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Youth Deradicalization as a Post-Terrorism Security Intervention and its effect on Social Relations in Nairobi County, Kenya

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Abstract: *De-radicalization among young people is a crucial fight of national and international terrorism globally. It is one of the post-terrorism security intervention strategies that is thought to address the root causes of youth engagement in terror activities. The study investigated the influence of de-radicalization as a post-terrorism security intervention strategy on social relations in the County Government of Nairobi, Kenya. The study adopted a mixed methods research design. It also used a sample size of 384 respondents, comprising 361 were heads of households, 15 members of Nairobi County Security Board and 8 survivors of terrorism acts. Convenient sampling technique was used to select heads of the households, purposive sampling techniques to identify members of Nairobi County Security Board and snowball sampling used to identify terror survivors. Key informants interview schedule as well as interview schedule were essentially employed methods of data collection. The data collected was subsequently analysed using both qualitative and quantitative methods, that is, descriptive statistics mainly used for qualitative data and direct quotation used for qualitative data. From the results of the study, the Kenyan youth de-radicalization programmes play a significant role in transformation of youth to be productive members of the society and eliminate terror mind-set. It was reported that youths have proved more susceptible to the appeal of terrorism due to poor social networks and social identity. Therefore, de-radicalization programmes should be continuous. The study recommends that the community should continuously strengthen family ties, create employment and educate the youths to divert them from extremism and radicalism.*

Keywords: *Youth Deradicalization, Post-terrorism Security Intervention, Social Relations, Nairobi, Kenya*

I. Introduction

In the context of counter-terrorism, de-radicalization is often thought to entail the simple reversal of

radicalization. However, the concept can be vague and subjective, yet more comprehensive, in its meaning. Porta and LaFree (2012) assert that the de-

radicalization process has two components that are often overlooked or conflated. One part contains the “de-radicalization of attitudes and beliefs” and the other includes “the disengagement from violent behaviour and the process of leaving violent groups and reintegrating into other social groups” (Porta & LaFree, 2012). El-Said (2015) concurs that de-radicalization refers to disengagement from violence. According to El-Said, de-radicalization is “a package of policies and measures designed and implemented by authorities in order to regularize and induce groups and individuals who have by now become radicalized or violent extremists to repent and disengage from violence”. De-radicalization can also be effective without the need for a formalized programme and “may not require any coordinated action to get it underway” (Dechesne, 2011).

In a de-radicalization, goals should be distinctly defined, and prudently include all key stakeholders, balancing both interest and influence. Cole (2003) reports that developing a professional and accountable police service practicing a new way of policing which is responsive to the needs of local communities is increasingly recognized as an important in the prevention of radicalization. The outline, preparation, implementation, examination and assessment of the anticipated commitment is meant to be extensive and consultative, so as to guarantee that all stakeholders have ownership of the programme.

De-radicalization among young people is a crucial fight of national and international terrorism globally (O’Duffy, 2008). It entails efforts to transform or reform youths who are socially secluded and disillusioned, who may have resorted to extremism in search for identity, recognition and purpose in life. This view stems from the fact that society is increasingly concerned with wealth creation and accumulation at the expense of healthy social and economic relationships among people. The strategy in which law enforcement and social workers build trust with local populations and become culturally sensitive to the community they serve is the best approach to prevention and management of youth radicalization (Nasser, 2015; Wade, 2015).

According to Muhsin (2012), both push and pull factors drive young people into terrorism. Push factors are the negative communal, cultural, and political attributes of one’s social environment that drive vulnerable individuals onto the path of violent extremism. These factors are frequently referred to as “underlying/root causes”, for example poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, discrimination, and political/economical marginalization. On the other hand, pull factors are the positive attributes and welfare of an extremist organization that draw

vulnerable individuals into terrorist groups. These include a terror group’s beliefs (for instance, emphasis on changing one’s condition through violence rather than “apathetic” and “passive” democratic means), strong bonds of brotherhood and sense of belonging, reputation building, prospect for fame or glory, and other socialization benefits (Choudhury, 2007). Considering these factors, concerted efforts are required to effectively address the risks presented by terrorist radicalization and to effectively manage transnational terrorism.

Muhsin (2012) says that poverty may be viewed as a basis for getting recruited into violent extremism. Nevertheless, he notes that some cases youth involvement in terrorism involve problems of low self-esteem. As such, the success of de-radicalization lies in overcoming poverty and improving self-esteem amongst the youth. Roy and Ross (2004) assert that destruction of property and life through military invasions and other human-made acts is a great cause of distress and some may join terror groups to seek revenge as well as to protect themselves and their families. In this instance, de-radicalization focuses on protection of property and families.

In addition, education is the best weapon to overcoming radicalization. A lack of education in general, and not religious education in particular, may push vulnerable groups to terror groups that promise better rewards. As a result, it becomes easier to join terror groups rather than languish in poverty with no chance to “pursue something greater” (Choudhury, 2007). Muhsin (2012), however, avers that the new terrorism trends exhibit characteristics that contrast with traditional terrorism. He argues that modern terror groups are more likely to form networks, rather than hierarchies or cells; this is particularly true of the groups emerging from decentralized radical Islamic movements organized around charismatic clerics. As such, unemployment cannot be proposed to explain why individuals join such terror groups. The forces that impel individuals to become terrorists and insurgents are thus timeless and, in fact, have less to do with one’s chosen profession than perhaps with other factors.

Most youths are concerned with attracting attention to themselves and protecting their reputation. Therefore, the reputation that one gains by joining a terror group is at times attractive to some for two main reasons. First, it delivers them from irrelevance to prominence. In a society that places great emphasis on age, the economically dependent youth command little respect and are seen as powerless (Choudhury, 2007). As such, by becoming a member of a terrorist group, some believe they are able to gain immediate respect and access to power, thereby strengthening

their sense of self-worth. Second, it strengthens a particular identity: in this case, “defender of country and religion.” This is important for two reasons, especially with terror groups affiliated with Islamic fundamentalism. It highlights the centrality of Islam in Somalis’ sense of identity. In Somalia, the role of religion is especially magnified in the identity of youths for whom clan politics has brought nothing but chaos and destruction. This does not necessarily indicate religious zealotry, but rather the intertwined nature of religion and nationality in their sense of identity (Schwartz, Dunkel & Waterman, 2009). Radicalization is certainly complicated, difficult to comprehend and tricky to address. However, understanding the different sides of radicalization is fundamental to developing a sound strategy.

Although a number of contributing factors may be singled out as facilitators for the emergence of radicalization processes leading to terrorism, it is impossible to identify one single root cause. Fetzer and Soper (2005) point out that the convergence of several possible contributing variables can usually be found at the heart of the radicalization process. Since terrorism and its precedent radicalization may arise for a number of reasons, precipitant factors vary according to each individual experience of and pathway to radicalization. On the other hand, Weine, Post, Ali, Henderson, Shanfield and Victoroff (2009) say that a considerable variety of contributing or facilitating factors can trigger the radicalization process in varying degrees at the intersection of personal history.

De-radicalization can be effectively achieved by involving and building capacity of individuals and groups locally with the intention to build resilience against it (Bartlett, Birdwell & King, 2010). This approach is important since radicalization usually occurs within loose social networks of relatives, friends and peers. The most vulnerable potential recruits are those who are at a stage of life where they are looking for an identity and livelihood, while looking for approval and justification (Baker, 2007). According to a report released by International Crisis Group (2012), there are four main factors that contribute to a country’s vulnerability to radicalization and terrorism: structural and institutional factors, grievances, foreign and military policy, and jihadist ideology. These factors can be reversed to bring about de-radicalization.

Further, the UK Strategy for Countering International Terrorism (2013) recognizes that radicalization is fundamentally an individual process and countering it requires adopting strategies with an individual touch. As such, local individuals, who interact with the youth such as parents, teachers, coaches, mentors,

and religious leaders, as well as peers, are critical in identifying strange activities or behaviours among the youth. Because such groups operate at the grassroots level, they are capable of detecting radicalization in its nascent stages and intervening before it metastasizes into acts of violent extremism (Speckhard & Paz, 2012).

In the East Africa Region, majority of the young people struggle with such issues as unemployment, education, housing, health services, and other necessities. However, they become frustrated with their inability to achieve culturally recognized adulthood status. As such, some might seek validation by joining violent extremist groups, which give them an adult-like status through responsibility, purpose and, often, financial compensation. Mogire and Agade (2011) observe that in Kenya, impunity among politically connected elites causes young people to lose confidence in their legal institutions. This development could be attributed to the seemingly discriminative approach by the criminal justice system. Young people, for instance, claim to receive harsh punishments for seemingly small offenses, such as lack of National identification cards and loitering.

Collection and processing of intelligence on youth radicalization remains a key concept in successful de-radicalization measures at the local police level (Schmid, 2013). For members of local communities to effectively contribute to the local intelligence system, they must be able to understand how and what to observe, how to and what to report. To exploit on the quality and quantity of material given by the community, law enforcement should give an outline of knowledge. The more that law enforcement informs the community, the more positive the feedback from the community (Scheider, 2004).

Youth recruitment into violent crimes, including terrorism, is not a new phenomenon in the Eastern Africa region in general. Pirio (2005) indicates that there were revolutionary movements in Sudan in early 1990s where the National Islamic Front (NIF) government of Sudan was accused of harbouring and abetting youth recruitment for purposes of expanding violent extremism. The NIF was further accused of associating with al-Qaeda to undermine the governments of Sudan’s neighbours with the sole aim of bringing about an Islamist state (Pirio, 2005). With such happening, youth socialization processes should aim to rejuvenate the young into productive members.

Many terrorist organizations encourage violent attacks based on a fundamentalist and erroneous interpretation of religious texts, such as the Qur’an. They focus on more specific ideas, including that ‘Western societies are morally bankrupt’, that ‘the

West is engaged in a war against Muslims' and that 'jihad and martyrdom are indeed legitimate means by which Muslims defend their faith' (Hafez & Mullins, 2015). Together, these ideas constitute an ideology because they describe a 'master narrative about the world and one's place in it' (Hafez & Mullins, 2015). Ideologies typically "demonize enemies and justify violence against them, and they incentivize sacrifice by promising heroic redemption" (Hafez & Mullins, 2015). For Neumann (2013), terrorism cannot be explained without reference to these ideological assumptions, because, otherwise, 'none of the behaviours make any sense'.

Another consistent finding is that social relationships are crucial to understanding radicalization (Christmann, 2012). This is relevant not only to Islamist terrorism, but also left-wing and right-wing terrorism, cult membership, and gangs (Hafez & Mullins, 2015). Radicalization is a 'group phenomenon' in which friends, relatives and top down recruitment processes encourage new members to internalize a group's common mind-set (Christmann, 2012). The influence exerted on new members can range from persuasion to manipulation and coercion (Maskaliūnaite, 2015). A number of processes facilitate this, including 'group bonding, group polarization and isolation, and peer pressure' (Christmann, 2012).

There are two main reasons group dynamics have a significant influence on radicalization. The first is that groups satisfy (and are able to exploit) the psychological need, particularly of young recruits, to find a sense of meaning and purpose. Membership to a group and participation in its activities satisfies the psychological 'quest for significance' (Kruglanski *et al.*, 2014). The second reason is that groups amplify the costs of leaving once an individual has joined. Even if an individual loses faith in the group's ideology, strategic or tactics, one cannot easily exit. One also has to contend with feelings of loyalty, guilt, and anxiety about returning to a previous 'normal' life (Hafez & Mullins, 2015). One may also fear criminal sanction by the state or punishment by the group itself. In other words, the soul-stirring, mental, material, and physical costs of exit can be prohibitively high to those seeking to move away from radicals (Hafez & Mullins, 2015).

Blomberg and Hess (2008) established that developed countries are more likely to experience terrorist attacks than developing countries. Ross (1993) hypothetically substantiates this finding, stating that economically developed countries afford terrorists and bigger targets; there is a greater availability of lethal weapons, and high-tech technology and communication systems to boost the effectiveness of their attacks. However, other

research manages to find pointers of poverty to be concurrently negative and positive predictors of terrorism. Using dyadic analysis of source and target countries, Blomberg and Hess (2008) and Li (2005) discovered that increased income levels in countries reduce the probability for their citizens to launch terrorist attacks abroad. Conversely, those countries with higher incomes, and advanced levels of political democracy and economic openness, are more likely to be pursued by international terrorists. When combined, these studies indicate a more multifaceted relationship wherein economic underdevelopment breeds terrorist arrangements and prompts citizens to launch international attacks against developing countries because they attribute power, development and free media that are likely to cover attacks (Hoffman & McCormick, 2004). Developed countries are endowed with more many and worthwhile targets and they are symbols of a non-egalitarian status quo and a focus for political hatreds (Crenshaw, 2007).

Economic imbalance is one of the factors that contribute to terrorism. In their analysis of terrorism in Africa, Campbell and Flournoy (2001) acknowledge the roles poverty and marginalization among the Muslims which cause sectarian and inter-ethnic strife, despair, and anti-Western resentment. They also note the emergence of Islamic agencies, funded by Saudi and other Persian Gulf states and individuals, which are addressing the social problems of Muslim communities while sowing seeds of discord and anti-Western sentiment and recruiting and providing safe havens for terrorist organizations.

According to June (2011), all terrorist groups have an ideology espoused, disseminated and popularized by extremist organizations that seem attractive and compelling, sanctioning the use of violence as the only alternative. These terrorist groups seek to ridicule and recruit young people to their cause. How, where, and to what extent vary across groups. Al Qaeda and many other groups like the al-Shabaab aspire to ridicule and recruit large numbers to show that they are part of an international network with an international agenda. This agenda draws selectively on militant Islamist ideologies of misrepresented theology that requires meticulous preventive and response strategies. Efforts to establish Islamic states and ultimately a single Islamic caliphate have certified terrorism around the world against military and civilian targets as a legitimate means to this end.

It can be argued that no distinct factors push people into terrorism. It is hard to profile a terrorist in general. Understanding and addressing some probable reasons behind some terrorist actions may reduce radicalization. However, profiles based on stereotypical assumptions in relation to nationality, religion, colour, tribe, gender and socio-economic

status are not merely discriminatory but are also futile (Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe [OSCE], 2014). Nonetheless, radicalization and enrolment do not take place in a vacuum. Every case of terrorist radicalization and enrolment comes from a connection with an environment that warrants these tendencies in addition to personal circumstances and psychology (Njogu, 2015).

Therefore, social interactions, group changes and inter-personal associations are major factors that influence pull factors. Interaction activity between the person and external influences includes terrorist propagandists and recruiters, who recognize, prey on and groom susceptible youths by providing physical and/or mental support, and misuse their trust to control them or indoctrinate them into being implicated into terrorism (Lombardi *et al.*, 2015). The internet is one of the media facilitating terrorist radicalization. The spread and exposure of ideologies that validate terrorism and foster its appeal are critical pull factors. Numerous terrorists and violent radicals expertly modify, package and distribute their theories to reach and reflect on a particular individual or group targeted for radicalization and recruitment.

Building relationships with local communities with a keen eye on de-radicalization and addressing the conditions favourable to the spread of terrorism is key. More specifically, this entails challenging violent or extremist rhetoric and supporting mainstream opinions, disrupting those who spread messages of violence, supporting individuals vulnerable to terrorist recruitment, increasing the resilience of communities to extremist propaganda and addressing the grievances which may make individuals and communities vulnerable to such exploitation (Secretary of State for the Home Department, 2011; Romaniuk & Fink, 2012). The strongest weapon against terrorism is precisely the facet of society that appeals to the potential recruits for terrorism. The potential recruits are the students/youth who come from the communities from which the terrorists derive their support who should become the focus of counterterrorism policies (OSCE, 2014).

Coker (2015) introduced some of the safety measures that can be adopted in de-radicalization to include tutorial and workshop sessions. Welfare, pastoral care, chaplain supports provide sufficient care and support for vulnerable learners. However, students must be protected in such spaces whereby extremist rhetoric or grooming takes place. Another approach is introducing external speakers in order to deal with possible instances of extremism. Coker further suggests online safety measures such as blocking access to dangerous or illegal sites by filtering and

using firewall systems. This also helps to identify curious students susceptible to radicalization.

Some authors, such as Silber and Bhatt (2007), refer to violent radicalization as a path that inherently involves concrete violent behaviour while others qualify the mere acceptance of certain ideas that condone or justify violence as an indicator of violent radicalization. For some authors and experts, the path to violent radicalization is an individual one whereas for others it is considered a collective process. In addition, Alonso and Reinares (2006) posit that the word “violent” also needs further qualification. Socialization into violence is not necessarily co-terminus with socialization into terrorism. While there are various forms of violence, not necessarily of a political nature, terrorism is a special kind of political violence. Among the various expressions of terrorism, suicide terrorism stands out as a particular phenomenon. Arguably, there is only a partial overlap between the pathways to political violence in general, terrorism in particular and suicide terrorism as a special case where the perpetrator is among the victims of an attack. Furthermore, the term “radicalization” is problematic in that its relationship to “radicalism” as an expression of legitimate political thought, still reflected in the titles of some political parties in Europe, is confusing. With the mounting number of home-grown terrorist attacks, radicalization is becoming an important security priority. With the sudden spurt in home-grown terrorism perpetrated by a new breed of terrorists born and radicalized in their country of residence, conceptions of terrorism have changed and so have conceptualizations of radicalization.

A report by the Institute for Security Studies (2012) shows that the Somali fundamentalist movement, which has been active in Somali politics since the late 1980s, is rooted in the 1950s. However, ISS notes that it was reinforced by state collapse in 1991 and the resultant civil war, international intervention, external influence, and the subsequent efforts made by the Somalis themselves at new patterns of political reconstruction in a bid to shape their own destiny. There are strong structural foundations for radicalization in East Africa, which calls for de-radicalization programmes and strategies to be enhanced.

It is worth recognizing that radicalization is learned, thus de-radicalization is also a learning process. Kimunguyi (2011) argues that the growth of Islamic extremism in East Africa (EA) appears linked to the poor socio-economic conditions of countries in the region where Islamist groups, deliberately leveraging socio-economic grievances, penetrate EA societies (Rosand *et al.*, 2009). Somalia’s growing Islamist radicalism is spilling over into Kenya. The militant

al-Shabaab movement has built a cross-border presence and a clandestine support network among Muslim populations in the north east and Nairobi and on the coast, and is trying to radicalize and recruit youth from these communities, often capitalizing on long-standing grievances against the central state. This problem could grow more severe with the October 2011 decision by the Kenyan government to intervene directly in Somalia.

Education is a game-changer in de-radicalization in that a lack of education in general may push vulnerable groups to pursue terrorism for financial, among others, rewards. As a result, it becomes easier to join al-Shabaab rather than languish in poverty with no chance to “pursue something greater” (Choudhury, 2007).

As there is no set hierarchy of facilitating factors to radicalization into violence, the examples described here are not in any particular order. The enabling environment may, for instance, contain historical antecedents of political violence or, on a more contemporary level, concrete experiences of civil war or brutal encounters with unjust authority. Excessive repression by state authorities is likely to contribute to a climate of mutual distrust among those affected and assists in creating an atmosphere in which disparate social aggregates will be inclined to antagonism and entrenchment instead of conflict resolution (Gartenstein-Ross & Grossman, 2009). Ideally, a necessary caveat when approaching issues related to radicalization is the treatment of religion; and thus inclusion of religious perspectives and faith-based organizations’ efforts could help address this challenge.

Further examples of facilitating factors would be linked to profound social changes such as the breakdown in social bonds of individuals caught between different cultures and generations. Alienation or the sense of a personal identity crisis can furthermore increase or add to sentiments of frustration. This in turn may be linked with the experience or the perception of prevalent social injustice that creates barriers for entry into mainstream society. Finally, lack of integration and the experience or perception of discrimination based on ethnic or religious origins can be other significant facilitating factors (Soper & Fetzer, 2007).

To de-radicalize youths, creation of enabling environment of socio-political incorporation particularly for Muslim communities with their broader society is of essence, and relatedly, their experiences of discrimination, victimization, and xenophobia should be considered (Wilner, 2009). Jenkins (2007) adds that the assumption rests on the notion that individuals and fringe groups who fail to properly associate with their host (or native) country

and nation the so-called “unassimilated” eventually seek other like-minded individuals to associate with. In so doing, they construct a narrow social network that is distinct from broader societal ones and establish identities that reflect the “clique” rather than the nation. As a result, some radicalized individuals distance themselves politically, socially, and even ideologically from the broader community, eventually rejecting the national identity shared by their fellow citizens, along with the collective’s underlining political ideology, historical narrative, and related value-systems. Anti-democratic action and violence is one possible outcome.

For successful de-radicalization, the polarization of society across different religious and cultural groups should be reduced as it weakens the bonds of state identity, civil association, and nationalism. In time, the broader communities in which the radicalized individuals live risk being characterized as enemies. In Western Europe, Granatstein, Smith and Stairs (2007) note, the second and third generation of Muslim citizens is more fiercely Islamist than their parents. The issue is the widespread failure to socially and politically incorporate certain persons into society and to properly teach, diffuse, and ingrain the lessons of democracy, peaceful dispute resolution, and the rule of law. The results are individuals who spur acceptance of their nation’s identity and fail to appreciate the state’s social and political norms, both of which ease the use of violence if and when it is contemplated (Hendrickson, 2012). The country contexts in which Kenya and Somalia, and the larger African youth are formed, also impact their vulnerability to radicalization, especially the prevalence of conflict.

At the global level, the Muslim diaspora communities now constitute the largest immigrant population in the EU. Contrary to expectations that Muslim immigrants would successfully assimilate, they are reaffirming their Islamic identity, as a new political identification, further more a number of them resort to terrorism against their adopted country (Anspaha, 2008). However, Hendrickson (2012) cites ineffective Muslim integration and political representation, as well as the social exclusion, unemployment and discrimination that the Muslims experience in their adopted countries – all have led to their deeper exclusion and marginalization, facilitating the development of Islamic radicalism and home-grown terrorism.

According to Precht (2007), in Western Europe, for many, the process of radicalization begins when they are teenagers looking for a cause and a stronger Muslim identity and increasingly finding the answer in the ideology of radical Islam. Often, people are rather secular before they enter the radicalization

process and, in general, radicalization is taking place within loose social networks of friends and peers (Precht, 2007). A significant aspect in radicalization is the presence of a fascinating person who can easily convey persuasive speeches not only in Mosques but also in schools, universities, or even prisons. “Official sources indicate that many American home-grown Islamists have also been radicalized while incarcerated, including the members of the prison-formed Jamiyat al-Islam al-Sahih cell in California that was convicted in 2007 for its plans to attack not only synagogues but also the Israeli consulate in Los Angeles” (Benraad, 2009). A lot of young probable radicals are not fully aware of their country’s history, as well, they lack appropriate knowledge of Islam and have not read the Quran to understand that Islam is in fact one of the most peaceful religions.

The fact that preachers of Wahhabi Islam find to their advantage is that many young disenchanted individuals are not knowledgeable about the entire scope of religion they are trying to embrace. Another important factor to consider is the role of social networks in the process of radicalization (Bizina & Gray, 2014). “Social links are key to the dynamics of terror networks” (Sageman, 2004). Group phenomenon is a strong factor in creating such network, because the potential jihadists were close friends or relatives when joining terrorist network and have done so not individually but as a group. Jenkins (2007) points out that numerous youth go through the groups of radicals subsequent to the society maligning them by getting virtual networks online, or in youth clubs and places of worship. Krueger (2007) asserts that the local community, by remaining disinterested in its youth, misses the cues that indicate the process of radicalization, as was the case with the Millennial Plot bombers in Montreal. Perhaps, this lapse in judgment was due to the same British multicultural approach that Canada has adopted to its immigration policies.

According to Richardson (2012), the widespread feeling of humiliation and uncertainty rests upon a whole array of widely diverging specific local circumstances. As in the past, it offers fringe groups an opportunity to justify their recourse to terrorism. However, as all opinion polls indicate, such terrorist violence is condemned by large majorities in most countries of the Muslim world as well as within Muslim communities inside Europe. From the late 19th century to the present day, all such diverse significant political radicalization waves that resulted in terrorist action share a number of structural features. Firstly, they all thrive in an enabling environment which is essentially characterized by a widely shared sense of injustice, whether real or perceived, among concerned segments of the

population or whole societies. Sentiments of injustice, exclusion and humiliation have always been powerful forces in politics and prime movers for change (Richardson, 2012). Radicalization contains many subsets of issues; socio-economic factors, leadership in community relations, demographics, and religion are focal points. To develop and effectively implement counter radicalization strategies, it is important to identify related factors impact or influence radicalization. Socioeconomics play an important role in contemporary terrorism.

Schmid (2013) argues that radicalization is not a threat to society if it is not connected to violence or other unlawful acts, such as incitement to hatred, as legally defined in compliance with international human rights law. Radicalization can actually be a force for beneficial change. Schmid (2011) points out that countering terrorist radicalization requires a sophisticated, comprehensive response. This should include both effective criminal-justice action, in compliance with international human rights standards and the rule of law, against those who incite others to terrorism and seek to recruit others for terrorism, and multidisciplinary efforts to address conditions that are conducive to terrorism (Schmid, 2011). Although efforts towards counter-radicalization have been enhanced, it appear analysis of these programs is more in the developed economies like USA, and hence more research in this area between Kenya and Somalia was needed.

According to Virta, De Lintand Deukmedjian (2008), initiatives to counter violent radical groups have been developed in many of the locations studied. The approach taken in each of these regions varies, with some focusing primarily on law enforcement and government actions or initiatives aimed at preventing acts of terrorism and shutting down terrorist networks. Some of the regions studied have implemented counter radicalization initiatives aimed more at understanding why people are susceptible to radicalization and then using that knowledge to minimize its occurrence (Virta *et al.*, 2008). However, very few of the counter-radicalization initiatives appear to be aimed specifically at addressing or preventing radicalization and recruitment.

According to Anspaha (2008), there are a few initiatives or programs identified in some of the regions that directly address youth, or are aimed at stemming recruitment attempts in venues frequented by youths. For example, school-based programs have been implemented in some regions that seek to educate both students and teachers about radicalization and potential signs of extremism (Anspaha, 2008). In addition, Albrecht and Jackson (2014) contend that curricula have been updated in some countries to promote integration and

multiculturalism, as well as to teach skills that would be useful to young persons seeking employment. In at least one of the locations studied, new schools are being opened in areas where existing schools were either established or infiltrated by terrorist groups in order to provide educational alternatives. Other youth-based programs that were identified include: ensuring that job opportunities are available for young persons; tackling discrimination that could lead persons to become radicalized; and, developing rehabilitation programs for young persons who have been implicated in terrorist or extremist activity. With respect to countering internet-based recruitment or radicalization, that existing initiatives are not focused on youth as a distinct group. Given the apparent increase in youth involvement in terrorist organizations, and the changing demographics of those involved or implicated, it is necessary to promote awareness that young persons are susceptible to terrorist recruitment and radicalization between Kenya and Somalia.

As has been shown by the situation in Europe (Anspaha, 2008), many of the young persons that are perceived as being most vulnerable to radicalization or recruitment (based on incidents that have already occurred) have been second and third-generation immigrants. It is believed that these young persons often struggle with identity problems, fail to integrate, and may feel excluded or marginalized vulnerabilities that have been utilized by terrorists to gain their support (Anspaha, 2008). It is important to gain a better understanding how terrorist groups are recruiting, radicalizing, and utilizing youth.

Bangura (2010) adds that there is also the need for dialogue among different ethno-religious groups in the country. Ethnic and religious groups in the country should not only talk about the need for dialogue among themselves, they should also act by organizing a forum for dialogue in all states and local governments of the federation. Dialogue will help to create ethnic accommodation, religious tolerance, understanding and peaceful co-existence among the different groups in the country. The challenges faced by the Muslim community like sectarian and inability to confront radicalization; and mounting tensions with other major faith groups, are blamed on the lack of Kenyan-Muslim leadership. There is great disaffection with the “official” Muslim leaders, many of whom are widely viewed as elitist and self-serving; their integrity sullied through ties with the regime or foreign interests; and disconnected from harsh community realities (Mohamud, 2010). This trust and credibility deficit compounds the leadership crisis and undermines community cohesion. Radical organizations have emerged in the last decade to challenge the “official” leadership and institutions.

Their political activism and radical anti-establishment politics are attractive to many youths, disillusioned with what they see as timid, pragmatist and moderate political views and style of the established institutions.

East Africa’s burgeoning youth population is increasingly defining the region’s security environment. Population growth over the past several decades has made East Africa one of the youngest regions in the world and is projected to continue. At the same time, violent extremist organizations (VEOs) remain active in the region and have extended their influence in a number of areas. Since the potential for East Africa’s youth to serve as drivers of economic growth are apparent when comparing its demographic trends to other world regions, such as East Asia; the same youth can play a key role in counter radicalization. In South Korea, for example, the country’s youth bulge was converted into a national asset through a blend of educational programs and youth-oriented services that prepared young people for jobs in a modern and globally connected economy (Bizina & Gray, 2014). However, most East African countries have not conducted sufficient government planning, attracted adequate amounts of private sector investment, or fostered the social awareness necessary to convert these demographic trends into national advantages, or even to properly accommodate their current and future young citizens.

De-radicalization helps youths disengage from extremism and radicalism. Psychological assessment, religious mentoring to solidify faith and divert extremism, community integration, family support are part of many intergrated activities which bind and bring about social identity, recognition and cooperation in youth lifestyles.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Post terrorism security interventions are designed to address not only the immediate aftermath of terrorism attacks but also the ensuring of social relations in and among the communities living together more so in our case Nairobi county. This is more crucial considering that the planning and execution of terrorist attacks also embraces local community agents. Globally and even in Africa, East Africa and Kenya, security interventions have had adverse implications on social relations in the immediate environment as well as national levels as stated by (Alozieuwa, 2012). Nairobi County has not been an exception, due to growing terrorist threats and the myriad post terrorism security interventions strategies by state and its actors. As a result of terrorism and counterterror activities, social relations in Nairobi have similarly been affected which might be at

variance to those in other jurisdictions. This is especially the case since particular interventions, such as police-community partnerships, have had long-term social impacts that require sociological responses. In this regard, therefore, the study examined the nature of police-community partnerships as a post terrorism security intervention strategy and its influence on social relations in Nairobi County Kenya.

III. Materials and Methods

The study was conducted in Nairobi County, Kenya. The County has remained a hotspot of terror attacks, the latest being the Dusit Restaurant attack on January 15th, 2019. Out of approximately 40 attacks that took place between the year 2011 and 2017, about 27 occurred at Nairobi County and its surroundings. As such, most of the survivors are found there. Due to the frequency of terror attacks, the residents of Nairobi County have a different perspective of social relations compared to their counterparts from other counties in Kenya.

This study adopted mixed methods research design by use of concurrent Triangulation technique. The study targeted all households living in Nairobi County who have been affected by terrorism directly or indirectly. In this group, the main target was the heads of household, security heads of the study area and survivors of terrorist attacks. According to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) (2009), there were 985,106 households in Nairobi County. This population formed the target population of the study. The sample size for the study was determined using sample size determination formula advanced by Krejcie and Morgan (1970). The formula is given as:

$$n = \frac{X^2 * N * P(1 - P)}{(ME^2 * (N - 1)) + (X^2 * P * (1 - P))}$$

Where:

n= Sample size

X² = Chi-square for the specified confidence level at 1 degree of freedom

N= population size

P = population proportion

Therefore, in the study the sample size was:

$$n = \frac{3.841 * 985106 * .5(1 - .5P)}{(.05 * .05 * (985106 - 1)) + (3.841 * .5 * (1 - .5))}$$

= 384 respondents

The study purposively selected Nairobi County. In addition, the study used proportionate sampling to

determine the number of respondents from each cluster (sub-county/constituency) that is Dagoretti North, Dagoretti South, Embakassi central, Embakassi East, Embakassi North, Embakassi South, Embakassi West, Kamukunji, Kasarani, Kibra, Langata, Makadara, Mathare, Roysambu, Ruaraka, Starehe and Westlands including survivors and County Security Board to give a total of 384 respondents

Key informants interview schedule as well as interview schedule were essentially employed methods of data collection. Data analysis methods entailed both qualitative and quantitative methods. Quantitative analysis involved using descriptive statistics where frequencies and percentages were utilized in order to describe the background characteristics of the respondents. In relation to quantitative analysis, the raw data from the field was first cleaned, edited and classified to ensure that the critical information to the research objectives were isolated. Coding of variables then followed to ease entering of data into an SPSS version 22 program where outputs in form of tables were obtained and used for data presentation. Qualitative data, on the other hand, was analysed by selecting the common themes that was presented by the respondents in relation to the study objectives. Qualitative data was presented in form of direct quotations from the respondents as well as indirect quotations as formatted by the researcher without altering the meaning.

IV. Results and Discussion

The study sought to assess the influence of youth deradicalization strategy on social relations in Nairobi County, Kenya. Table 1 below shows that 76.0% were aware of youth who were formerly radicalized and have since reformed and 75.8% were of the view that several kinds of rehabilitation strategies/programmes had been put place for de-radicalized youth. Moreover, 80.8% were of the view that strategies/programmes used were effective in realizing social bonding while 78.6% were of the view that society provides youth with opportunities for identity, acceptance and purpose. Another majority (82.6%) were of the view that the youth are active towards social activities when they feel their part of the society and 80.0% were of the view that youth relate well with other members of the society when involved in activities.

Table 1: Youth De-radicalization Strategy and Social Relations

Statements	SD	D	U	A	SA	Total	Mean	
I am aware of youth who were formerly	F	19	33	61	163	108	384	3.80

radicalized and have since reformed as good citizens	%	5	8.6	15.8	42.4	28.1	100	76.0
Several kinds of rehabilitation strategies/programmes have been put in place for de-radicalized youth to feel a sense of belonging	F	19	41	55	152	116	384	3.79
	%	5	10.8	14.4	39.6	30.2	100	75.8
Strategies/programmes used are effective in realizing social bonding	F	0	8	53	238	86	384	4.04
	%	0	2.2	13.7	61.9	22.3	100	80.8
Society provides youth with opportunities for identity, acceptance and purpose	F	19	30	66	108	160	384	3.93
	%	5	7.9	17.3	28.1	41.7	100	78.6
The youth are active towards social activities when they feel they are involved as part of the society	F	0	8	58	166	152	384	4.18
	%	0	2.2	15.1	43.2	39.6	100	82.6
The youth relate well with other members of the society when involved in activities	F	19	19	44	160	141	384	4.00
	%	5	5	11.5	41.7	36.7	100	80.0

Source: Field Data (2019)

4.2 Effectiveness of the Youth De-radicalization Programmes

The study results indicated in Table 1 above show that majority of the respondents (76%) were conscious of a number of young people who were formerly radicalized and have since reformed. Youths put in so much effort to access employment, education, housing, health services, and other necessities. Nevertheless, they become discouraged with their incapacity to get culturally known adulthood status and therefore seek justification by joining aggressive terrorist groups that offer them an adult-like status through liability, reason and often financial reimbursement. Faced with these challenges, the youths are more likely to look for a meaning and construct worldviews that satisfy their desires for self-actualization and fulfilment (Bell, 2016). This can be seen from the sentiments of one of the Nairobi County Security Board (NCSB) member who stated:

Our boys who were being radicalized in one of the institution in the city here were taken by the government given jobs such as collection of garbage to date they have rely changed, currently the are our ambassadors and support us in dealing with radicalization and extremism (Personal Communication, NCSB Member, 2019).

Further, a terrorist attack survivor said “If we change the culture of our youths not to see life in terms of prosperity we can minimize the rate of terrorism in counties especially in Nairobi. This is because we bring up our youths with a mind of getting rich by all means” (Personal Communication, terror attack survivor, 2019). A household member from Starehe Sub-County also had this to say: “Programmes should

be sustainable, and it should focus on the attitudes and culture of our youth if we want to succeed on the fight against terrorism. It’s not enough to divert their attention we should mound the character of our youths” (Personal Communication, household member, 2019).

There are two parts to the de-radicalization process: one part is the de-radicalization of attitudes and values, and the second includes dis-engagement from violent behaviour and the process of leaving vicious groups and reintegrating into other social groups (Porta & LaFree, 2012; El-Said 2015). Youths have proved more susceptible to the appeal of terrorism due to poor social networks as they wrestle with questions of identity, their place in the world and their future. Social interactions, group dynamics and interpersonal relationships therefore play a primary role as pull factors (Muhsin, 2012). An interactive process between the individual and external influences includes terrorist propagandists and recruiters, who identify, prey on and groom vulnerable youths. They gain a hold on them by providing material and/or psychological support, and abuse their trust to manipulate them or indoctrinate them into becoming involved with terrorism. Therefore, after being radicalized, when they are reformed, the you thare brought together and given skills which allow them to change.

On the contrary, as regards the effectiveness of the strategies and programmes, due to its geostrategic position relations with the US, the United Kingdom (UK) and Israel, proximity to Somalia and its role in the war against terrorism, Kenya is at the crossroads as far as countering youth radicalization is concerned. The country has variously been referred to as a base for terrorist activities. Weak governance on security and criminal justice system is highly believed to

discourage local communities from participating in addressing the root causes of youth radicalization in the Country. Gartenstein-Ross and Grossman (2009) contend that the major basis for home-grown radicalization in Kenya is the incapacity of young people to experience the acculturation and assimilation process successfully; a process that would enable them to become fully productive members of the society. This vacuity leaves them vulnerable and susceptible to the influences of radicalizing forces.

According to Mogire and Agade (2011), the advanced Kenya's economy and infrastructure, relative to her neighbours, allows for freedom of movement and abundance of targets of recruitment. Weak governance in key areas such as security, criminal justice system, and rule of law, which is seemingly applied in a selective manner, probably serves as push factors for disenfranchised youth in joining terrorism ranks. Additionally, Kenya's proximity to unstable states, porous borders, political stability and relatively stronger cosmopolitan economy attracts abundance of al-Shabaab sympathizers into the Country. On the other hand, Muhula (2007) observes that Kenyan youth are bedevilled with various grievances arising from poverty, unemployment, limited education opportunities and poor socialization. These vulnerabilities coupled with an extreme interpretation of Islam, are likely to therefore employ a variety of ideological tools and radical Islamic teachings to galvanize the youth towards violence.

4.3 Forms of Youth De-radicalization Strategies/Programmes and Sense of Belonging

From the study, respondents (75.8%), as seen in Table 1 above, reported that there were several kinds of rehabilitation strategies/programmes that had been put in place for de-radicalizing youth by creating a sense of belonging among them.

Terrorist groups in society use different strategies to give the youth a false sense of belonging by infusing in the man "us versus them" mentality. In this approach to radicalization, "group members of an in-group will seek to find negative aspects of an out-group, thus enhancing their self-image" (McLeod, 2008). However, one of the terrorism survivor respondents from Embakasi West had this to say: "This jobs which have been created for us have been able to place food on the table and shun evil in our lives in fact when I was jobless I used to look for ways of joining terrorism for me to earn a live hood but for now I am mindful of my job and my relationship with other youths" (Personal Communication, terrorism survivor, 2019).

Further another a household head from Roysambu stated thus: "With the introduction of loans to the

youth, my mind changed immediately our group on chicken rearing was funded, before that a good number of us were looking for ways to sneak to Somali and try our lives there. This group for sure has brought us together for your information we are now working as brothers and sisters" (Personal Communication, Household head, 2019).

The Nairobi County Security Board members stated that efforts had been made to ensure that all our youths were engaged innovative and creative ventures to contribute to social progress. The strategies used included Youth Enterprise Development Fund (YEDF), Education and tutorial and workshop sessions for youth. The YEDF is a state corporation mandated to offer financial and business development support services to youth-owned enterprises in Kenya. This is in line with what has been stated by Muhsin (2012), that from such funding the youth come together and form a group to undertake a particular development or business and through such group their energies are directed to projects and the mind of terrorism as a source of income is negated. Through such grouping youths create social network and social relationships which lead them to know one another and build development teams.

Similarly, Kilford (2014) avers that youth education using dialogue encourages young people to look for different narratives and viewpoints. Involving young people in conversation promotes an avenue needed to avert radicalization while allowing them to learn more skills and comprehend the phenomenon and its dynamics. This view was echoed from the interviews conducted during the study. One household head in Mathare stated: "Education is the main weapon of inculcating required attributes by the state to the youth especially by helping the youth to embrace nationalism which means doing everything for your good and for the good of the nation" (Personal Communication, Household head, 2019).

This sentiments were also supported by member of Nairobi security board who looked at education and YEDF as the best missiles to unite the youths and reduce incidence of terrorism in their society. A terror survivor also had this to say: "Education is an enabler to youths thus it bring people from different back grounds together in one environment thus socialization takes place converting 'bad' youths to acceptable members of the society" (Personal Communication, Terror survivor, 2019).

Further, education also had a role in de-radicalization and shifting values of a radicalized individual by bringing socialization. In this case, education entailsthe reversal of values gained during the process of radicalization, which occurred through educating the youth on what values they gained by

becoming radical. Another strategy, as stated by Koehler (2016), is the creation of safe spaces of belonging and engagement after terror attack. Belonging and engagement is the situation where the young people work with other members of the society. Spaces should be created for youths to discuss their frustrations with trusted adults in the society and be listened to. Trusted members of the society can serve this purpose.

Further, schools curricula and programmes aimed at preventing youth from terrorist radicalization and recruitment. The staff in charge of prevention in school (counsellors, teachers, health professionals, administrators) plays a vital role in preparing young people to challenge extremism and the ideology of terrorism and effectively rebut those who have sympathy with terrorism. This calls for a shared responsibility by different agencies such as education, faith, health, criminal justice and charities including internet. Establishing new sets of standards of ethics and behaviours for teachers that clarify obligations regarding extremism enables schools to take stern actions against staff who demonstrate unacceptable views (Gearty, 2005). This should apply to universities and colleges to ensure secure environments for students. While still upholding their commitment to freedom of speech, academic freedom and learning, universities have a key role in preventing terrorism and extremism. The university societies and student groups should have a clear and unambiguous role in safeguarding the young people from radicalization and recruitment by terrorist groups. A similar strategy involves funding Religious Education Council of Kenya in providing training and materials for helping teachers of religious education in discussing contentious extremism issues and violent views.

Coker (2015) introduced some of the safety measures that can be taken to minimize the risk of radicalization, including tutorial and workshop sessions for youth. Welfare, pastoral care, chaplain supports provide sufficient care and support for vulnerable youths. However, students must be protected in such spaces where extremist rhetoric or grooming takes place. Another approach is introducing external speakers in order to deal with possible instances of extremism. The internet has, on the hand, proved to be the most popular site for radicalization and recruitment for new members. As such, Coker (2015) suggests that online safety measures such as blocking access to dangerous or illegal sites by filtering and using firewall systems. This also helps to identify curious students susceptible to radicalization.

4.4 Community Re-Integration Programmes to De-radicalized Youth

Community re-integration is more about the society accept the reformed youth back to their society and supporting them to transform their lives fully and terminate radicalization completely. The results in Table 1 above (78.6%), indicates that society provides youth with opportunities for identity, acceptance and purpose. Focusing on edification of relationships with local communities with the intention to preventing radicalization and addressing the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism is a major step. More specifically, this entails challenging aggressive or radical language and supporting conventional opinion, disrupting those who spread messages of violence supporting individuals susceptible to terrorist enrolment, increasing the resilience of communities to extremist propaganda and addressing the grievances which may make individuals and communities vulnerable to such exploitation.

One of the household respondent from Kasarani said: “The strongest weapon in our arsenal against terrorism is precisely the facet of our society that appeals to the potential recruits for terrorism. The potential recruits are the students/youth who come from the communities from which the terrorists derive their support who should become the focus of youth de-radicalization strategy” (Personal Communication, Household member, 2019). The Nairobi County Security Board said “The county has created opportunities for youths to identify themselves and build self-esteem amongst them, this is undertaken by giving the youth to know themselves and the roles expected of them by the government” (Personal Communication, NCSB member, 2019).

On the contrary, members of the society are currently too busy for the youths to get attention from them. Muhsin (2012) states that there are two forces that drive the youth to terrorism, namely the push and the pull factors. Those which push the youth are negative social, cultural, and political features of where someone stays and is surrounded by, that aid in pushing vulnerable individuals onto the path of violent radicalism. Push factors are what are commonly known as “underlying/root causes” such as shortage, unemployment, illiteracy, favouritism, and political/economical marginalization. Pull factors, on the other hand, are the affirmative characteristics and benefits of an extremist organization that “pull” vulnerable individuals to join. These include the group’s ideology (e.g., emphasis on changing one’s condition through violence rather than “apathetic” and “passive” democratic means), strong bonds of brotherhood and

sense of belonging, reputation building, prospect of fame or glory, and other socialization benefits (Choudhury, 2007).

4.5 Post De-radicalization Youth Social Activities and Outcomes

Post de-radicalization youth engagements are quite critical to make them busy and not think of involving themselves in terrorist acts. Investigations in the kind of activities that the youth engage in after de-radicalization revealed that 82.6% results from Table 1 above indicated that youth are active towards social activities when they are involved as part of the society. One of the respondents from Mathare Sub-County stated that the current constitution of Kenya recognizes them and thus in every government engagements youths should be part of them. Moreover, the study established that the government and society at large can do much to make the youth shunt involvement in terrorism activities and instead, engage in productive activities through various strategies.

One of the most successful strategies in youth de-radicalization is education. Students are skilled on academic commitment and career goals that deter them from brainwashing terror and jihad applied in youth de-radicalization. Teaching youth new ways of building coping mechanism and cognitive schemes insulates them from future crisis. Dissuading youths from being drawn into radicalization and recruitment (attracting and compelling ideologies of extremists and terrorism that are destructive defensive mechanisms) is thus a critical proactive remedy in Kenyan education system today. This can best be explained by the sentiment of terror survivor who said “The youth are no longer future leaders they are the current leaders and they can direct their lives if a conducive environment is provided to them” (Personal Communication, Terror attack survivor, 2019).

Identification should be cautiously done against a range of feasible indicators: expressed support for violence and terrorism; possession of extremist literature; attempts to access or contribute to aggressive activist websites; possession of materials regarding weapons and explosives; and possession of materials regarding training, skills and techniques (Gunaratna, 2014). This can well be expounded by the Nairobi County Security Board member who state “if we want to mould our youths we should do so with caution and encourage them to have positive life in everything they do lets give them hope” (Personal Communication, NCSB member, 2019).

On the contrary, Mogire and Agade (2011) observe that, in Kenya, impunity among politically connected elites causes young people to lose confidence in their

society and legal institutions. This development could be attributed to the seemingly discriminative approach by the criminal justice system. Youth, for instance, claim to receive harsh punishments for seemingly small offenses, such as lack of National identification cards and loitering.

In Countering radicalization to violent extremism can be successfully accomplished by involving and empowering individuals and groups at the local level to build resilience against it. Thus, radicalization usually occurs within loose social networks of relatives, friends and peers and therefore to overcome it family ties, good communication, participation in monitored religious activities by the youth and strengthening community ties are the best weapons to be used.

Therefore, despite diverse attempts and successes in youth de-radicalization, Kenya’s overall strategy has been marked by solemn institutional weaknesses that limit the effectiveness of set strategies. The country is still faced with challenges such as home-grown terrorism and with permeable borders among other concerns. Additionally, Kenyan police and the larger public security sector have over and over again failed to carry out good policing with the community, which is necessary to gather quality evidence and have effective de-radicalization. Without addressing these factors, Kenya’s counter-radicalization strategies cannot work effectively. Building community cohesion in the face of a sustained effort by al-Shabaab to provoke ethnic and religious divisions in Kenya is vital for marginalizing revolutionary actors and avoiding sectarian strife. Key to this will be building trust in the effectiveness, professionalism, and transparency of Kenya’s security sector among Kenyan youths. For counter radical efforts to be successful, there must be intelligence lead and thus calls for the winning of the hearts and minds of the population.

V. Conclusion and Recommendations

The youth have proved more susceptible to the appeal of terrorism due to poor social networks as they grapple with questions of identity, their place in the world and their future. Social interactions, group dynamics and interpersonal relationships therefore play a primary role as pull factors. An interactive process between the individual and external influences includes terrorist propagandists and recruiters, who identify, prey on and groom vulnerable youths, gain a hold on them by providing material and/or psychological support, and abuse their trust to manipulate them or indoctrinate them into becoming involved with terrorism. Therefore, once radicalized, when they are reformed, the youth

should be brought together and given skills that enable them to change and develop their livelihoods. The community should continuously strengthen family ties, create employment and educate the youths to divert them from extremism and radicalism. The study did not focus on psychological outcomes of post-terrorism to the victims and survivors of terror acts. Therefore, future studies should focus on the psychological implications of post-terrorism attacks.

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