



Terrorist Radicalization, Recruitment, and Prevention in Kenya: A Critical Literature Review

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TERRORIST RADICALIZATION, RECRUITMENT, AND PREVENTION IN KENYA: A CRITICAL LITERATURE REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Research and interest on terrorism has increased several folds in the last few decades in many countries. Terrorism is known to have a significant effect on security and socio-economic performance of many countries across the globe. This paper investigates the role of radicalization and recruitment of individuals into terror groups and terrorist activities. The paper uses theoretical analysis approach to examine secondary paper obtained from various secondary sources globally. The review uses qualitative methods comprised mainly of content analysis to identify mentions of relevant terms as the main method. It then proposes possible prevention measures in the Kenya and Somalia context. The analysis has established that terrorism is a global phenomenon and has intensified especially since the emergence of terrorist organizations such as Al Qaeda, Boko Haram, Al Shabab, and Islamic State. This paper shows that Al Shabab and Al Qaeda members including Kenyans have participated in several terrorist attacks globally. The paper finds that terrorist radicalization and recruitment mostly targets the youth through indoctrination based on extreme ideology, brainwashing; and rejection of status quo, freedom of expression, and modern ideas. A key finding is that contrary to belief linking terrorism to religion and ethnicity, empirical evidence indicates that economic circumstances top the list for individuals joining terrorist groups. The study concludes that radicalization and recruitment has increased tremendously in the recent past two decades. The study recommends that Kenya and Somalia governments should intensify credible intelligence gathering and response, build trust among ordinary citizens, improve on counter-intelligence, set up proper systems for de-radicalizing and resettling youth disengaging from terrorist activities, and institute measures for establishing livelihood engagements for all youth. The study also suggests that governments should deal with radicalization at grassroots level by including its causes, effects, and prevention in social studies starting from primary school level.

Key Words: Al Shabab, Prevention, Radicalization, Recruitment, Terrorism

1.0 INTRODUCTION

In today's dynamic world characterized by globalization, freedom of movement, and sophisticated technology, importance of terrorism is manifest in the space it occupies in contemporary security literature (Cronin, 2004; Gerwehr & Daly, 2006; Botha & Abdille, 2014). Terrorism has been noted as a key concern for security and has been observed to lead to decline in social development of affected countries (Botha, 2014). It is further argued that economies of countries that experience high levels of terrorism will perform worse than those experiencing lower levels. Higher levels of terrorism deny countries an environment conducive for pursuit of opportunities and development agenda in a way that could make them prosper when not faced with terrorist threats.

Terrorism refers to violence committed against a non-combatant target. It involves premeditation by clandestine agents or groups usually having political motives and with the purpose of influencing an audience (Kimunguyi, 2011). Terrorism has become increasingly complex at international and national levels and existing mechanisms have been ineffective to deal with the associated problems conclusively. As a result, there has been an escalation of terrorist activities, especially in countries where security and entry restrictions are weak. These activities have had profound effect on social and economic performance of several countries through loss of innocent lives and livelihoods, destruction of property as well as restriction of freedom of movement (Chaliand & Blin, 2007). In addition, extant research portrays terrorism as a serious impediment and important factor for security and socio-economic activities in many economies (Botha, 2014).

Many nationalities across the globe have recognized the need to deal with terrorism and this has resulted in concerted attention in analyzing terrorism, its manifestation, impact, and prevention (Botha & Abdille, 2014). For instance, the now famous September 2011 (9/11) terrorist attack in the United States of America (USA) caused massive destruction of property, businesses, and deaths of over 3,000 people. Governments have changed tact and adopted a proactive approach to dealing with terrorism by allocating massive resources to enhance security even at the expense of socio-economic development. Although this has happened, the number of terrorist attacks and threats has not reduced in a significant way. In West Africa, Nigeria has experienced terror attacks for long and continues to face increased attacks from Boko Haram, a resident terrorist group whose insurgency permeates into Cameroun and other neighbouring West African countries. Similarly, East Africa region, Kenya in particular has experienced numerable terrorist attacks such as the 2015 Garissa University attack which left over 140 people dead is also documented in literature.

Of all terrorism related concerns that worry the world today, few reach the level of radicalization (Odhiambo, 2015). Radicalization refers to the process by which people are made more willing to consider new and different policies and ideas including social and cultural beliefs. It is also the process by which an individual or group adopts extreme political opinions and religious beliefs. The 2012 Collins English Dictionary defines

radicalization as the social or religious ideals and aspirations that may reject or undermine the status quo or contemporary ideas and freedom of choice (Odhiambo, 2015). In the ongoing search for solutions for combating terrorism, and improving security, along a continuum of developing countries to world economic giants, the current period is full of many insights into radicalization (Kimunguyi, 2011). Extant studies have shown that radicalization can be an important antecedent for achieving the motives of terrorism (Ploch, 2012; Botha, 2014).

A large array of new terrorists is initiated and created by radicalizing individuals increasing strengths of terrorist organizations. Through extreme political views and religious beliefs, a terror organization can obtain valuable competencies and resources which compliment their existing abilities. Through these dimensions, radicalization may drive terrorist organizations to become more aggressive in planning, coordinating, and executing their actions thus perpetrating terrorism. For instance, Sparago (2007) reports that, the now famous September (9/11) terrorist attack in the United States of America (USA) was planned, funded, and coordinated by Osama bin Laden from Al Qaeda base and training camp in Afghanistan. This was after moving from Sudan where he established valuable contacts with jihadists internationally whom he used to radicalize new Al Qaeda recruits. In similar circumstances, the 1998 bombing of the US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania respectively in which over 200 people died, were planned through sophisticated Al Qaeda networks beyond the borders of the two countries.

Recruitment is an important determinant of terrorism (Kimunguyi, 2011). According to Homeland Security Institute (HSI), recruitment refers to the process by which people are enlisted to become members of an army or a cause (HSI, 2009). It involves methodically and intentionally targeting individuals to engage them into the activities of terrorist organizations or groups (Evans, 2007). Historically, the success of terrorists and insurgents has always been based on their ability to bring on board more recruits into their organizations. Studies argue that recruitment is an important source of manpower needed by terror organizations to launch attacks and sustain operations (Gerwehr & Daly, 2006). Due to the dynamic nature of terrorism, recruitment approaches change dramatically with intensity of terrorist or insurgent campaigns on the one hand, and proactivity or reaction by various state organs and security apparatus towards combating terrorism, on the other.

This is evident in the United Kingdom (UK) where a 2012 UK report indicates that terrorist recruiters have moved away from public places and are now targeting young educated people in private homes (Odhiambo, 2015). Similarly in Kenya, initially recruiters went for slum youths in the capital of Nairobi who were desperate and the city of Mombasa. However, they changed their approach as well as their targeted individuals. However, they have changed their tactics as well as their targets. Kenya's National Security Intelligence Service (NSIS), reports that terror recruiters target university students who are well-educated and have penetrated universities and similar institutions through recruitment, training, and indoctrination thereafter (Daily Nation, June 29 2015).

The combined effect of radicalization and recruitment makes terrorism have both direct and indirect devastating consequence on economies worldwide. For example the direct costs associated with the September 9/11 USA terrorist attack include casualties, destroyed buildings, a heightened anxiety level and the estimated 80 to 90 billion US dollars in subsequent losses in wages, compensations, and decreased business (Kunreuther, Michel-Kerjan, & Porter, 2003; Chaliand & Blin, 2007). Other international terror attacks with huge social and economic implications include the Khobar Tower incident in Saudi Arabia in 1996; the Madrid, Spain bombing in 2004; and the England train bombing in 2005 (Kunreuther, et al., 2003). In West Africa, Nigeria has experienced terrorism for long which continues with intensified attacks from Boko Haram, a resident terrorist group whose insurgence permeates into Cameroun and other neighbouring West African countries.

Literature has generally pointed to radicalization and recruitment as important antecedents of terrorism, although this is not adequately supported empirically. Apparently, some analysts have conceptualized radicalization and recruitment differently in terms of their dimensions and processes and therefore effect on terrorism (Botha, 2014; HSI, 2009; Gerwehr & Daly, 2006). By merely examining these relationships from a theoretical perspective, the actual effects and processes involved remain unclear. Furthermore, the lack of convergence in views on root causes of terrorism leaves a cause for scholarly literature to establish more conclusive evidence on the actual factors leading to terrorism. This calls for increased empirical research to investigate the nature and effect of radicalization and recruitment on terrorism. The main objective in this study was to establish the link between terrorism, radicalization, and recruitment. The study also aimed to do determine measures that can be used to prevent radicalization and recruitment and thus reduce terrorism. The study did a critical analysis of both empirical and theoretical literature to address the issue of how terrorist organizations and groups identify and recruit their members and the prevention, and counter-terrorism measures that can be used to reduce terrorist activities.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

There are many theories that have been developed which try to explain the concept of terrorism as well as radicalization and recruitment as its antecedents (Schwartz, 2005; Moghaddam, 2005). However, we note that there is no single theory galvanizing all these concepts. This is perhaps because the field is still relatively young. Our analysis is thus underpinned on identity, socio-economic development, and “security threat” theories. Schwartz, Dunkel and Waterman (2009) conceptualized terrorism as an identity issue. Identity takes the form of a three dimensional theoretical construct comprised of cultural identity, social identify, and personal identity (Meloy, 2004; Schwartz, 2005; Moghaddam, 2005). They argue that understanding terrorism requires not only studying the levels of the “main effects” of each identity but also the inherent “interactions” in these levels.

Citing Schwartz, Montgomery, and Briones (2006), Shwartz Dunkel and Waterman (2009:540) refer to cultural identity as “the specific cultural values a person incorporates throughout life as guiding principles for behavior, such as collectivism, absolutism in belief, and familism.” This definition implies that terrorist engagement requires somebody to have stronger preference for cultural identity. Viewed from another perspective, cultural identity fuels terrorism through the dichotomous “us versus them” principle - for example our culture versus theirs, our religion versus theirs. Evidently, those who value cultural and social groups lower than themselves are less likely to spend personal time in advancing the agendas for such groups (Baum, 2008). Engagement in terrorist activities like suicide bombing thus calls for collectivism by prioritizing the group ahead of the individual.

Social identity theory also has many implications in the study of terrorism. The theory mainly deals with social aspects of the individual in terms of association with one’s own group and rejection of opposing groups (Wolf & Hulsizer, 2005). Social identification is acquired through diverse interpersonal relationships and interactions for example in high schools and religious activities such as prayers and seminars (Korostelina, 2008). At the social identity level, the dichotomous “us versus them” thinking promotes a sharp distinction between intergroup and intragroup relationships. Such distinctions encourage group members to vent their anger against groups they do not belong to. Clearly, terror organizations have taken advantage of such distinctions to perpetrate terrorism under the guise of Islam as a religious group distinct from Christians, Hindus, and others (Moghaddam, 2005).

According to Schwartz et al (2009:544), personal identity refers to “individuals’ self-definition, particularly with respect to those goals, values, and beliefs that they hold in such domains of concern as vocation, religion, politics, family roles, gender roles, ethnicity, and personal interests.” They argue that the way personal identity is established explains its relevance to terrorism. Marcia (1966) conceptualized identity process as a paradigm consisting of exploration and commitment. During exploration, an individual actively considers alternative identity possibilities while in the commitment stage, he forms a strong, unwavering investment in the particular alternative identity elements preferred (McCauley, 1989; Waterman & Archer, 1990; Sanders, 1998). The outcomes from this paradigm lead to emergence of terrorist identity.

In search for solutions for prevention of terrorism, studies have also analyzed terrorism based on several disciplines such as security, economics, sociology, peace, and conflict (Omer, 2009; Gerwehr & Daly, 2006). Two primary theoretical perspectives have emerged from these studies; one viewing terrorism as a socio-economic development issue, and the other as a security threat (Omer, 2009). The socio-economic development approach to radicalization has focused on the social and economic development as key issues to democratization (Omer, 2009). Researchers taking this approach have considered educational and economic empowerment as the best prescription for radicalization. Their argument is that because poverty and illiteracy combine to form an environment conducive for radicalism, socio-economic development can be used to reduce or even

eliminate radicalization (Richards, 2002). The use of social and economic measures have facilitated a multi-level approach to analysis of radicalization including national, regional, global, and organizational or group levels.

The other school of thought on terrorism research stems from security threat perspective (Omer, 2009). Analysts using this perspective have argued that poverty and lack of education do not seem to characterize most terrorists (Rice, 2003). In their view, it seems that most terrorists are more from ordinary backgrounds and of middle class status. As such terrorism is more predominantly a security threat with no socio-economic linkage or root. Literature focusing on this approach has laid more emphasis on coercive action, jihadist ideology, state actors, and counter-terrorism intelligence (Barro, 2002; Giorno, 2002; Krueger, Alan, and Jitka Maleckova, 2003). While this security approach promises to make a strong contribution, some studies have questioned validity of research stream (Botha & Abdille, 2014). Furthermore, lack of consensus on the actual nature of jihadist ideology, and coercive action has created confusion. Even with these differences, studying radicalization still remains important and provides a great potential for future contribution to counter-terrorism and prevention measures.

Terrorism, Radicalization, and Recruitment in Kenya

Kenya has been a hotbed for terror activities especially in the last nearly three decades or so. Kenya shares international borders with five countries including Ethiopia, South Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania, and Somalia. Majority of these countries have historically experienced internal violent conflicts to varying degrees some of which are still active. Furthermore, the shared borders are porous and uncontrolled making free movement a regular phenomenon (Kimunguyi, 2011).

Kenya's constitution also guarantees its citizens and other residents freedom of speech, movement, and other rights. These issues coupled with technological factors such as internet, mobile phones, and social media expose the country to terrorism. As a result there has been a significant increase in terror attacks in Kenya over the past few decades. Literature has linked these increased terrorist incidents to the region's vulnerability arising from conflicts which the region particularly Somalia, Sudan, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Djibouti has been experiencing (Ibrahim, 2010; Rabasa et. al., 2007).

The significant increase in terror attacks in the region has further been fueled by conflicts at both internal and inter-interstate levels coupled with weak governance, and statelessness in Somalia. Porous borders characterized by free movement of people and illegal small arms and light weapons (SALWs) have also enabled terrorists to significantly penetrate deeper into various neighbouring countries in the region (Rosand, Millar & Ipe, 2009; Rabasa, 2009). This has been most harmful especially along the Kenya-Somalia border and has not only aided refugees fleeing the conflict to move freely into Kenya but also easy movement of terrorists and smuggling of SALWs into the country (Menkhaus, 2005).

Vulnerability in the region may further be linked to radical Islam in the Horn of Africa (Kimunguyi, 2011). The region has experienced an escalation in the number of radical Islamist groups and movements for a long time. This upsurge may be associated with the poor socio-economic conditions in the region which Islamist fundamentalist groups take advantage of to penetrate the region (Rosand, Millar & Ipe, 2009). While seemingly well intentioned, humanitarian assistance and support towards development, and social services such as education, healthcare, and vocational training have also been used for proliferation of extremism in the region.

In the last two decades or so, Kenya has experienced a phenomenal increase in number and intensity of terror attacks compared to all its neighbours except Somalia (Kimunguyi, 2011). These include those mentioned earlier and the 2002 Kikambala Hotel incident, the 2013 Westgate Mall attack which killed over 65 people, the 2015 Garissa University attack in which over 140 people died, and more recently the 2016 El Ade Kenya Defense Forces (KDF) camp in Somalia in which unknown number of soldiers were killed. The escalation in numbers and seriousness of the attacks has aroused the concern of the Kenya Government and the internal community.

Initially, attacks in this country were mainly carried out by non-Kenyans. For example the 1998 bombing of the US Embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in which over 200 people died. However, as the frequency and complexity of the attacks increased it has been realized that Kenyan's are also involved. Odhiambo (2015) lists several examples including the March 2012 Nairobi bus park grenade attack by a 28 year-old Kenyan named Elgiva Oliacha Bwire alias Mohammed Seif; Nderitu also known as Mohammed; Muchiri, alias Hussein; Paul Wangaga and his wife who were shot dead after throwing three grenades at police officers; Abraham Kemoi Setot; and Caleb Anyela Onyango who police arrested in Kitale in July 2012 while on a self confessed mission allegedly to bomb a Catholic Church in Umoja in Nairobi.

As a result of the increased intensity of attacks across the globe, there has been increasing international focus and attention on counter-terrorism and prevention measures which has pushed many countries to be concerned with global terrorism. This is more so because radicalization and recruitment of individuals by terrorists happens in all corners of the globe including the internet (Arena & Arrigo, 2006). At national level, governments have formulated relevant policies, created systems and structures, and even enacted specific laws to deal with terrorism. This makes terrorism a complex and important issue which begs the question: "How do terrorist organizations and groups identify and recruit their members; and what are the prevention, and counter-terrorism measures that can be used to reduce terrorist activities?"

Radicalization of Individuals

Radicalization is a key initial step towards terrorism comprised of indoctrination, brainwashing, isolation, extreme ideology, rejection of status quo, and denial of freedom of expression. Several past studies have gradually contributed to the establishment of

radicalization as a legitimate construct contributing to terrorism (Botha & Abdille, 2014; Kimunguyi, 2011). Prior to these studies, radicalization was viewed not so much from extremist perspective but more as a normal phenomenon involving different views and opinions of politics, policies and ideas. Much of this body of literature has been synthesized by for example Odhiambo (2015) and Omer (2009) as they made comparisons between radicalized and non-radicalized individuals. In these studies, several aspects of terrorist organizations were indentified. The identified characteristics include higher affinity for social groups, cultural inclination, religious beliefs, collectivism, and fundamentalism (Omer, 2009). In contrast, non-radicalized people were categorized as having lower affinity for these attributes.

Research has been relatively uniform in application of radicalization but differences have arisen in researcher perceptions of the construct. This is evident in the diverse definitions of radicalization in more contemporary literature. For example radicalization has been viewed as adoption of extremist belief system as method to support societal changes (HSI, 2009). In contrast, it is viewed as social or religious ideals and aspirations that may reject or undermine status quo (Odhiambo, 2015). Even with this diversity in definitions, determining radicalization has surprisingly remained fairly consistent with majority of authors using brainwashing, indoctrination, rejection of status quo, financial assistance promise and familial-like bonds as its measures (HSI, 2009; Shwartz, Dunkel, & Waterman, 2009). It seems more contemporary literature has increasingly regarded radicalization as a precursor to terrorism. Radicalization is closely linked to recruitment and in Kenya, the two take place almost simultaneously.

Recruitment into Terror Groups

Maintaining the right number and type of people has become increasingly important for terrorist organizations. Studies (Sparago, 2007; HSI, 2009) indicate that in this era where terrorism has become a global affair, every terrorist organization strives to be able to meet future demands for its activities. Recruitment increases the likelihood that terrorist organizations will realize their short and long-term obligations. As terrorist organizations continue to intensify their operations through search and retention, they are using a holistic approach to talent management.

The role of recruitment is that of identifying, attracting, and indoctrinating new members into a terrorist organization (Botha, 2014; Botha & Abdille, 2014). Recruitment has been mentioned in several extant studies as a crucial step in ensuring continuity in terrorist activities (Odhiambo, 2015; Kimunguyi, 2009). Terrorism is a dynamic venture with very high attrition rates and hence requires a constant replenishment of personnel and physical resources and assets. Research indicates that many countries spend colossal amounts of resources in terrorism detection and prevention measures and hence terrorists have to keep changing their tactics to succeed (Home Department, 2011). It has also been established that modern terrorism involves suicidal approaches which results in high attrition in terms of loss of terrorist human resource. For example, terrorist operations

have lost several personnel during suicide missions such as 1998 Kenya and Tanzania USA Embassy bombings, and the 9/11 terrorist attacks in USA, and many more in Somalia. This makes recruitment an important activity for terrorist organizations to ensure they not only have adequate resources but also new personnel and ideas to execute their plans.

Due to the importance of recruitment in terror organizations, considerable amount of research attention has focused on its role in terrorism (Botha, 2014; Botha & Abdille, 2014; Odhiambo, 2015). This research has however concentrated more on how recruitment is carried out leaving out conceptual issues (Gerwehr & Daly, 2006; Sparago, 2007; HSI, 2009). This is demonstrated in the many different approaches to recruitment discussed in literature. For example Sparago (2007) discusses religion, sex, age, marital status, economic background, and level of education as the most important demographic characteristics terror recruiters give priority. The article argues that being a Muslim tops the priority list of recruiters and supersedes all other factors. The article also observes that recruitment largely targets males which supports the fact that more than 90% of past attack cases have involved male terrorists. Another important characteristic is being young – for example 9/11 attackers were in 28-33 year old bracket.

In Kenya, radicalization and recruitment target people with similar demographics and characteristics. A significant factor is religion which available reports indicate that the preferred recruits either have to be of Muslim faith at the onset or have to convert to Islam before joining a terror group (Odhiambo, 2015). The group of people most predominantly targeted is the males although there have been few reports of female recruits. For example intelligence reports indicate that three Kenya females were arrested in 2015 on the way to Somalia to join Al Shabab. Reports further indicate that much as Al Shabab has been recruiting mainly youth across the board, their main target in the last few years has been the youth in schools, tertiary institutions, and universities. According to intelligence reports, at least one terrorist involved in the 2015 Garissa University attack was university student. Likewise, more recently in 2016, a university student was arrested at the airport while on his way to Libya to join a terror group.

These terror incidents have increased against a backdrop of intense recruitment drives resulting from Al-Shabaab's agents which have shown tremendous success. Especially, the continued occupation of Somalia by Kenyan fighters has led to tremendous increase of new individuals' recruitment from Kenya, of Somalis and non-Somalis resulting in a wider outreach. A factor which has been linked to increased intensity of recruitment in Kenya is the presence by Kenya Defense Forces (KDF) in Southern Somalia. It is noted that Al Shabab attacks involving Kenyans has increased significantly from 2011 when KDF invaded Southern Somalia. Reports by The East African Standard newspaper of November 5, 2015 indicate that Al-Shabaab, is actively recruiting from neighboring Kenya as retaliation for this occupation to prepare them to fight within and outside Somalia. Obviously this trend means that reducing impact of al-Shabab within Somalia and Kenya will be more difficult.

According to Botha and Abdille (2014), religious and economic gains top the list of reasons why individuals join Al Shabab. In their empirical study in Mogadishu Somalia, they found that young people are easily lured into terrorism by being offered money, jobs, and opportunities. In Somalia, such offers are for as little as \$50 a month (Botha & Abdille, 5) while in Kenya they are much higher including for example a monthly salary of \$700, their family upkeep, and benefits of spiritual and economic nature. Similarly, terrorist recruiters argue from a Muslim religion point of view to make their targets believe that after their deaths during jihad, they get automatic ticket to heaven and will enter paradise directly where 72 virgins will greet them (Kohlmann, 2006). This idea that one may go straightly to paradise is of great inspiration of terrorists since one is made to believe in better life after death compared to the one he lives. Moreover, this becomes more convincing when they see many of the dead ones celebrated as martyrs where they live. For example congratulating the parents by naming streets after them and designating holidays in their honour and sacrifice. Terrorists engaged in suicide missions tend to achieve a cult-like status of celebrity in some parts of the Muslim dominated world. This allures those intending to become famous. This can be a great opportunity to those desperate for opportunities for success and earning a living. Jihad can be viewed as a means towards self-fulfillment through selfless action.

Recruitments take place in specific places which terrorist recruiters perceive as safe, private and not exposed to arouse suspicion (Botha, 2014). Mosque environment is one such place which provides the individual with converging structure of socialization and religion (Botha & Abdille, 2014). The recruits view the mosques as religious symbols used to for practicing faith, prying and interacting with other faithful. According to Forest (2006), Mosques are places where Muslims pray together and interact and therefore offer an atmosphere of privacy that makes it easy for individuals operating in the mosque to perform recruitment and radicalization rituals without much suspicion. Forest (2006) further argues that for recruiters, the mosque acts as an ideal place where possible recruits can be identified. In the mosques, worshippers are observed and based on how they behave and the extent of their vulnerability, the recruiters are able to detect who can be a good target to be recruited.

The Internet has also proven to be one of the most powerful and useful tools of terrorism as a communication tool, an educational forum, and of course a place for recruitment (Laqueur, 2004; HSI, 2009; Odhiambo, 2015). The virtual approach to recruitment enables the targeted individuals have extreme identity confidentiality making tracking their movement difficult. The Internet being borderless therefore makes a good and limitless recruitment place globally (Kimunguyi, 2007). It is now possible for somebody in Kenya, to communicate and establish a jihadist network far away in Somalia or Afghanistan and seal a deal in minutes. In Kenyan context much as many youth has been netted from all corners of the country, many of them are from regions hail from predominantly Muslim regions especially in the north eastern territory of the country (NSIS, 2015).

Reports indicate that the militant group has taken advantage of the Kenyan recruits and put online propaganda videos featuring fighters speaking Kiswahili Kenyan accent to convince potential recruits of existence of Kenyans in the group (Ringa, 2015). Kohlmann (2006) states that different types of video tapes have been used in the past for attracting vulnerable individuals to terrorism. These video tapes include testimonials of past martyrs together with executions, and even scenes of people being beheaded. They also contain messages delivered by bin Laden and Zawahiri. These tapes and messages in other forms mostly propaganda are easily available and can be readily accessed through the internet. Most often, they are popularly displayed in schools, mosques and such places where groups of youth can be easily reached. The main motive is to access these targets personally and individually. It is believed that when they see accomplishments of the others with their own eyes, this can powerfully motivate terror recruits. For example, when American Nicholas Berg's execution is shown in videos, the potential terrorist sees with his own eyes jihadism in practice and where he should place his obligations.

Some of the prime breeding grounds for terrorist recruitment are educational institutions like schools and universities. In particular, the lower education levels tend to be better targets since many students are still young and are easily impressed. In the madrasa and lower primary schools, young people in the 8 - 10 years age bracket are taught early to obey religious authority without question. Because the madrasa system educates many young children, it acts as incubation apparatus for recruiting candidates. Other institutions of higher learning such as universities are increasingly being used as hunting grounds by those recruiting terrorist (Odhiambo, 2015). June 29, 2015 Daily Nation reports attributed to Kenya National Security Intelligence Service (NSIS) indicate that well-educated university students are easily lured by the militants to the group by penetrating institutions of higher learning where they recruit, indoctrinate, and even train their recruits. Easy access to these institutions has been blamed on the government's poor monitoring system which has made it possible for terrorist agents to easily enter the institutions and perform their intentions unnoticed.

In April 2015, Kenyan security agencies learnt firsthand the impact of educated Kenyan recruits after it was revealed that one of the Garissa University College attackers was a university law graduate. The former University of Nairobi (UON) law student Abdirahim Mohammad Abdullahi who was behind the attack was killed during an operation to retake the university. According to April 25, 2015 issue of Kenya Today, Abdullah who was a Mandera chief's privileged son having graduated with a law degree in 2013 was working as a bank advisor before later joined Al-Shabaab. It is said that the second known university graduate to have died while fighting for al-shabaab. This followed the previous death of the first university student who died while carrying out a suicide bomb attack at a police station in 2014 in Nairobi. Abdul Hajira, the suicide bomber reappeared to complete a bachelor of commerce degree after a one year absence. Most students recruited into al-shabaab such as Abdullahi went through the mentorship of an engineer Sheikh Ahmad Imam Ali who was declared the supreme leader of al-shabaab's Kenyan branch. It has also been reported that the video production unit of

al-shabaab is headed by one of previous Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture (JKUAT) student, Ali (Wardheernews 2015, December 14). Ali operates from a base in Somalia since 2009, and is believed to adopt a recruitment strategy that targets both students and the deprived people in places like Nairobi's Majengo slums. Street children in the 12 and 16 year age bracket living in the coastal area are also targeted by people like Ali. Most of the children fall prey to these recruitments mainly because they lack basic needs including food, clothing, and even housing which the al-shabaab suggests would give to those who return to their fold. Reports also indicate that recruits gain in terms of family, belonging and purpose (Botha, 2014; HSI, 2009; Daily Nation 2015, November 1).

In August 2015, those responsible for recruiting Kenyans into al-Shabaab were identified by security agencies to include Ali himself, Ramadhan Hamisi Kufungwa, A and Abdifatah Abubakar Ahmad. It was confirmed that the two were leaders of Jeshi la Ayman ('Army of Ayman'), which was started by Al Shabab militant wing with the aim of increasing terrorist attacks in the Kenyan Soil. They have since participated in a few incidents in the Kenyan coast (Roberts, 2015). Terror groups also in addition have targeted prisons in Kenya which Cuthbertson (2004) says are prime areas to recruit individuals from Pistole (2003). He further adds that, this is so because prison inmates often turn to religion during their confinement.

This results in a situation where the confined youth get exposed to Islamic extremism. Often, the prisoners convicted of petty offences such as drug selling, illegal alien, and theft harbour feelings making them prone to extremists. As soon as they are nabbed, such individuals take to terrorist activities as a way of revenging to the society that denied him freedom sending him to prison. Islam prisoners are likely to adopt the type of frustrations that other Muslims all over the world suffer. They feel that whereas one society jails them, the other welcomes them. The problem of recruiting inmates will prevail in Kenya since they are neglected by family and friends. Becoming a member of these radical groups protect and provide the incarcerated individuals with a network for communicating within and outside the prison walls. Studies focusing on terrorism have reported mixed findings. While Botha and Abdille (2014) indicate that terrorism and radicalization may be related, Odhiambo (2015) shows that in some cases, some individuals are recruited into terrorism without being radicalization. Similarly, there is interchangeable use of radicalization and recruitment of individuals into terrorism causing confusion. There is also a dearth of studies on measures to prevent terrorism. These differences show lack of convergence in opinions about terrorism, radicalization, recruitment, and prevention. This paper addressed these gaps in line with the conceptual framework in Figure 2.1.

Conceptual Framework for the Study

The reviewed literature has revealed that gaps still exist in this important area of radicalization, and recruitment of individuals into terrorist groups. Despite terrorist activities increasing considerably in Kenya in the last few decades, the link between radicalization, recruitment, and terrorism is still unclear especially regarding the specific

methods terrorists use to recruit individuals. Also missing are the methods that can be used to prevent further radicalization and recruitment. This study attempted to fill these gaps by investigating the relationships as shown in Figure 2.1

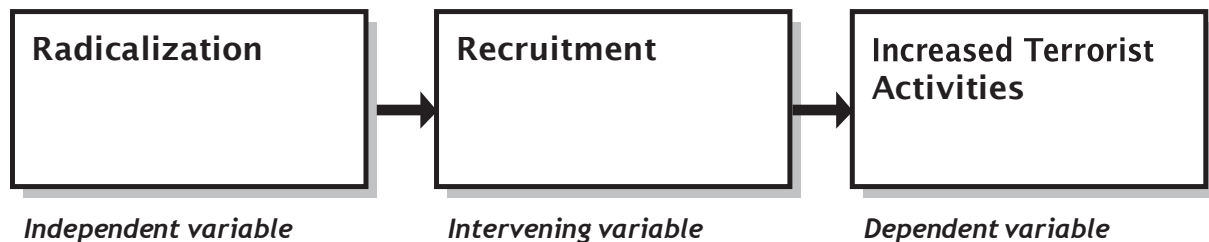


Figure 2.1- Conceptual framework for the study.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This article used qualitative research design to do a theoretical analysis of extant literature on radicalization, and recruitment of individuals into terrorist groups. The main aim of the study was to determine if radicalization and recruitment leads to increased terrorist activities and identify methods to reduce radicalization. The study was a desk analysis of existing academic literature and obtained journal articles, books, periodicals, publications, and conference papers from various sources. The study also applied content analysis techniques to identify, analyze, and critique authors' discussions and opinions on terrorism.

4.0 FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PREVENTION OF TERRORISM

The purpose of this study was to determine how terrorist organizations and groups identify and recruit their members. We predicted that radicalization and recruitment had increased globally especially in Kenya and this has led to many young Kenyans joining terrorist organizations. According to this article, terrorism has become a global phenomenon devoid of physical boundaries. This is evident from the high number of terrorist incidents in USA, Europe, Middle East, Northern and West Africa. There has also been a sharp increase in terrorist activities in the East African region, Kenya in particular following the 1998 USA embassy bombing which has been associated with Al Shabab working together with Al Qaeda. Thereafter, terrorists have targeted Kenya with several attacks in Kikambala, Westgate Mall, the 2015 Garissa University, and the January 2016 El Adde KDF attack inside Somalia.

The study also aimed to establish prevention, and counter-terrorism measures that can reduce recruitment. We proposed that prevention efforts should focus on places of worship, educational institutions, and internet among many of which have become hotbeds

for terrorist radicalization and recruitment. This article found that terrorist recruiters target mainly mosques, schools, social establishments, internet, and universities. Terrorist groups operate under the guise of specific religious ideology but often interpret it to justify their extremist cause. No wonder in Kenya, a growing trend for terrorist recruiters is to first convert their victims to Islam before indoctrinating them into terrorist activities.

Globally terrorism prevention has focused on reducing environments that are conducive to terrorist activities. For instance the UN counter terrorism strategy of 2006 recommends an approach that aims to address conditions that promote the spread of terrorism. Likewise, studies (HSI, 2009) have suggested measures such as legislation to criminalize radicalization and recruitment, especially children, into terrorism; increased monitoring of websites appealing to targeted population and create other websites which act as “noise” or decoys aimed at redirecting attention of the targeted people. This article finds that in order to reduce radicalization and recruitment of Kenyans by terrorist organizations, the Kenya Government, international community, and academic institutions have roles to play.

The Kenya government can involve religious and community leaders more in the fight against terrorism. This is consistent with Botha and Abdille (2014) who pointed out the need to support an inclusive national building process by bringing clan leaders together at regional and national levels. Odhiambo (2015) also argued that the inability of the Muslim community to confront radicalism is due to lack of Kenyan-Muslim leadership commitment. Forming regional and national forums will also resolve the alleged lack of a common voice of Muslim leaders in condemning acts of terrorism, and their apparent silence when Islamic institutions and places of worship are allegedly used for radicalisation. By creating such forums for the leaders, the government will address the capacity gaps among individual imams to enable them becoming proactive in detecting radicalization activities in the mosques.

Capacity building may be in form of training on modern and effective strategies to combat radicalism, and provision of security, so they can speak out openly, especially in places of worship, against the indoctrination of the Muslim youths (Okeyo & Abdiwahab, 2014). The government should also work on building trust with the communities. The government should show the public that it is able to offer better life than what the terrorists promise –“winning the heart of the minds”. Building trust can also include controlled use of force during anti-terrorism raids. Quite often, anti-terrorism raids are conducted with little or care for the local bona fide residents. These raids should be conducted in ways that do not harm the Kenyan citizens living in these areas such that only insurgents/terrorists are targeted.

The government also needs to enhance intelligence gathering and use. It is clear that terrorist strength is vested on its ability to gather intelligence. According to Kimunguyi (2011), lack of adequate intelligence reduces ability of the government to plan counter-terrorism strategies. Kenya’s security agencies should gather intelligence at the levels of school, places of worship, community, and public places in general. Moreover the

intelligence gathered should be acted upon. It has also been reported in the past that there is sometimes collusion between some members of the security forces and terrorists such that information is leaked to terrorists making them evade arrests. Counter-terrorism need to combine prevention approaches to address both real and perceived grievances as well as economic, social and political issues; and should also involve gathering intelligence within security agencies such as police force, NSIS, and the armed forces to know in advance if some staff could be in touch with terrorists (Rosand, Ipe, Miller, 2007: 103).

Furthermore it is ironical that in Kenya, security officers are often deployed in areas where they do not understand the local language, culture, or geographical terrain. This often leads to ineffectiveness in intelligence gathering and discharge of duties, and sometimes devastating consequences such as the Baragoi Massacre of 2012, where 42 newly graduated police officers lost their lives pursuing cattle rustlers in a jungle they did not understand. To effectively combat radicalism and its effects, the Government needs a review of policy, to ensure that a good proportion of postings in areas prone to terrorism for purposes of intelligence gathering understand the culture and language of the local communities where there is perceived radicalization (Stockman, 2006).

In most cases, local administrators get insights into happenings within their localities, and would be key partners in intelligence gathering on the activities of radical groups, and individuals suspected of involvement in such activities. These administrators would be important agents in identifying candidates for the de-radicalisation programme, to forestall the recruitment and radicalisation process, as well as in the rehabilitation of returnees from al Shabaab. Training and adequate security would be required to build the capacities of local administrators to play these roles more effectively. These initiatives should be in addition to the Nyumba Kumi initiative which should also be strengthened through legislation, establishment of structures, and capacity building.

The government also needs to establish a program for reintegration and counter-radicalization of returnees who delink with terror organizations. It is not evident from the analysis how former radicalized people who surrender are accepted and reintegrated back into normal life. Returnees, majority of whom return after disengagement from radicalised groups due to disillusionment that they have experienced in the field, could prove useful if rehabilitated to dissuade others from supporting al Shabaab. Such parties could be embedded into peer education programmes in schools and colleges to give them better understanding of the dynamics of radical and terrorist groups. An example is in Somalia where the government has set up a re-integration program to rehabilitate and resettle ex-Al Shabab combatants back into the society (Okeyo & Abdiwahab, 2014).

There is also need to increase awareness campaigns to sensitize the communities on radicalization, and educate the citizens and other Kenya residents on dangers of radicalization and joining terror groups. This could be done through several media channels, updating curriculum to include anti-terrorism issues, but even more importantly to educate on the known channels such internet and other methods. This can promote patriotism, and sensitise the communities on what actually radicalisation is, and what it

is not, as well as the consequences of radicalisation, and alternative and peaceful ways of achieving the ends for which radical groups recruit.

An important aspect of the message would be to educate the audiences on the need for unity as Kenyans, as well as how to identify and respond to radical teachings, and how to identify and handle radicalised persons within the community (Botha, 2014). Message should be tailored according to target beneficiaries. For example some groups would include madrassa teachers, parents, teachers in formal education - primary, secondary and colleges/universities; and the students themselves (Botha, 2014). Furthermore, there is need to establish a nation-building process that is inclusive by creating opportunities for national dialogues bringing together clan leaders at regional and national levels to debate issues of radicalization, recruitment, and terrorism and make recommendations for implementation.

Sensitizing and creating awareness to Journalists on patriotic reporting on Terrorism may also reduce radicalization. Terrorists rely on the power of the media - electronic, print, and online - to carry the message about their activities (Awal, Hoskins, & O'Loughlin, 2011). Unaware of this fact, many local journalists and media houses have played into the terrorists trap, and contributed to the spread of fear and mutual suspicion between communities and religions. While media houses have a role to report objectively on all occurrences, training the media to report on attacks considering national interests, security and cohesion, as international media does when such attacks happen in the west, would to a large extent help to focus the public attention and reaction to the real issues, without resulting to ethnic and religious profiling - which is the terrorists' main purpose (Aziz, 2010).

The Kenya government can also improve efficiency of the judiciary and strengthen the criminal justice system as a measure for reduced terrorist activities. Many law enforcement officers lament the inadequacies of Kenya's judicial system in handling terrorism cases (The Equal Rights Trust, 2012). It is not uncommon for an officer to risk his life apprehending high profile suspects, only for the suspects to be set free on bond, pending hearing of the case. In some cases, the suspects have returned to harm or kill the arresting officers, and then escape out of the country, thus absconding the court bond. To Quote Al Amin Kimathi, a renowned Muslim human rights crusader, "They [police] reach a point where they get frustrated by the law and the court process and they have realized that the only way to deal with these people is to 'disappear' them" (Jamah, 2015). The government should strengthen the rule of law and criminal justice system to ensure fast and thorough investigations are done on terrorism cases. This should enable cases of terrorism to be dealt with conclusively and expeditiously. The conceptual framework in Figure 4.1 summarizes these recommendations in a diagrammatic form.

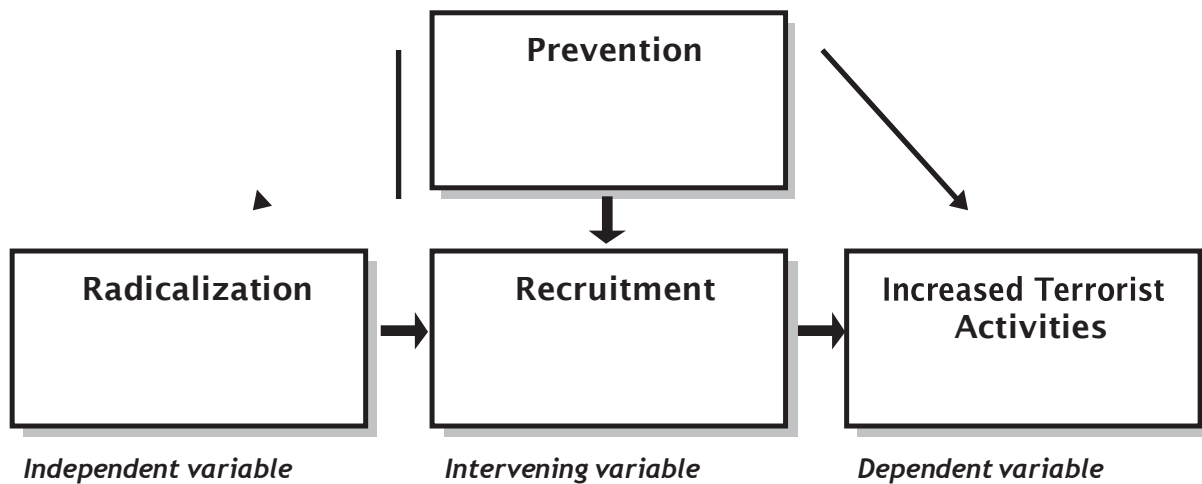


Figure 4.1- Recommended conceptual framework from the study findings

Radicalization was operationalized as extreme ideology, brainwashing, and rejection of status quo, denial freedom of expression and modern ideas while recruitment was determined by promises for compensation, good life, isolation, and being given guns and money.

5.0 CONCLUSION

This article analyzed the nature of terrorism in Kenya specifically focusing on radicalization and recruitment of people into terrorist groups. We did a critical literature review of both empirical and theoretical studies as well as other research reports. The analysis reveals that whereas terrorism is a global phenomenon, the increased terrorist activities in Kenya may be attributed to a number of specific factors including the country's proximity to Somalia where Al Shabab is resident and very active; lack of adequate control and corruption at entry points into the country which facilitates entry of illegal aliens who later on engage in terrorism, and illegal weapons later on used in perpetrating terrorism and other criminal activities; historical injustices in some areas and communities in the country which drive their youth and other members to rebel against the laws and reject the status quo; failure by government to create an environment conducive for entrepreneurship, social development, and business opportunities to ensure youth are actively engaged in lawful and gainful activities; failure to create a system for monitoring and gathering intelligence from schools, places of worship, social places, communities and the public at large which may be used to plan counter-terrorism and prevention measures and preempt radicalization and recruitment and attacks.

Granted, these are not the only means through which the war on radicalisation can be won. However, the bottom-line remains that it is possible to defeat radicalisation and its effects, including terrorism. As we have seen in this discourse, the key approach

lies in responding to the ideology that results in violent extremism with a higher level of calmness, and tact, as opposed to fighting fire with fire.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

This study recommends that the Kenya government should take immediate interventions to prevent radicalization in the country. These should involve use of professional psychologists and religious leaders to identify an individual's motivations for joining a radical group, or using the already existing information and then developing a solution based on the individual's motivations. Medium term interventions should include information and sensitisation campaigns to help people understand radicalisation, and what to do about it. Addressing systemic issues and historical injustices, which have been used to give legitimacy to the radicalisation course, would be long term strategies. These would ensure that the gains made through small incremental processes under immediate and short-term strategies are solidified, and effective systems are put in place to forestall radicalisation before it starts. The study finally recommends that future research may focus on establishing more specifically why learned youth tend to succumb more to radicalization.

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