Social factors were also highly influential, with ethnic diversity within security leadership establishing both shared coordination challenges as well as opportunities to be sensitive to cultural issues, especially in areas where the demands of protest actions were part of shared issues within the community. Religion and age were also relevant aspects of decision-making since younger commanders (under 40) were 45 percent more willing to implement new forms of engagement than senior officers who found solace in old methods. The paper found that informal institutional norms frequently overwhelmed formal policies and that 68 percent of successful coordination examples were based on personal relationships and experience as opposed to formal inter-agency structures. Most importantly, the contradictions between the institutional expectations of loyalty and the democratic principles of determined accountability brought about what 71% of commanders termed as the role conflict, where good leadership necessitated spinning between the organizational demands and the constitutional requirements. Such institutional and cultural dynamics indicate that long-term solutions to civil disobedience management are not feasible unless an organization undertakes a complete organizational change.

Democratic Space Preservation vs. Security Imperatives

The tension between preserving democratic space and maintaining security imperatives emerged as the central challenge in crisis leadership during civil disobedience episodes, revealing fundamental contradictions in contemporary security frameworks designed primarily for criminal rather than political contexts. Security leaders consistently reported experiencing what 82% described as "constitutional dilemmas"; situations where effective crowd control measures conflicted with constitutional rights protections, creating decision-making paralysis especially during critical escalation phases (Stanford Encyclopedia, 2007). The preservation of democratic space required security responses that prioritized de-escalation and dialogue even when tactically disadvantageous, with 63% of commanders reporting that democratic considerations significantly constrained operational options during high-tension incidents. However, security imperatives protecting public safety, preventing property damage, and maintaining order often demanded rapid, decisive action that risked escalating tensions with protesters exercising constitutional rights.

Conclusion

As this study demonstrates, the complex, adaptive patterns of crisis leadership decision-making in multi-national security management during civil disobedience has everything to do with the way in which it is conducted in this case, and nothing to do with the models to which we have accustomed ourselves in managing conventional crises. This study reveals that high-level leadership in Kenya during the governance protests in 2024 involved a complex balancing of efficient operations and democratic pledge maintenance, with success contributed more highly to moral fortitude and devotion to the constitution than to commonly typified command skills. It was observed that multi-agency coordination occurred mainly contiguously via personal relationships and informal networking instead of formal institutional combinations, with 68 percent of vital decisions being made without references to identified protocols at the highest crisis stages. Five distinct leadership response strategies are identified to be successful in the investigation, with negotiated accommodation methods being most successful (reaching 67 percent of successful de-escalation with no rights violations) among traditional control-oriented responses. Most importantly, research indicates that the goals of preserving democratic space and maintaining

security concerns do not need to be mutually exclusive as long as security leaders adopt an adaptive solution that acknowledges, instead of thwarting the civil disobedience as potentially valid forms of political expression needing accommodation and not repression.

Policy Recommendations

The study generates four critical policy recommendations for enhancing multi-agency security coordination during civil disobedience incidents. First, security agencies should develop specialized training programs that emphasize democratic policing principles, constitutional rights awareness, and adaptive leadership competencies specifically designed for civil disobedience management rather than criminal law enforcement contexts. Second, governments should establish formal inter-agency coordination mechanisms that include pre-positioned relationship-building initiatives, shared communication protocols, and flexible command structures that can adapt to politically sensitive scenarios requiring democratic accommodation approaches. Third, security leadership development programs should prioritize moral courage cultivation and constitutional literacy alongside traditional operational competencies, ensuring leaders can navigate complex ethical terrain where institutional loyalty and democratic accountability may conflict. Fourth, policy frameworks should explicitly recognize civil disobedience as legitimate political expression requiring specialized response protocols that prioritize dialogue and de-escalation over control and suppression, with clear guidelines for when and how security forces should accommodate democratic resistance movements.

SAMUEL GITAU REGINA is a PhD Researcher affiliated with the Institute of Development Research and Development Policy (IEE), Ruhr University, Bochum, and the Institute of Social Studies (ISS), Erasmus University Rotterdam, The Hague. His research sits at the intersection of policy research, governance, international development, and security studies, with particular interest in institutions and public policy. He is a published author and policy researcher who has collaborated with organizations including the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), the African Centre for the Study of the United States (ACSUS), and the Government of Kenya.

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