

**THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY AND ITS INVOLVEMENT IN
DERADICALIZATION IN KENYA: THE CASE OF NAIROBI AND MOMBASA
COUNTIES**

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DECLARATION

This Project is my original work and has not been submitted for award of a degree in any other university.

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I acknowledge that the limitations of this work are entirely mine and cannot be attributed to any of other person.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my loving parents; my mother, Dubo Omar and my father, Mohamed Ibrahim, who gifted me with the privilege of education themselves had never enjoyed, and guided me to appreciate the value of reading and lifelong learning. I understand any amount of gratitude shown to them is woefully inadequate. Thank you for being such extra-ordinary parents!

ABSTRACT

Radicalization is increasingly gaining traction in Kenya, primarily as a consequence of the longstanding instability in Somalia and the growth of Islamist extremist groups such as *Al-Shabaab* and *Al-Qaeda* in the region. Radicalization is also facilitated by myriad of factors such as marginalization of Muslim communities, ideological indoctrination and economic and political deprivation. Nairobi and Mombasa, the two biggest cities in Kenya, together with North Eastern Kenya are some of the worst affected regions in the country.

Various studies have observed that radicalization takes place within a community setting. Yet, the government's counter-radicalization strategy fails to appreciate the long-acknowledged fact that emphasizes the importance of involving local communities in this process. Instead, the government's high-handed strategy of banning organizations, extra-judicial killings, forced disappearances and censorship has alienated local Muslim communities and ended up pushing many into the path of radicalization. This study interrogates the rise of radicalization and its implication in Nairobi and Mombasa counties and further identifies gaps in the government's de-radicalization strategy. Finally, the study makes several recommendations for effectively involving the community in de-radicalization.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACERWC	- African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child
AIAI	- Al-Itihad Al Islamiya
BBC	- British Broadcasting Corporation
BRAVE	- Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism
CBO	- Community Based Organization
CIED	- Centre for Ihsan and Educational Developemnt
CTITF	- The UN Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force
DIIS	- Danish Institute for International Studies
FGD	- Focus Group Discussion
GoK	- Government of Kenya
HRW	- Human Rights Watch
IPI	- International Peace Institute
KDF	- Kenya Defence Forces
KMYA	- Kenya Muslim Youth Alliance
KECOSE	- Kenya Community Centre
KEMWA	- Kenya Women Alliance
MRC	- Mombasa Republican Council
NCTb	- National Coordinator for Counterterrorism
NCTC	- National Counter-Terrorism Centre
OLN	- Operation Linda Nchi
PCOK	- Peace and Charity Organization of Kenya
SUPKEM	- Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims
UN	- United Nations

- UNDP - United Nations Development Programme
- UNEP - United Nations Environmental Programme
- UNHCR - United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- UNODC - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
- UoN - University of Nairobi
- USAID - United States Agency for Development
- WORDE - World Organization for Resource Development and Education

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1 Background of the Study

Radicalization and its by-product, violent extremism, have become the greatest security challenge and concern of the current century. Several countries, both in the developed and developing world, have been significantly impacted by acts of terrorism perpetrated through the process of radicalization and violent extremism. Bloody terrorist attacks such the September 11, 2001 (9/11) World Trade Tower bombing and subsequent attacks in Bali in 2002 and 2005, Madrid in 2004, London in 2005 and multiple bombings in Paris have particularly shone the spotlight on these emerging threats to international peace and security and subsequently turned the attention of the world towards addressing them.

These attacks have been perpetrated by Islamic radical movements such as Al Qaeda, Boko Haram, Al Shabaab and Islamic State (Daesh) whose activities and missions are premised on an extremist interpretation of Islam, contrary to the true representation of Islam as a religion of peace and tranquility. Muslims describe Islam as a religion of peace that eschews violence and respects religious freedoms of individuals and communities. However, the activities and teachings of radicalists and

violent extremists project an incorrect impression of Islam as a religion that seeks domination and compliance through use of brute force.

On their part, Kenya and the greater Eastern Africa region have for a long time suffered these security challenges. Kenya first suffered a terrorist attack in 1980 when the Israeli-owned Norfolk Hotel in downtown Nairobi was targeted by operatives of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) as a revenge for Kenya's part in allowing Israeli Defense Forces' hostage rescue team to refuel in Nairobi and also use Kenya's airspace en-route to Entebbe International Airport in Uganda, in what is commonly referred to as *Operation Entebbe* (Laing, 2013).

However, it was the concurrent bombings of United States Embassies in Nairobi, Kenya and in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania in 1998 where 214 people, mostly Kenyan nationals were killed and 5,000 injured that marked a dark turning point for the overall security of the region. These attacks were followed in 2002 by the launching of missiles at an Israeli charter aircraft leaving the international airport in Mombasa, Kenya's second city, and the detonation of a bomb in a truck at an Israeli-owned resort also in Mombasa. The Missile failed to hit the airliner but sixteen people, mainly Kenyan nationals and Israelis, perished in the bombing of the resort.

Those early attacks highlighted the imperative of strong and proactive counter-radicalization strategies by the Government of Kenya and encouraged the country to become a key ally and strategic partner of the United States of America in the Horn of Africa region in the much maligned War on Terror.

Strong ties with the United States and unpopular counter-radicalization strategies by the Government was used by radical preachers to radicalize the population by inciting them to rebel against the perceived or real oppression of the security services of Kenya and the West. This in turn led to more terrorist attacks, especially by the Al Shabaab terrorist group, against Kenya and Western targets in the country in subsequent years. Some of the most notable terrorist incidents in the country during this period included the September 2013 attack on Westgate Mall, an upscale shopping centre popular with Western expats and affluent Kenyans, which killed more than 60 people and the kidnapping of several Western tourists in the Coastal region of Kenya.

Kenya, also as the most democratic country in the Horn of Africa region, whose citizens were allowed unfettered rights to exercise their political and political freedoms, became a "legitimate" target of the terrorists in the region. Radicals also exploited the democratic and human rights space to advance their radicalization agenda and frustrate security agencies.

In response to the increased threat to its national security and economic interests, Kenya through the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) launched an offensive against Al Shabaab in an operation christened *Operation Linda Nchi (OLN)* – loosely translated in Kiswahili as "Protect the Nation" in October, 2011. The intervention succeeded in routing the group from their strongholds, including the port city of Kismayu, which earned them huge revenue from taxation and service charges, hence seriously undermining their ability to finance their war efforts. Several other towns and cities in Somalia were also liberated from the group and several leading commanders got

neutralized. This has led many commentators and analysts to posit that morale among Al Shabaab combatants and sympathizers had gone low.

Though severely degraded, however, Al Shabaab still retains the capability to carry out both asymmetric and conventional attacks in Somalia and the region. To boost the morale of its fighters and to avenge for the heavy damage wrought by Kenya on them, Al Shabaab has placed Kenya among its top targets and has continued to carry out attacks in the country. The group has also recruited many Kenyans among its ranks and often used them to plan and hit targets in the country. These recruitments are mostly targeted at Muslim majority regions and urban centres, including Nairobi and Mombasa.

The response by the Government of Kenya mirrored the response of other countries which was characterized by high-handedness and was largely state-centric. The response by the West, for instance, included but not limited to the agenda for regime change in countries such as Afghanistan and Iraq, support for rival moderate militia groups, arbitrary detentions and collective punishment of communities residing in extremist hot-spots. Save for the regime change agenda, Kenya largely followed the Western script. Unfortunately, such extensive focus on state security machinery to address the problems of radicalization and violent extremism has inevitably created a lacuna and brought to fore debate on the role of the community to prevent, manage and resolve the evolving security dilemma.

1.1.1. Evolution of Radicalization in Kenya

Muslims in Kenya are estimated at 4.3 million, translating to roughly 11 percent of the total Kenyan population (Government of Kenya (GoK), 2010). While clearly a minority religion in the country, Muslims comprise the majority in the Coastal region – where Mombasa is located - and in North Eastern Kenya. Large populations of Muslims are also found in Nairobi, the capital city. Ethnically, the Kenyan Somali and the Swahilis groups constitute the majority of the Muslim population in the country (Bjorn, 2006). Others include the Borana, Arabs and Asian communities. The table below, based on 2009 National Population Census, shows that Kenya is a multi-religious country. However, Muslims are clearly in the minority and continue to struggle with the crisis on identity and belonging.

Table 1: Kenya’s religious make-up

Religion	Total	Percentage %
Catholic	9,010, 684	23
Protestant	18, 307, 466	49
Other Christians	4, 559, 584	12
Muslims	4,304, 798	11
Hindu	53, 393	Below 1
Traditionalist	635, 352	2
Other religion	557, 450	1

No religion	922, 128	2
Unsure	61, 233	Below 1

Source: Ministry of State for Planning, National Development and Vision 2030 (2010) 2009 Population & Housing Census results, Nairobi: Government Printer, p33

Incidentally, both the Somali and Swahili communities felt marginalized by successive Kenyan governments and thus “assumed” second-class citizen status. The colonial government concentrated with developing and investing in Central Kenya, a fertile region they dotingly referred to as the “white highlands”, and relegated the development of other areas, including the Muslim majority regions such as Northern Kenya and Mombasa. Christian missionaries, who have greatly contributed to the development of the education sector in the country from the colonial period, also built schools and provided education to people from Christian dominated regions to the disadvantage of Muslims, even in urban areas such as Nairobi and Mombasa. Since education was not availed to them, most Muslim communities perceived it to be a preserve of Christians and a way of propagating Christianity. Muslim families therefore feared to take their children to school for fear of proselytization.

Thus the historical marginalization of Muslims in Kenya can be attributed to the British colonial legacy of categorizing people as either native or non-native and, marginally, to the denial of educational opportunities by Christian missionaries. In British colonial parlance in Kenya, natives included African communities while non-natives included Asians, Arabs and Europeans. For their part, the Kenyan Swahilis and Somalis were neither considered natives which would have given them an “African identity” nor the higher status of non-natives.

Bujra (2002) observes that the legacy of colonial division remains today as many contemporary Kenyans continue to see Muslims (Kenyan Somalis and Swahilis) more as foreigners than as true Kenyans.

Over the years, Kenyans were also divided politically and socially by both ethnicity and religion which has been the cause for several violent clashes. The politics of the country is also based on ethnic coalitions leading to polarization and balkanization of the country into government and opposition zones. The Coastal region and Mombasa which was predominantly Muslim, therefore, suffered twice as much marginalization as other minority but Christian communities.

Independent Kenya also continued the colonial policy of favouring the so-called natives who had by then embraced Christianity. Thus, Christianity in turn also became the de-facto religion of the State, to the disadvantage of the Muslims. Like many African governments of the time, the young Kenyan government of the 1960s and 1970s was mired in politics of ethnic conspiracy that benefited the communities of the President and segregated against those that didn't have any of their sons in high positions.

Further, the Government continued the colonial policy of developing the agricultural rich areas, which was referred to as "high potential areas" and neglected the arid and semi-arid areas (low potential areas) where most Muslims communities lived. Schools and infrastructure development were concentrated in the Christian areas. Thus, the marginalization of the Muslim areas under an independent Kenyan government became even more institutionalized.

Table 2: Kenya's ethnic groups and composition

Ethnic group	Location	Predominant location
Kikuyu	6 622 576	Central region and Nairobi (estimated at 47%) and Rift Valley (15%)
Luhya	5 338 666	Western region (80%) and Nairobi (16%)
Kalenjin	4 967 328	Rift Valley region (95%)
Luo	4 044 440	Nyanza Province (estimated at 87%) and Nairobi (15%)
Kenyan Somali	2 385 572	North Eastern region
Kisii	2 205 669	Nyanza (95%)
Mijikenda	1 960 574	Coastal region
Meru	1 658 108	Meru & Tharaka Nithi counties
Turkana	988 592	Turkana, Samburu, Trans-Nzoia, Laikipia and Isiolo counties
Maasai	841 622	Kajiado and Narok counties
Teso	338 833	Busia counties
Embu	324 092	Embu county
Taita	273 519	Taita Taveta county
Kuria	260 401	Kuria county
Samburu	237 179	Samburu county
Tharaka	175 905	Tharaka Nithi
Mbeere	168 155	Embu county

Borana	161 399	Isiolo and Marsabit counties
Basuba	139 271	Western region
Swahili	110 614	Coastal region
Gabra	89 515	Marsabit county
Orma	66 275	Garissa and Tana River counties
Rendile	60 437	Marsabit

Source: Government of Kenya. (2010). Kenya 2009 Population and Housing Census. Ministry of State for Planning, National Development and Vision 2030. Nairobi: Government Printer, p34

Consequently, Kenya's Muslims became culturally isolated as Christianity and Western educational systems became established in the rest of the country while their areas remained neglected. Prestholdt (2011) argues that with less access to government-run schools, many Muslim families turned to *madrassas* and to foreign education, some which have been taken over in recent years by radical preachers and teachers.

It is contended that not only was Christianity privileged, but Islam was also vilified (ibid). This political disenfranchisement has never been remedied and remains a major grievance of Kenya's Muslims to date. Due to their marginalization in the socio-economic and political processes and consequential lack of influence in Kenyan politics, dissent grew stronger among Muslims, which inevitably birthed agitation and radicalism.

Immediately after independence, the Somalis of Northern Kenya started a secessionist movement in an attempt to join their fellow Somalis in a Greater

Somalia (Botha, 2013). The Secessionist movement was brutally crushed through economic strangulation and mass punishments of entire communities. The Government targeted the livestock of the mainly pastoralist Somalis, leading to a disruption of their ways of life. This disruption resulted in many pastoralist Somalis migrating to towns and cities in other parts of the country. For these Somalis, the Eastleigh neighborhood of Nairobi was the first port of call. Thus, the nucleus of a Somali enclave in Nairobi was established. However, the secessionist ideology is unresolved to date (Ibid).

Similarly, the Mwambao United Front Movement emerged in Kenya's coastal communities calling for the autonomy of the coastal strip of Kenya. Today the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) has taken up this cause and has attracted significant support (Hayes, 2012).

When the domination of bigger ethnic communities took hold, smaller ethnic groups, such as the Swahilis, started to agitate for a devolved governance system due to the fear of domination by the numerically-stronger ethnic groups (Hornsby, 2012). Their agitation would however yield little until the new Constitution was promulgated in 2010 when a devolved system of governance was introduced.

Though not fully federal, the Constitution introduced a restructuring of the governance system by providing for the transfer of functions, administrative responsibility and resources from the central government to the 47 sub-national governance units – or counties. With this, many Muslim areas, including Mombasa, got some measure of administrative and financial independence to chart their own destiny and fund their development priorities (May, 2013).

Whereas such systems were established to ensure equitable sharing of resources, these forms of devolution have not fully lived up to the original promise, primarily due to runaway corruption, insecurity and hesitation by the national government to cede authority over certain critical functions. In Mombasa, insecurity occasioned by radicalization and violent extremism has seriously impacted the tourism industry which is the economic mainstay and a major source of foreign exchange for the city-county. According to International Crisis Group (2013), for instance, in 2013, at the height of sustained terrorist attacks, the government announced reduction of tourist arrivals by 11 percent and a decline of 2 percent in revenue collection compared to the data from the previous year. In Nairobi, the story remained unchanged: the Muslim minority groups in the city still remained on the periphery.

The disenfranchisement has significantly contributed to cases of radicalized youths joining extremist groups, such as the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) and *Al-Shabaab* militia groups (Botha, 2013).

Kagwanja (2012) argues that high levels of poverty, chronic underdevelopment, a deep sense of marginalization among Muslim communities in Kenya and the country's relative proximity to the Middle East region are some of the factors that have transformed the region's radical Islamists and trans-boundary terrorist networks.

After the terrorist attacks of 9/11, the government of the United States pressured the Kenyan government to more scrupulously examine the passports of citizens of Asian or Arab descent and Muslims in general. Many residents of Mombasa are descendants of Omani and Yemeni traders and most still retain strong ties with their

kin in the Arabian Peninsula. In response, the Government of Kenya has introduced a number of requirements; for one to obtain a new passport or renew a previously held one, Kenyan Muslims are required to satisfy stringent requirements, including undergoing invasive security vetting and presenting several documents to prove their citizenship. Many Kenyan Muslims consider the enforcement of these restrictive passport and Identity Card issuance procedures to be blatantly discriminatory (Bujra, 2002).

Further, Kenya has taken several steps to strengthen terrorism legislation, investigate terrorist organizations operating in Kenya, and arrest suspected terrorist operatives. While these steps are critical in controlling the spread of terrorism and violent extremism, they are viewed by many Kenyan Muslims as specifically targeting them. The harshest critics of government complain on, among many other issues, the lack of involvement of Muslim communities in the fight against radicalization and violent extremism (Langat, 2015). They also resent what they, for plausible reasons, believe to be a profiling of whole communities as terrorists.

Unemployment among youth in Kenya is extremely high. An estimated 75 percent of out-of-school youths are unemployed, according to the US Agency for International Development (USAID) Kenya Country Annual Report (2014). Reflecting the national pattern, unemployment figures for Nairobi and Mombasa remain high. Though current official figures are unavailable, a cursory observation reveals even higher unemployment rates among Muslim communities in Mombasa and Nairobi, especially in neighbourhoods such as Kibera and Eastleigh in Nairobi. Unemployment in

Mombasa is commonplace and this has also been variously attributed to the high drug abuse rate among youth in the city.

Maud (2015) argues that the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2014, which took ten years of deliberation and amendments before enactment, is problematic. In spite of the consultations that preceded its enactment, the Act attracted a lot of criticism from human rights and Muslim groups in Kenya. Controversially, Muslim communities have also linked the bill with the extra-judicial killings of Muslim clerics.

1.2. Statement of the Research Problem

For the past two decades, Kenya has been experiencing a myriad of terrorist attacks incited by radical Islamic preachers. These attacks have gone notches higher after the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) entered Somalia in October 2011. Simultaneously, there has been a rise in the number of radicalized Kenyan youths working in cahoots with local and foreign Islamic extremists groups. This was clearly demonstrated in the number of Kenyan youths who have participated in some of the most atrocious attacks prosecuted by Al Shabaab on Kenyan soil.

Although radicalization has historically been linked to people from the Coastal region (Mombasa) as well as parts of Northern Kenya and Nairobi, this misperception was, however, discredited by a series of arrests and the successful conviction of individuals from traditionally Christian dominated parts of the country that had joined *Al-Shabaab* (Botha, 2013). Nevertheless, Nairobi, Mombasa, and parts of Northern Kenya are still considered as the locus of radicalization and extremism based on high terror acts (Ibid).

The push factors to violent extremism and radicalization are complex, and can be understood within religious, ideological, political, economic and historical contexts. They defy easy analysis and our understanding of the phenomenon is still a work in progress. Granted, un-fulfilled grievances, alienation, religious activism and poor governance play a part in radicalization, but the extent to which they matter is a matter of conjecture. Attacks perpetrated by youth who are relatively very well educated and from wealthy families such as those conducted at Garissa University College by a law graduate from the University of Nairobi (UoN) challenge our longstanding assumptions on these issues.

The increasing number of radicalized persons in the country, especially the youths who are critical members of society, naturally draws attention to the role of the community and some of the existing institutions within communities in counter-radicalization. It is widely agreed that several formal and informal societal institutions and community dynamics play critical roles in radicalization. Well, religious personages and institutions are particularly key in these efforts. Imams, mosques and madrassas play an important guidance and counseling role. They are also critical in promoting non-violent conflict prevention and tolerance. On the other hand, religious institutions have also been used to provide cover for recruitment and propagation of extremist-related ideology and as such remain critical in this endeavor.

One knowledgeable commentator argues that any successful anti-radicalization strategy by the government must involve the local communities. This argument

sounds plausible especially considering the grievances by many Muslim communities of exclusion by government in the de-radicalization effort (UNDP, 2015).

Nevertheless, the key question, with regard to community involvement in de-radicalization and preventing new cases of radicalization, is the extent of effectiveness or ineffectiveness of community–government partnerships in containing and reducing the increased rates of youth radicalization. Further, there was need to evaluate some of de-radicalization strategies that the local communities and government can engage in to strengthen de-radicalization while preventing new cases.

Therefore this research sought to study the efforts that have been undertaken in the de-radicalization process in Kenya, particularly in Nairobi and Mombasa. It also sought to find out the factors that contributed to the success or failure of the de-radicalization process. The study, especially, sought to understand how the involvement of the community can also enable the success of the de-radicalization process. The key guiding question to this research study was therefore: what role does the community play in the de-radicalization process in Nairobi and Mombasa.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

The overall objective of the study was to analyze the involvement of communities in de-radicalization processes in Kenya, focusing on Nairobi and Mombasa Counties.

More specifically, the study aimed to:

- i. Examine the causes of youth radicalization in Kenya, with specific focus on Mombasa and Nairobi Counties.

- ii. Critically analyze the role of the community in de-radicalization processes in Nairobi and Mombasa counties;
- iii. Interrogate the emerging push and pull factors in community efforts at de-radicalization processes in Kenya.

1.4. Rationale of the Study

This discourse will contribute towards an understanding of the dynamics of radicalization and more specifically the role of communities' in de-radicalization processes. The case of the study was carefully selected to include Nairobi and Mombasa counties, Kenya's two biggest cities by population. This is because Nairobi and Mombasa have disproportionately witnessed some of the worst cases of youth radicalization and violent extremism compared to the rest of the country.

The study will contribute to the policy formulation and implementation by the National and the County Governments in addressing radicalization by ensuring appropriate strategies are adopted and implemented, particularly in relation to involvement of the community as critical stakeholders in de-radicalization. The study offers an important forum for counter-terrorism and radicalization practitioners to engage in dialogue on the best approaches based on the recommendation of the study, especially as regards community involvement and participation in de-radicalization.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study is important with regard to two key areas - these are; its policy and academic contributions. It is important to note that with the rising specter of violent

extremism across the African continent and more specifically, Kenya, there was an urgent need for pragmatic government-community partnerships to counter the abhorrent practice of radicalization and violent extremism.

In regard to policy formulation and implementation, the study dwelt on past and current policies of government at containing the general rise of radicalization. The analysis of effectiveness or ineffectiveness of these policies, within the backdrop of radicalization in Nairobi and Mombasa counties as the focus of the study, was intended to help in developing a pragmatic policy framework aimed at countering radicalization.

On the academic front, this study sought to provide useful insights into the discourse of community involvement in radicalization and de-radicalization processes. Despite the long history of radicalization, there seemed to be limited literature specifically focusing on the prevailing trend of Islamic radicalization in the twenty-first century. Most studies have mainly focused on conventional strategies predicated on the use of force and security forces in de-radicalization. In a nutshell, the study hopes to greatly contribute to the body of knowledge in this field as it will also contribute to ongoing policy debates on the same.

1.6. Hypotheses

The study tested the following hypotheses:

- i. Effective local community-government partnerships can contribute to effective de-radicalization processes of the youth in Kenya;

- ii. There is a strong relationship, both positive and negative, between local communities and government programming in de-radicalization processes of the youth in Kenya;
- iii. There are other factors to consider in local community partnerships with the government on de-radicalization processes of the youth in Kenya.

1.7. Scope and Limitations of the Study

The scope of the study was to assess the role the community plays in the radicalization with special focus on Mombasa and Nairobi counties. The study focused on the communities in Mombasa and Nairobi Counties with a focus on the radicalization and violent extremism hot-spots within the two counties.

The study also evaluated the contribution of the community in offering de-radicalization education in mosques and community centres and partnerships between the community, schools and civil society with National and County governments.

The two counties are not wholly representative of the entire nation but the researcher used them to represent the other counties in the country as they provided good cases studies.

The major limitations to the study were with regard to the collection of primary data. The sensitivity of the topic made it difficult for both the local community and government officials to freely offer necessary information required to complete the study. The local community members, especially those who had undergone radicalization process and their families, were, for example out of fear, unable to

agree to face-to-face interviews. Owing to his nature of employment and employer, the researcher was also careful not to elicit fear and suspicion towards himself from the radicalized individuals.

Government officials especially those actively involved in counter-terrorism operations were unwilling to provide and help with the kind of information required for the study. They were always quick to invoke the secrecy of their engagements and policy considerations. The problem of bureaucratic red-tape in booking and getting appointments from key selected government officials had also delayed the set date for completion of the study.

The huge population and relatively large geographical expanse of the two counties limited coverage of the study. However, the researcher obtained a representative sample from the population to overcome this limitation.

1.8. Definition of terms

1.8.1.: Al Shabaab, also known as Harakat al-Mujahidin, is a Jihadist terrorist group based in Somalia but operating across Eastern Africa region. Al Shabaab in Arabic stands for the Youth.

1.8.2.: A radical: according to Norman (2003), "radical" is a term used to designate individuals, parties and movements that wish to alter drastically any existing practice, institution or social system. A radical is therefore an individual who subscribes to such extreme thoughts and aspirations.

1.8.3.: Daesh: Arabic for Islamic States, refers to a terrorist group operating out of Middle East and North Africa. The group has claimed responsibility for terrorist attacks in United States, France, Iraq, Turkey, Syria, Egypt and Libya.

1.8.4. Madrassa: a school where Islamic religious education is taught. Radical preachers have infiltrated some of the religious schools in Kenya and elsewhere in the world to radicalize their students.

1.8.5. Mombasa Republican Council (MRC): is an outlawed group operating out of Mombasa, in the coastal region of Kenya which pursues a secessionist agenda as a panacea to the historical land grievances of the people of the Coastal region. The land economy of the region is dominated by people from outside the region.

1.8.6.: Marginalization – Refers to the relegation to unimportant or powerless position within a society or a group (Britannica Encyclopedia, no date). In the context of this study, it refers to the relegation of Muslim community and Muslim dominated neighborhoods in Mombasa and Nairobi to periphery of Kenyan society and the underdevelopment.

1.8.7. Imam: an Islamic religious leader

1.8.9. Islamic extremism has been variously described as a form of Islam that adheres to the jihadist interpretation of Islam which promotes the use of violence to advance political and sectarian agenda

1.8.10.: Islamism: A reform movement that advocates the re-ordering of government and society in accordance with laws prescribed by Islam (Britannica

Encyclopedia, no date). Islamism is also variously referred to as political Islam, Islamic activism, Islamic fundamentalism etcetera.

1.8.11.: Jihad: Perhaps the most misunderstood and misused term in Islam. It is an Arabic word that loosely translates to “Holy war” in defence of Islam. In a religious sense it refers to the struggle against oneself to be a pious believer in the way of God. Many Islamic scholars contend that Jihad must not be violent and does not necessarily mean war against non-believers. However, many “Muslims” have invoked Jihad to wage war and violence against those they differ with, often to advance a political goal.

1.8.12.: Jihadist: Is an individual who subscribes to violent brand of Islam or Jihad.

1.8.13.: Radical Islam: Variously referred to as militant Islam is a brand of Islam that seeks to impose Islamism on society or government by use of force. Its ultimate goal is to create a global community, or Caliphate of Muslim believers. Radical Islamists are characterized by their contempt for the beliefs, practices, and symbols of other religious traditions.

1.8.14.: Radicalization is a contested terminology. However Onuoha (2014) defines it as a process that involves an individual or group transitioning from passive reception of revolutionary, militant, ideas and beliefs to active pursuit of these ideals, especially through supporting, promoting and adopting violence to realize such intentions. The process is associated with changes in self-identification that are informed by unaddressed grievances driven by personal and group concerns

regarding local issues as well as international events. Such grievances create the sense of alienation and embitterment that provides a mental opening for radicalization. This definition fits well with what is so far known about radicalization in Kenya.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Chapter one looked at the background of the study, the statement of the problem and presented the study's objectives, hypotheses and rationale. This Chapter focuses on literature review. It will start by a discourse on radicalization and de-radicalization processes; followed by the debate on community involvement in youth radicalization and de-radicalization. This is based on the premise that radicalization and de-radicalization can only occur within the ambit of community engagement. The literature review will then conclude with a literature gap.

2.1. Radicalization: An Overview

Radicalization is an old phenomenon with varied definitions, depending on the context under which it is used. It can be traced back to the 18th Century enlightenment period, in the wake of the French and American revolutions (Schimid, 2013). However, the concept gained traction during the 19th Century with the emergence of ideologically-based political party systems, with those holding extreme social and political views often described as radicals (Ibid).

Radicalization is a contentious concept and as such has no universally agreed definition. Veldhuis and Staus (2006) contend that lack of a common definition for radicalization has seen the concept gain different interpretations. The contestation

and absence over a common definition notwithstanding, scholars and policy-makers have, however, always viewed radicalization as an evolving process in an individual and not an instantaneous outcome. Kiras (2011) posits that there was near unanimity on the two most prominent features of radicalization which are the use of force and indiscriminate targeting of civilians.

Conversely, Rahimulla et al. (2013) argues that although radicalization has been identified as the predetermining factor towards engagement of violent extremists' terror acts, it does not necessarily imply perpetration of violence.

Radicalism does not, by and in itself, necessarily amount to a crime, however, radicalization that breeds violent extremism is considered a criminal offence. In Kenya, like other democracies whose constitutions uphold strict observance of the rule of law, the fight against radicalization has been complicated by human rights concerns, especially with regards to freedom of worship and rights of individuals.

Counterterrorism campaigns in many theaters around the world have had to contend with the growing number of extremists in their prisons and the resultant huge resources to keep them, often, indefinitely. Further, after observing that prisons have increasingly been turned into incubators of radicalization, governments across the globe, especially the most affected ones, have sought alternative options of managing radicalized individuals (Rabasa et al., 2010). This is the reasoning behind the effort by many countries, including Kenya, to seek ways of rehabilitating these prisoners, first as a cost-cutting measure and secondly in order to use them in de-radicalization campaigns.

Schmid (2013 p.10) stresses that radicalism tends to blind individuals into one defining ideology of “with us or against us mentality”, which compartmentalizes entire communities to be either allies or enemies of radical and extremist groups. This rigid balkanization of society, he claims, makes radicalized individuals to easily slide into violent extremist acts. In spite of this vulnerability, he however, argues that radicals are easier to de-radicalize as compared to turning extremists from their extreme persuasions and ways.

A cursory examination of available literature reveals a growing body of view that classifies radicalism into two broad groups: violent and non-violent radicalization. With regard to extremism, however, there is consensus among scholars and academicians, that it takes a violent form (Tsoukala, 2008; Taspinar, 2009; Schmid, 2013, and Lynch and Hudson 2016). Therefore, it can be argued that extremism is an extreme form of radicalization.

Once a radicalized individual becomes an extremist, then they get most vulnerable to commit or engage in terrorism. Tsoukala (2008) claims the definition of violent extremism and terrorism is also polarizing. In fact, he goes ahead to assert that the complex and contentious concept of terrorism has even led some scholars to deny its very existence.

Lynch and Hudson (2016) observe that while it is not necessary that individuals who commit terror acts have to undergo transition from radicalization through extremism to terrorism, it is important to note that in most cases, theoretically and practically this is the case for most terrorists.

Across Kenya, specifically in Mombasa and Nairobi, the number of reported youths who have been radicalized has been on the rise, in essence leading to an increase in acts of terrorism. However, as Kanyinga (2015) argues, there have been reported cases of youths joining *Al-Shabaab* from regions which are not traditionally dominated by Muslim communities, such as western, central and Rift Valley regions. Radicalization and acts of Islamic extremism has mainly been concentrated along Kenya's coast, Nairobi, and North Eastern regions.

Although radicalization happens in all religions, cultures, regions and age groups, this study will mainly focus on religious radicalization that gives way to violent extremism, a fact that continues to threaten Kenya's national peace and security and therefore its economic development.

2.2 Why Kenya Remains a Target for Radicalization and Terrorism

According to United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (2012) and Kagwanja (2012) Kenya has become a popular theatre for terrorist and other criminal activities because of its; geographical proximity to the Middle East and Somalia, location surrounded by unstable neighbors, ethnic and religious composition, deep US and other Western countries' interest in the country, as well as poverty and religious fundamentalism in the country and the greater Horn of Africa region.

The Coastal region is inhabited by Arabs who share their language, historical and cultural ties with their brethren in the Middle East; this makes it easy for terrorists to blend in Kenya's Coastal region.

As stated elsewhere in this report, Kenya is a strategic partner of the United States and serves as its anchor state in the East Africa and the Horn of Africa region. Kenya's strategic location and longstanding Western ties have made it a cornerstone of US and European strategy against Al Qaeda and Al Shabaab as well as efforts to resolve the conflicts in the Great Lakes region, South Sudan and Somalia.

Additionally, the US government has always had unfettered access and use of Kenya's sea and airbases for the past decades. The United Kingdom also has a permanent in base in Nanyuki, in central Kenya, from where it trains its soldiers before deploying them for missions overseas. Nairobi and Mombasa host several tourist resorts and business investments owned by Western investors. Nairobi is an important diplomatic capital that hosts several embassies/high commissions and is home to the only United Nations headquarters in the developing world. The United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and UN-Habitat are both domiciled in Nairobi. These make Kenya a target for terrorist attacks and activities keen on settling scores with Western countries.

Kenya is surrounded by unstable neighbors; for instance, Somalia which has not had a functioning government since the 1991 collapse of the Siad Barre regime. South Sudan, the youngest country in Africa which borders Kenya on the North-east, is mired in civil war. Kenya also hosts refugees from a number of countries in the Greater Horn of Africa sub-region, mostly from the two unstable neighbours mentioned above. This makes it easy for radicalized persons to penetrate the border and preach hatred.

Finally, poverty and widespread unemployment has greatly contributed to the spread of terrorist activities in Kenya. Widespread poverty and unemployment has pushed many Kenyans into the radicalization trap and made them easy targets for radical preachers. Any keen observer would notice that the Muslim population in the country is disproportionately affected by the general high unemployment levels and resultant poverty. Kibera in Nairobi, inhabited by the Muslim Nubian community, is generally recognized as the biggest slum in Africa. While data on poverty levels among Muslims vis-à-vis other faiths is not available, social commentators, among them the late Professor Mazrui (1985) sustain this narrative.

2.3. De- radicalization

Generally, literature on the concept of de-radicalization is relatively new – less than fifteen years old – and was arguably prompted by the United States-led War on Terror in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 coordinated attacks in the United States of America by the Al Qaeda terrorist group. As such, the definition of de-radicalization has concentrated mostly on Islamic radicalization and therefore remains inadequate and contentious (Schmid, 2013 p.41). The focus on Islamic radicalization, in the context of defining de-radicalization has polarized opinion and views on the very understanding of de-radicalization. In such a polarized situation, therefore, it is impossible to agree on a general definition.

Nonetheless, this study, will adopt the definition coined by Horgan (2008) which describes de-radicalization as “programmes that are generally directed against individuals who have become radical with the aim of reintegrating them into society or at least dissuading them from violence” (cited in Schimdt, 2013). This definition

was also adopted by the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Forces (CTITF).

The Process of de-radicalization normally starts with discouraging radicalized individuals to abandon their beliefs. Radicalization starts “silently” without any tell-tale signs. Rabasa *et.al.*, (2010) posit that de-radicalization is a highly individual and gradual process therefore making the task of correctly identifying a radical a complex task. Consequently, the challenge to de-radicalization begins with identifying radicalized individuals early before they turn into violent radicals or extremists.

The hurdle of identifying radical individuals at early stages before they turn into violent extremists has also made jailed extremists as the primary target in the de-radicalization process (Rabasa et al, 2010b). Further, it is also difficult, for any responsible government, to prosecute people on the basis of their views, regardless of how openly they express their radical beliefs as long as they do not commit a crime. It is for this reason that de-radicalization strategies in Kenya and most parts of the world have mostly focused on individuals who have exhibited violent extremist tendencies (extremists).

Nevertheless, de-radicalization programmes have continued to gain traction in most countries, presumably owing to the dawning recognition that use of force and intimidation by themselves (on their own) are not effective tools against violent extremism and radicalization (ibid; National Coordinator for Counterterrorism (NCTb), 2010). In fact, when the use of force leads to violation of an individual’s or community’s civil liberties and human rights, the government loses credibility in the

“eyes” of the community and therefore loses “legitimacy” to undertake a successful de-radicalization programmes. Most importantly, a growing number of de-radicalization experts and “securocrats” have determined that, to undermine extremist organizations and defeat radicalization, it was necessary to rehabilitate radicals through close cooperation with local communities. As a result, many nations have developed de-radicalization programmes led by local communities. De-radicalized individuals require acceptance from the community to integrate and get fully rehabilitated. Rejection from the community can force relapse into radicalization.

A credible de-radicalization strategy must also seek to address and exploit the radical’s/extremists “push and “pull” factors, with a view to changing the cognitive shift in their worldview. Pull factors refer to all the reasons and justifications that attract an individual in the way of radicalization and extremism. Pull factors refer to all issues that bring doubt over their radical beliefs and convictions in the minds of radicalized individuals. Pull factors may include issues such as disillusionment with the philosophy, vision, chances of success, risk level, leadership and their status/position within the organization.

Push factors on the other hand are the root causes that push an individual into radicalization and include all the attractions for wanting to be part of a terror network, such as marginalization, social inequalities, unemployment, lack of education, Western foreign policy orientation that has widely been cast as anti-Islam, financial incentives etcetera. Bjorgo and Horgan (2009) advises that once these push and pull factors are correctly identified, de-radicalization strategies can

then focus on issues that may complicate disengagement from the group by radicals. They note that presence of other family members in the group may serve as an exit barrier for individuals to make a break with radicalism. However, it should also be noted that families also play a crucial role in dissuading their members from radical orientation.

In certain respects, the process of de-radicalization amounts to 'radicalization in reverse'. Just like in radicalization, the initial steps to a successful de-radicalization strategy must start by building a relationship with the targeted individual and gradually gaining their unwavering trust. This can be done through befriending, provision of social support and use of financial inducements. (Hearne and Laiq, 2010).

One challenge of de-radicalization is the difficulty to determine correctly whether an individual has completely been de-radicalized or has merely been disengaged (ibid). Horgan (2008 p. 21-27) defines disengagement as "a process whereby a radical individual, though may not necessarily undertake violent extreme actions against "non-believers", still supports and is associated to the terrorist organization".

In the absence of a mechanism to accurately determine levels of radicalization, mere words and deeds of individuals may not actually reflect the true commitment to renounce radical beliefs. The above challenge notwithstanding, an effective de-radicalization strategy should of necessity first pursue disengagement as a precursor to successful integration of radicals and extremists (ibid).

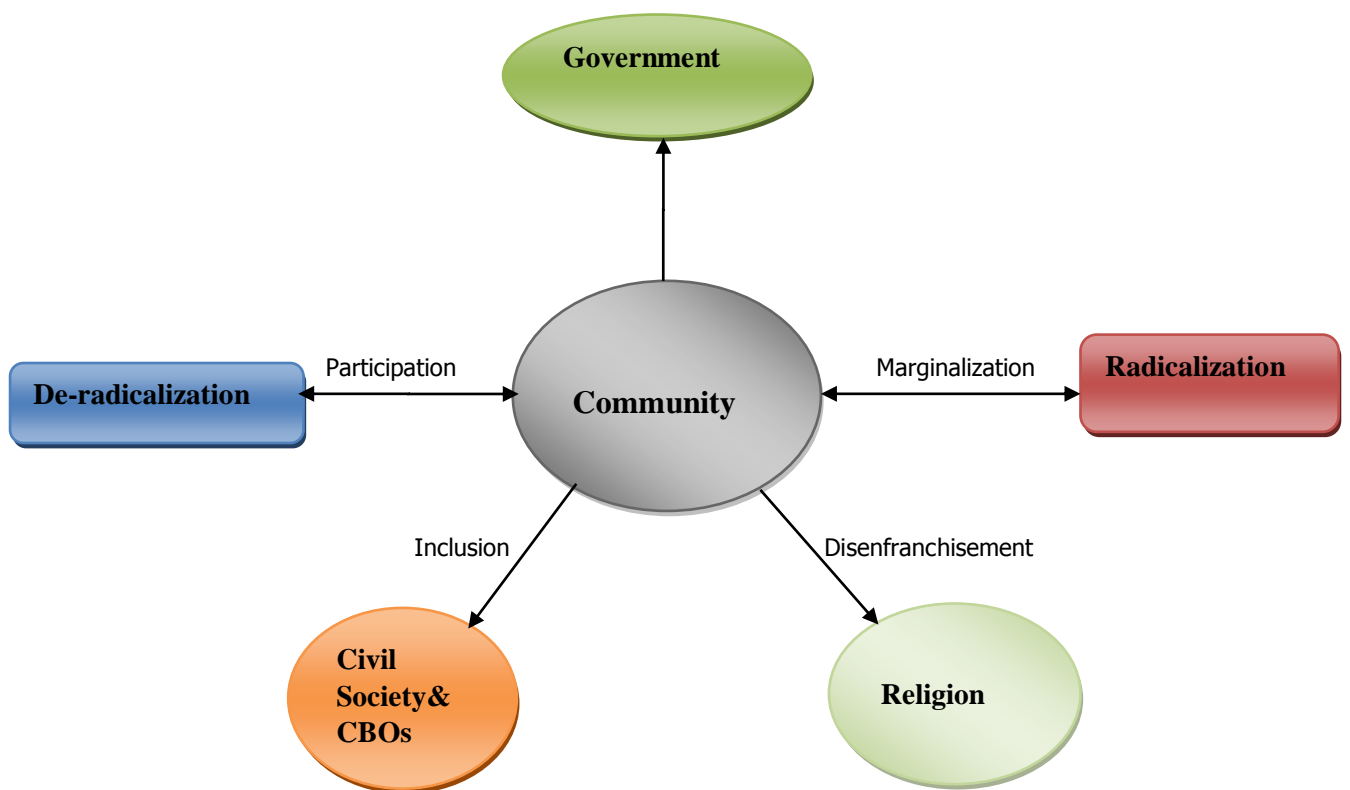
2.4 Conceptual Framework

The community and its components such as civil society groups, community based organizations (CBOs), religious organizations, government agencies-both local and national, is at the core of either catalyzing radicalization or de-radicalization of individuals. This, Taspinar (2009), theorizes is due to the significant role that local communities and institutions play in the moral upbringing and the socialization process of youths.

Feelings of disenfranchisement by marginalized communities create an environment that breeds hatred against the general society, particularly against perceived or real perpetrators of their marginalization/domination. Hatred and resentment pushes individuals to sympathize with ideologies of anti-establishment organized groups. This can be observed even within non-Islamic radicalized groups such as Mungiki, an outlawed ethnic organization/religious sect in Kenya (Nzioka and Njoka, 2009)

Involvement of the community and their engagement in any socio-economic and political endeavours, especially those that directly impact their lives, promotes a sense of ownership and determines its success. In the context of de-radicalization, the engagement and consultation with local communities in government's de-radicalization programmes can be very useful in promptly detecting radical elements and discourage them before they destabilize the society, once the communities they live in feel part of the government's agenda.

Figure1: Conceptual Framework



2.4.1. How Communities Understand Radicalization and Extremism.

A study conducted by Tahiri (2013) in Australia found that most community leaders and government stakeholders perceived radicalization as a process that went beyond widely accepted social or community norms. A cursory examination of available secondary literature indicates that radicalism was a by-product of extremist dogma

(ibid). However a considerable number of scholars contend that radicalization and extremism was most widespread among those individuals with an uncontrolled propensity to always have their way, such that they always wanted to impose their idiosyncratic beliefs on other people or on society as a whole.

Government stakeholders and community leaders interviewed for the study by Tahiri (2013) understood extremism as an off-shoot of radicalization. However, the scholar further observes that for a considerable number of the population in the study, there was insignificant distinction between radicalism and extremism and therefore concludes that the terms are interchangeable (ibid).

In Kenya, discussions surrounding terrorism and counterterrorism issues revolved around perceptions of a number of grievances related to the socio-economic and political spheres. The counterterrorism agenda, among the marginalized communities of coastal Kenya, is alleged to have led to what they view as a series of oppressive practices by state security forces.

In their debates many Kenyans revealed a strong belief that economic deprivation was a facilitator for recruitment into radicalism and radicalization.

2.4.2. Approaches to Community involvement in the De-radicalization

Process

Having gone through common perceptions of radicalization as well as the de-radicalization process, it is important to look at the role of community in the de-radicalization process and review the different approaches employed in selected countries.

Bhulai (2014) asserts that mothers, fathers, siblings and social networks play an important role of disseminating values and traditions of the community and contribute towards shaping the worldviews of children and youths. As such, they provide the primary information on individuals that may be used to discourage violent ideas before they take root. They may also offer useful information that may lead to apprehending or de-radicalizing persons who may have developed radical ideas.

Conversely, families and friends may also conceal, out of fear, the activities of individuals undergoing radicalization, or in the extreme case, even provide an enabling environment for young people to join extremist groups (ibid).

Such an example is seen in the Dutch government's approach to engaging the broader community, particularly with the imams and moving beyond strictly enforcing the law. The Dutch government created "information houses" that the locals used to safely seek help on particular at-risk individuals and developments in their neighborhoods. These information houses acted as a link between the law enforcement and security agencies and the local community and, often times, took limited mitigating actions before involving law enforcement officials (Mirahmadi and Farooq. 2010).

Saudi Arabia has also embraced a community based approach which focused on individuals that were radicalized but who have not gotten involved in violent activities by providing religious re-education (Jacobson, 2010). The Saudi model also works through a system of offering financial and material incentives to former detainees and their families as a way of dissuading them from relapsing into

radicalism. Such incentives may include job offers and funds to purchase a house. The family is also required to make an undertaking to support former radicals not to relapse and are held accountable for their actions and inactions should the individual digress (Boucek, 2008).

Mirahmadi and Farooq (2010) observe that the shortcoming of the Saudi approach is that it emphasizes more on disengagement as opposed to de-radicalization. It does not for instance seek to alter the primary facilitators and motivators of radicalism. This shortcoming of the Saudi programme notwithstanding, it is probably safe to conclude that its model has achieved notable successes. Through this approach, Saudi Arabia has managed to keep a firm eye on its former radicals and reigned in on the works of new radicals. This explains why Saudi Arabia in spite of the huge number of its nationals mentioned in some of the most atrocious terrorist attacks, has managed to be relatively free of such terrorist attacks on home soil. This approach may therefore be experimented in a county/city with a Muslim majority like Mombasa.

While Muslims in the UK are obviously in the minority, they make a significant portion of the growing minority communities' in the Kingdom; thereby requiring the UK government to come up with ways that would deal with the ever growing problem of radicalization among Muslim youths from within its borders. This has necessitated the implementation of a participatory de-radicalization approach that brings together moderate Muslim religious leaders and security agencies to work together at the local levels to counter radicalization (Government of the United

Kingdom, 2008). This strategy is implemented through the UK's national counter-radicalization strategy; PREVENT (ibid).

PREVENT works through establishing a broad network of Muslims from across the Kingdom, more so from different ethnic backgrounds and seeks to empower existing organizations involved in de-radicalization. The programme also supports local Muslim organizations to offer civic education to the youth in order to motivate them to channel their energies towards positive socio-economic activities such as sports and the arts (Mirahmadi and Farooq. 2010).

Through the "Ambassadors for Islam" project, the British government provides Muslim youths with theological knowledge to counter extremist ideologies and indoctrinations. The project also has the imperative of popularizing and therefore affirming "British-ness" or, if you wish, a British identity that is at peace with Islam.

Under the PREVENT project, the British government has also invested much in the development of Islamic teaching materials in schools across the country in order to teach civic engagement and thereby amplify the moderate Muslim voices and participation in socio-political sphere.

The government has also taken the fight to the virtual world, through online forums and platforms with a view to reducing access and availability of radical material on the internet.

In conclusion, the UK PREVENT, which works with a broad range of Muslim voices and cross-section Muslim actors, has been cited by scholars such as Mirahmadi and

Farooq (2010) as a good model on how to effectively involve communities the de-radicalization process.

2.5. Other National De-Radicalization Programmes

With the ever-increasing number of suspected and convicted radicals and terrorists, Governments all over the world have begun to seriously consider de-radicalization programmes. In fact, several countries have already introduced de-radicalization programmes under various names. Invariably, all these programmes sought to produce a change of mind either at the individual or at the communal level. Some countries concurrently pursue both.

For instance, the Government of Singapore deals with de-radicalization using the individual approach, while Egypt pursues the collective approach. Some like Indonesia, however, combine the two approaches in dealing with de-radicalization (Schmid, 2013).

Still, there are countries, especially in Europe, that have taken a slightly different approach to combating the twin challenges of radical Islam and violent extremism. These include the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, and Denmark which have implemented a voluntary, community based programmes. These strategies are structured around and suited to a target community's unique characteristics, vulnerabilities and needs and is undertaken through close cooperation with local authorities/municipalities. This approach is informed by the understanding that local communities and authorities, aided by their close proximity, are best suited to

identify radical behavior and inclinations of individuals and subsequently make swift remedial interventions (International Peace Institute, 2010).

Further, most European governments have placed proactive intelligence collection and law enforcement agencies at the fore of their counter-radicalization effort. France, for example, used its intelligence agencies to great success during the Algerian Civil war in the late 1950s and early 1960s. However, from the evidence of the multiple terrorist attacks in France over the recent past, this model has proven to be imperfect. While intelligence gathering and espionage are critical to informing the crafting and subsequent implementation of an effective de-radicalization strategy, the disturbing frequent attacks presupposes the need for intelligence to be used alongside other community-based strategies.

2.6. Literature Gap

Based on the foregoing discussion, it is clear that the community plays a key role both in radicalization and de-radicalization processes. The two processes are both gradual and are heavily influenced by community's perceptions of marginalization by government authorities.

Unfortunately, the legendary mistrust between governments and communities, especially minority communities, in undemocratic countries and Africa has greatly undermined de-radicalization efforts.

Research on community involvement in de-radicalization is most extensive for Europe and Middle East. In general, there is a dearth of literature and research studies that focus on community involvement and de-radicalization in Kenya and

even the continent, Africa. For instance, there is little evidence about its successes elsewhere on the continent. This study seeks to plug this knowledge gap.

Further, some scholars and commentators have argued for the need for further research on new approaches and innovative approaches and methodologies for community involvement in de-radicalization, particularly those that are suited to the local conditions in Africa. This study sought to identify these progressive approaches and methodologies for community involvement in de-radicalization in Mombasa and Nairobi.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

Chapter Two reviewed the literature about radicalization and de-radicalization of youths and other groups. It also analyzed the process of community involvement in the de-radicalization process through a conceptual framework, explored the national and de-radicalization programmes, examined the vulnerability of Kenya as a “popular” target for terrorism and radicalization, and ended by revealing the literature gap.

This Chapter will highlight the various methods and procedures the researcher adopted in conducting the study in order to answer the research questions raised in chapter one. The chapter is organized in the following structure: the research design; population, sampling design, study area, methods of data collection; data analysis methods and lastly, ethical considerations.

3.2. Research Design

This study used a Case Study Design within a qualitative framework. According to Yin (1994. p.13), case study is defined as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context.....” particularly when evidence is sourced from multiple sources. Further, a Case Study Design is recommended when a researcher wants to study the conditions within which a phenomenon occurs (ibid).

This method was preferred for this study because it enabled use of the researcher's prior knowledge in the analysis of information gathered and can also be used in combination with other methods (Yin, 1991).

While secondary data was the main source data for this research project, this study used a mixed research design; with a bias to the use of qualitative data. Qualitative data used consisted of open-ended information that the researcher usually gathered through interviews, focus groups discussions (FGDs) and observations. This method helped the researcher gain a deeper understanding of the issues at hand: Community involvement in de-radicalization in the study area.

3.3. Population

Cooper and Schindler (2006) define population as the total population of elements upon which inferences can be made.

The study population consisted of all residents of Nairobi and Mombasa counties which was estimated at over 5,200,000 people. Nairobi is the administrative capital of Kenya. According to the 2009 Population census, Nairobi had a population of 3.1 million (Kenya Population Data sheet, 2011). However, this number is estimated to have increased to over 4 million. Mombasa, a port city, is Kenya's second-largest city and is located in the coastal region. It had a population of 938, 000 as per the 2009 national population census. Current population is estimated at 1.2 million.

Both Nairobi and Mombasa are cosmopolitan and multi-religious. However, Mombasa has a predominantly Muslim majority population

3.4. Sampling Design

The study mainly focused on the Muslim Community, with emphasis on those living in Nairobi and Mombasa counties. In Nairobi, the research targeted the Somali community in Eastleigh and the Nubian community in Kibera. The sample group also included radicalized youths as well as those under de-radicalization programmes in Nairobi and Mombasa in addition to their families. To get relevant and specific data, the researcher interviewed government officials, community leaders, religious activists as well as Muslim clerics and scholars. The sensitivity of the topic, however, prevented access to any substantial information from government officials and most radicalized individuals.

Since it was impossible and cost prohibitive to reach every member of the population, the researcher tried to accommodate every element of the population of interest in the sampling frame in order to make it as nearly representative to the population as possible. Thereafter, the researcher prepared a list of all suitable key informants to develop a sampling frame. However, the list could not be attached to this report owing to security concerns expressed by the respondents.

Non probability sampling technique of purposive sampling was utilized for this study in selecting suitable respondents who in the judgment of the researcher were deemed to possess expert knowledge or first-hand information on the research topic (Peter, 1994). This technique therefore allowed for inclusion of suitable key informants of different categories, which provided opportunities for comparing views of the different informants both in Nairobi and Mombasa. These included key

informants from relevant institutions that are involved in counterterrorism initiatives and simple random sampling for other interviewees.

The researcher interviewed 30 Key informants, 15 each from Nairobi and Mombasa.

3.5. Study Area

Nairobi and Mombasa are the two biggest cities in Kenya. Both have considerable Muslim populations - a majority in Mombasa and a minority population in Nairobi. Additionally, both have experienced spates of terrorism-related attacks and have been reported to allegedly host recruitment centers, in this case, Majengo and Eastleigh in Nairobi; and Masjid Musa and Masjid Sakina in Mombasa. Furthermore, the populations in Nairobi and Mombasa are cosmopolitan and urbane; thereby providing an interesting and non-traditional perspective for the study.

Eastleigh, is a lower middle class suburb, located to the east of Nairobi's commercial centre, otherwise known as the city centre. Prior to the collapse of Somalia in 1991, there was a small Somali community and a few thousand Kenyan-Somali shopkeepers in the estate. However, the estate has developed dramatically in the past quarter century, dotted by its multi-national population of native Kenyans as well as refugees and Diaspora communities mainly from the Eastern African countries of Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia (Lindley, 2007). However, ethnic Somalis constitute the largest portion of the population in the area leading many to nickname it "little Mogadishu" (University of Oxford, no date). Mogadishu is the capital city of Somalia.

Kibera, the infamous slum in Nairobi – Kenya’s capital, is viewed as the largest and poorest slum in Africa. After the First World War, the British government settled its former soldiers of mostly ethnic Nubians from The Sudan to settle in a forest at the edge of Nairobi, as a reward for their service. Nubians are predominantly Muslim. However, after Kenya’s independence, the government claimed this land as its own and settled other native Kenyans in the area (Research International, 2005). Over the years, Nubians continued to build informal structures while at the same time welcoming newcomers from all over the country.

Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), the media and politicians have variously been quoted to estimate Kibera’s population at a staggering 700,000 to 1 million residents. These extraordinary figures have been legitimized through innumerable repetition. The inhabitants of this informal settlement are often described, in the NGO and media circles, as young and jobless.

In Mombasa, radicalization revolves around land grievances driven by radical organizations such as the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC), an outlawed group that has made it their mission to evict “outsiders” who have dominated economic life at the Coast and also restore ownership of the means of production to the natives. MRC has also called for the self determination of the coast people. This renewed agitation for self-determination, the National Council for Law Reporting (2012) observes appeared in 2008. Although the MRC has to date not been implicated in acts of terrorism, it is often perceived to be associated with *Al-Shabaab* in the Coastal region of Kenya. This is partly because both groups function in the same space, Mombasa and other parts of the coastal region.

Considering the uniform spread of Muslim communities in Mombasa, the study area for this research is the whole of Mombasa, with respondents randomly chosen from the entire county. However, radicalisation hotspots such as Musa Mosque and Sakina Mosque were given more deliberate focus and attention.

3.6. Data Collection Methods

Both primary and secondary sources of data were utilized for the study. However, the research heavily relied on secondary sources, obtained from books, academic journals, newspaper articles, government publications and policy documents. This allowed for provision of informed analysis and recommendations on community engagement in the de-radicalization processes. The choice of secondary data used depended on their availability, accessibility and relevance to the research objectives.

The researcher also used observation as a model; mainly unstructured. Observations made were helpful in monitoring developments related to the study and making informed predictions of likely future trends in radicalization and de-radicalization processes in the study area.

However, primary data was mainly collected using interviews with suitable key informants to compliment the secondary data. Interview questions were sent out via email to specific key informants within the general Muslim community in the target area. Responses from key informants were crucial in corroborating information sourced from documentary sources. State officials with the advantage of being involved in the day-to-day policy decisions and implementation at both national and county government levels were purposively identified.

The researcher prepared an interview guide to conduct the interviews and a documentary checklist for identifying relevant documents.

The interview method was selected because it allowed the respondents to express their mind freely, allowed the study of non-verbal communication and also enabled the researcher to avoid alienation from the respondent.

The Interviews were conducted following a number of successive steps, that involved selecting and approaching individuals, arranging time, date, duration and conditions of the interview.

In the study, documentary evidence was also used in identifying and interpreting existing information on bilateral trade and strategies for pursuing Kenya's national interests.

3.5. Data Analysis

The researcher analyzed the data collected descriptively due to the narrative nature of the data collected. Sometimes, the analysis also involved looking at the emotions of interviewees as well as observations of their reactions. The data collected from both secondary and primary data sources were analyzed in a narrative form; with plans to share the report -including the study's findings - with both the academic and policy communities in this field.

3.7. Ethical Considerations

All respondents were informed of the objectives, methods and anticipated benefits of the study before they were interviewed. A copy of the findings of the report would be made available to a group of academics and practitioners for validation purposes.

The same shall be done for the communities in the study area and for relevant government agencies once the study is completed so that the findings can contribute to the existing body of knowledge in this field as well to ongoing policy debates around radicalization and government/community partnerships in the de-radicalization process.

CHAPTER FOUR

DE-RADICALIZATION STRATEGIES IN KENYA AND THE ROLE FOR COMMUNITIES

4.1 Introduction

Chapter three focused on research methodology and highlighted the various methods and procedures the researcher adopted in conducting the study. The research design was done using a Case Study Design within a qualitative framework.

This Chapter will focus on the question of community involvement in the de-radicalization process. The focal areas are Nairobi and Mombasa, which, besides Northeastern Kenya, have witnessed a high number of terrorist attacks in the country; an indication of high concentration of youth radicalization. Despite their cosmopolitan nature and outlook, both cities have a high concentration of Muslims.

However, due to the fact that de-radicalization cannot be comprehensively understood without looking into radicalization as an underlying factor that drive people into violent extremism, the discourse will also delve into the dynamics of radicalization process. This will then be followed by a debate on de-radicalization strategies and community engagement.

4.2 Radicalization in Kenya: The Case of Nairobi and Mombasa

The existence of some of the world's major religions in Kenya confirms the multi-religious nature of the country (Maina, 2016). Crucially, Muslims, Christians and Hindus in the country have for several centuries co-existed peacefully, without

religious conflicts and wars unlike in other African countries such as Nigeria and the Sudan (ibid). However, mutual suspicion and competition between the faithful of the two major religions, Christianity and Islam, have persisted. These continue to be exacerbated by the growing threat of radicalization and terrorist attacks in the country which has heightened *islamophobia* in the country, thereby militating against efforts geared towards inter-religious harmony.

The Constitution of Kenya, through its Bill of Rights - one of the most progressive ones in Africa - protects the religious freedom of all citizens. Nevertheless, Muslims in Kenya have always been subjected to arbitrary detention, harassment, and profiling by government security agencies over mere suspicion of involvement in radical activities. Such harassment normally heightens immediately after terrorist attacks inside the country, including those linked to the Somalia-based terrorist group *Al-Shabaab* or its sympathizers, such as the September 21, 2013 attack on Westgate Mall in Nairobi (International Religious Freedom Report, 2013).

Muslim leaders and rights activists have also accused the government of using extra-judicial measures in the broader fight against terrorism to arrest, harass, and even deport Muslims to foreign countries, like what happened in 2007 when the Government of Kenya (GoK) deported several of its nationals to Somalia to face an uncertain future in a lawless country (Sudan Tribune, 2007). Several cases of disappearances of Muslims, with alleged ties to *Al-Shabaab*, have been reported. Such cases are on the increase as the risk to the nation also goes up.

Critics have also accused the government of deliberately failing to differentiate violent extremists from legitimate scholars, members of Muslim human rights groups

and civil society organizations, as well as ordinary citizens. Inefficiency and runaway corruption with the criminal justice system has undermined the legal integrity of criminal investigations therefore forcing security personnel to act outside of the law.

Additionally, various legislative initiatives, particularly the Suppression of Terrorism Bill first introduced in 2002 are viewed by many as punitive (Patterson, 2015). The bill was drafted and brought before parliament without conducting due consultations with the Muslim community. The most controversial aspect, however, was the dangerous sweeping powers given to the police to arrest and detain any person who dresses in ways the police deem suspicious, among other issues. This, in the opinion of many Muslims, criminalized Islamic clothing. The Bill elicited so much opposition from Kenyan Muslims and rights groups that it had to be withdrawn. The Bill was thereafter withdrawn and later reintroduced with minimum amendments.

Though, most of the clauses Muslims objected to in the 2002 Bill were expunged and made more palatable, the new Act still prescribes stiff punishments for people suspected of involvement in radicalization and terrorism. It also legitimizes the extradition of terrorism suspects to foreign countries for prosecution.

Violent confrontation with suspected Islamic radicals and Muslim communities such as the storming of mosques by security agents in Mombasa and Majengo in Nairobi, as well as cases of government involvement in the assassination and mysterious disappearances of perceived radical Imams have witnessed the radicalization of moderate Muslim youths (IRIN News, 2014).

The followers of assassinated radical Muslim clerics have also increasingly turned against moderate Muslims in retaliation efforts. IRIN News (2014) documents the assassination of moderate clerics as well as takeover of Musa and Sakina Mosques in Mombasa by radical Muslim youths. In essence, the overzealous approach and tactics of government in the de-radicalization process has provoked general community resentment. It is therefore important that de-radicalization be done through increased engagement of all key stakeholders within the community to create better understanding and appreciation of such joint efforts.

Collectively, therefore, these counter-terrorism measures with their associated overreaction and human rights abuses have further alienated Muslim communities who were already marginalized and have had the “unintended consequence of exacerbating pre-existing grievances and social cleavages” (Patterson, 2015).

In retaliation to the incursion of the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) into Somalia and the subsequent damage wrought on *Al-Shabaab* in that country, *Al-Shabaab* has stepped up its radicalization efforts and terror activities in Kenya. Nairobi and Mombasa, the two biggest cities, have naturally provided the best revenge targets.

The rise of violent extremism and terror acts in these two city counties has mostly affected the youths who are estimated to be a third of the over 40 million Kenyans (GoK/UNDP, 2015). Conversely, the huge youth population coupled with economic, social and political disengagement have made more youths vulnerable to radicalization as compared to other demographic age-groups in the country (ibid). Factors responsible for radicalization among the youth can be broadly categorized into socio-economic and political spheres.

According to World Bank estimates, unemployment among Kenyan youths stands at about 17.3 percent; which translates to nearly one in every five youths in the country having no access to employment opportunities. Unemployment levels are highest in urban centres such as Nairobi and Mombasa. These groups of unemployed youths become more vulnerable to radicalization especially through lure of financial gain offered by terror groups such as *Al-Shabaab*.

The other factor that is closely linked to increased radicalization among young people within Muslim communities, particularly in Mombasa and Nairobi, is the nature and quality of education. Lack of government involvement in determining the curriculum of foreign funded Madrassas in Muslim neighborhoods in Mombasa and Nairobi have enabled radical elements to exposed young Muslims to radical teachings and extreme beliefs at a tender age, before their ability to interrogate misrepresentations of the religion is fully developed.

Moreover, GoK/UNDP (2015) postulate that the lack of harmonized curriculum by in *Madrassas* to ensure conformity to moderate Islamic teachings has further compounded youth radicalization, as rogue clerics misinterpret the Quran and Islamic teachings to young Muslims. This is one area where the government's de-radicalization strategy has failed to address.

Generally, uptake of schooling in Mombasa and Muslim neighborhoods of Eastleigh and Kibera are below the national average. The coast region and Mombasa in particular, has perennially performed poorly in national examinations and until recently had no university. This has forced many young people in the Coast region to

miss out on educational opportunities as compared to other regions of Kenya, therefore making them more vulnerable to indoctrination and radicalization.

4.3 Community involvement in De-radicalization Process: The case of Nairobi and Mombasa

The process of de-radicalization, fighting terror and violent extremism cannot be attained without the involvement of key stakeholders in the community (Cherney, 2015). De-radicalization campaigns should employ softer approaches; subtle yet persuasive, low pressure method. Such an approach has a higher probability of steering radicalized individuals off their violent path, towards a moderate orientation.

Of necessity, a successful de-radicalization process should also entail understanding of original pull and push factors. A proper understanding of factors that lead individuals to embrace radicalism will enable key stakeholders in the community to build supportive mechanisms that help individuals to disengage from de-radicalization. More importantly, however, communities should be sensitized on the need to integrate previously radicalized individuals into the community to enable them contribute to the development of the community and sensitize other individuals.

Groups formally and informally interviewed for this study identified three key actors within the community that can be involved in a de-radicalization programme: These include:

- i. Local community stakeholders comprising of the family, friends, civil society organisations, community based organisations, religious groups, religious leaders, business communities, and other interest groups;
- ii. Government agencies - at both county and national levels;
- iii. Individual members of society who have either been radicalized or are vulnerable to radicalization and their family members.

In order to deal with the challenges of de-radicalization, the three broad stakeholders identified above need to work in concert to ensure de-radicalization campaigns. This is because radicalization is undertaken within the context of the community. Therefore, in order to undertake de-radicalization measures all these elements must be engaged.

These three actors have increasingly been aided in the de-radicalization process by advances in information technology, particularly the various social media platforms. Conversely, this has also facilitated radicalization through publication of various radical videos and material. The virtual nature of internet has also made it difficult for the community to easily detect the radicalization of its members, as the individuals undergoing radicalization do not necessarily have been socialized within traditional community. The strategies and tactics used in de-radicalization programmes should therefore heavily incorporate information technology skills.

Among the three main stakeholders in de-radicalization at the community level, the central player is the government. While there has been intense contestation over the role of government in the de-radicalization process involving the community, there is plausible indication that no credible de-radicalization could take place without the

involvement of government (International Peace Institute, 2010). Cases to support the credibility of this foregoing assertion abound. For instance, the successful “de-radicalization stories of Gama’a al Islamiyya between 1997-2007 and Al Jihad group in Egypt” stands out in reaffirmation of the important role of government (Ibid, p.4). The Egyptian success story was validated by the denunciation of violence and subsequent absence of any violent acts perpetrated by the hitherto radical groups in later years.

Governments, owing to their administrative and governance networks, possess the resources, as well as legal-institutional mandate and advantage to mobilize other stakeholders in the fight against radicalization. Unfortunately, the government of Kenya has been lethargic, at best, in its approach to de-radicalization. This has consequently driven communities in Kenya, including those in Nairobi and Mombasa, to the periphery as it also failed to stem radicalization and violent terrorist attacks.

The government has continued to heavily rely on “hard power” tactics. This realist “hard power” tactics to fighting terror and its root cause, radicalization, was intensely witnessed in 2014 when the government following a wave of terrorist attacks across the country, undertook an exercise to flush out all perceived illegal immigrants, mainly Somalis, in what was known as “*Operation Usalama*” (Human Rights Watch, 2014). At the end of that infamous operation, over 4,000 people, mostly Somalis, were rounded up and detained in a sports stadium in the outskirts of Nairobi for days in pathetic, inhumane conditions. Many of those detainees were released without any charges. However, 288 of them were deported to Somalia

while 730 others were sent back to the *Dadaab* refugee camp (Human Rights Watch, 2015).

Helping in de-radicalization, "hard power" tactics have been counter-productive. It has seen an escalation of acts of terror and increased radicalization of youths joining violent extremist groups. In essence, misplaced government actions has been buttressed real and imagined perceptions of state marginalization, by ethnic Somalis and the general Muslim communities in both Mombasa and Nairobi. It has further bred radicalization of moderate youths leading them to join *Al-Shabaab* on the basis of government policies seen as propagating marginalization and persecution of Muslims.

There is therefore the need to change tact in the fight against radicalization. The community-government initiatives, with communities taking lead are essential in tackling radicalization within communities. The national government, in particular, needs to adopt a more liberal, inclusive and practical policies to dissuade youths from joining violent extremism and terror groups. The benefit of softer approaches at de-radicalization by government agencies, with the inclusive participation of all stakeholders in the community, is the trust created between community and government.

Unlike extra-judicial killings or forceful coercions that have had negative repercussions and tend to negatively impact radicalization, community-government partnerships are likely to see voluntary presentation of information and surrender of radicalized individuals. It is believed to also facilitate smooth re-integration of hitherto radicalized individuals back into the society.

An array of hope in government's evolving strategy to increasingly engage various community stakeholders in de-radicalization, first became clear when parliament enacted the Security Laws Amendment Act 2014 that paved way for the establishment of Kenya National Counter-Terrorism Centre (NCTC) (Government of Kenya, 2014). The NCTC counter-terrorism strategies are all centred on practical community-government partnerships, particularly with community-based youth and women organizations (GoK/UNDP, 2015).

Through the NCTC, the government has engaged community members in dialogue and collaborated with youth and women organizations such as the Kenya Women Alliance (KEMWA), Kenya Community Centre (KECOSE), as well as youth organizations, such as Kenya Muslim Youth Alliance (KMYA) (ibid).

The successful implementation of these strategies has also witnessed a relative decline in cases of violent extremism and terrorist attacks in the country, particularly in Nairobi and Mombasa. This is clear proof of an effective de-radicalization strategy enabled by a partnership between the government and local communities.

In an informative news article, Mathenge (2011) observes that the government has begun efforts to rehabilitate de-radicalized youths. Ombati (2015) also asserts that the government has also provided amnesty and reintegration to youth who denounce *Al-Shabaab*. As a reintegration and de-radicalization strategy, the Government of Kenya, immediately after the enactment of the Security Laws (Amendment) Act, 2014, swiftly put in place measures to provide training and alternative source of livelihood to youth who denounced radicalization and violent extremism (Nkaissery, 2015). In all these programmes, the government has dutifully

engaged the community. However, many key informants for this study contend that the government engages only a section of the population that they perceive to be pro-government and has shunned those who have political inclinations towards the opposition.

Security and terrorism has been grossly politicized in a country where everything seems to revolve around politics and ethnicity. This was clearly demonstrated in the habitual manner in which the government responded to terrorist attacks. For instance, President Kenyatta and his Minister for Interior claimed the attack in a village in Mpeketoni in June 2014 was the work of opposition sympathizers who were keen on destabilizing the country, even though *Al-Shabaab* claimed responsibility (Botha, 2014). Senior politicians, both in government and in opposition, are known to harness political divisions to further their political ends. It is not surprising to hear leading politicians brand their political opponents as radicals and/or sympathizers of *Al-Shabaab* in order to settle political scores. Such inflammatory and reckless statements heighten political temperatures, sow discord among Kenyan people and undermine de-radicalization efforts. It is, therefore, difficult to effectively engage the community in such a deeply polarized environment.

Community-based organizations, religious organizations, especially Muslim clerics are important actors in community de-radicalization processes. This is because while political, economic, social and individual choices hugely contribute towards radicalization, religious ideology, laced with extremism [and interpretation] is the foremost precondition in the process of radicalization (Crone, 2016).

However, Islamic Imams and preachers should be well versed with Islamic religious teachings before being deployed to mosques to provide spiritual guidance against radicalization and conduct prayers. This will help counter arguments and radical teachings of rogue Imams keen on promoting extreme religious beliefs and therefore dissuade individuals from joining terror groups. In doing this, Imams and preachers will need to be complemented by the general community.

Among Muslim communities in Mombasa and Nairobi, the realization of the significance of religious leaders, within communities, as key to winning the war against violent extremism has seen both county and national government partner with Islamic religious scholars in dissuading youths from radical religious viewpoints.

Various Muslim leaders through organizations such as the Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM), Centre for Ihsan and Educational Development(CIED), and BRAVE have initiated programmes aimed at dissuading militant ideology and annual dialogue event among Muslim communities with a view to de-popularizing the extreme teachings by radical Muslim clerics (Langat, 2015). For a period of two months, BRAVE ran a hugely publicized media campaign, both on mainstream and social media platforms, with anti-extremist messages.

Similarly, the Nairobi-based Peace and Charity Organization of Kenya (PCOK) has focused on youth through a multi-pronged strategy that sought to advance de-radicalization and the fight against drug and substance abuse through awareness campaigns.

However, while the BRAVE campaign and other similar initiatives were relatively successful in educating many Kenyans, Christians and Muslims alike, they all needed to be sustained for a long period in order to have for maximum effect. However, in view of the cost involved, it is understandable why such projects could not keep the campaign going for long. This underscores the necessity of a strong partnership between the community and government, with the government underwriting the cost of such campaigns for instance.

Further, in as much as intra-Muslim religious dialogue is crucial in creating a shared understanding and strategy towards counter-radicalization, it is also important to concurrently engage leaders and stakeholders of other religions within communities, more so Christian leaders and organizations, in order to obtain broad-based and extensive discussions on de-radicalization; hence a direct and/or indirect inter-faith dialogue.

This is important given that, other than attacking general public spaces, violent extremists have also specifically targeted churches and businesses, obviously with a motive to instill suspicion and inter-faith discord between Muslim and Christian communities in the country. Such attacks were particularly rampant in Eastleigh and have regrettably resulted in some small scale skirmishes between the Somali-Muslim inhabitants of the suburb and Christian communities from neighboring estates. Therefore this underscores the imperative to convening of more inclusive inter-faith forums to foster a culture of dialogue which can promote cohesion, deflate religious tensions and, most importantly, educate Kenyans on the dangers of radicalization; regardless of which religious faithful it emanates from.

4.4 Emerging Trends in the Role of the Community in De-radicalization in Kenya

From the discourse on the role of community involvement, issues like the impact of radicalization on children, weak terrorism legislation and radicalization of the youth emerge. Here-below are short notes on the afore-mentioned issues:

4.4.1. The Impact of Radicalization on the Rights of Children

It so happens that in most conflicts children and women are invariably the most affected by conflicts, with their rights violated and future destroyed. Besides resulting in the killings of their parents, some conflicts have also led to direct targeting of children by warring forces.

Recent trends in armed conflicts in Africa have resulted in new challenges for the protection of children where children are to carry out suicide missions and attacks. Increasingly the boy and girl child have been targeted for recruitment and use by terrorist groups through indoctrination and manipulation. Often times these children are also coerced to participate in hostilities, including acts of extreme violence. In certain instances these children are unaware of the actions or consequences of the acts they are manipulated or coerced to commit, which explains the current situation in some parts of Kenya (Bailey, 2015).

Similar to adults, children get radicalized through exposure to messages of indoctrination and fundamentalist ideas from a range of means, which may include contact with already radicalized family members, friends, radical preachers or, through peer pressure and "increasingly, through the internet" (Ibid, p.5). However,

many recent cases world over, including [those] in Nairobi and Mombasa, revealed that family members of children who were radicalized online were often unaware of their children's behavior or beliefs until it was too late (Cherney, 2015).

As highly impressionable beings, children are easily swayed by the glorification of violence that extremist violence promises and are, therefore, most vulnerable to indoctrination (African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACERWC, 2016).

Children are victims of grave violations of rights including killing, sexual violence, displacement and denial of health services. The impact on education is also devastating. For example, children in radicalized families are denied the chance of going to school and tragically the number of reported attacks on educational facilities is rising, including the Garissa University College in Northern Kenya, underscores their hostility towards education. This is presumably because they also appreciate the liberating power of education. Several schools in Northern Kenya and Somalia have been closed down for considerably long time as parents have stopped sending their children to school over threats of attack by *Al-Shabaab*. The Garissa University College was closed for over one year after the April, 2015 attack.

Besides its impact on education, there are also alleged reports of detention of children suspected of involvement in radical behavior in Kenya, thereby seriously compromising their wellbeing, survival and development. This practice of victimizing innocent children is unfortunate and must be stopped. The Government of Kenya (GoK) should instead adopt strategies that seek to convince young people and children that the path they have chosen for themselves is wrong and consider

providing counselling and other psychological support to them through the relevant ministries.

Radicalization in Kenya is concentrated in areas and regions dominated by Muslim communities, Somalis, Arabs and indigenous coastal communities thereby indicating possibilities of a community role in the radicalization. The narrative of marginalization is passed on by the older generation to children and the youths who then internalize and get indoctrinated to view the government as a enemy.

However, this is not done always through the family. Other community members do so in the various interactions children and youth. These include interactions through casual conversations with peers, at the mosque and community centres and also political rallies. A research undertaken Botha (2013) in this area in Kenya revealed that family members of radicalized individuals and suspects of violent extremism were “often unaware of their relatives’ radical behavior or beliefs” and are invariably surprised by news of their radicalization.

Conversely, it is widely argued that the family members, with the closeness and confidence they share, have the advantage of detecting radical inclinations firsthand and can therefore potentially play a very important role in de-radicalization. Similarly, they can also play a role in radicalization through perpetuating communal “victimhood mentality”.

As articulated elsewhere in the report, the youth and children are the principal targets for radical indoctrination. Therefore, in order to tackle the issue of radicalization and violent extremism, governments need to put more attention on

young people. Also, more emphasis in the de-radicalization process should be further geared towards community-government partnership; and with active participation of the youth.

4.4.2. Radicalization of Youth

The youth are the most valuable resource of any society. However, with the rise of violent extremism and radicalization, they have also been the worst perpetrators of the twin phenomenon.

The youth are particularly susceptible to radicalization for a variety of reasons. Al Shabaab, just like other virulent Islamic terrorist groups across the world, are keen on targeting the youth for recruitment into radicalization and violent extremism. This study will adopt the Government of Kenya definition of youth which assumes all individuals between ages 18-35 to be youth, even though terrorist groups including Al Shabaab are known to recruit children between ages 10-15 years (Government of Kenya, 2002).

The youth are attracted to the radical ideologies and teachings of radicalists for various reasons. In Kenya, the radical groups exploiting the vulnerability of youth occasioned by high unemployment and sub-standard socio-economic conditions to position themselves as saviors and champions for their deprived rights (IRIN, 2013).

Many social commentators argue that over-exposure to the internet has exposed the youth to radical teachings. While this assertion is true, the Homeland Security Department of the United States argues that the internet is “merely an accelerant to the radicalization process” (Homeland Security, 2009 p.6). Instead, the department

argues that neurological factors, the psychological instability caused by uneven development of the brain, among the youth had more to do with their impulsive and risky behavior that habitually pushes them into radicalization (cited in Ramakrishna, 2016).

This argument is further strengthened by Ramakrishna (2016) who asserts that psychological vulnerabilities of the youth is further influenced within the family context. British psychologist Razzaque (2008) goes further to argue that a youth growing up without a stable role model or immediate family to provide guidance and care "will see things in a different light from the way adults do, even as he grows older"(cited in Ramakrishna, 2016). The huge number of street children and children growing up under the care of single parents in Nairobi and Mombasa provide radical groups with a rich reservoir of potential recruits.

Ramakrishna (2016) identifies also what he calls "the social milieu" as another factor that plays an instrumental role in the radicalization of the youth into extremist organizations. He defines social milieu as the social infrastructure "within which the immediate families are embedded". He asserts that youth who have grown up in families and communities where who are poorly integrated into the mainstream and who are predicated with a commonly shared perception that their community are facing socio-economic and political marginalization, rarely come out un-radicalized. Thus the Muslim youth in Nairobi, especially in the marginalized neighborhoods of Eastleigh and Kibera, and Mombasa are vulnerable to favourably receiving radical ideologies. He illustrates the example of the Jews and Palestinian Arabs to support

his argument of how culturally sanctioned group prejudice can be socialized very early in the life of individuals/youth.

Ramakrishna (2015) observes that a strong family – with a healthy parent-child relationship – is a precondition for tackling the radicalization problem. He prescribes that good families make good societies, devoid of violent extremism and terrorism.

The understanding the context the role of social networks and group dynamics is critical in developing responsive and effective strategies against radicalization and violent extremism. In so doing, the influence of relatives, a neighbor or a charismatic local preacher cannot be over-emphasized.

Perceptions of social exclusion and marginality in an environment of a youth bulge, as is the case in Nairobi and Mombasa, are inevitable precursor for radicalization and violent extremism. Indeed, these should serve as warning signals that should be addressed in order to forestall the possibility of the youth being lured towards extremist causes.

Unfulfilled social and economic wants and needs alone may not lead to radicalization and violent extremism. It is the unfulfilled needs coupled with severe form of social exclusion that could mark the beginning of a serious wave of radicalization. This, unfortunately, is true for both Mombasa and Nairobi. The Muslim youth in the two counties are, in the words and estimation of most respondents of this study, feel neglected and “lesser Kenyans”.

De-radicalization strategies in Nairobi and Mombasa have failed because the youth feel alienated from these strategies even when representatives of the community are

involved. Generally, the youth feel they are more victims of the war on radicalization than they have been of radicalization itself. In Mombasa, it was noted that even the use of moderate Imams had failed because young people no longer regarded them as credible and most Imams tended to be out of touch with the pulse of the youth. This may be attributed to the generational gap.

The youth are therefore critical global resources and players that must be incorporated in the de-radicalization process. The youths who are often the victims of the security-oriented strategies have been most resistant of the government approaches, it is therefore critical that government-community partnerships takes the youths on board as indispensable players in the process of radicalization.

4.4.3. Terrorism Law

Terrorism has emerged as a major national security concern and threat of Kenya. However, efforts to combat the menace remain lackluster and have suffered tremendously from an insufficient legal framework (Crisis Group, 2012).

For a long time, terrorism-related offenses were primarily handled under the provisions of the penal code, with the net result that offenders received lenient sentences or, often times, even had their cases dismissed.

Further, efforts to formulate specific counterterrorism legislation in the past were met with criticism from human-rights bodies, the clergy, legal bodies, and the public at large (Amnesty International Report, 2014). The country only enacted a new legislation on the counter-terrorism only in 2014, after years of bickering over the nuances in the proposed laws.

Civil society and non-governmental organizations were blamed by the government for sabotaging the country's legislations on counter-terrorism, especially on human-rights grounds. They accused Kenyan security forces of heavy handedness in their handling of terror suspects and decried the seemingly habitual collective punishment of entire Muslim communities whenever terrorists strike. Rights groups and the United Nations accused Kenyan security agencies of torture, lengthy pre-trial detentions without charges, and harassment of families of people suspected of terrorism (Okumu and Botha, 2007).

Prior to 2014, Kenyan criminal law did not specifically provide for terrorism, but for crimes perpetrated through terrorism. As such, only small aspects of terrorism were covered in the criminal law of the country, which was not sufficient to curb terrorism or give it the emphasis and due attention the associated crimes required (Otisso, 2009).

It was only through the 2014 Terrorism Suppression Act that issues such as funding, were provided for in the laws of the country. The absence of such a law left gaping holes for criminals to exploit the country's criminal laws which did not also provide for anticipatory crimes. This meant that, to a large extent, collection of intelligence failed to enhance the criminal justice system, because the information collected could not be used to prosecute persons intending to commit terrorism (Wanjiru, 2006).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Summary

This chapter presents the summary, key findings and recommendations of the study. The major objective of this study was to examine the role of community in de-radicalization with special focus on Mombasa and Nairobi counties.

The study was guided by the following research objectives: Examine the causes of youth radicalization in Kenya, with specific focus on Mombasa and Nairobi Counties; critically analyze the role of the community in de-radicalization processes in Nairobi and Mombasa counties; interrogate the emerging push and pull factors in community efforts at de-radicalization processes in Kenya.

Descriptive research design, using a Case Study Design method within a qualitative framework was adopted for this study. The total population was estimated at 5 million people and the sample size was 30 target key informants, 15 each from both Nairobi and Mombasa respectively. The sampling frame was drawn from among government officials, community leaders, religious activists, religious scholars, radicalized youths and their families and Muslim scholars. Non probability (purposive) sampling technique where the researcher uses his own expert judgment to identify key informants was used.

Both primary and secondary sources of data were utilized during the data collection stage. Primary data was obtained from the key informant interviews while secondary

data was sourced from books, academic journals and government publications. In doing the data analysis, the researcher assessed the information from documents and in-depth interviews and related them to the assumptions made before, in the theoretical discourse as well as during the data collection stage, in order to test their validity.

The key findings of the study revealed that communities have a defining role in both de-radicalization and radicalization. As such, the study recommends a paradigm shift in the way the Government has in the past responded to radicalization, by looking beyond traditional law enforcement based approaches to partner with communities in the de-radicalization process.

The study recommends further comprehensive research in the area to enrich the understanding of radicalization in the Kenyan context. This will enable adoption of informed strategic interventions.

5.2. Summary of key findings

The study shows that radicalization in Kenya, particularly in Mombasa and Nairobi counties, has steadily gained momentum. Across the country, the number of reported youths who have or continued to be radicalized has been on the rise, in essence leading to an increase in acts of terrorism. Perilously, there have been reported cases of youths joining *Al-Shabaab* from regions which were not traditionally dominated by Muslim communities, such as Western, Central and Rift Valley regions.

This has elicited a national conversation on how best to counter radicalization and extremism. The Kenya government's strategy on de-radicalization has largely been manifestly law enforcement-based and invariably employed hard tactics, with minimal community involvement. This has created a groundswell of grievances against the government and, consequently, had the negative consequence of further pushing individuals and whole communities into radicalization.

While there are several routes to de-radicalization, the one common thread is the involvement of human beings through propagation of radical ideas and teachings (Mirahmadi and Farooq, 2010). The study shows that the role of community in de-radicalization was very critical and should therefore be at the centre of any de-radicalization strategy.

Government bureaucrats and policy makers will have to look beyond traditional approaches that placed use of force at the fore of de-radicalization strategy and instead consider enlisting more public and private partnerships with the community.

As such there was need for a change of strategy by the Government. Communities, especially Muslim communities, within which radicalization takes place are best positioned to counter radical narratives. There is therefore need for the Government and local communities to develop partnerships against radicalization and violent extremism. It is important to note that communities play a significant role in both radicalization and de-radicalization processes. The community, through its various social systems, provides a medium through which individuals socialize and influence one another. Thus depending on social interactions, communities provide the perfect

platform for the radicalization of individuals and, conversely, also facilitate the move towards de-radicalization.

The community has a huge stake in fighting radicalization and is therefore critical stakeholders in the process. Invariably, it is their lives that are most affected and their livelihoods that are destroyed. Mombasa and Eastleigh in Nairobi which both have Muslim-majority populations have been adversely affected by radicalization and violent extremism in the form of capital flight and loss of business. It therefore follows that both the government and the community have a mutual and compelling interest in countering radicalization and extremism.

The community can be engaged through several formal and informal institutions and dynamics. Family units, religious leaders and teachers play vital guidance role. Working in concert with these “guardians”, opinion leaders, political leaders, civil society groups and other influential persons in the community can be engaged in changing the narrative in favour of de-radicalization. Women, for instance, as primary guardians of the family are empowered to identify early signs of radicalization in their children and as such can be valuable players in the de-radicalization process.

Community-led initiatives are particularly effective in facilitating a stop to radicalization in the initial stages (Mirahmadi and Farooq, 2010). Moderate Muslims and Imams can for instance act as a first line of defense against homegrown terrorism.

Religious leaders can also be used to counter-radicalize those who have already been radicalized through provision of legitimate counseling, religious retraining and encouraging authentic reading of Islam with a view to defeating extremist mindsets.

The study noted that there was high level of mistrust between the government and the community. This presupposes the need for the government to build trust and confidence between law enforcement agencies and local communities. This can be done by making de-radicalization efforts to have a local character, for instance, have Muslim public officials hailing from the target areas actively participate in the campaign besides reducing the high-handedness associated with government efforts.

Although hard-handed approaches may be useful in shielding against threats posed by radicalization and violent extremism to human security, governments need to adopt a holistic approach that incorporates partnerships with local communities and most importantly that seeks to address the root causes of radicalization (Botha, 2013). In communities where members feel marginalized, it is essential that emotional excuses that facilitate a "victimhood" mentality be addressed early, before it is too late.

Although it is beyond the focus of this study to extensively assess the extent of the effectiveness of law enforcement-led de-radicalization strategies, a cursory observation of the Kenya government's strategy reveals that de-radicalization strategies employed thus far have not been very successful, at least going by the increasing cases and incidences of radicalization and violent extremist in the country. This strategic failure can be attributed to among other things the growing perception

that de-radicalization strategies are targeted against Muslim communities (Berkouk, 2007). These perceptions are sustained by blatant violation of basic human rights, civil liberties, rule of law and disregard for due process and justice (Botha, 2014).

The rise and proliferation of radicalization and transnational terrorism should be studied and understood within a historical context (Berkouk, 2007). This study shows that history plays as important role as any other factor, if not more, in the radicalization process. For example, colonial legacy and practices have had a long-term effect in marginalizing Muslim communities. Further, the continued marginalization and neglect of North Eastern Kenya, Coastal region, including Mombasa and other Muslim dominated areas in the country and the domination of small communities by bigger ones have continued to haunt the country. This explains the agitation for better representation and equity of the 1960s which has over the years sustained the feelings of marginalization and therefore radicalization.

Most recently, the increase in radicalization of Kenyan Muslim youths into violent extremism can be traced to the early 1990s, during the agitation for multiparty democratic system when the government banned the formation of the Islamic Party of Kenya (IPK) (Abdalla, 2002).

The study also noted that international terrorist networks have evolved and adjusted their strategies to the de-radicalization strategies employed by governments. For instance, while Al Qaeda used foreigners and international terrorists (Pakistanis and Jordanians) to carry out the 1998 bombing of United States Embassy in Nairobi, they have increasingly resorted to using local contacts to undertake subsequent attacks. This was after the government increased surveillance of foreign nationals arriving

into the country. That is when Al Qaeda and its associates decided to radicalize Kenyan nationals into their illicit operations. To this end, Al Qaeda whipped emotions of the local Muslim communities by invoking their longstanding marginalization by the Government. The Government in turn indirectly facilitated their work by continuing the marginalization, stereotyping and collectively punishing members of the Muslim faith into radicalism.

However, as noted above, the role of radicalized Kenyans with links to domestic and global terror networks became more pronounced after the 1998 twin bombings of the United States embassies in Nairobi and Dar-es-Salaam, Kenya and Tanzania respectively.

Failure of the criminal justice system in Kenya continues to militate against the fight against radicalization and extremism. Corruption among the police and state prosecutors in Kenya is so widespread that it was almost bringing the criminal justice system in the country to its knees. The failure to successfully prosecute and convict known radicalists such as Sheikh Aboud Rogo in Mombasa due to the shortcomings mentioned above, has forced the government to resort to extra-judicial killings of terror suspects. Sheikh Aboud Rogo and his accomplice, Sheikh Makaburi were killed, on diverse dates, in a drive-by shooting in Mombasa, allegedly by the Kenya police after the government failed to successfully bring them to justice under the courts (BBC, 2012). Sheikh Aboud Rogo was on the United States and United Nations sanctions list for allegedly supporting Al Shabaab militants.

Discussions surrounding terrorism and counterterrorism issues revolve around perceptions of a number of grievances related to the socio-economic and political

spheres. The counterterrorism agenda, among the marginalized communities of Nairobi and Coastal Kenya, was alleged to have led to what they view as a series of oppressive practices by state security forces. The subject of local opposition, frustration, and disapproval to the national government relates to the relative economic deprivation. Among other grievances of local communities has been the general socioeconomic and political marginalization of local youth, a lack of gender inclusivity, and ethnic discrimination against Muslim communities.

While radicalization is ultimately an individual process particularly linked to social networks and personal relationships, the society/community plays a defining role in influencing the radical views and opinions of individuals. Thus, the role of social networks and group dynamics including the influence of relatives/family members, neighbors or charismatic local preachers and political activists was found to be very influential on the choices of individuals.

In a country where maintenance of law and order was sacrificed at alter of self-enrichment and illicit gain, gang violence has reigned supreme. The vacuum created by weak policing has enabled the mushrooming of vigilante groups and gangs all over the country. These included the Super-power in Eastleigh and Mungiki in many parts of Nairobi. Gang culture encourages radicalism and thus has given Al Shabaab a "reserve army" of willing and enthusiastic recruits in the ranks of Super-Power, a gang group operating in Eastleigh composed mainly of ethnic Somalis from Kenya and Somalia.

The study also examined the role of culture in radicalization. It examined for instance the cultural practices and requirements around marriage and bride price

among Muslim communities in Mombasa and Nairobi. In Muslim and African communities one only attained adulthood after getting married, which was considered a higher social status. Youths were also expected to support their parents in adulthood. These two culturally defined roles put many already unemployed youths in Nairobi and Mombasa under immense pressure. Modern culture of consumerism has made bride price very expensive.

Thus the study sought to investigate how youths in the two counties coped with these frustrations imposed by the culturally defined roles of adulthood. The study established that radical groups have exploited these frustrations by offering financial incentives and the attraction of a fast way out of the predicaments of the world through suicide missions. The study recommended a re-calibration of such outdated and punitive cultural norms among the community or the assistance of the community to offset the burden through a partnership between the community and the government.

Proximity to Somalia and a porous border with a country devoid of a stable government for the last 25 years as well as the presence of a huge population of Somali refugees makes Kenya vulnerable to radicalization and violent extremism perpetrated by terrorist groups operating out of that country. In April, 2016, the Government of Kenya announced its decision to close the Daadab Refugee Complex, the biggest of its kind in Africa hosting over 400,000 refugees mainly from Somalia, after citing security concerns. Various Government officials interviewed for this study observed that the Dadaab Refugee Complex had lost its humanitarian character and

has instead become a centre of radicalization, planning and training of Al Shabaab militants as well as a conduit for contraband goods, weapons and smuggled sugar.

Various sources interviewed for this study also claimed that the huge concentration of Somali refugees and ethnic Kenyan Somalis and other Muslim communities in certain urban neighborhoods in Nairobi and Mombasa have enabled the growth of radicalization in the two cities. Some of the neighbourhoods mostly mentioned in this regard include Eastleigh in Nairobi and Majengo in Mombasa.

The challenges and struggles of the Somali diaspora communities in Mombasa and Nairobi in trying to integrate into their host communities was explored in this study. Terrorist attacks perpetrated by Al Shabaab and Somali nationals in Kenya have turned the public against the Somali refugees and decreased sympathy for them. It was observed that these refugee communities are exploited by their host communities and security agencies through extortion, xenophobia, business rivalry and general persecution through frequent security swoops such as the infamous Usalama Watch of 2013. These have in turn deeply entrenched feelings of marginalization among Somali refugees and their Muslim sympathizers which Al Shabaab has been quick to exploit for recruitment into radicalization and extremism. These circumstances have also enabled radicalists and extremists to freely continue their illicit mission without the fear since the refugees themselves felt already marginalized.

Sarah et. al., (2015) in a very insightful paper for RAND Corporation observes that factors such as poor living conditions , poverty and loss of personal opportunities of

refugees contribute to their alienation and can therefore make them more receptive to extremist and radical ideologies.

The study observed that the internet, especially through the social media, was emerging as a significant vehicle for radicalization in Kenya. The easy and cheap access of internet even on the phone in Kenya has become facilitators for radicalization and violent extremism. Such cases have mostly been noted in urban centres, such as Nairobi and Mombasa, where majority youths have access to internet connectivity and share urban culture with their peers across the globe. This has exposed thousands of highly impressionable youths to radicalization, without even having to visit physical locations associated with radicals and radical teachings.

The onus on government and the community therefore is to reduce the ability of radicalists and extremists to propagate and recruit followers from among the growing number of internet users, particularly the impressionable youths.

Government policy makers need to develop their understanding of how the internet is used in facilitating consumption of radical doctrines and thereafter equip community members with tools and technology to increase resilience. These strategies should balance between safeguarding the freedom of speech vis-a-vis public safety and most importantly, seek to reduce appetite for radical and extremist material.

The legendary mistrust between the government and the local historically marginalized Muslim communities in Nairobi and Mombasa have continues to hamper efforts at de-radicalization as families and radicalized individuals refuse to

come out due to fear of government harassment and victimization. However, there has been positive developments after the government, through NCTC, opened up avenues for working with stakeholders within the general community in the war against radicalization, a practice that has witnessed reduction in violent extremism and acts of terror in Mombasa and Nairobi counties.

A long, porous border that Kenya shares with Somalia has made it difficult for Kenya to control the movement of radicalized persons across the border. Even though the government has sought to mitigate this problem through construction of a security wall along parts of the 424 mile-long border with Somalia, the high cost of the project (estimated at \$17 billion) makes it prohibitive. Additionally, walls built elsewhere in the world, for instance in Israel and United States, have proved not to be adequate in controlling the movement of persons across the border. Further, the opposition by the government of Somalia to the construction of the wall further complicates the future of the project.

Corruption and ineptitude among government officials in Kenya has been the biggest impediment to controlling radicalization and violent extremism. Corruption is so high in the country that some social commentators have called for it to be declared a national disaster.

The Kenya's police force, a critical player in the de-radicalization process, for instance, is among the most corrupt in East Africa. At a trifle, it is reported *Al-Shabaab adherents could* easily buy safe passage and visas for themselves from Kenya government officials.

Despite several initiatives over the years to reform the police service, intelligence and defense forces in the country, very little in terms of meaningful progress has been registered. A combination of low pay, poor housing and living conditions and inadequate operational budget has meant that morale within the security forces was very low. On average, a police constable in Kenya earns a paltry USD 300 in a country where the cost of living is sharply rising (Ngugi, 2015). In such conditions, it is obviously understandable why the police and other security agencies have been unable to resist the lure of hefty bribes offered by radicalists.

5.3. Conclusions

Based on the above discourse, it is imperative that community plays a key role in both radicalization and de-radicalization of individuals. Therefore to fight violent extremism, which is an advanced form of radicalization, community-government partnership is crucial. The Government should therefore facilitate an interface with thought leaders in the community, namely; religious scholars, Imams, political leaders, businesspeople and families of radicalized youth among others. Such a partnership should be based on mutual respect and shared responsibility.

Based on the responses of key informants for this study, it can be empirically stated that the high-handed strategies deployed by the Kenya government, that seemingly treated every Muslim as a terrorist or a potential terrorist, have singularly turned the public against the government's de-radicalization programmes in Mombasa and Nairobi. A majority of the respondents faulted the government *modus operandi* on de-radicalization.

It was noted that individuals joining radical groups were motivated by either ethnic or religious grievances or a combination of both in extreme circumstances. However, based purely on the responses given by key informants, religious marginalization and the wish to exert revenge on the perpetrators was the greatest motivation.

While most respondents mentioned economic deprivation and poverty of the Muslim youths in Nairobi and Mombasa as one of the social problems that has driven individuals into radicalization and extremism, they also reckoned that, on its own poverty is not a cause for extremism. However, the harsh conditions of poverty, provides ideal conditions for radical attitudes to develop faster. This position is upheld by the works of many scholars including Botha (2014) and Abay (2014).

5.4. Recommendations

Firstly, the fight against radicalization and violent extremism should be understood as a fight against socio-economic and political factors that serve as enablers and facilitators of radicalization. It is therefore imperative that the first strategy in the fight against radicalization and violent extremism should entail addressing the root causes of radicalization, such as social, economic, and political marginalization, that eventually transforms radicals into terrorists. This study therefore recommends that government agencies and security organizations should, first of all, work with local communities in order to not only collect intelligence but at the same time develop intelligence assets among the public.

Secondly, the government and the local communities should jointly run public awareness exercises that promote the teaching of authentic and pacifist Islamic

doctrines through social media, and mainstream media such as television and radio, messaging on billboards and adverts, and through religious sermons in mosques and community centres. In doing so, the government and the community may wish to utilize youth and popular culture (hip-hop, rap and social media) and other modern forms of communal expression to disseminate counter narratives on radicalization through poetry, radio programmes and theatre performances.

Thirdly, the government should in partnership with local communities should promote social activities geared towards keeping the youths, who are the most vulnerable to radicalization, positively engaged, for instance through activities such as sports and other cultural activities.

Fourth, the government should encourage law enforcement agencies and officials to engage with communities with a view to better understanding the nuances of the Muslim populations in the two counties especially as they relate to radicalization. Radicalization should not only be seen from a purely law enforcement-led perspectives but also from the socio-economic and political points of view.

Fifth, the government should empower moderate Muslim Imams and preachers and protect them from radical elements. Moderate Imams in Mombasa have been reportedly silenced by threats from radicals. The leadership tussle and eventual takeover of Masjid Sakina in Mombasa by radical preachers is one example of government neglect of moderates until it was too late. The government should publicly recognize and provide support for efforts of local religious communities in the two counties. This will give a positive example for Muslim youths and general public to emulate and also enable moderate Imams to be the first line of defence

against radicalism and violent extremism by providing timely counselling and teaching authentic Islam.

Several Muslim leaders and groups in Mombasa and Nairobi are already actively involved in teaching authentic Islam that extols social cohesion and discourages violence. These include organizations such as SUPKEM, the BRAVE Movement and individual Imams in mosques around the two counties. This means that there are already existing resources and infrastructure for the government to effectively work with Muslim communities. What needs to be done is for the government to harmonize the various groups and strategies employed with a view to developing a comprehensive method of engagement.

Sixth, in view of the massive proliferation of radical websites and emergence of the social media as a medium for radicalization, the government in partnership with local Muslim leaders, scholars and Imams should consider to also put on the web moderate religious material to counter the narratives and teachings of extremists.

Seventh, in partnership with local communities, the government should seek to create awareness among the general public against the false teachings of radicals and extremists and the virtues of peaceful co-existence among communities.

Eighth, fighting radicalization requires a holistic and multi-dimensional approach to succeed. As recommended by many throughout the study period, the Government of Kenya needs to align strategies with the interests and concerns of local communities in the target area, in this context, Nairobi and Mombasa. This presupposes the imperative for the government to gradually address the

longstanding socio-economic and political marginalization of local Muslim communities in the two counties. Further, there was need for the partnerships on de-radicalization to be extended to address other socio-economic needs of the communities.

Ninth, the Muslim communities in Nairobi and Mombasa may wish to review some widely prevalent cultural practices that place enormous social pressure on the youth, majority of who are unemployed. These include payment of high bride price and glorification of exorbitant weddings. Failure to attain the culturally defined high status of marriage and responsibility makes the youth vulnerable to the machinations of radical groups who promise financial compensation and rewards in lieu of recruitment.

Lastly, there should be undertaken a comprehensive survey on the effective modalities of community involvement in de-radicalization processes, whilst taking due regard of the unique nuances of the population, actual practice of Islam in Nairobi and Mombasa and the communities' attitudes towards the day-to-day social and political challenges afflicting them. This will enable the modelling of a diversified yet a counter-terrorism strategy that is well suited to the unique circumstances obtaining in Mombasa and Nairobi. The funding for such research may be sourced from the government.

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Appendix I: Letter of introduction to Key Informants

Dear.....

I am pleased to inform you that I am in the process of conducting a Research Project on "**Community Involvement in De-radicalization in Kenya: Case Study of Nairobi and Mombasa counties**" in partial fulfillment of the

requirement for the Master of Arts in Contemporary Diplomacy at **University of Malta**.

The findings from this study can help Governments, particularly the Kenya Government design appropriate strategies to engage local communities in its de-radicalization programmes and/or efforts. The study will endeavour to outline a number of recommendations on the procedures, tools and measures that should be adopted to initiate effective cooperation and partnership between the Government of Kenya and local communities, especially in Nairobi and Mombasa counties.

Interviews with key informants will be utilized as one of methodologies of data collection. In view of your active participation in communal activities aimed at de-radicalization of the youth, particularly through the Brave Movement and extensive knowledge on the subject of research, your participation in this study is highly preferable.

The purpose of this letter, therefore, is to request you to fill the interview questions to the best of your knowledge and email back to me on mustaphamib@yahoo.com

Please note that any information you give will be treated with confidentiality and at no instance will it be used for any purpose other than for this project.

Feel free to ask any questions that you have about participating in this project at any time.

Your prompt assistance will be highly appreciated.

Yours Faithfully

Mustafa Ibrahim
RESEARCHER

Appendix II: Interview Guide

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

With emphasis on Nairobi and Mombasa counties, please answer the following interview questions:

1. What do you understand by the term Radicalization in Kenyan context?
2. How did radicalization manifest itself in Kenya from the beginning?
3. In your opinion what are the root causes/reasons for radicalization? What are some of the emerging issues/causes of radicalization?
4. Can we stop radicalization? If yes, explain how?
5. It is argued that community involvement will contribute to de-radicalization; do you agree with this statement? If yes, Explain how community involvement can help eradicate radicalization.
6. To what extent has the community (In Mombasa and Nairobi) participated in de-radicalization? Are there any efforts, past or ongoing, that have been initiated by the local communities? If yes, How and why?
7. Is the government involved in programmes/initiatives aimed at de-radicalization? If yes, in your opinion, have they been effective? What could you attribute to the success and/or failure of those initiatives?
8. Are there any existing government-local community partnerships on de-radicalization? And how effective and /or ineffective have they been? How does the community and Government effort complement each other?
9. What is the perception of the public on community members or local organizations involved in joint de-radicalization programmes with the government?