Contributions of Community Based Approaches to Countering Youth Radicalization in Kenya’s Mombasa and Nairobi Counties.

A Dissertation Presented to the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (SHSS) of United States International University-Africa (USIU-A) in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in International Relations.

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SUMMER 2018
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my original work, and it has not been submitted to any academic institution in any form other than the United States International University-Africa (USIU-A).

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
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<tr>
<td>AMISOM</td>
<td>African Union Mission in Somalia</td>
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<tr>
<td>AMYC</td>
<td>Ansaar Muslim Youth Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>Administration Police</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATM</td>
<td>Automated Teller Machine</td>
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<tr>
<td>ATPU</td>
<td>Anti-Terrorism Policing Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>AU</td>
<td>African Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>BRAVE</td>
<td>Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBOs</td>
<td>Community Based Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC</td>
<td>County Commissioner</td>
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<tr>
<td>CICC</td>
<td>Coast Interfaith Council of Clerics</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIPK</td>
<td>Council of Imams and Islamic Preachers of Kenya</td>
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<td>CONTEST</td>
<td>Counter-terrorism Strategy</td>
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<tr>
<td>CP</td>
<td>Community Policing</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Civil Society Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>CVE</td>
<td>Countering Violent Extremism</td>
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<tr>
<td>DVD</td>
<td>Digital Video Disc</td>
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<tr>
<td>FBI</td>
<td>Federal Bureau of Investigations</td>
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<td>FGDS</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussions</td>
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<td>GOK</td>
<td>Government of Kenya</td>
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<tr>
<td>GWOT</td>
<td>Global War on Terror</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICU</td>
<td>Islamic Courts Union</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDS</td>
<td>Institute of Development Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>IOM</td>
<td>International Organization for Migration</td>
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<tr>
<td>IPK</td>
<td>Islamic Party of Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IS</td>
<td>Islamic State</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISIL</td>
<td>Islamic State in the Levant</td>
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<td>ISIS</td>
<td>Islamic State of Iraq and Syria</td>
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<tr>
<td>JKUAT</td>
<td>Jomo Kenyatta University of Science and Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>KDF</td>
<td>Kenya Defence Forces</td>
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<tr>
<td>KPA</td>
<td>Kenya Ports Authority</td>
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<td>LIKODEP</td>
<td>Likoni Youth Development Program</td>
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MCAP-PCVE  Mombasa County Action Plan for Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism
MOU       Memorandum of Understanding
MRC       Mombasa Republican Council
MYC       Muslim Youth Center
NACOSTI   National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
NAMLEF    National Muslim Leaders Forum
NARC      National Rainbow Coalition
NCTC      National Counter Terrorism Center
NIS       National Intelligence Service
NSCVE     National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism
OSCE      Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
PBUH      Peace be Upon Him
PIRA      Provisional Irish Republican Army
PKK       Kurdistan Workers’ Party
POTA      Prevention of Terrorism Act
PRMC      Pumwani Riyadha Mosque Committee
RVI       Rift Valley Institute
SIP       Strategic Implementation Plan
SUPKEM    Supreme Council of Kenyan Muslims
TFG       Transitional Federal Government
UN        United Nations
UK        United Kingdom
UNSC      United Nations Security Council
USA       United States of America
USAID     United States Agency for International Development
VE        Violent Extremism
ABSTRACT

This research investigated the community-based approaches and interventions that have been adopted by communities in Nairobi and Mombasa Counties of Kenya in counter-radicalization work. Community-based approaches focusing on building the resilience of communities to react and respond to challenges posed by youth radicalization including their involvement in violent extremism are now considered to be a key plank of any counter-terrorism work globally. The underlying perspective for this shift is that the communities are better placed to respond to terrorists given that individuals are recruited from communities and which not only threatens community safety but also endangers their children, family and neighbours.

By focusing on resilience in the Kenyan context, this research responds to a changing discourse in terrorism studies. Going beyond these earlier narratives is the focus of this dissertation. The study investigated the multiple risk factors at play and how community-based approaches work in countering violent extremism in the Kenyan context. It finds both potentials and challenges in using community-based approaches in counter-radicalization work.

The study adopted a qualitative research design. It relied on both primary and secondary sources of data. In terms of primary data, the study relied on oral interviews that adopted both structured and semi-structured interview formats. Additionally, Focus Group Discussions (FGDS) were held with communities in the two field locations (Nairobi and Mombasa) and included youth, grassroots community workers, civil society actors, and faith-based organizations leaders. Key informants working within government policy and law enforcement agencies were also interviewed. Data was analysed through interpretivism and qualitative content analysis.
CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This research examines community-based approaches in Kenya engaged in countering youth radicalization that has been on the rise. A series of terror-related incidents in recent years, such as the Westgate Mall attack in 2013 and the Garissa University attacks in 2015, point to these growing security threats. Some of these home-grown incidences of terror attacks are now being linked to the phenomenon of youth radicalization. The central thesis of this work is to investigate the contributions of community-based approaches in counter-radicalization discourses in the Kenyan context. The research sites for the study are Majengo and Eastleigh in Nairobi and Likoni in Mombasa. In doing so, the research contributes to a wider understanding of the potential of community-based approaches in counter-radicalization work that have minimally been explored in global and local literature. Existing studies have been concerned with prevention of violent extremism and counter-radicalization, but with a focus on the contributions of governments to the neglect of community actors, such as civil society and local associations (Nielsen & Schack, 2016:311).

Furthermore, this study is rooted in a paradigm shift to unravel the community-led counter-radicalization initiatives in the Kenyan context that are minimally explored in the literature. In this study, terrorism refers to a deliberate use or threat of violence by individuals, state and non-state actors to achieve political, ideological, religious or criminal goals (Mogire & Mkutu, 2011:473).

For operational clarity, radicalization refers to a personal process in which individuals pick extreme political, social, and religious aspirations and where the achievement of particular goals justifies the application of indiscriminate violence (Wilner & Doboulouz, 2010). Extremism is applied in this study to refer to actions that are deemed by an observer to violate acceptable political values such as democracy or human rights. The reference to
extremist behaviour is made in reference to what is considered acceptable behaviours and beliefs in the political space (Jackson, 2016:2) Radicalization is an emotional and mental process that motivates an individual to engage in violent behaviour. Radicalization is, however, not limited to Kenya and East Africa but is now widely entrenched in parts of Middle East, Asia, Western Europe and Central, South and North America. Radicalization thus needs to be understood from a multiplicity of factors that are both home-grown and globalized (Wilner & Doboulouz, 2010).

This understanding has implications for counter-radicalization initiatives. Counter-radicalization broadly refers to policies and programmes of a non-coercive nature that are meant to prevent individuals from taking on terrorist causes. These policies cut across social, economic, including legal spheres, with the communities taking centre-stage (Schmid, 2013). This research is situated within the changing nature of security based on the phenomena of terrorism. The ‘notion’ of community resilience as a remedy in the war on terror is increasingly being fronted by academic experts as the new approach in Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) globally (Weine et al. 2013).

Existing academic discourses have overly focused on the pathways that lead to individual radicalization to commit extremist acts. However, previous studies in attempting to unravel the multiple and contested pathways that individuals take in the radicalization path have been shaped around the so-called push and pull factors. There exists literature on the same across different parts of the globe (Botha, 2014; Vertigans, 2007). While it has remained absolutely critical for policy and academic literature to be concerned with the pathways to radicalization, the scholarly approaches in the study of terrorism have been shifting towards the field of community resilience. Hence, this research departs from pathways to radicalization narratives that have attracted significant research attention. Hence
this study examines community resilience approaches touted as the ‘new’ approach in counter-radicalization work using a Kenyan context (Weine et al. 2013).

Community resilience focuses on ‘soft’ power through a range of complementing approaches, such as community dialogues, peace forums, and counter-narratives, among other interventions in dealing with emerging threats from terrorism. It is therefore critical for researchers to examine empirically the contribution of community-based approaches in counter-radicalization not only in Kenya but also globally. Examining the contribution of community-based approaches in counter-radicalization work holds the potential for broadening the academic discourses on countering terrorism in the Kenyan context and which have overly focused on state centric approaches (use of force and legalistic responses) (Mogire & Mkutu, 2011).

In the early 2000s, the United States (US) began to adopt a ‘soft’ power approach in dealing with violent extremism. This soft power builds on the existing global discourses of countering violent extremism through legalistic approaches, use of forces and other overt operations that have become the norm in counter-terrorism work (Gus, 2014). Building community resilience is increasingly in the post 9/11 period being considered to be alternative to the traditional counter-terrorism responses.

In investigating the contribution and applicability of community-based approaches in Kenya’s counter-radicalization initiatives, this study pursues three strands of empirical enquiry. The first strand begins by isolating empirically the processes and trends on radicalization with a focus on selected sites in Nairobi and Mombasa counties. The second strand examines the diverse community-based approaches that have been adopted in counter-radicalization efforts in selected sites in Nairobi and Mombasa counties. The third strand that this study pursues empirically is an evaluation of the various community-based counter-
radicalization approaches with a view to investigating their potentials, pitfalls and challenges from a Kenyan context.

In Kenya and in the wider East African context, minimal literature has examined the contribution of communities in building resilience against violent extremism. The available literature has examined the individual pathways to radicalization from a Kenyan and an East African context with possibilities of violent extremism. Therefore, this study contributes to the under-researched areas of countering violent extremism from a soft power approach (Botha, 2015; Schmid, 2011).

Existing theoretical approaches to countering violent extremism within the realm of counter-terrorism have largely focused on hard power approaches. Hard power approaches from international relations and political sciences lenses are drawn from the concept of power. Power in mainstream politics has to do with influencing an actor towards a particular action such as coercion (hard power) or attraction (soft power) (Aly et al. 2015; Aly, 2013). In the context of countering terrorism, there is now a policy appreciation of the need to go beyond hard power approaches and to examine the potential of soft power approaches and which this study engages in. Hard power approaches within the counter-terrorism discourses include interventions such as targets hardening, military interventions, intelligence and punitive strategies (Aly et al. 2015).

In contrast to hard power approaches, soft power approaches in counter-terrorism are considered to fall in the realm of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE). Hence, soft power approaches include interventions such as deradicalization programmes, education, development programmes, conflict management, community empowerment and counter-narratives. Additionally, soft power approaches have been termed in the security literature as either being alternatives or complementary approaches in counter-terrorism (Aly et al. 2015).
This study examines the soft power approach in countering violent extremism from a Kenyan context. It will do so by investigating a variety of community-based approaches in use in selected locations in Nairobi and Mombasa counties. Recruitment and radicalization have been documented to have occurred in these two sites and led to a number of terrorist acts in the two areas. These areas are further considered to be radicalization hotspots with multiple connections and linkages that facilitate terrorism (Botha, 2014; Mwakimako & Willis, 2014; Anderson & McKnight, 2014).

Whereas soft power approaches in CVE are increasingly promoted and popularized by both state and non-state actors, they have been subjected to criticism. One of the key criticisms levelled against soft power approaches and mainly in western societies, is that their overall interventions are directed at Muslim minorities. They are based on flawed linkages between religion and violent extremism. Australian CVE approaches in the post 9/11 environment for instance have borne this criticism (Aly, 2015).

Furthermore, the soft power approach is gaining credence as an alternative approach towards countering violent extremism. In the US where a militaristic approach has been applied to counter-terrorism, a shift in strategy has become imminent. From the beginning of the 2000s, US policy makers have observed that while militaristic responses provide quick measurable outcomes such as through drone strikes, they nevertheless lead to grievance raisings against the US in situations of ‘collateral damage’. This has been documented in places such as Somalia, Pakistan and Yemen in the 2000s (Aldrich, 2014).

The paradigmatic shift by the US government in the post 9/11 period has entailed the application of a broader strategy of diplomacy, development, and a defence platform that incorporates the soft power approach in dealing with violent extremism. Soft power approaches in the new strategy have included among others working on redressing socio-
economic marginalization, improving civil-military relations, including improving educational and vocational opportunities. The soft power approach recognizes the multiple pathways that predispose individuals towards radicalization and either push or pull them towards joining violent extremism. In light of this, the soft power approaches seek to preempt the likelihood of individuals joining potential terrorist networks (Aldrich, 2014). Some of the soft power strategies in this respect have included job provision, vocational training, and information diffusion strategies (Aldrich, 2014).

Community based approaches which fall in the realm of soft power approaches constitute in themselves alternative approaches to countering violent extremism. There is the growing realization that one of the effective approaches in countering radicalization is to engage with communities in addition to other available tools in countering violent extremism. Building community resilience as an effort to counter-radicalization remains one of the critical defences against violent extremism. The notion of community here is applied to mean individuals, institutions and networks residing in the same geographical area. The notion of community resilience is applied in this study to mean the ability of communities to withstand and respond to challenges that are posed by a broad array of adverse events, whether natural or man-made (OSCE, 2014).

The critical defences against violent extremism are thus communities, individuals and institutions in a particular locale. Communities are considered critical in countering violent extremism as they remain better placed to appreciate and confront the security threats given that violent extremists target their children, families, and neighbours (White House, 2011). Communities remain key actors in counter-terrorism work as terrorists look for support, and recruit from the community in mounting their attacks. That is why the US has since 2011 adopted this approach as part of dealing with domestic security threats posed by homegrown violent extremism.
Homegrown extremism refers broadly to the rise of domestic groups within a country with the intent to commit political violence. They are enabled by among others the internet, levels of external assistance, including a rise in fundamentalist interpretation of Islam (Schuurman, Bakker & Eijkman, 2018). The community-based approach complements a range of other counter-terrorism tools (law enforcement, legal options and so on) and which bring a range of actors together, such as government, individuals and the private sector (White House, 2011).

The shift to community-based approaches in the US context is anchored in the underlying philosophy that communities are better able to appreciate their own challenges and craft appropriate responses in partnership with other actors such as government and the private sector. The US government prior to engaging with communities to counter-violent extremism has had a long experience in supporting local communities to deal with societal issues such as gangs and lethal school shootings that are prevalent in the US (White House, 2011).

The notion of community resilience even though it remains contested as to its harms and benefits has similarly been applied in United Kingdom’s (UK) counter-terrorism strategy. The aspect of community resilience is laid out in the UK National Counter-Terrorism Strategy also known as CONTEST that was first conceptualized in 2003 but would be published by the UK Home Office in 2006 under the then Blair government (Hardy, 2014). This model sought to work with communities to reduce vulnerabilities from terrorists’ attacks through government partnerships. This model engages in community discourses themed on, among other issues, citizenship, civic education and building inter-faith dialogues as part of the strategy to dissuade individuals to join violent extremism (Hardy, 2014).
While the community engagement approach in the UK context has been considered a critical step in counter-terrorism, it has been critiqued on several fronts. First, the approach has principally focused on the Muslim communities and thus ‘securitized’ the community as potential terrorists. Similarly, this has occurred in Kenya. This apparent securitization has led to a lacklustre approach for Muslim communities in the UK to cooperate in community resilience interventions. Second, the community resilience approach as applied in the UK case study has also been perceived to be ‘a spying’ venture as it has combined preventive action and the larger counter-terrorism agendas. It has been critiqued on its use of coercive approaches and heavy policing oversight (Hardy, 2014). Third, the budgetary aspects of community resilience projects are not made distinct within counter-terrorism efforts. Analysts have noted that there is the lack of a distinct budget for coercive counter-terrorism work and community integration (Hardy, 2014). Hence, this has resulted in questions about the real essence of the community resilience approach adopted in the UK.

Furthermore, Hardy (2014) also raises an important question that the present study in the Kenyan context shall seek to evaluate. The question that Hardy (2014) poses is that given that dangers posed by terrorist ideologies are protracted, it is extremely important to investigate how communities are dealing with their own adversities. This in a context where governments seem to have abdicated their responsibilities for protecting their citizens (Hardy, 2014).

1.1 Background of the Study

Home-grown youth radicalization to commit terrorism is on the rise in the Kenyan context. There is therefore a need to empirically understand this phenomenon before examining and evaluating community-based approaches that fit into the emerging field of community resilience. Khalil and Zeuthen (2014) call for a contextualization of risk factors to youth radicalization before countering violent extremism initiatives can be adopted.
Hence, youth radicalization to commit terrorism is not unique to Kenya but is now a global security challenge (Gow et al. 2013; Dalgaard-Nielsen, 2010; Bertjan et al. 2013). In the Kenyan context, the patterns and dynamics have been evolving since the early 2000s. (Rosenau, 2005; Bardubeen, 2012). Furthermore, since Kenya’s military intervention in Somalia in late 2011, Al-Shabaab attacks have intensified in the country. Some of these attacks have been attributed to radicalized youth. The growing menace of youth radicalization is the new face of home-grown terrorism that is not only affecting Kenya but has found roots in Somalia. Indigenous Kenyan youth of both Muslim and non-Muslim faiths have since 2008 been joining the Al-Shabaab to wage attacks in both Kenya and Somalia (Amble & Hitchens, 2014).

Additionally, the factors that explain radicalization need to be understood broadly on the account of ideology, financial motivations, including forced conscription (Amble & Hitchens, 2014). This is a complete departure from the radicalization of the 1990s that was chiefly drawn from the Muslim constituency in the Kenyan context (Rosenau, 2005). For instance, radicalization in the United Kingdom in the mid-2000s among young Muslims has been blamed chiefly on their underlying perceptions of ‘injustices’ perpetrated at the local, national and international levels. Young Muslims taking up radical causes do it under the context of waging a global Jihad against the British and US foreign policy in the Middle East geared towards eradicating Al-Qaeda cells in the region following the September 11, 2001 (hereafter 9/11) terror attacks in the US (Duffy, 2008).

This then provides an entry point for radicalization and justification of violence in ‘defence’ of the Islamic faith. It is pertinent to note however that the so-called radical Islam pre-dates the 9/11. It can be traced to the 1979 Iranian revolution that was founded on anti-colonial Muslim resistance. It is the event of the 1980s and the subsequent 9/11 that was a turning point. In the 1980s and 1990s there were attacks in different places in Europe, US and
East Africa. Post the Iranian revolution of 1979 that deposed the Shahs, the US State Department in 1984 classified Iran as a state sponsor of terrorism. Post 9/11 Iran became part of the ‘Axis of Evil’ by linking Iran with supporting terrorism, a question of tensions between the two countries even in current relations (Jiang, 2017:237; Duyvesteyn, 2004). The July 7, 2005 (hereafter 7/7) bombings in London were linked to British foreign policy in the Middle East. Besides, home-grown radicalization is also linked to inequalities in terms of jobs and educational achievements among British Muslims and which predisposes them to indoctrination and may lead to extremism (Duffy, 2008). These are further linked to racism and anti-Islamic prejudice among majority culture leading in part to suspect communities (Carter, 2017).

Radicalization in North Africa prior to and post 9/11 is also principally linked to an ideological debate premised on colonialism, Islam, the West and Christianity divides. The narrative to radicalize individuals including the youth is linked to a ‘Muslim siege’ in contexts such as Iraq post 2003, including Palestine and hence a call for violence (Githen-Mazer, 2008). This radicalization to commit violence is a function of individual contacts that, more recently could happen in Mosques and which are further aided by technology such as the internet and DVDs (Githen-Mazer, 2008). The role of the internet in aiding violent extremism and in ‘communicating’ terrorist acts remain under-researched areas within radicalization discourses with implications for counter-radicalization responses (Conway, 2016; Mair, 2016).

Kenya has since the late 1990s struggled with insecurity emanating from terrorism. However, past terror attacks in the country resonate with the dynamics of global terrorism. Before 9/11, there was the 1998 US Embassy bombings. In 2002 there was an attack at the Paradise Hotel in Kikambala, Mombasa. These attacks were both blamed on Al-Qaeda terror
networks. These attacks were principally waged by foreigners but with tacit support of local terror cells (Mogire & Mkutu, 2011; Lind & Howell, 2010).

Whereas principally these attacks were aimed at western targets, there is arguably a change of tact in terror attacks in the country. Post 2002 to around 2012, low-scale terror attacks targeted ordinary Kenyans in public spaces such as entertainment venues, public transport, and places of worship (Amble & Hitchens, 2014). In a complete departure from low-scale attacks, terror stuck again at the up-market Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi in September 2013. The Al-Shabaab terror group claimed responsibility for this attack that claimed at least 70 lives while injuring over 200 others (Amble & Hitchens, 2014; Jaji, 2013).

Moreover, Kenya has been considered vulnerable to terror attacks for at least three principal reasons. First is her weak governance mechanisms as evidenced by poor border controls, which allows terrorists to enter and leave at will (Harmony, 2007; Otenyo, 2004). Second is that Kenya has significant western interests given her historical associations with countries such as the US and the UK, and thus ideological justifications come into play on the part of the terrorists. Third, but not least, is that runaway corruption in the government bureaucracy has allowed terrorists to operate without arrests or prosecutions (Harmony, 2007; Otenyo, 2004).

In situating Kenya’s role in international security, Bachmann (2012) observes that Kenya has always been concerned with achieving Somalia’s stability. Somalia in the context of a failed state has presented a number of security threats including terrorist related threats. Indeed, a series of terror related incidences in Kenya in the late 2000s would largely inform her intervention into Somalia in 2011 to counter the Al-Shabaab threat and secure her territory (Birkett, 2013).
Additionally, Kenya has joined the international community in securitizing Somalia as a recruitment haven for Al-Qaeda-type militants (Bachman, 2012:133). Whereas the Kenyan security apparatus has constructed an unstable Somalia as providing a recruiting hub for terrorists, therefore, the contradiction is that Kenyans have also been recruited into some of these terrorist groups, such as Al-Shabaab (Bachman, 2012).

The Global War on Terror (GWOT) discourses post 9/11 have shifted to weak and failed states in the developing world, such as Somalia. Contradicting this perspective, security analysts have argued that relatively functioning states such as Kenya have provided a conducive environment for terrorists to operate. Bradbury and Kleinman (2010) have also argued that Kenya did provide a much more ‘suitable’ environment for terrorist groups to operate than in Somalia in the 1990s. Indeed, Simons and Tucker (2007) have argued that the ‘socio-geography’ of a territory does matter to terrorists. In saying so, they are discounting the common narrative that failed states are conducive to international terrorists. To the contrary, they claim that terrorists prefer to operate in places that are less characterized by chaos because they need a certain level of operational infrastructure to launch their operations (Simon & Tucker, 2007).

There exist debates around ‘ungoverned spaces’ in contexts such as Somalia and providing a safe haven for terrorists. In Somalia, empirical evidence has shown that groups such as Al-Qaeda and their affiliates in the Horn preferred to operate in Kenya in the past. What is not disputed, however, is that a stateless Somalia in the past provided a space to move men, shipments and other logistics in the Horn of Africa, including providing a safe haven for terrorists (Harmony, 2007).

In the Eastern African region, a multiplicity of factors helps to explain youth vulnerabilities to radicalization. Poor economic prospects amidst a bulging youth population have offered a conducive environment for youth radicalization to join terror networks. The
youth form the majority of the population in the case of Kenya and Uganda and struggle to access employment, education, and housing opportunities. Kenya youth’s population as at 2015 stood at 55.1 per cent with Uganda standing at 77 per cent (Index Mundi, 2016). Whereas radicalization is a personal process, radical organizations have been strategic in understanding these vulnerabilities and have tapped into them to radicalize (Africa Centre for Strategic Studies, 2012).

Empirical research in the Kenyan context has however disputed the often-cited macro levels of social and economic grievances as predictors of mainly religious radicalization. Instead, radicalization should be understood as an individualized process that is devoid of macro level grievances. The radicalization process is thus better conceptualized as emanating from relational circumstances. Ideas in this context referring to the uptake of religious beliefs (Rink & Sharma, 2016).

There exists however, an indirect link on the overall between poverty and terrorism in Africa. What is undeniable is that an environment characterized by injustices, poverty, and alienation among others provides an opportunity for religious and other extremist groups to advance radical ideologies and to recruit terrorism collaborators (Pham, 2007). The poverty-terrorism nexus has been considered in literature per se not to contribute to terrorism directly, but when tied with other factors such as economic grievances have resulted in political violence (Makinda, 2006; Piazza, 2006, 2011).

The crisis of national identity among youth in the East African region is also part of the reason that extremist organizations find it easy to recruit among the youth. What the youth in the region lack is a strong sense of nationhood and therefore they are easily persuaded to take up foreign radical ideologies. This absence of a strong sense of nationalism opens up a home-grown radicalization path likely to function along the path of ethnic, clan and communal lines (Africa Centre for Strategic Studies, 2012). For instance, the Coast
region of Kenya has been marginalized in material terms since independence in 1963. Previous accounts have classified Coastal residents as second class citizens. These material realities have been manifested in several areas of marginalization such as inadequate job opportunities for locals, basic neglect of infrastructure and poor social investments in education (Kresse, 2009).

The western world discourses on the predisposing factors to radicalization goes beyond economic marginalization and focuses largely on ideology. In this case, ideology is activated as a response to a perceived discrimination of the Muslim identity and hence a motivation to avenge by mobilizing violence. Additionally, the foreign policy pursued by western states also tends to push Muslims to join radical groups in the western world. Literature is indicative that such interventions as the Iraq invasion in 2003, principally led by the US, pushed Muslim youth in the western world to want to commit violence as a way of defending ‘Islam’ that they considered to be under threat (Wilner & Dobolouz, 2010).

An empirical study conducted in the US among Somali immigrant youth in the State of Minnesota confirmed that youth radicalization goes beyond economic marginalization. The study accounted for at least 18 young adults (18-30 years), mostly from middle class backgrounds and who left for Somalia in 2007 and 2008 to join the Al-Shabaab. Their motivation to support the Al-Shabaab was on account of defending their Somali nation from ‘foreign invasion’. This followed Ethiopia’s intervention in late 2006 to oust Al-Shabaab from Mogadishu (Weine et al. 2009). The radicalization path comprised multiple channels. The channels included Mosques, social media and other online platforms (Weine et al. 2009).

Furthermore, security threats emanating from youth radicalization in Kenya have been on the rise since 2008. Analysts have argued that youth radicalization has since intensified in the post Kenya’s military intervention in Somalia in 2011. This has had a negative impact on Kenya’s national security (Anderson & McKnight, 2014). Between 2011 and 2012, there
were at least 17 terror attacks that targeted places of worship, police stations, and public transport sites which were blamed on Kenyan youth turned Al-Shabaab (Amble & Hitchens, 2014). This situation is explained by among other factors the role of ideology propounded by religious figures. Religious figures in this period began to recruit youth to ‘fight’ a globalist *Jihad* by claiming Kenya’s engagement in Somalia post 2011 was an assault on Islam (Amble & Hitchens, 2014). Religious figures thus utilized this window of opportunity to pitch a larger narrative about the need for waging a local *Jihad* in Kenya and in Somalia (Amble & Hitchens, 2014).

Therefore, the radicalization narrative that was driven was that Kenya and the West engagement in Somalia was part of a globalist strategy to wipe out Islam by fighting the Al-Shabaab group. This then became the mobilizing platform to drive youth recruitment into the Al-Shabaab. Mosques are touted as the venues in which recruitment and radicalization of youth to commit terrorism has happened in Kenya in the past (Amble & Hitchens, 2014). Radicalization is however, a gradual process that involves indoctrination through a propagandist ideology and combat training in Somalia after which the youth are deemed ready to commit political violence in Kenya and beyond (Amble & Hitchens, 2014).

In Kenya, the radicalization path is also moving beyond the traditional Somali Muslim youth to include other ethnicities of non-Muslim faith (Botha, 2014). However, youth radicalization in Kenya only became pronounced in the mid-2000s although the roots go much earlier. Indeed, it is the changing circumstances in the 2000s, chiefly the invasion of Somalia in 2006 by Ethiopian forces to oust the Islamic Courts Union and Kenya’s and consequently African Union (AU) interventions in Somalia post 2011, that account for the fact that youth radicalization and recruitment has been on an upward trend. The role of religious figures in radicalizing youth to join Al-Shabaab is an influential contributor to this problem. There are claims in literature that the late Aboud Rogo, a Mombasa based Islamic
preacher, used radical sermons to recruit youth to Al-Shabaab in the mid 2000s (Amble & Hitchens, 2014). Aboud Rogo considered an influential Salafi preacher since the 1980s was associated with the Al-Qaeda networks in the 1990s. There are also claims that he supported both the US Embassy bombings in Nairobi in 1998 and the Paradise Hotel bombing at the Kenyan Coast in 2002. Consequently, he was named a Global Terrorist by the US in 2012 (Amble & Hitchens, 2014). The appeal of so the so called ‘Jihadi clerics’ such as the Rogo could be their pursuit of clear ‘political goals’. He had the capacity alongside other clerics to connect socio-economic marginalization of the Muslims and in turn justifying recruitment. The desired route was then to appeal through religious propaganda to reclaim ‘Muslim ‘lands and separate Muslims from non-Muslims (Ndzovu, 2017). There is the additional perspective that recruitment is more skewed towards the economically marginalized (Ndzovu, 2017).

For the western world, radicalization to commit violence is shifting from formal channels such as Mosques to informal groupings and private religious instruction that make counter-terrorism initiatives cumbersome. Peer pressure and group discourses among younger generations have also contributed to radicalization globally. Discourses especially in the West among ‘Muslim’ terrorists show they are driven more to militancy because of rising Islamophobia, discrimination and the associated impacts of anti-terrorism laws (Vertigans, 2007). Similarly, Omeje (2008) is of the opinion that if the Americans intensify their tempo in the war on terror in the Global South, part of the repercussions will be increased radicalization as a response to an aggressive American foreign policy.

The other reason that has been used to account for radicalization globally and hence to terrorism is the repression of Muslim groups by state agencies, which, when combined with social exclusion, provides a ground for Islamic militarization. Algeria and Egypt are case studies in the 1990s (Vertigans, 2007). In the Kenyan case, how the state has traditionally
dealt with the Muslim constituency in its counter-terrorism strategy could be a push-factor towards violent extremism (Botha, 2014).

The Kenyan security agencies have overly situated the Muslim identity in Kenya as being responsible for terror attacks that have intensified in the post 9/11 period. This has led to some sections of the Muslim community being subjected to arbitrary arrests and detentions, including extra-ordinary renditions (Prestholdt, 2011; Whitaker, 2008). This became more pronounced in April 2014 with Operation *Usalama* Watch (*Usalama* means security in Kiswahili language) being undertaken in the Eastleigh suburb of Nairobi to flush out terrorists. The religious and ethnic stereotyping of Muslims including those of Somali origin makes it conducive for Islamic extremism to take root. Furthermore, Botha (2014) observes that counter-terrorism approaches largely built on arbitrary arrests and detentions may push youth to extremism.

Community resilience as an approach to respond to the challenges posed by violent extremism has notably been popularized by the Presidency of Barack Obama which in 2011 launched a Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) to deal with the threats posed by violent radicalization through ‘community-based solutions’ in the US (Weine *et al.* 2013). This plan was in part a policy response of dealing with home-grown radicalization blamed on the Al-Qaeda network. This plan (SIP) laid a strategy for leveraging on communities to deal and respond to violent extremism. Therefore, the resilience approach considers families, communities, including networks as key pillars in countering violent extremism. Families for instance are considered critical as members of radical groups seek their support when they are confronted with certain adversities in life. Similarly, communities provide opportunities for dialogue and safe spaces to engage in when youth and young adults face immense challenges, such as when they are targeted for recruitment into radical causes (Weine *et al.* 2013).
Moreover, Weine et al. (2013) call for new community-based research to examine how resilience models work in other contexts, having focused their study on the US context. The SIP Plan of Action is underpinned by the assumption that any community would want to shield its members by denouncing violent radicalization and terrorist recruitment. However, it is not the case that all communities would necessarily oppose violent radicalization and terrorist recruitment. Building resilience is premised on the need to understand the history, the culture, values, the social structures and the unique experiences of communities in order to appreciate what resilience means for them in specific geographical contexts. Therefore, community resilience work also needs to pay attention to virtual spaces (for example the internet) and the Diaspora (family ties) as these contexts have implications on countering violent extremism. Communities by themselves are not homogenous and therefore there is a need to appreciate their diversity in terms of religion, political leanings and ethnicity (Weine et al. 2013). However, community-based approaches as geared towards addressing violent extremism remains an under-researched area within the confines of terrorism studies in the Kenyan context and thus merits an empirical enquiry.

Coaffee and Rodgers (2008) examine the changing discourses of security from the global to the local and how this shift is emerging as a field of study. They argue that international relations and the field of security concerns have been studied at global, transnational and local levels within broad governance mechanisms. Their study puts emphasis on the need to shift to localized responses in dealing with emerging security challenges and which require different frames of analysis. Furthermore, Coaffee and Rodgers (2008) study is broadly anchored on the emerging discourses of securing cities with a particular focus on UK cities but with implications on how the changing discourses of security have an implication on the broad counter-terrorism debates.
There has been an ongoing changing paradigm of how security is to be contextualized in response to new security challenges such as terrorism. There is the increasing realization that security is becoming more domestic and personal and therefore the need to plan appropriately in terms of risk management (Coaffee & Rodgers, 2008). Within these changing security debates and in the post 9/11 period, the appreciation that ordinary citizens need to be brought on board in governance processes is now being appreciated. This apparent clear shift in securitization policies in the post 9/11 period departs from an earlier position in the pre-9/11 period where security matters were the privileged preserve of the professionals and expert stakeholders. This shift in the counter-terrorism work targeting to bring on board individuals and communities as part of security risk management is geared towards reinforcing already existing and broader institutional strategies. Incorporating the ‘community resilience’ approach as the response relies on the role of individuals and communities to be part of security management raises several questions that would merit further empirical studies beyond the UK context (Coaffee & Rodgers, 2008).

First, in order for the ‘new ‘security approach (community resilience) for counter-terrorism security to work effectively it must be acceptable to community actors in a specific place. Broad literature in the counter-terrorism realm has often pointed to the repercussions such as increased government surveillance of particular communities and further creating an environment of fear. This further shrinks’ citizen voices in the security governance realm. Taking a case study approach of the City of Manchester in the UK, Coaffee and Rodgers (2008) note that on the overall security agencies have crowded out community voices in resilience planning and thus bringing into sharp focus the value of the community in broader national security strategies.

Secondly, community resilience as a strategy to deal with terrorism while incorporating community voices have been more of information sharing rather than more
meaningful community engagement. This has further served to securitize the City of Manchester, UK (for example increased surveillance, hardening of targets) and less of community engagements in dealing with security threats. Thus, there is a critical call for more meaningful citizens engagement in dealing with emerging security threats including terrorism (Coaffee & Rodgers, 2008; Spalek & Intoual, 2007).

Briggs (2010) writing in the context of counter-terrorism initiatives in the post July 7, 2005 London, UK bombings (the 7/7 attacks) underscores the value of community engagement in responding to the challenges posed by growing threats of home-grown terrorism in the post 9/11 period. The 7/7 attacks brought to the fore the presence of radicalized individuals within a section of the Muslim constituency in the UK (Briggs, 2010). This attack alongside a series of other terror incidents in the country since the 2000s prompted the development of the ‘CONTEST’ strategy in 2003. The strategy was however published by the Tony Blair’s government in 2006 (Hardy, 2014). Part of the strategy entailed building community resilience in efforts at countering violent extremism (Hardy, 2014). Terrorist threats emanate from a tiny section of the community usually integrated within communities and do not act wholly on their own. Based on this understanding, Briggs (2010) emphasizes that there are critical roles that communities can play in various facets of a counter-terrorism strategy.

Briggs (2010) highlights four key roles that communities can take in a broader counter-terrorism strategy. First, there is the understanding that if terrorists are well integrated, the community may act as an early warning mechanism for the police and the intelligence services should they have reservations about particular groups or individuals. There exists an extensive tradition of the public involvement in crime prevention. Second, communities can innovate on various approaches to dissuade young people from taking up violence. Given that there exist multiple radicalization paths across individuals, communities
can take up preventive approaches to reduce the prevalence of young people being radicalized. This would entail communities engaging with youth workers, local authorities including the police. Third, communities are in a better position to respond to real or perceived communal grievances that provide an entry point for terrorists’ messages to gain root and thereby sway individuals to commit, support or incite violence. Tackling these grievances thus helps to stop the terrorist messaging which are premised on driving a wedge between ordinary people, governments, law enforcement agencies, and thus disrupting the government’s counter-terrorism initiatives. Fourth, the police and other security agencies cannot act without the consent of the communities that they are meant to protect. Government agencies working within communities thus need this consent as this may give them the benefit of the doubt when mistakes occur in the course of operations including the infringement of civil liberties in crises and rushed moments. Guaranteeing an effective response to broader counter-terrorism approaches would require the trust and partnership of Muslim communities in the UK context (Briggs, 2010).

Briggs (2010) in evaluating the community engagement processes in counter-terrorism in the UK notes that while this policy (community engagement) has been successful in the past, it has had several shortcomings. One of the shortcomings was the lack of a meaningful involvement of the community by local authorities and law enforcement agencies. This denoted the lack of trust and equal partnerships in these engagements. These communities cited the lack of opportunities to share their knowledge and experiences with state agencies which would inform localized needs responses. The second was that, the CONTEST strategy did not signify a shared understanding of the problem across government departments and therefore created a confusion in the implementation. Furthermore, the lack of clarity as to the focus of who the strategy was geared towards also brought confusion. There were competing debates about whether the community engagement strategy needed to
respond to Muslim communities only or if it needed to engage also with far-right extremism in the UK. Third, but not least, there was a growing perception that a negative media reporting about Islam and episodes of Islamophobia would influence their support for this community engagement. It would lead to low trust and confidence levels between government and the Muslim communities thereby reducing the willingness of the communities to engage in counter-terrorism (Briggs, 2010).

Cherney and Hartley (2015) writing within the context of community engagement in counter-terrorism in Australia find similar shortcomings and tensions as Brigg’s (2010) findings from the UK. Cherney and Hartley (2015) similarly observe that community engagements have created a number of underlying tensions such as overly securitizing Muslim communities. The net effect of this is government mistrust given the apparent securitization of the Muslim identity. Furthermore, Cherney and Hartley (2015) deepen the argument that the dynamics of trust are yet to be fully explored within community engagement approaches in the Australian context. A number of events have helped to complicate trust building among Muslim communities which would require further empirical scrutiny.

Among other factors complicating trust building are government’s anti-terror tactics such as police raids and blanket surveillance of Muslim communities. Additionally, there exists the mainstream media and political discourses that have tended to equate Islam with violent extremism (Cherney & Hartley, 2015). Some of the mentioned factors have served to complicate community engagement in counter-terrorism work given varying contexts and the breadth of challenges to address. Exploring the dynamics of trust within community engagement which are considered context specific would have critical inputs for counter-terrorism strategies (Cherney & Hartley, 2015).
Community resilience activities globally fit within the discourse of the emerging concept of Countering Violent Extremism (CVE). Tackling violent extremism (VE) as one component of a wider CVE approach has most notably involved the use of law enforcement programmes, counter-terrorism including development initiatives. In the Kenyan context, a number of CVE programming supported by the donor communities including actors such as the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) have since 2011 been rolling out such initiatives. The programming in the Kenyan context has involved supporting communities, organizations and networks with small grants to carry out a number of VE related activities (Khalil & Zeuthen, 2014). These activities have in addition to small grants supported ‘vulnerable’ communities with livelihood trainings, community debates on sensitive topics, including dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder. CVE programming in the Kenyan context has come in the wake of rising violent extremism acts over the years. The September 2013 Westgate attack in Nairobi and the Garissa University attack in 2015 are salient indicators of the rise of home-grown terrorism largely blamed on youth radicalization (Khalil & Zeuthen, 2014).

CVE programming in the Kenyan context have targeted parts of Nairobi (Eastleigh suburb) and its immediate environs and also some parts of the Kenyan Coast (Mombasa, Malindi, Lamu, Kwale and Kilifi) where communities are considered vulnerable to terrorism (Mogire et al. 2018; Balakian, 2016). An evaluation of CVE programming funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Kenya provides a mixed bag of responses as to the effectiveness of such interventions. One of the key findings of a CVE programme running between 2011 and 2013 is that it had dissuaded sections of the population to take up violent extremism. However, one of the shortcomings raised speaks to the lack of a clear-cut segmentation of individuals who are most ‘vulnerable’ to take up violent extremist causes (Khalil & Zeuthen, 2014).
Moving forward in the Kenyan context, this evaluation pointed out the need for context-specific programming, for example targeting ex-convicts, teenagers, specific clans. This stood in contrast to targeting broader communities and identities in the Kenyan context. This was in an attempt at overcoming religious and ethnic profiling in wider counter-terrorism initiatives. The study also calls for a more detailed approach to the so-called push and pull factors of radicalization noting that previous programming in the Kenyan context has not fully engaged with such factors as the role of material incentives, fear, revenge, including a sense of adventure (Khalil & Zeuthen, 2014).

The broader critique was thus that these previous levels of programming in CVE in the Kenyan context concentrated more on collective radicalization factors (for example poverty and unemployment) as opposed to individualized factors that could lead to radicalization and hence contribute to counter-radicalization initiatives. This evaluation of the CVE programming also faults the governmental repressive practices in counter-terrorism as being counter-productive in dealing with violent extremism (Khalil & Zeuthen, 2014). Botha (2014) also critiques this approach and notes that it could be a key factor aggravating youth radicalization in the Kenyan context.

Countering violent extremism initiatives have largely been driven by non-state actors (civil society) in partnership with communities in the Kenyan context. This has driven narratives of western driven interests and the associated repercussions of these perceptions among communities. Present studies have not fully appreciated these associated perceptions and what further impact they would have on CVE programming. Therefore, the anecdotal evidence available indicates that communities working with donor interests have had to adopt a more ‘neutral’ language to avoid labelling their initiatives as ‘CVE’ given the underlying assumptions of risks that these labels carry. In fact, some of the associated risks include the view that some communities in certain ‘labelled VE’ regions in the country as they may be
wary of projects funded by Westerners and thus may shy away from participating in CVE activities (Khalil & Zeuthen, 2014). It is imperative to note, however, that Kwale, Lamu, and Mombasa have developed their respective counties CVE action plans, with Isiolo as of July 2018 being in the process of developing one (Ogada, 2017).

In examining the communal responses to CVE, this research analyses the tensions, and challenges that come with working in the field that is now largely supported by western donors. Counter-terrorism since the mid-1990s has been principally supported by western governments most notably the US and the UK (Mogire & Mkutu, 2011). Furthermore, the Kenyan government in September 2016 launched a countering violent extremism policy (Ogada, 2017). Part of the government plan was to hand out a greater part of the implementation to civil society and faith-based organizations (Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government, 2016). Whereas the government has prioritized partnership with civil society organizations, it has also cracked down on organizations such as Haki-Africa. While these kind of governance stances are problematic, they have been justified on claims of being complicit in terrorism. This apparent gap of the government presence in countering violent extremism thus leaves the civil society and communities to deal with this growing security menace. It is imperative to note that community resilience initiatives in other contexts such as the UK, US, and Australia have largely been driven and coordinated by governments (Hardy, 2014; White House, 2011). It is thus imperative in the Kenyan context to study the contribution of communities in dealing with counter-radicalization.

Available studies on Kenya’s broader counter-terrorism responses have focused predominantly on hard power approaches. They are yet to appreciate the softer power approaches that are now increasingly being relied upon as the new approach to deal with emerging threats of terrorism. In the Kenyan context, government agencies have in the post
9/11 period been concerned with hard power approaches that have combined legalistic options, stabilizing Somalia (through diplomacy, conflict management in the early 2000s and in October 2011, with the military intervention), including seeking capacity building from western partners. Singling out capacity building, with the western powers, the government has set up the Kenya Anti-Terrorism Police Unit (ATPU), strengthened institutions such as the National Intelligence Service (NIS) as well as improving borders and aviation security (Mogire & Mkutu, 2011, Bachmann, 2012; Whitaker, 2007).

Furthermore, some of the hard power approaches adopted in the Kenyan context have resulted in allegations of human rights abuses, ethnic and religious profiling some of which have proved counter-productive in counter-radicalization work. The levels of community-police relations in the Kenyan context has also been low and therefore putting into focus how communities are engaging in counter-radicalization work (Omeje & Githigaro, 2012). There is only an anecdotal evidence of studies emerging in the Kenyan context about community resilience and by extension the application of community-based approaches and therefore this research intends to broaden this empirical gap with a focus on Nairobi and Mombasa Counties of Kenya.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Terrorism has had grave security implications on human security and economic development globally (Weine et al. 2013; White House, 2011). Global and state approaches based on hard power approaches have largely been unsuccessful and to some extent contributed to increased radicalization and attendant violent extremism (Duffy, 2008; Botha, 2014). In Kenya, since the Al-Qaeda terrorist attack in 1998, increased terror attacks have led to loss of lives, destruction of property and economic slumps (Mkutu & Mogire, 2011). The Kenyan state counter-terrorism efforts have also not been fully effective due to their hard power approaches and are even considered to have failed (Botha, 2014; Botha, 2015;
SUPKEM, 2016). Additionally, within hard power approaches, there have been increased terrorist attacks, youth radicalization and human rights violations. Therefore, this study explores and examines community-based approaches to counter-radicalization in Kenya considered to be the new global and the domestic approach in dealing with emerging terrorism threats.

Existing research in the areas of counter-terrorism and within it counter-radicalization discourses in the Kenyan context have focused on the role of government in the broad counter-terrorism work. This study thus builds from the broad literature on radicalizations pathways and approaches both in the global and the Kenyan contexts with a view to examine a new option in counter-radicalization approaches from a community perspective (Botha, 2014, Mogire & Mkutu, 2011, Prestholdt, 2011). From existing literature there is no detailed empirical analysis on how Kenyan communities are responding to emerging security threats posed by youth radicalization and hence the relevance for this study.

The concept of radicalization is contested owing to differing contextual applications of the term. There is yet to be a clear consensus on the term’s usage across security, integration and foreign policy contexts. This has implications on counter-measures adopted. To get rid of the problematics of the terminology, it is essential to avoid its usage in absolute terms. In other words, specificity would be required in the term’s usage (Sedgwick, 2010). Following on Sedgwick (2010), the concept is applied in this study from a security perspective. While not devoid of controversy, this study takes on a security agenda in situating radicalization from a standpoint of direct or indirect threats to state security or that of its citizens (Sedgwick, 2010:485). This research therefore investigates the community-based approaches and interventions that have been adopted by communities in Nairobi and Mombasa Counties of Kenya in counter-radicalization efforts.
Hence, this research builds on the works of analysts such as Weine et al. (2013) who suggests broadening existing community-based research to appreciate the different contexts and perspectives as how-to resilience works in varied globalized contexts. This study thus responds to this research gap with a focus on Kenya. By focusing on the Kenyan context which has implications for wider comparative lessons across the globe, the study pays attention to the emerging field of community resilience that is dependent on the sensibilities of local social and cultural concerns and how this impacts on this new model of countering violent extremism. Furthermore, this research fits into an emerging field of counter-radicalization that is laden with tensions as to which approaches work best where and in what contexts.

Moreover, this research is premised on the understanding that while community resilience work is now important for alternative counter-terrorism work, it remains a ‘complex, interactive construct’ that is value laden and is underpinned by localized meanings and conflicts (Weine et al. 2013:331). The available literature in the Kenyan context does not fully explore this context. Furthermore, community resilience work in the context of countering violent extremism requires government partnership which has created tensions in other global contexts with implications for how it might work in Kenya. However, there exists a long history in many communities especially refugees and immigrants who hold deep mistrusts for governments (Jaji, 2013). In the Coast, counter-terrorism operations have further served to weaken state-society relations there. This has arisen out of social constructions that some communities coupled with influences of Salafi inspired teachings since the 1970s presents terrorism threats (Prestholdt, 2011; Lind et al. 2017). Therefore, some of these concerns merit an empirical enquiry to understand the strengths and any weaknesses of this new approach in countering violent extremism.
1.3 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this research is to investigate community-based approaches in countering youth radicalization in Mombasa and Nairobi Counties in Kenya. The specific research objectives guiding this research are as follows:

1. To investigate the processes and trends of radicalization in the Kenyan context.
2. To examine the community-based approaches towards countering youth radicalization in Kenya.
3. To evaluate the challenges and potentials that exist in applying community-based approaches in countering youth radicalisation in these counties.

1.4 Research Questions

The specific research objectives above will be guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the processes and trends of radicalization in Mombasa and Nairobi counties in Kenya?
2. What community-level interventions exist to counter youth radicalisation in these counties?
3. What challenges and potentials exist in applying community-based approaches in countering youth radicalisation in these counties?
1.5 Justification of the Study

Although, there is wide body of literature that is emerging in the Kenyan context on various facets of counter-terrorism, few studies have explored community-based approaches in counter-radicalization. From existing literature there is no detailed empirical analysis on how Kenyan communities are responding to emerging security threats posed by youth radicalization. What is available so far are studies focused on government counter-terrorism responses. Government counter-terrorism responses are being faulted for their failures to address the security challenges posed by radicalization (Botha, 2014; IOM/GOK, 2015). Therefore, there is the need to investigate in what ways communities are responding as an alternative to hard power approaches considered alienating to communities. Furthermore, in the global South, very little data exists on community responses in counter-radicalization.

Besides, this research builds on an emerging body of global literature that has been concerned with a paradigm shift in counter-terrorism approaches from hard-power to soft-power approaches. This work is therefore important for building on new knowledge drawing experiences from the Kenyan context. The study findings will be useful for both academic and policy reasons. The study findings shall also be useful in appreciating how community capabilities can be applied in counter-radicalization interventions. Currently, policy makers are seeking solutions to the increasing problem of radicalization, therefore, the research would contribute to this perspective because the current state centric interventions are hardly working.

1.6 Scope of the Study

In examining the community-based approaches in counter-radicalization efforts in Kenya, this research examines the period between 2001 and 2017 with a focus on Nairobi and Mombasa Counties. The study sites chosen are Eastleigh and Majengo areas in Nairobi and Likoni in Mombasa. In terms of justification for the study areas, Eastleigh is chosen because
it has been previously securitized as a terrorist recruitment site which the government raided in 2014 through the operation *Usalama* Watch (Balakian, 2016; Rink & Sharma, 2016). The operation was a security swoop to address the challenges of terrorism. Some terrorist attacks have occurred in the area leading to government designation as a terrorist haven (Balakian, 2016; Anderson & McKnight, 2015).

Eastleigh has a large Somali population that has been securitized by the state for a variety of crime issues including terrorism. It is found in the capital city of Nairobi and has regional and global connections in terms of security and business respectively. There have also been links between Dabaab refugee camps in Garissa County and the Eastleigh area with regards to youth recruitment and the mobilization of violence. A number of terrorist attacks have happened in this site. This mix of factors make it suitable for a research site (Balakian, 2016).

The Eastleigh area has long been a site of radicalization even prior to Kenya’s 2011 intervention in Somalia. Adjoining Eastleigh in Nairobi is Majengo area, a low-income settlement which has since 2006 been linked with youth recruitment through Mosques and the activities of the Muslim Youth Centre (MYC) founded by Sheikh Imani Ali, who is now a commander in Al-Shabaab in Somalia (Amble & Hitchens, 2014; Anderson & McKnight, 2015). Mosques in both Eastleigh and Majengo areas of Nairobi have been used as sites of radicalization and hence it was relevant to assess the community responses to this challenge.

Likoni in Mombasa is also chosen on the account that there are organizations that have been dealing with returnees from Al-Shabaab (Ruteere, 2014). Likoni has a high population destiny and lacks a meaningful economic industry. It has a high crime prevalence rate, presents risk factors for radicalization as well as support for secessionist groups such as the MYC. It is further comprised of four locations and five electoral wards. It is largely an unplanned settlement occupying 41.1 square Kilometers (CIDP, 2013; CVPS, 2017). Looking
at the Likoni site within Mombasa area also provides linkages to radicalization in neighbouring Tanzania through the port city of Tanga. There have also been links between the MYC in Mombasa and the Ansar Muslim Youth Center (AMYC) based in Tanga, Tanzania. The links have been in form of training and recruitment for terrorist causes. This again speaks to porous borders and state capacity (LeSage, 2014). Mombasa is also Kenya’s second largest city and has a predominant Muslim population and multiple communal identities. Mombasa and Nairobi (Eastleigh and Majengo) have some radicalization linkages through MYC now renamed Al-Hijra (Anderson & McKnight, 2015). The combination of these two sites yield rich comparative data on the subject of the study. In addition, Mombasa and the wider Coastal region has been associated with the rise of the Pwani si Kenya movement referenced as the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) that has a secessionist agenda (Willis & Gona, 2012:48-49). The grievances associated with the movement have in certain instances been in tandem with those used for radicalization.

The post 2001 period is chosen because it marked the sustained push for a Global War on Terror (GWOT) driven by Western powers. This has also acted as a starting point for how governments including Kenya reacted in response to terrorism challenges. The time frame chosen helps to analyse the community-based approaches adopted to counter radicalization and how these interventions have been shaped in the GWOT context in the study period.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

This study relies on three theories to situate the problem. It relies on political socialization, social movements, and securitization theory to anchor the study. The three theories shall be complementary.

1.7.1 Political Socialization Theory

Dawson and Prewitt (1969) are the main proponents of political socialization theory applied in the study. The main argument of this theory and which has relevance for
understanding youth radicalization is that socialization from a young age dictates how an individual will perceive and interact with the outside world. This socialization path then situates an individual’s frame of references on such matters as religion and ideology. Therefore, this theory is mainly concerned with how a political culture is acquired from a young age. Furthermore, Dawson and Prewitt (1969) theory notes that the lenses an individual applies to life situations are socialized from an early stage. Political socialization is thus a function of two socialization agents. The primary socialization agents include family, peers and social groups while the secondary influencing agents include the media and political experiences.

Political socialization theory considers the socialization of individual world views to be a gradual process. Radicalization taps into the socialization process to influence individuals to join terrorist networks. Hence, this theory helps to explain the contribution of multiple role players that socialize individuals to join terror networks. This theory has been applied to study the radicalization path that Kenyan youth joining Al-Shabaab network have taken. Botha (2014) applied this theory to understand the role of family, friends, and social groups in pushing youth to join the Al-Shabaab terror network in Kenya. The study also relies on this theory to understand the enabling environments for youth radicalization including understanding print and online media platforms as radicalization platforms.

1.7.2 Securitization Theory

The research also relies on securitization theory propounded by Barry Buzan and Ole Waever from the Copenhagen School. This theory broadens the orthodox definitions of traditional security that is more concerned with state survival. The Copenhagen School broadens the security discourse by incorporating categories of military, economic, societal, environmental and political security. The securitization approach categorizes the ‘securitizing actors’ and ‘referent objects’. On the one hand, the securitizing actors may include states,
individuals and the non-state actors. While, on the other hand, the referent objects can be individuals, groups and also salient issues of national interests such as sovereignty, environment, and economics and so on (Buzan & Waever, 2009).

Furthermore, the securitization model adopts two processes. One is that the securitizing actor frames a particular issue or theme say terrorism as being an existential threat to the referent object. Secondly, for an issue to be fully securitized, the securitizing actor must succeed in persuading a relevant audience such as public opinion, political elites and the like that a referent object is under threat and therefore, it calls for adoption of extraordinary measures. This is immediately followed by a speech act where an actor uses a security language to convince that the threat needs an intervention (Emmers, 2007:110-113).

This security theory has been applied by scholars such as Schonberg (2009) in understanding how the US government framed its intervention to invade Iraq in 2003 on the premise that it was pursuing weapons of mass destruction. Hence in this dissertation, this theory is applied to understand Kenya’s state framing of the security threats emanating from youth radicalization including justification for its responses.

1.7.3 Social Movement Theory

This study also relies on social movement theory as way to understand the social networks that are involved into pushing individuals to join protest movements including terrorist movements. The social movement theory has been applied in the study of terrorist movements and in particular social networks that are relied upon for recruitment into protest activities (Clark, 2004).

Social movements are denoted as networks of linkages both institutional and personal which feed into particular social institutions. The theory opines that these social networks are loosely connected by the same ideology and rely on primary networks to mobilize for their cause through violence (Clark, 2004). The organizers of social movements often frame their
ideology or agenda along four areas and with a call for action, problem or grievances, adversary, the goal, and the solution (Mirabito & Berry, 2015:339). The proposition of this theory therefore being that social or friendship networks are key to recruitment and entry into a movement.

This theory also argues that social networks do ease uncertainty of joining or create peer pressure in case an individual declines to join the movement. This theory further notes that what goes on across social networks is consensus building in reference to collective interpretations of grievances. This theory is particularly useful in locating the dimensions of class, race, and gender and how they influence the recruitment process into a movement such as the Al-Shabaab in this context (Clark, 2004). This theory is applied in this dissertation to understand the processes of radicalization to commit terrorism in the Kenyan context.

1.8 Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into seven chapters with an introduction and conclusion of the theme discussed. Chapter one provides the introduction, background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives, justifications, scope, and, theoretical framework. Additionally, chapter one contextualizes the community-based approaches in counter-radicalization and sets the scene for the rest of the dissertation. Chapter two as the literature review evaluates the available body of literature on the related discourses of terrorism, radicalization as well as contextualizing the critical shift from hard power approaches in counter-terrorism to soft power approaches in order to identify the research gap. Chapter three explains the methodology. This chapter discusses the overall research design of the study. It outlines the type of data and the sampling strategies used. The methods of data collection including data interpretation and analysis is explained. This chapter also provides the ethical guidelines applied in this dissertation. Chapters four, five and six are empirical chapters drawn from the fieldwork findings in Mombasa and Nairobi Counties. Chapter four
investigates the processes and trends of youth radicalization in Mombasa and Nairobi Counties. **Chapter five** examines the community-based approaches that have been adopted in the two study locations (Mombasa and Nairobi) in counter-radicalization work. **Chapter six** analyses the potentials and challenges of community-based approaches in counter-radicalization in the two locations. While **Chapter seven** offers the general conclusions by summarizing the key findings of the study, answers the central thesis and provides the future areas of research.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter evaluates the available body of literature on the related discourses of terrorism, radicalization as well as contextualizing the critical shift from hard power approaches in counter-terrorism to soft power approaches in order to identify the gap. It is organized across themes in order to situate the research gap.

2.1 The Meaning and Debates on Terrorism

Terrorism remains an essentially disputed term in the social sciences (Spencer, 2011). It is disputed because its conceptualization is subject to location, historical periods, power, changing perceptions of morality, international relations and so forth. The term is dependent on the agency that is defining it (Vertigans, 2011). The analysis of terrorism is not the preserve of a single academic discipline. It has always been influenced by events and policy interests such as the events of the September 11, 2001 (hereafter 9/11) attacks on New York and Washington. The 9/11 attacks triggered a reformulation of the American foreign policy interests and led to war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Additionally, the 2004 and 2005 bombings in Madrid and London would similarly impact on the counter-terrorism policy agendas in Spain and Great Britain (Crenshaw, 2010).

Despite the lack of unanimity of how to conceptually define terrorism, multiple scholars have come to the conclusion that “terrorism is a politically motivated tactic involving the threat or the use of violence in which the pursuit of publicity plays a significant role,” (Spencer, 2011:4). Regardless of the differences in terminologies, terrorism has been evolving since the mid-1990s from ‘old’ terrorism to ‘new’ forms of terrorism and which is further explored in this chapter (Spencer, 2011).
In 2004, the United Nations (UN) Secretary-General’s High-Level Panel Report (p.52), defined terrorism as follows:

“Any action … that is intended to cause death or serious bodily harm to civilians or to non-combatants, when the purpose of such act, by its nature or context is to intimidate a population, or to compel a government or an international organization to do or to abstain from doing any act.”

The challenge with defining terrorism from an empirical perspective is the difficulty (ies) of drawing a distinction between terrorism and other forms of political violence. This includes instances where terrorism occurs in the context of a civil war, or in periods of insurgencies that may blur the distinctions between combatants and non-combatants. It remains difficult to judge the intent or the motivation of an attack to consider whether it fits the phenomenon (Crenshaw, 2010:3).

2.2 The History of Terrorism

Terrorism has deep historic roots and has evolved over time just as individuals, groups and systems have. The key characteristics of terrorist incidences have not changed. It is the tactics, targets, weapons and the support systems that have been changing over the years. Notwithstanding the fact that the word terrorism originated during the French Revolution and the Jacobin Reign of Terror (1792-1794), individual incidences of terror are traceable to the ancient Greek and Roman Republics (Combs, 2013:3).

The term terrorism was used by the French revolutionary leaders to wipe out their political opponents. In Russia in the 19th century the term was also adopted by the then ruling party to characterize Russian revolutionaries who applied violent means to achieve their aims. By the end of the 19th century at the height of left wing and radical rebels that were mobilizing violent attacks in Europe, the term terrorism would be attributed to non-state anarchists rather than governments. This idea stood in contrast with the previous 18th century French definition (Kuei-Tsui, 2017:147).
The ancient times were marked by acts of conquerors that created climates of fear through either wiping out entire population or forcing them into exile. The Romans for instance created terrifying symbols of opposition by crucifying prisoners by nailing and tying them to a cross or to a wooden platform to die under excruciating public death (Combs, 2013). Terrorism is thus a political term originating from state terror emanating from a historical perspective (Combs, 2013:3).

2.3 New versus Old Terrorism and the Future of Terrorism

Whereas it cannot be predicted with accuracy how terrorism will develop in the 21st century, a number of assumptions can be made about future threat assessments. It is likely that terrorism will continue to be experienced in different parts of the world. This is because of the existence of social, economic and political conditions considered to be part of the root causes of terrorism. In the world today, there still exists the presence of a number of weak and failed states and where respective authorities have been unable to meet the basic needs of their citizens, including the lawlessness that have allowed terrorists to operate with ease (Cole, 2011). Terrorism is however not a preserve of weak states. It also occurs in strong states as has been the case with select European countries such as Germany in the 1970s (Duyvesteyn, 2004:441).

While contested, failed/weak states are marked by several characteristics that distinguish them from strong states. Categorizing states as failed is problematic given the lack of a clear standard for which all states aspire to. Weak states are unable to provide security, basic services and essential freedoms to their citizens. In fact, no state can claim a complete monopoly of violence (Eizenstat et al. 2005; Hippel, 2002). This then explains the often-indirect link claimed between weak states and terrorism (Simon & Tucker, 2007). It is rather the breakdown of law and order in the so-called failed states that create conducive
environments for terrorists to conduct economic activities including trading in illicit goods (Hippel, 2002).

Additionally, terrorist ideologies have the possibilities of evolving in unpredictable ways. These ideologies have the potential to cut across national boundaries and permeate across the society of states. A number of states or rogue people within states are likely to sponsor terrorism most notably at the regional levels for ideological and political reasons (Cole, 2011:201-202). Terrorism remains by its very nature adaptable and therefore specific groups that exist at a particular time could disappear, evolve or re-emerge as new ideologies or causes become manifest. It is on this fact that it is extremely difficult to make long term threat assessments (Cole, 2011:201-202).

Three major trends in terrorism have emerged in the early twenty-first century which merit some brief scrutiny. One is that the majority of terrorism is now perpetrated by groups with a political-religious ideology. There has been a rise particularly of Islamic fundamentalist groups such as the Al-Qaeda and increasingly now groups such as the Islamic State in Iraq and Levant (ISIL), the Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram (Cole, 2011; Hansen, 2016). However, it is imperative to point out that while many countries limit the application of the term terrorism to non-state actors, it is not strictly a phenomenon perpetrated by individuals or groups. States also do perpetrate terror even though significant terror attacks continue to be perpetrated by non-state actors (Combs, 2013:3).

Secondly, there has been the rise of attacks causing large numbers of indiscriminate casualties and third, has been the growing threat posed by the use of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear weapons (CBRN). The key significant strain of the use of CBRN by terrorists in the near future remains technological constraints’. This could be altered significantly, if terrorist groups are able to recruit technical competent persons. Hence, CBRN remains a key threat in the future (Cole, 2011). The Iraqi government use of the
cyanide gas on the Kurds in Halabja in March 1988 demonstrates the possibilities of such weapons being used (Combs, 2013). This particular attack was perpetrated by the state (Combs, 2013:70). However, the ability of terrorists to manufacture CBRN weapons is likely to be constrained by counter-measures adopted by states. In the post 9/11 period, multiple states have countered this threat by way of legislation, including tightening security at CBRN weapon storage sites (Cole, 2011:212-213).

2.4 Radicalization Discourses

Radicalization as a concept within terrorism studies has become fuzzy and problematic to define. Radicalization discourses are now being applied as frames to understanding notions of extremism and the rise of home grown terrorism that have emerged in western societies and beyond. Radicalization discourses have also become popular in policy and academic circles. How radicalization is defined has implications for prevention and de-radicalization engagements. Radicalization as a concept emerged in the post 9/11 period. While problematic, it has mainly assumed three agendas which are dependent on specific constructions. The concept has been applied in setting security, integration and foreign policy agendas. The term has been applied to shape responses from a state security view (Sedgwick, 2010).

While there is yet to be consensus on what radicalization means, there is an overarching view that it involves “the psychological, emotional and behavioral processes by which an individual adopts an ideology that promotes violence for the attainment of political, economic, religious or social goals” (Jensen et al. 2018:1). What is not in contention across radicalization models is that it is a gradual process influenced by different factors and dynamics. The processes remain complex, contextual and with multiple pathways. The various radicalization models differ on the length and the complexity of the ‘process’. Studying radicalization therefore is about unravelling the nature of the process (Neumann,
Often at the heart of the debates is the need to distinguish it from terrorism and also from extremism (Kuhle & Lindekilde, 2012).

According to Regeringen (2009:8), extremism has been defined as follows:

“Extremism is characterised by totalitarian and anti-democratic ideologies, intolerance to the views of others, hostile imagery and a division into ‘them’ and ‘ideas may be expressed in different ways, and ultimately, they may bring individuals or groups to use violent or undemocratic methods as a tool to reaching a specific political objective, or they may seek to undermine the democratic social order” (Regeringen, 2009: 8).

Much of the literature on the subject has tended to situate ‘radicalization’ within the confines of Islamist extremism and jihadist terrorism. Radicalization needs to be explained beyond a singular phenomenon from the perspective of a militant non-state actor. These militant non-state actors pursue their goals without regard to the interest of other parties. It should also include the actions of state actors too. Current studies that examine the phenomenon of radicalization have overly focused on ‘vulnerable’ groups such as the youth (Schmid, 2013: iv).

The youth vulnerabilities to radicalism have been examined from the lenses of push and pull factors. The push and pull factors are considered micro level factors with criticisms that they have failed to produce conclusive evidence on what causes radicalization. The push and pull factors have additionally been criticized for their lack of in-depth explanations. The criticisms being that their findings are generated from small samples and a few case studies which make it impossible for generalizations and comparisons. Owing to shortcomings of micro-level analysis, the debates have shifted to the meso-level or what has been termed the ‘radical milieu’ and additionally to the macro-levels that examines the input of public opinion and party politics (Schmid, 2013: iv).

Additionally, Githens-Mazers and Lambert (2010) have argued that radicalization as a research topic has mostly been informed by assumptions as opposed to systematic, scientific
and empirically founded research. Similarly, Bosi (2012) notes that most literature on political violence and terrorism lacks scientific merit. As a result, the literature on political violence has thus overly relied on secondary and tertiary accounts. Political violence analysts have thus recommended fieldwork targeting individual actors linked with violent political organizations as a way to better understand this social phenomenon in its specific context. This call for fieldwork research, however, raises a variety of ethical and methodological challenges for researchers. Some of the methodological challenges may include gaining access to present or former militants, including the associated challenges of building enough trust to gain entry into the communities under study (Martin-Ortega & Herman, 2009).

Therefore, this study seeks to broaden the empirical understanding of the radicalization processes so far by conducting field research. Having an appreciation for radicalization processes has implications for future counter-radicalization initiatives. There is already the presence of scholarship that has attempted to delineate the differences between violent radicalization and non-violent radicalization. Radicalization that leads to violence is then termed as ‘violent’ radicalization and radicalization that does not result to violence as ‘non-violent radicalization’. Non-violent radicalization denotes a process that leads to individuals holding radical views yet they do not assist or abet terrorist activities (Bartlett & Miller, 2012).

Drawing on an empirical work conducted in Canada between 2007 and 2009 yields illustrative findings around individualized factors that create prospects for violent radicalization and those that do not. For individuals taking up radical causes, political characteristics were important. Key among the factors cited included alienation and discrimination of mainly the Muslim identity especially in the wake of 9/11. Thus, it could provide a space for violent dogma to be entrenched. Secondly, was the anger directed at
western foreign policy and more so with the interventions in such places as Iraq being a threat to Islam and hence a call for terrorist violence (Bartlett & Miller, 2012).

Academic interest around radicalization has been growing since the 7/7 attacks in UK. In the post 7/7 attacks, there was a shift from solely focusing on international terrorist networks such as the Al-Qaeda to include the rise of home grown terrorist networks. These home-grown networks are being blamed for radicalization and consequently violent radicalization (Githens-Mazer & Lambert, 2010). The debates thus shifted to the presence of individuals residents within the nation and who often led normal lives being predisposed to commit violence. The introduction of the radicalization concept was thus a need to isolate the so called home grown terrorists before they mobilized political violence. In the discursive context of radicalization that followed, the focus moved from the acts of terrorist violence itself to the process. This entailed paying attention to the ‘opinion, views and ideas,’ that triggered the process (Hörnqvist & Flyghed, 2012:320-321).

Shifting the approach from the individual level process, politicians and the media in the UK context identify simplistic narratives around ideology, alienation, the internet as causes of radicalization while ignoring foreign policy outcomes such as the Iraq invasion of 2003. Within the UK context, communal and governmental discourses have overly securitized the Muslim identity as a source of terror threats. They have also included radicalization and blamed it on the apparent failures of the British Muslims to integrate politically and socially to the so termed ‘European’ values (Githens-Mazer & Lambert, 2010).

Using an example of the Adam brothers one of whom was found culpable of planning a terror attack in the UK in 2004 and convicted in 2007, the radicalization wisdom around extreme religious ideology is challenged. Radicalization in this context is challenged on the basis that only one of the 3 Adam brothers, Rahman, contemplated a violent Islamist inspired
violence on account of watching ‘radicalizing videos’ and being associated with networks that taught on ‘Salafi’ teachings in religious places. The fact that only one of the three brothers was inspired to commit violence amidst a ‘radicalized’ environment gives credence to the unpredictability of who joins a radical movement (Githen-Mazer & Lambert, 2010).

All of the three brothers were exposed to the videos showing the plight of Muslim sufferings in places such as Pakistan and Iraq which urged the need to engage in terrorism as an obligation. These videos also came laden with the technical, tactical and paths to becoming a terrorist. The causation here is on account of ideology. The critical perspective brought to the fore here is that the question of identity (being Muslim for instance) and following on a claimed violent ideology such as Salafism theology should not be assumed to lead to terrorism as the Adam brothers case study demonstrates to the contrary. However, it is notable that there exists empirical evidence of individual Salafis that work to prevent terrorist violence (Githens-Mazer & Lambert, 2010).

Since 2005, when the concept of radicalization emerged in mainstream terrorism discourses, two grand narratives on social disorder have dominated the analysis of the concept. The two grand narratives have been borrowed from a typology developed by Ruth Levitas (1998). This typology sets apart the social integrationist discourse and moral underclass discourse. The typology was initially developed to analyze poverty and social marginalization perspectives.

In the radicalization discourses, the typology (social integrationist and moral underclass) have been contextualized as exclusivist and cultural perspectives respectively. The exclusivist perspective results from the rise of conflicts and problems in society that predispose individual to take up values and perspectives that are distinct from the mainstream society. This exclusion often being linked to unemployment and residential segregation. The cultural perspective considers conflicts to be necessitated by a clash of values between
western and Muslim perspectives. In political terms the cultural perspective is associated with among others neo-conservatism and Islamophobia. The culturalist perspective is mainly associated with ‘new’ forms of terrorism with claims that Islam is associated with terrorist violence (Hörnqvist & Flyghed, 2012).

Western civilization relying on Samuel Huntington’s (1993) thesis on the ‘clash of civilizations’ follows this perspective with arguments that the world was under threat from Islamist values. Radicalization thus from a cultural perspective results from a clash of cultural values even though the perspective can be challenged. The exclusivist perspective similarly does not offer a convincing explanation as to why individuals get radicalized. It simply claims that those at the margins of society are likely to be radicalized. To the contrary, a profile of those that have been radicalized to commit violence indicates that a significant proportion of them are not socially disadvantaged (Vertigans, 2007). Hence, the view that some individuals are radicalized on the internet, in book stores and Mosques are indicators that they possess at the bare minimum social and economic capital. This challenges the marginalization thesis proffered by the exclusivist perspective. These two perspectives are both incompatible and complementary at the same time. In a nutshell, they speak to the ambiguities of the radicalization concept (Hörnqvist & Flyghed, 2012).

The ‘radical milieu’ or simply the social environment that terrorist groups operate in is important as an avenue to explore how it shapes the nature of political violence in particular ways. Conceptually, it refers to how violent groups are socially and symbolically linked. These groups share experiences, symbols, narratives and frames of interpretation which are linked to a certain extent to their social networks. This meso-level approach pays attention to the wider political and social environments and how they interplay to nurture the growth of violent groups. Paying attention to this environment contributes to broadening the field’s knowledge on the available literature on the ‘root-causes’ of terrorism including the
pathways to individual radicalization. Studying the environment thus provides a broader understanding of the individual pathways to radicalization and the development of violent groups (Malthaner & Waldmann, 2014).

Exploring the radical milieu is in part a response to the criticisms of the Critical Terrorism Studies neglect of the social and political environment that intersect in multiple ways to lead to individual radicalization. Thus, the analytical contribution of the ‘radical milieu’ is a contextualization of principally the individuals’ pathways of radicalization (Malthaner & Waldmann, 2014). It identifies and deepens the contextual understanding on how individuals join radical movements. Individuals often join radical groups out of personal networks, through linkages with acquaintances, friendship, groups and family ties. It is these personal connections that link individuals to violent groups.

Individual pathways to radicalization thus take place within the spatial and social environment of the radical milieus. These social environments are however not static but are marked by dynamic relational structures around terrorist groups and in their processes of mobilizing political violence. The relationship between radical milieus and the security agencies is highly conflictual and constantly has an influence on the nature of violent confrontations by radicalized groups. The confrontations with security agencies then create an interpretive framework for which the groups mobilize counter violence as a response to state persecutions and in the process lead to the emergence of radical milieus (Malthaner & Waldmann, 2014).

There exist multiple pathways that predispose individuals and groups towards radicalization and terrorism (McCauley & Moskalensko, 2008; Jensen et al. 2018). The multiple explanations thus make it less likely to isolate a theoretical position as to what leads individuals to take up radical actions (McCauley & Moskalensko, 2008). In a nutshell, the
pathways to radicalization are considered to be occurring at three basic levels. These are at the level of the individual, group and mass.

At the individual level, this is largely a result of personal victimization, expression of political grievances as well as the ‘power of love’ (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008). Broadening the perspective around political grievances is often how injustices are framed in the debates justifying violence. Individuals progressively pick up radical ideologies to justify violent extremism. Hence, the adopted ideologies at the personal level are informed by at least three underlying assumptions. That the community has suffered injustices, this injustice being linked to a specific enemy or force and the violence being directed at the perceived enemy to settle the claimed injustices (Ali et al. 2016). The power of love at the individual level is applied to characterize individuals who join radical causes drawing influences from their networks of friends, lovers, and family.

At the group level, there is the push towards group consensus to influence the take up of radical causes which is dependent on a group reaching certain objectives. At the mass level, the path towards radicalization is enhanced by among others, the use of revenge and dehumanizing of the other. For instance, the US waging war against the Taliban post 9/11 was framed as a threat to the Muslim nations with the act being relied as a strategy for mass radicalization. Therefore, in reality, the pathways to radicalization remain multiple and complex and are problematic to delineate them (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008). Researchers consider the process of radicalization to be a dynamic process with variations across individuals and communities (Ali et al. 2016; Neumann, 2013).

2.5 Theoretical Approaches to the Study of Radicalization

Radicalization studies are informed by three dominant theoretical approaches that examine key indicators that push individuals from radicalization to political violence. At one
end, there exists the cognitive theories that seek to explain radicalization from a cultural-psychological position. These theories often aim at isolating the cognitive indicators that may predispose young people from taking up violent causes. These include: anti-Western attitudes, religious fundamentalism and youth alienation (Monagham & Molnar, 2016).

The second is the behavioural approach which considers that the pickings of extreme beliefs are dependent upon interactions both online and offline that leads to multiple pathways (Monagham & Molnar, 2016). The behavioural approach looks into interpersonal dynamics while examining any transformation in personal habits, behaviours, religious beliefs, political associations that would be linked to radicalization. The behavioural approach presupposes that exploring the symptoms of personal transformation could serve as key indicators for individual potentialities to take up terrorist causes (Monagham & Molnar, 2016).

The third theoretical approach that has been explored within the radicalization discourses is the narrative school. This approach calls for a widening of the social and political context and for which violence may arise. The narrative approach charts a holistic approach by examining the interplay between theology, emotions, identity and group dynamics (Monagham & Molnar, 2016). The narrative approach challenges the reductivism in both the cognitive approach (this approach situates radicalization at the level of personality traits, political ideas, and extreme beliefs) and the behavioural approach (which situates radicalization at the level of social networks). The narrative approach on the overall calls for a wider social political context with which to isolate indicators that would point to political violence. The indicators to examine in this social context would include counter-cultures, social movements, extremist religious ideologies, and the specific geo-political factors that would contribute to radicalization processes (Monagham & Molnar, 2016).
Examining these contextual factors and aided by case studies following on the narrative approach provides a set of indicators that would explain the relationship between radicalization and political violence. Across the three schools, the reliance of scientific indicators would be useful to security risk management. These three theoretical approaches with a focus on individual behaviour could often complement counter-terrorism strategies given the variables they could produce. These variables often being applied in risk analysis (Monagham & Molnar, 2016).

2.6 How do Individuals become Radicalized: Some Variations

Within the radicalization debates, there exist multiple competing explanations detailing how individuals get radicalized. The debates are broadly centred on socio-economic marginalization and which includes high unemployment especially among youth. However, there exist alternative explanations disputing the links between socio-economic marginalization and radicalization (Piazza, 2006; Botha, 2014). The debates centred on the structural inequalities and injustices in society are considered to be the push factors. Pull factors on the other hand, appeal to the personal rewards of joining extremist groups such as identity and belonging.

Meanwhile, in literature there are claims that poverty, marginalization and socio-exclusion have been linked to manufacturing terrorism. However, notable scholars such as Walter Laqueur and Paul Wilkinson have rejected this argument. Instead these scholars argue that the likely factors that lead to terrorism and or extremism include political repression, democratization, the shifts from authoritarianism to quasi-democracy, geography to religious indoctrination (Laqueur, 2003; Wilkinson, 2006). One of the critiques of the raised perspective is that the East African region has been ignored academically in the past on some of these concerns. In the East African context, the political and the socio-economic conditions cannot be ruled out. Radical Islamists may thus capitalize on the widespread
poverty in the region, and the marginalization of the Muslim constituency in the mainstream political system as recruitment tools (Kfir, 2008:832-833).

One of the most cited models to explain radicalization is the Silber and Bhatt (2007) model that considers the phenomenon as occurring along a four-phase process: the pre-radicalization phase, self-identification phase, the indoctrination phase with the last phase being the jihadization phase (Aly & Striegher, 2012). The first phase, the pre-radicalization phase marks the entry point to the radicalization phase. The self-identification phase is marked by the presence of internal and external prompts that may include social alienation and economic marginalization. These triggers may then cause individuals to change their worldviews including the adoption of new religious ideologies. The indoctrination phase is where individuals adopt wholesome the Salafi-jihadi ideology as a result of altering their belief systems and thereafter being ready to commit violence. The jihadization phase is when members of a particular group consider it a religious duty to plan and undertake a terrorist attack (Aly & Striegher, 2012).

Silber and Bhatt (2007) model acknowledges that each of the radicalization phases is unique, and therefore individuals do not always follow a linear path in the process. There exist possibilities that individuals may drop off the path of radicalization at any point. The critique of the Silber and Bhatt (2007) model is its exclusivist focus on the Salafi-Jihadi ideology as an extremist religious ideology. The main bone of contention of the critiques of this model is its political persuasion to exclusively link radicalization as a process of involvement in Islamic terrorism. Other criticisms of the model denounce the argument that the variant of Salafi Islam is not necessary a violent Islam (Aly & Striegher, 2012).

Existing perspectives on the Kenyan context consider the pathways to radicalization and violent extremism to be a combination of several perspectives. Key among the perspectives are claims of poverty and socio-economic marginalization in both the Mombasa
and Nairobi sites of this study. The lure for financial incentives has been considered critical to push individuals to join radical groups with empirical evidence to support it (Amble & Hitchens, 2014; Bradbury & Kleinman, 2010). However, poverty and the links towards radicalization have been disputed on the account that even individuals from relatively well to do families have been radicalized to join radical groups (Piazza, 2006; Vertigans, 2007).

Other perspectives have included the contribution of radical teachers misinterpreting religious teachings as a recruitment mechanism. In this respect, there are claims that sections of the ‘Madrassas’ teachings have been sites of these ‘claimed’ indoctrination processes (Amble & Hitchens, 2014; Lind & Howell, 2010; Ndzovu, 2017). Literature is also indicative of how government counter-terrorism initiatives and mainly the hard power approaches have been alienating and contributing to this security challenge. The role of print and online media is an emerging area that would require further empirical scrutiny in the Kenyan context even though they have been accounted for in other contexts (Conway, 2016; Vertigans, 2007).

2.7 **Kenya’s Experience with Terrorism: A Brief Overview**

Kenya has had experiences with terror related attacks from the 1980s to the present times. One of the first terror incidents was the bombing of the Norfolk Hotel in December 1980 in Nairobi. The hotel was then an Israeli-owned establishment. This terror attack was linked to the Israel-Palestinian conflict (Krause & Otenyo, 2005). The Popular Front for the Liberation of the Palestine (PFLP) was responsible for the attack. The attack carried out by the PFLP and which claimed 15 lives while injuring 85 others, was interpreted to be a revenge mission for Kenya’s assistance to an Israel rescue mission to free hostages from a hijacked Air France plane in Entebbe, Uganda in 1976 (Mogire & Mkutu, 2011:474). Below is a figure from ACLED that summarizes incidences of grenades and bombings in Kenya from 1997 to 2014.
From figure 1 above, the intensity and frequency of terror attacks is mainly after 2011. This is significant given Kenya’s unilateral intervention in Somalia in October 2011. The figure too shows the epicenter of the attacks to be mainly in Nairobi, North Eastern and the Kenyan Coast.

The second major incident was the terrorist attack of the US Embassy on August 7, 1998 and which was attributed to Osama Bin Laden and the Al-Qaeda network. The attack claimed over 200 lives (Krause & Otenyo, 2005). In a span of barely four years after the 1998 attacks, terror struck again on 28 November 2002, in Kikambala north of Mombasa. First was a suicide bombing attack on Paradise Hotel, an Israeli-owned resort that claimed at least 12
lives while injuring 80 others. The second attack was an attempted missile attack on an Israeli plane leaving the Mombasa International Airport en-route to Tel-Aviv. The plane with over 200 passengers narrowly escaped the missile. A group calling itself the ‘Army of Palestine’ affiliated to the Al-Qaeda claimed responsibility for these 2002 attacks in Mombasa (Krause & Otenyo, 2005). In light of the growing terror attacks with the 1998 and the 2002 being targeted at Americans and Israelis respectively, Kenyans in letters to editors of mainstream dailies were concerned that the attacks were a breach of their sovereignty and social peace (Krause & Otenyo, 2005).

The 2002 attacks occurred after the 9/11 attacks in the US. 9/11 raised global publicity about terrorism and marked an entry into a new terrorist conscious world (Krause & Otenyo 2005). Kenya in the post 9/11 period would be designated by the US as ‘an anchor state’ in helping to fight global terrorism in the Horn of Africa. Kenya has thus been used as a staging point to dismantle the Al-Qaeda networks in the Horn of Africa region (Mogire & Mkutu, 2011:475).

In the periods between 2002 and 2010, there were several other terror incidents across the country. In August 2003 a policeman was killed; 2007 June there was an explosion at a bus stop in Nairobi killing 2 and injuring 35 people. In December 2010, there was an explosion at a bus terminus that claimed 3 lives and injured 39 others. In the same month, there was a grenade attack on police officers on patrol. These attacks were linked to the Al-Shabaab group based in Somalia (Mogire & Mkutu, 2011:475). The Al-Shabaab would intensify a series of kidnappings along northern Kenya that included western tourists and this necessitated Kenya’s military intervention into Somalia in October 2011. The attack, codenamed ‘Operation Linda Nchi’ (Kiswahili for “protect the country”), was a response to the incursion of the Al-Shabaab militias into Kenyan territory (Fisher, 2013: 7; Birkett, 2013:1-2; International Crisis Group, 2012).
Kenya would again witness an internationalized terror attack on the 21st of September, 2013 at the up-market Westgate Shopping Mall in Nairobi’s Westland’s suburb. The attack was linked by the Kenyan state to the Al-Shabaab militia group affiliated with the Al-Qaeda network. The attackers relied on social media (Twitter) to engage with multiple audiences (Mair, 2016). Al-Shabaab argued that it was a revenge option for Kenya’s intervention in Somalia. This attack claimed 67 lives and injured hundreds. Post this attack, the Kenyan state revived its position of repatriating Somali refugees to their country as way of pre-empting future strikes (BBC News, 2013; Khalil & Zeuthen, 2014; Mair, 2016).

An inquiry by the Joint Parliamentary Committees on Administration and National Security and Foreign Relations and Defence on the 2013 Westgate attack provided for a number of factors that had culminated into this attack amidst a host of other terror incidents in the country (Kenya National Assembly, 2013). Some of the cited factors included Kenya’s porous borders with Somalia, runaway corruption in the security agencies, the phenomenon of youth radicalization with claims that over 500 youths had joined the Al-Shabaab, and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, including a growing refugee population that then numbered about 600,000. The inquiry report lamented the failures of the security apparatus to pre-empt this attack despite general information on the imminence of the threat. Governmental agencies responding to the Westgate attack were also faulted for their failures to respond to this attack promptly (Kenya National Assembly, 2013).

In March 2014, the Kenya National Assembly rejected the Joint Committee report citing poor work and lack of useful recommendations. In the wake of several terror related attacks in the country post the 2013 Westgate attacks, the Kenyan government launched a massive counter-terrorism operation that it termed as ‘Operation Usalama (Security) Watch’ in April of 2014. This police operation principally targeting the Somalis living in Eastleigh and in the South C suburbs saw a relocation of about 4,000 people and who were
subsequently detained at the Safaricom Kasarani stadium (Williams, 2014; Balakian, 2016). Those who bribed the security officials bought their way out of this confinement. Sections of the Kenyan media and the political class contributed to the stereotyping of the ethnic Somalis citizens and refugees as responsible for this attack. It was this victimization narrative that the Al-Shabaab used in a recruitment video released in May of 2014 following the launch of Operation *Usalama* Watch (Williams, 2014).

In 2014, there was a sustained wave of terror attacks mostly in the coastal region. Between June and mid July 2014, Lamu County exploded with runaway insecurity. The media and public discourses both attributed the attacks to local militias while not ruling out the Al-Shabaab network. Between mid-June and mid July 2014 at least 90 people perished in the period among them police officers (Bocha & Kazungu, 2014). In November 2014, an attack in Mandera claimed 28 passengers. In December 2014, an attack on quarry workers claimed 36 people. These attacks were aided by a choice of weapons ranging from hand grenades, improvised explosion devices (IEDs), landmines to bombs (Mogire, Mkutu & Alusa, 2018). In April 2015, terror again struck at the Garissa University College where 167 lives were lost. The Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility.

The two case studies chosen for this study (Nairobi and Mombasa Counties) have been considered to be varied level hotspots for violent extremists. The Eastleigh area of Nairobi has in particular been considered to be a prominent hotspot, including the adjacent area of Majengo. Violence has also risen in frequency within the Kenyan Coast and especially raising religious tensions after the killings of prominent clerics such as Sheikhs Aboud Rogo (August 2012), Ibrahim Rogo (2013), Abubakar Shariff (April 2014) and Idriss Mohamed (June 2014) (Khalil & Zeuthen, 2014). The demonstrations that ensued after these unsolved killings brought on board tough state responses. These killings were suspected to
have been carried out by the state (Lind et al. 2017). The policing agencies in Kenya often applying teargas and live ammunition to quell these protests (Mwakimako & Willis, 2014).

The Kenyan Coast region in the post-independence period experienced socio-economic marginalization by the Kenyan state, factors which have provided a conducive environment for terrorism to operate (Willis & Gona, 2012; Bradbury & Kleinman, 2010). The two sites chosen for the study have been documented as having experienced recruitment of young men into radicalization for slightly over a decade. There are documented cases of returnees (previously young males recruited for violence) coming from Somalia and ending up in parts of the Kenyan Coast and in Eastleigh in Nairobi. Some of the returnees making the journey back out of frustrations in Somalia, while others being keen to pursue jihad when back home (Mwakimako & Willis, 2014:14; IOM/GOK, 2015).

Additionally, the Coast region has been previously marginalized in terms of their identity and belonging to the Kenyan nation. In particular those with a Swahili identity (a mix of African, Arab, and South Asia identity), including Muslim Arab and Asian origins orientations being questioned. In the senior Kenyatta and the Moi’s regimes, there existed perceptions that they did not fully ‘belong’ to the Kenyan nation. These perceptions were tied to the colonial classifications of ‘natives’ and ‘non-natives’ to demarcate ‘colonized’ subjects. The Swahili took on in varied times both the native and the non-native categorization and yet lacked a ‘tribal’ identity unlike their ‘native’ counter-parts. Similarly, Muslims of Arab and Asian identity also gravitated towards a non-native status in the colonial state. Hence, the Kenyan Coast has a long history of settling immigrants from other parts of East Africa, Arabia, including South Asia. The colonial status of non-natives ascribed to the Swahili, Arabs and those of Asian identity would give credence to their view as ‘outsiders’ in the post-colonial Kenya and which has exacerbated social tensions. In 1961, both the Arab and Swahili communities already envisioned a Coastal autonomy arguing that
the Coast area had been a ten-mile strip lease agreement signed in the 1890s with the Sultan of Zanzibar (Prestholdt, 2011; Berman, 2017). The Mijikenda have also been part of the Kenyan Coast and opted to be part of Kenya in 1961 unlike Arab and Swahili communities. Within their historical categorization as the Mtwapa-Digo group, they variously have taken on two identities. The Muslim Mijikenda refers specifically to the Digo and who claim descent from Kwale. The non-Muslim Mijikenda categorization who comprise eight subgroups even though some small numbers have converted to Islam include: Giriama, Rabai, Ribe, Kambe, Jibana, Chonyi, Kauma, Duruma (Parkin, 1989:166).

The Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) even though not part of the study has used the narrative of the expiry of the lease to claim secession from Kenya with its slogan ‘Pwani si Kenya’ (Kiswahili-The Coast is not Kenya). At independence, the post-independence leadership quashed these demands and centralized the government after a brief Majimbo (regional) government. This material reality became more pronounced prior to the 2013 general elections even calling for the boycott of the elections (Willis & Gona, 2012). The Coast has been neglected more broadly in terms of social economic development and the attendant dominations by up-country peoples. This when tied to land grabs created other challenges such as land squatters. It is some of these grievances that are presently channeled by the MRC (Kresse, 2009; Berman, 2017).

The Arabs and Swahili feared domination by their upcountry Christian leaders and hence their push for autonomy of the Coast region as early as 1961. The Daniel Moi era in particular discriminated Coastal Muslims in application for national identity cards and passports. The state would over time quell their political dissent and specifically target the rise of the Islamic Party of Kenya (IPK) following the return of multi-partism in 1991 (Prestholdt, 2011).
The IPK party proving popular across urban Muslims in Mombasa rallied anti-Moi demonstrations and was consequently denied registration by the state. The IPK in its mobilization strategy relied on citizenship dilemmas centered on lack of identity cards and passports, including the demands for social justice and addressing runway corruption (Prestholdt, 2011). The Moi regime immediately accused the IPK to be Islamic fundamentalists and mobilized non-state violence to weaken the IPK through young Mijikenda youth. Moi’s regime would claim that the Coastal Muslim communities were supporting terrorism after the 1998 bombings. Kenyan security forces would post the 1998 attacks carry out raids in Swahili majority areas of Old Town and Majengo in Mombasa. These raids often led to the harassment and detentions of Muslims in the period even though the 1998 attacks were linked to foreigners (Prestholdt, 2011). Over time, the Mwai Kibaki regime (2002-2013) would adopt a similar stance of securitizing a section of the Coastal community to be responsible for terror attacks (Whitaker, 2008; Prestholdt, 2011).

2.8 The Explanation for Vulnerabilities to Terrorism in Kenya

Analysts have highlighted a number of explanations as to why Kenya has been vulnerable to terrorism. At least three explanations have been proffered. One relates to a number of internal factors that have reference to global discourses, second being Kenya’s external relations with regimes and non-state actors and third being the weak governance mechanisms (Otenyo, 2004).

Taking the case of internal factors, a number of explanations can be identified as making Kenya vulnerable to terrorism. Terrorism gained an entry in a period of poor socio-economic outcomes (Otenyo, 2004). The linkages between poverty and terrorism have however been disputed in the literature (Piazza, 2006; Piazza, 2011). The internal factors in the Kenyan context have also been linked to the new waves of terrorism globally. A particular key wave was the rise of Osama Bin Laden at the end of the Gulf War in 1991.
This period of Osama’s rise coincided with the rise of Islamic Party of Kenya which was denied registration by the Kenyan state following the return to multi-partism in 1991. The Kenyan state would make links between the IPK and the Sudan state post 1989 that was then considered supportive of terrorism. IPK received support from Sudan, the then home to Osama Bin Laden before he relocated to Afghanistan. The regime that took power in Sudan in June 1989 is claimed to have been committed to fundamentalism and to the spread of Islam in the Nile and the greater Horn of Africa (Otenyo, 2004). The Sudanese factor in support of the Islamist group Al-Ittihad al-Islami (Islamic Union) in Somalia post 1991 added to insecurity fears in Kenya. The Islamic Union would later be classified as a terrorist organization by the United States’ Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) and consequently linked to Al-Qaeda.

Kenya was concerned that Sudan’s support for fundamentalist groups in Somalia would further complicate its own security. Kenya would make a claim that the Islamic Union linked to the Paradise Hotel attack north of Mombasa in November 2002 had linkages with the Sudan. Other vulnerabilities to terrorism have been the claims that refugees, especially Somalis residing in Dabaab refugee camp, were agents of fundamentalism. The link being made between the presence of illegal firearms, among a variety of weapons being sold in the camp. The point being that the refugee camps had capabilities of spreading radical ideas including training into terrorist causes (Otenyo, 2004:79).

Secondly, Kenya’s vulnerabilities to terrorism are considered on the account of her relations with other regimes and non-state actors. Drawing on a foreign policy context, Kenya’s relations with other powers such as the USA, UK, and Israel have made it vulnerable to terror attacks (Otenyo, 2004; Mabera, 2016). Singling out Israel-Kenya relations, analysts such as Mazrui (2001) would argue that therein lays the root cause of terrorism. Kenya being seen as supportive of Israel, it has served to alienate the Muslim population who consider
Israel and its allies such as the US of violating the rights of the Palestinian who are still struggling for statehood. This aspect being alienating to the Muslim nation then creates vulnerabilities for terrorism. As mentioned before, the first major terrorist attack in Kenya in 1980 is considered to have been a revenge attacks by Arabs for the support Kenya offered to Israeli commandos as they rescued a hijacked plane with their nationals in Entebbe, Uganda earlier (Otenyo, 2004).

A third variable that has impacted negatively on Kenya’s vulnerabilities to terrorism relates to its weak governance mechanisms (Cannon & Pkalya, 2017). An extensive network of corrupt state officials has in the past been claimed to aid terrorists through services such as banking and passport issuance. The corrupt bureaucracy when linked to other governance challenges such as insecure borders and a less thriving economy could point to these vulnerabilities (Mogire & Mkutu, 2011; Omeje & Githigaro, 2012; Cannon & Pkalya, 2017). There are further arguments that the police are underpaid and therefore do not undertake their functions with zeal and diligence. It is likely therefore that individuals with terrorist intentions could enter the country through a corrupt administration but also facilitate trade that could be used by groups such as the Al-Shabaab to carry out their activities.

In an era of increased radicalization, it has been argued that part of the trade goods moving between Somalia and Kenya through the northeastern area (Garissa for example), such as guns, cooking oil, and sugar, could be funding Al-Shabaab (Otenyo, 2004; Mkutu, Marani & Ruteere, 2014). Corruption and state capture of key institutions in Kenya is rife and has notably been used to facilitate various forms of transnational organized crime (Gastrow, 2011).

2.9 **Kenya’s Counter-terrorism and Counter-radicalization Responses**

Within the domains of counter-terrorism, Kenya has become a recipient of foreign support to strengthen her internal security following the launch of the so called ‘war on
terror’ post the 9/11 attacks. In terms of the US support, part of the policy thinking is the designation of Kenya as a weak state which needs capacity building for internal security given a series of terrorist motivated attacks in the country (Bachmann & Honke, 2009). The US alongside other partners, namely the UK and Denmark, has engaged in a series of policy responses to Kenya through several strategies. One has been hard security assistance (military support, equipment and so on), two has been support with anti-terrorism legislation, and third but not least has been support with soft-power approaches. These various interventions have produced several contradictions.

The available literature singles out the overarching contribution of the US especially towards capacity strengthening of key national security institutions. These have included the military, the intelligence service (presently the National Intelligence Service-NIS), the police, including border patrols (Mogire & Mkutu, 2011). Through the US East Africa Counter-Terrorism Initiatives and the Anti-Terrorism Assistance Programme, in 2003 and 2004, Kenya established the Anti-Terrorism Police Unit (ATPU) and also the National Counter-Terrorism Center (Bachmann & Honke, 2009; Mogire & Mkutu, 2011; Whitaker, 2008).

The UK has provided support with Kenya’s border control through the provision of communication hardware and operations trainings as part of addressing infiltrations at the borders (Bachmann & Honke, 2009). In the past, the British military had also been involved in training special counter-terrorism forces but there was a halt in 2008 following claims of human rights violations in Mount Elgon by a Kenyan unit trained in counter-terrorism operations (Bachmann & Honke, 2009). Amidst the donor strengthening of the capacity of state agencies, criticisms have been raised on the lack of their strong mechanisms to ensure transparency and accountability of the strengthened state institutions (Bachmann & Honke, 2009).
All the three main counter-terrorism partners in the Kenyan context (US, UK, and Denmark) have engaged in softer strategies through social development programmes. The soft strategies are partly informed by poverty-terrorism linkages even though the links have been disputed (Piazza, 2006; Laqueur, 2003). Increasingly therefore, development aid is now being used to counter-terrorism or what has simply been termed the ‘securitization’ of development or what other analysts have called the securitization of aid (Bachmann & Honke, 2009; Howell & Lind, 2008:7).

In the ‘Global War on Terror’ discourse, securitization of aid takes on multiple levels. At the macro-level, political elites have claimed the linkages between poverty, deprivation and terrorism. This attempted causality has then been used to infuse development planning into the global security agendas. This has further been manifested by the increased cooperation between global security, military and development agencies at the super-national levels, and has been manifested in speeches of UN officials who have been at the forefront of making linkages between security and development (Howell & Lind, 2008:7).

At the meso-level, connections have been made between aid, foreign policy and security agencies. This works through the pooling of resources for both security and development agencies to support discrete ventures. Some of this support going for bilateral aid flows to ‘frontline states’ engaged in the war on terror. At the micro-level and where a lot of ‘soft’ approaches towards counter-terrorism fits, there is the greater interaction between civil and military support, including support to civil society (Howell & Lind, 2008:8).

These soft programmes have often ranged from support with community policing to infrastructure projects such as construction of wells, schools and so on with the latter being undertaken in previously marginalized areas of the former Coast and North-Eastern provinces (Bradbury & Kleinman, 2010). The infrastructure projects run mainly by the US are meant to win the trust of local-Muslim communities but carry motivations for intelligence gathering.
and preventing individuals from joining terrorist organizations (Bachmann & Honke, 2009; Bradbury & Kleinman, 2010).

Some interventions supported by donors such as the establishment of the ATPU have been critiqued for their violations of human rights in counter terrorism practices. The claim has been in the wave of such attacks as the Kikambala attack in 2002, the state even in the absence of the ATPU had began to securitize certain identities in the Kenyan state. Peoples of a Muslim and Somali identity have been increasingly securitized as responsible for terror threats which has over time damaged relations between the government and Kenyans of Muslim identity (Bachmann & Honke, 2009).

This securitization of the Somalis identity could be argued to be ongoing as the Operation Usalama Watch of 2014 launched in Nairobi environs demonstrated. This security operation followed a spate of terror attacks including the September 2013 Westgate attacks. The operation Usalama watch launched in Eastleigh and South C areas of Nairobi affected a sizeable population of Somalis. This security swoop that was intended to pre-empt terror threats resulted in a range of human rights violations including arbitrary arrests and confinements (Anderson & McKnight, 2015; Balakian, 2016).

A key counter-terrorism response in 2011 was Kenya’s military intervention in Somalia in 2011 to deal with the growing threats that were posed by the Al-Shabaab. Birkett (2013) argues that Kenya was justified under International Law to engage in Somalia even though it was intervening principally to counteract the threats posed by the militant group Al-Shabaab and not the state. For this reason, he avers that Kenya was not at war with Somalia but it was in pursuit of a non-state actor who it has securitized as constituting a key security threat.
Indeed, the response was largely informed by a series of kidnappings and various attacks that had led to loss of lives for the past 36 months before Kenya had invaded Somalia. Kenya wrote to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) informing the body of its decision to invade Somalia a day after her invasion on 17th of October 2011. In her letter, it would argue that Kenya had suffered a series of security threats emanating from Al-Shabaab and hence, her decision to intervene (Birkett, 2013).

While security threats were cited as the primary reason for this intervention, economic reasons were additional motivations. Kenya at this point had been considering securing the Coastal region and developing the Lamu port. There was an additional plan to set up a transport corridor in northern Kenya. This was in anticipation of oil discovery in Turkana County in addition to exploring oil on a disputed maritime zone with Somalia. A wider economic logic thus fitted into this intervention (Anderson & McKnight, 2014).

Kenya’s intervention in Somalia had the backing of the African Union, the US and France (Birkett, 2013:14). Kenya was in sum invoking its right to self-defence under Article 51 of the UN Charter. Kenya’s mission in this intervention was to push the Al-Shabaab past Kismayo about 200 km from the Kenyan-Somalia border (Birkett, 2013:19). The subsequent incorporation of Kenyan troops into the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) forces in February 2012 terminated the rights of Kenya’s self-defence given that the UN Security Council had come on board. The unilateral intervention in October 2011 by Kenya had initially been met with opposition by Somali authorities (Birkett, 2013).

Within the confines of Muslim-state relations in Kenya, state activities following the invasion of Ethiopia in Somalia with the active backing of special US forces in 2006 also set the stage for growing mistrust. Ethiopia’s intervention was meant to wrestle Mogadishu of the control of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU). This intervention resulted in a massive influx of refugees in the Kenyan territory.
The Kenyan security agencies in tandem with US forces sought to arrest Al-Qaeda militants within the fleeing refugees. Kenya’s response was to arrest at least 150 people of different nations and whom they rendered to Somalia and Ethiopia. The rendering of at least 19 Muslims as claimed by the then opposition chief Raila Odinga served to exacerbate tensions within the Muslim community (Bachmann & Honke, 2009). The influential Muslim umbrella group— the National Muslim Leaders Forum (Namlef)—came out openly at the height of the 2007 elections to declare their mistrust for the Kibaki administration and to vouch support for Raila Odinga in the presidential race. Odinga signed in the scramble for the ‘Muslim vote’ a memorandum of understanding with the Namlef committing to a fair representation of Muslims within the Kenyan state but also promised to open inquiries around arbitrary anti-terrorism measures. The MOU was themed around Muslim grievances meted out by the Kibaki administration (Bachmann & Honke, 2009).

One of the domestic measures that Kenya has pursued in efforts at countering terrorism has been the enacting of anti-terrorism legislation. This is a goal that had been pursued since the National Rainbow Coalition (NARC) regime came to power in late 2002 (Makinda, 2007). The anti-terrorism legislation would only come to fruition in October, 2012 with the presidential assent of the prevention of terrorism act (also known as POTA), (Ndonga, 2012). This immediately drew criticism from sections of the Muslim constituency that saw the act as directly targeting them. Kenya thus joins other countries in the African continent that have passed anti-terrorism legislations such as Egypt, South Africa and Uganda post the 9/11 period. The overriding critiques of the various pieces of legislation regarding the war on terror have been their violations of human rights and civil liberties (Makinda, 2007:27).

For Kenya, the journey towards achieving anti-terrorism legislation has largely been driven by Western powers. This had the effect of creating rifts and discord within the Muslim community supported by a vibrant civil society and a political class. The anti-terrorism
legislation gained a momentum in the first Kibaki administration (2003-2007). In 2003, the Kibaki administration prepared as part of its counter-terrorism strategy, the suppression of terrorism bill and presented it to parliament. The voices of dissent argued that the bill had not benefitted from wide consultation among various stakeholders (Bachman & Honke, 2009:107).

Furthermore, the various contentions within the bill as espoused by civil society organizations were that it would interfere with the enjoyment of various civil rights within the Kenyan constitution. The main areas of criticism included enhanced powers of the police to arrest, search and detain suspects at will including secret locations. At the same time the state officials would be immune from any prosecution. There was also a clause that sought to argue that a person could be construed to be sympathetic to a terrorist cause by the virtue of their dress code. This again drew widespread condemnation from the Muslim community fearing that it would target them. The bill was withdrawn after a concerted opposition from various stakeholders including some members of parliament. The bill became part of public discussions in 2005 and a new anti-terrorism bill was introduced in 2006. The absence of the legislation did not mean, however, that the state would stop its anti-terror missions. Its mission would continue with the operations of the anti-terrorism police unit- ATPU which has been variously condemned for its alleged violation of human rights and particularly so within the Kenyan Muslim constituency (Bachman & Honke, 2009: 107-108; Makinda, 2007: 27-28).

Internally, both Moi and Kibaki administrations continued to enhance checks on non-governmental organizations as a counter-terrorism strategy (Prestholdt, 2011). This strategy was implemented after the 1998 US embassy bombings. The initial scrutiny after the 1998 attacks being directed at Muslim organizations that provided humanitarian assistance to refugee communities in Kenya’s former North-Eastern Province. A number of charities were
banned from operating in the country. The banning was founded on claims that they were supportive of terrorist organizations. Those with Middle East connections created further suspicions (Prestholdt, 2011; Mogire & Mkutu, 2011).

2.10 Uhuru Kenyatta’s Administration Counter-Terrorism Approaches (Post 2013)

The Kenyatta administration counter-terrorism responses indicate a multi-agency approach with various state institutions coming to support the war on terrorism. Specialized state agencies have been brought on board to deal with this challenge. These include the National Intelligence Service (NIS), and the National Police Service (NPS) (Mkutu, Marani & Ruteere, 2014). While some security functions have been retained at the national level, county governments have also been accorded security functions that would include policing terrorism among other forms of crime. This is line with the establishment of devolved governments post the 2013 general elections enabled with the passage of 2010 Kenyan constitution (Mkutu, Marani & Ruteere, 2014).

There has been the continuation of Kenya’s stabilization efforts in Somalia in during the Kenyatta presidency. Kenya has continued its engagement through the African Union Mission in Somalia contingent that it joined in 2012. During the Kibaki presidency (2002-2013), Kenya would unilaterally intervene in Southern Somalia in 2011 following a wave of terror attacks blamed on the Al-Shabaab (Birkett, 2013).

The Operation Usalama Watch was launched a year into the Kenyatta presidency specifically with the intent to swipe out terrorists mainly from the ‘securitized’ space that is Eastleigh. On April 5, 2014, state security agencies launched an operation to deal with mainly undocumented refugees that were securitized as posing terrorist threats (Balakian, 2016; Gluck, 2017). This operation came a few months after the September 2013 Westgate attack. This intervention ended rounding up thousands of Somali refugees, some of whom had
genuine identification papers. Consequently, those without documentation were to be deported to their country of origin, whereas refugees with camp issued documents were relocated to their registered camps. For those registered in Nairobi, they needed to identify a camp of choice for their relocation (Balakian, 2016).

The Operation Usalama Watch opened debates on the legitimacy of identity cards as documents to confer citizenship. Within this operation, the Kenyan national identity became a marker of citizenship and a non-suspect status. In contrast, those holding refugee identity cards were categorized as terror suspects. Within the operation, Somali Kenyans who have had historical difficulties accessing national identity cards would have their IDs constructed as illegitimate (Balakian, 2016). These foundations of illegitimate documents are based on accounts that corruption in the Kenyan state has resulted in the un-procedural issuance of identity and travel documents even to non-Kenians (Balakian, 2016). The operation Usalama Watch also became an opportunity for security officials to extort bribes from suspects in return for their freedoms (Balakian, 2016).

Additionally, a parliamentary committee that had investigated the Westgate attack in 2013 had recommended the closure of both the Kakuma and Dabaab refugee camps and the repealing of the Kenya’s 2006 refugee act. It also argued for the repatriation of refugees, a position that would run counter to the principle of non-refoulement as contained in the Geneva Convention of 1951 and which Kenya is a signatory to (Botha, 2014; Williams, 2014). The parliamentary report on the 2013 Westgate attack included a recommendation on the repatriation of urban Somali refugees that run counter to a 2013 court ruling that had challenged a previous government directive issued in 2012 to relocate urban refugees (Williams, 2014).

In December 2014, the Kenyan parliament passed the Security Amendment Act of 2014 that sought to enhance the powers of the state to deal with notably the threat of
terrorism. This Amendment Act revised at least 15 pieces of legislation in order to give the state more powers in countering terrorism (GOK, 2014). Among the laws amended was the Prevention of Terrorism Act of 2012. This particular review gave police more powers such as detaining terror suspects for more than 24 hours. However, they needed the court’s warrant (GOK, 2014).

2.11 Operation Linda Boni

As part of a strategy to disrupt terrorist networks and bases in Kenya, in September 2015, the government launched the Operation Linda Boni to weed out Al-Shabaab from the Boni Forest in Lamu County (Mogire, Mkutu & Alusa, 2018). This operation is still ongoing in 2018 and is conducted jointly by the police, intelligence and the Kenya Defence Forces. This operation came in the wake of several attacks in Lamu County in 2014 (such as the Mpeketoni settlement attack) linked to the Al-Shabaab and affiliated groups. Moreover, Al-Shabaab is said to have several camps in the forest. The operation has entailed direct combat, the infiltration and interrogation of suspects across Lamu County (Mogire, Mkutu & Alusa, 2017:87).

The Boni operation has faced several criticisms including disappearances. Security officials also suffered the brunt of the operation. A July 2017 attack at a police post in Lamu claimed the lives of three officers. The attack was executed by 150 people. In this attack, guns were stolen, communication equipment was destroyed and a police vehicle stolen (Mogire, Mkutu & Alusa, 2018).

2.12 Kenya’s National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism (NSCVE)

As part of responding to the security threats posed broadly by violent extremism, the national government launched a National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism in 2016. The strategy calls for wide engagement across the state and non-state actors. The strategy calls for a multi-stakeholder engagement to respond to threats posed by such terrorist
organizations such as the Al-Shabaab, Daesh (ISIS) that are currently operating in the Horn of Africa (GOK, 2016). The strategy also calls for engagement and collaboration between Kenyan citizens, communities, civil societies, community-based organizations, religious authorities, including partnerships with state organs at the national, county and local levels.

In a nutshell, it incorporates nine pillars in which CVE work is to be anchored. Among the pillars is education that seeks counter-radicalization in educational institutions. Besides, the strategy places emphasis on research-driven CVE initiatives. The National Counter Terrorism Center (NCTC) is mandated to coordinate CVE work in Kenya. This strategy presents a significant shift on how countering violent extremism should proceed. It relies on a multiplicity of actors including non-state actors to defeat a growing security threat (GOK, 2016).

2.13 Debates around Community Resilience

The notion of building community resilience to counter violent-extremism has assumed currency in the post 9/11 environment. It has been adopted in multiple locations mainly in parts of Europe and Australia. Resilience as a concept is broadly applied to mean the value of individual capacities to withstand or overcome adversities that they might face (Weine et al. 2013). Specifically, resilience within counter-radicalization discourses means the use of a number of multi-faceted strategies to reduce the prevalence of radicalization and recruitment into violent extremism. Resilience does involve multiple agencies that include individuals, communities, societies and networks. How resilience is applied is dependent on culture, context, language, child and youth development, including associated risk factors. Activities rapidly recommended for building resilience against violent extremism include civic dialogue platforms, mentoring programs, community policing among other interventions (Weine et al. 2013).
Resilience is underpinned by the view that individuals and communities can play an active role in counter-radicalization interventions. However, the broader discourses around the concept of resilience claim the agency of community as a safeguard around violent extremism. Therefore, the claim is that naturally a section of the community would want to safeguard their members from the threat of radicalization and violent recruitment (Weine et al. 2013:329).

There exist potentials that community policing could be a practical tool in the prevention of terrorism and generally in countering radicalization. This potential has been considered by academics and field practitioners. Besides, community policing as a philosophy engages the community in broad crime prevention. The approach is now being applied in countering radicalization. However, it seeks as its goal the reduction of crime with community and policing agencies cooperation. For community policing to work, it would require the appreciation of its philosophy by both the police and the community. In addition, trust between the police and the community is important. Trust building among the two would help the community to open up on their security issues including terrorism leading to collective problem-solving strategies (Yildiz & Gotkepe, 2011).

From a policing perspective, opening up the communication channels with community leaders and opinion shapers is critical in helping the police to understand the terrain they are operating on. Hence, community policing is in itself a contemporary shift in policing. It implies that while traditional hard policing strategies (for example increased surveillance and patrol, stop and search), are still required, community policing should often be seen as a contemporary approach (Yildiz & Gotkepe, 2011; Murray, 2005). This model has been applied in Turkey since the 2000s to prevent radicalization by the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK). The community policing has entailed such activities as organizing
community cultural events to interact with mainly young people that could be at risk of being enrolled by groups as PKK.

As part of wider trust building with communities, community policing officers make regular visits to peoples’ home and business enterprises. The focus of these visits being to reach families with preventative information on the PKK to stop further recruitment of their children. Building community trust has also entailed on the part of the Turkish police, a review of some hard-centered approaches. The previous application of extra-legal ways such as torture, illegal detentions, excessive force on demonstrators has formed part of the review (Yildiz & Gotkepe, 2011). Changing their policing practice was also in part informed by the PKK negative experiences with Turkish police that included killings and torture of their members. It was on this account that their membership sought non-cooperation with the police. The perspective being that if the police were to act as the PKK expected them to, then this would reinforce the PKK members attachment to their organization. Drawing on the Turkish case, community policing has a new potential to deal with radicalization and more lessons would need to be learnt from other similar experiences (Yildiz & Gotkepe, 2011).

Building resilience to counter-violent extremism is fraught with several obstacles that would require empirical scrutiny in the Kenyan context. One is that resilience within counter-radicalization discourses remains a complex process mediated by localized meanings and conflicts (Weine et al. 2013:331). Secondly, there is the question of sustainability to fund community building projects such as civic dialogues and community policing. Third, is the need for quick results in resilience work yet strengthening resilience ought to be a long-term process. Security policy makers are often on the quick fix mode. Fourth is the larger phenomenon of communities’ mistrust for governments and which would be critical for building community resilience against violent extremism (Weine et al. 2013:331; Nielsen & Schack, 2016).
However, there exists a gaping presence of critical studies examining how community resilience works in Kenya to counter violent extremism. In other words, what are the impacts and effects of these approaches in the Kenyan context. Asking these kinds of questions beyond the ‘soft’ power approaches has implications for both scholarship and policy planning in government.

The so-called soft power approaches are one of the two thematic areas in the global war on terror (GWOT) discourses. The other thematic response being the use of hard power approaches. The hard power approaches combine the physical approach to deter terrorist activities including the use of arrests, surveillance and intelligence to undermine terrorist acts (Aljunied, 2011). Meanwhile, soft power approaches are often focused on discounting terrorist ideologies through counter-ideology discourses that promote political violence. Therefore, taking on a soft approach, Muslim organizations and leaders are turning out to be critical partners in denouncing terrorist violence in varied contexts (Aljunied, 2011). They are doing so through the use of public education, counseling and issuing of religious decrees (fatwas). They are thus actors that have become useful and critical in challenging terrorist ideologies grounded in misinterpretation of Jihad teachings. In Singapore for instance, the Islamic Religious Council of Singapore (MUIS) has been a crucial partner in challenging extreme ideologies. MUIS has been documented as challenging the Jihadist ideologies that apply a narrow interpretation of religion to mobilize violence. It has additionally called for the forging of peaceful relations between Muslim and non-Muslims faiths (Aljunied, 2011:654-659).

Despite the surge of debates in terrorism and counter-terrorism globally in the post 9/11 period, minimal attention has been paid to the role that religious communities and community leaders can play in combating terrorism. It is imperative that within the confines of soft-power that the role of religion is brought in countering terrorism. This is so because
religious communities in particular have been touted as possessing social capital when they have used their positions to promote cohesion and mutual co-existence in society (Halafoff & Wright-Neville, 2009). In doing so and from a positive front, they have been critical in building inter-faith relations and challenging negative stereotypes and perspectives that have existed in societies.

In the Australian context post 9/11, there has been the mounting of dialogue forums and other public community engagement by the Muslim community to promote the understanding of their religion and culture. The reason being to counter the negative role that religion has occupied in pushing for political violence. There remains the need therefore to engage with role of religion both for its positive and negative influences in security matters (Halafoff & Wright-Neville, 2009).

The threat of political violence and most notably terrorism remains a contemporary security challenge to governments and societies. Therefore, the nature of threats shaped by groups propounding diverse ideologies and more so the militant jihadism presents the most formidable threat to international security. In addressing these security threats, military approaches have dominated the global counter-terrorism agenda pre and post 9/11 (Gunaratna & Rabin, 2011).

Focusing narrowly on fighting armed groups with military might have not always significantly reduced the threats (Gunaratna & Rabin, 2011:1-2). The effects of military action and state repression have been blamed on creating further radicalization in communities including promoting local support for terrorist groups. This has been accounted for in the Kenyan discourses of radicalization (Botha, 2014). In the recent past, the awareness of these challenges has led to a growing interest in more comprehensive counter-terrorism policies. However, these counter-terrorism policies are now departing from strategies that are repressive in places such as Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Yemen. These
alternative strategies have relied on the use of religious education by respected clerics, psychological counseling, community and family support in rehabilitating convicted and suspected terrorists (Gunaratna & Rabin, 2011:1-2).

The contribution of faith-based organizations in countering violent fundamentalism is just but one of the approaches being considered to be an alternative to ‘western’ led and imposed solutions. Western oriented counter-terrorism responses have been overly criticized for their repressive tactics and more so in the post 9/11 period (Petrigh, 2011). Counter-radicalization initiatives have been developed in the Islamic communities in part to address this challenge. The response has included targeted appeals and messaging to deal with initiatives posed by the so called ‘extremist’ Muslims (Petrigh, 2011:14). One such initiative is the Amman message that was pioneered in 2004 by King Abdullah of Jordan. The King convened an Islamic conference drawing leading Islamic scholars (ulama) in 2005 and which delivered the Amman message. The Amman message rejects the actions and narratives of extremists. The message is thus simply a sustained argument that Islam rejects extremism, radicalism and fanaticism and considers them to be forms of injustices (Petrigh, 2011).

In a nutshell, the message taking both a religious and a moral perspective rejects the concept of terrorism and takes a clear stand on the complex questions of political violence. The Amman message calls for the respect and dignity of the human life. It has not been fully possible to measure the extent to which the messaging has been effective in the Muslim community in rallying against political violence. Additionally, the messaging has been critiqued as being elite driven by the traditional and political leadership (Petrigh, 2011).

Similarly, in Indonesia, the work of the Persyarikatan Muhammadiyah, an institution founded in 1912, has been lauded for promoting resilience through countering the wrong interpretation of Jihad (Petrigh, 2011). It roots itself as a moderate Islamic movement that is committed to the idea of dialogue with radicals in the religious sphere. The movement
organized from the grassroots to district, provincial and national levels, relies on its operational structure to build resilience and denounce acts of terrorism (Petrigh, 2011).

Additionally, a study conducted in Australia on community perceptions of radicalization and violent extremism emphasized the role that Muslim community leadership could play in countering violent extremism. One is that the religious leaders could counter extremist violence through counter-narratives. The call for Muslim religious leaders’ engagement in portraying a concise understanding of the Islamic religion was linked to the broader credibility that they enjoyed within their faith (Grossman & Tahiri, 2015:18).

In the Kenyan context, counter-terrorism support largely directed by donors has been shifting towards a developmental approach in addition to state support (Bachmann & Honke, 2009). In doing so, donors have supported Muslim communities and local organizations engaged in counter-terrorism work (Bachmann & Honke, 2009). Other forms of assistance have ranged from legal assistance to creating awareness around counter-terrorism and human rights. The donors’ shift towards developmentalism is seen as complementing the traditional approach of supporting state institutions.

The counter-terrorism agenda in the post 9/11 has shifted to incorporate ‘peace and security’ agendas driven by donor nations. Framed on a developmental approach, this shift has been met with a fair share of caution as to the donors’ objective. In the Kenyan context for instance, the Danish support (through the Danish Embassy) to non-state actors including Muslim organizations in the broad counter-terrorism domains had at its initial stages to alter their label of counter-terrorism for acceptability by these local organizations (Bachmann & Honke, 2009).

The use of terminology clearly does matter given the apprehension of mainly Muslim communities’ around counter-terrorism practices that are perceived to be externally driven
and the uncertainties of donor-driven agendas (Bachmann & Honke, 2009). This would lead to renaming of the support to ‘Peace, security and development’ and where non-state actors including Muslim organizations, inter-faith actors, and non-religious groups have been facilitated in the past to work on a range of issues (Bachmann & Honke, 2009). Key issue areas have included conflict prevention, inter-religious mediations, human rights trainings and youth empowerment. For instance, the Danish embassy adaptability in the Kenyan context has pointed to the contribution of local agency in shifting the priorities and objectives of donor organizations. Donor interests in the developmental front have in part led to local organizations aligning themselves to the ‘peace and development’ bandwagon to raise resources for their work (Bachmann & Honke, 2009). The critique of some of these developmental initiatives is their potential to be captured by local interests which could potentially link to shifting local power relations and or create aid dependency. Besides, further research is required to deepen the working of development as counter-insurgency including how emancipatory projects have become sites of governing populations (Bachmann & Honke, 2009).

2.14 The Perceived Sites of Radicalization in the Kenyan State

The foundations of radicalization in the Kenyan context are traceable to the 1990s and in part are attributed to the alienation and disaffection of the Muslim community. In light of growing terror threats in the late 1990s, the agency of a section of the Muslim community often termed as ‘radicals’ have been claimed to be responsible for the rise in the waves of youth recruitment into radical causes (Anderson & McKnight, 2014). The Pumwani area of Nairobi and in particular the Majengo informal settlement and the adjacent Gikomba market which borders the Eastleigh area largely inhabited by Somalis has been constructed as a site of youth recruitment to radicalization.
In the Pumwani area, the activities of Al-Hijra- the wing of the Al-Shabaab operations in Kenya and formerly led by Sheikh Ahmed Imani Ali who established the Nairobi’s Muslim Youth Center (MYC) in the mid 2000s- has been claimed in multiple literature as the site of youth recruitment. Groups such as the Al-Hijra fit into the Al-Shabaab strategy of localizing a jihadist discourse (Anderson & McKnight, 2014; Ndzovu, 2017). The claim in literature is that the Pumwani Riyadha Mosque has been a site of recruitment for radical causes since the 2010 Kampala bombings (Amble & Hitchens, 2014). The Kenyan security agencies in the post 2010 period have considered Imams and younger activists linked with the MYC as dangerous fundamentalists. The activities of the MYC in the post October 2011 invasion of Somalia by the Kenyan defence forces relied on the ‘narrative’ of waging a jihad against the Kenyan state. The claims to mount a jihad being explained to claims of Muslim oppression in the country including waging a defence for the Muslim Ummah (Anderson & McKnight, 2014).

The Masjid Musa Mosque in Majengo, Mombasa has also been constructed as a site of recruitment for violent extremists (Anderson & Mc Knight, 2014). In between the rise of Al- Hijra (Al- Shabaab affiliate in Kenya) there have been several raids since 2012 to round up perceived Al-Hijra supporters largely by the Kenya’s Anti-Terrorism Police Unit (ATPU). Since 2012, press reports have documented the assassinations of Muslim activists and clerics mainly in the Coastal area, numbering at least 21 as at 2014, with claims of their linkage to the activities of Al-Hijra (Anderson & McKnight, 2014). These assassinations are both claimed to be the work of the state security agencies including external security agencies even though such allegations have been refuted by the ATPU. There is also a claim that some of the clerics killed in the period could also be the work of Al-Shabaab operatives targeting the so called ‘moderate’ preachers keen on promoting a discourse against radicalization and jihadist radicalization (Anderson & McKnight, 2014; Mwakimako & Willis, 2014).
There are thus tensions around those considered to be ‘radical’ versus ‘moderate’ preachers (Anderson & McKnight, 2014; Mwakimako & Willis, 2014). The murder of Sheikh Mohammed Idris on June 10, 2014 was linked to Al-Shabaab retaliatory attacks. Sheikh Idris was the chairman of the Council of Imams and Preachers of Kenya (CIPK) and had been involved in a power struggle with radical Muslims at the Sakina Mosque. Whereas Idris campaigned against radicalization, he had been associated by the government together with other leaders of the CIPK as supporting terrorism (Anderson & McKnight, 2014).

The Masjid Musa Mosque in Mombasa that was raided by the police on February 2, 2014 on claims that it was supporting radicalization was renamed *Masjid Shuhadaa* or Martyrs Mosque in part to honor those killed in raids there and in part to defy the state. The Mosque had since reverted to its original name-Masjid Musa. A November 2014 raid in Mombasa’s Masjid Musa and Sakina Mosques discovered a pistol, eight grenades and a flag linked to the Al-Shabaab. These raids were meant to cut alleged ties between the Mosques and the Al-Shabaab. The police claimed that the Mosques were a recruitment and training ground for youth seeking to join Al-Shabaab (Mogire, Mkutu & Alusa, 2018:88-89).

Assassinations of clerics and activities alike regardless of their agency have served as providing an entry point for radicalization. This works against counter-radicalization initiatives in the sense that the level of trust between state agencies and the Kenyan Muslim communities are significantly diminished. The implication of this has been the broadening of the narrative that state agencies are anti-Muslim and when linked with alienation and discrimination of the Muslim identity provides an easy point for radicalization in part as a response to state actions (Anderson & McKnight, 2014; Botha, 2014).

Al-Shabaab through *Al-Hijra* network in Kenya in 2012 launched an online magazine *Gaidi Mtaani* (terrorist in the street) in Kiswahili but with English commentary on topical issues such as the Kenya’s military invasion in October 2011 to Somalia and the operation
Usalama Watch launched in April 2014. The latter security operation was perceived as targeting Somalis and Muslims in various environs in Nairobi under the cover of counter-terrorism. Gaidi Mtaani has hence in the past managed its propaganda towards a call for arms to defend the Muslim Ummah that is under threat from the Kenyan nation (Anderson & McKnight, 2014). The debates being teased around themes of Muslim economic deprivation, political marginalization, including social oppression complete with historical analysis since independence. The intention being to rationalize the activities of the Al-Shabaab as a defence of the Muslim community with claims of oppression from the Kenyan state (Anderson & McKnight, 2014).

Prior to the launch of the Gaidi Mtaani, an online platform had been the distribution of the print newsletter, the Al-Misbah which has since been discontinued owing to state crackdowns (Amble & Hitchens, 2014). This weekly newsletter was distributed in slums in Mombasa and Nairobi and was carefully crafted to appeal to Muslims to take up radical causes in East Africa. This was justified on claims of their plight (marginalization, oppression realities while linked to other global threats ‘against’ Muslims (Amble & Hitchens, 2014:528-529).

2.15 The Agency of Salafism in the Kenyan Context of Radicalization

The agency of radicalization in the Kenyan context is attributed to the spread of the Salafi doctrine, although some scholars are skeptical that not all Salafists advocate violence (Anderson & McKnight, 2014:19-20; Mwakimako & Willis, 2014:9). However, Amble and Hitchens (2014) claim that in the Kenyan context, the agency of a variant of Salafism as being linked to the radicalization of youth in Kenya. Hence, Salafism as a movement with strong Saudi Arabian connections is a revivalist puritanical movement that denounces cultural influences and calls for separation from a non-Muslim society. It proponents adhere to Jihad and reject most modern interpretations of the teaching of Islam and instead look to
the primary sources, that is the Koran and the Hadith. There exist variants within the Salafi movements with some sub-groups following a quietest path. It is political Salafism also referred to as Salafi- Jihadists that groups such as the Al-Qaeda emerged from. It is the variant of Salafi Jihadists that is now being linked to the wave of radicalization in the Kenyan context in the late 2000s (Amble & Hitchens, 2014).

Furthermore, Salafi-jihadist insurgencies differ significantly from other insurgencies historically. They privilege the creation of an Islamic state, overrunning supposedly apostate states, and pushing out the US and other western powers from their regions of operations (Byman, 2013). One of the distinct features that sets apart the Salafi-Jihadist variant of Islam from non-violent Salafism is how they envision their goal of forming an Islamic State. For the Salafi-Jihadists, they lay their exclusive methodology on using Jihad to achieve their singular goal of forming an Islamic State. In contrast, the quietest Salafis prefer an alternative route. They rely on among other tactics, Islamic education and a return to seminal texts as used in the prophet’s generation (Kassim, 2015:176).

In advancing their strategy, Salafi Jihadists, remain intent on driving other non-Salafi entities outside of their localities (Byman, 2013). The exact order of these goals is varied among groups. What they hold in common is their rejection of any deviations from the oneness of God including hostility to non-Muslims. In particular they are opposed to unbelievers, supposed apostates (notably Shia- Muslims spread across countries) and those Sunnis that do not ‘properly’ embrace Islam such as those who adopt folk customs, and mysticism (Byman, 2013).

Furthermore, Salafi-jihadism rejects the notion of nationalism and thus denounces colonial boundaries that divide Muslims which are recognized by the community of nations. In rejecting the notions of nationalism, they call on Muslims to fight as Muslims and not to consider their identities as Iraqis or Egyptians for instance (Byman, 2013). It is on this
premise that their logistics and networks transcend borders. This variant of Islam in terms of its propaganda and narratives of recruitment targets young men to fight while older men and women supporting the insurgency in its organizational and financial needs (Byman, 2013). The popular rhetoric across Salafi-jihadist ideology is their dislike for non-Muslim communities and disliked Muslim groups. Revisiting their rejection of nationalism, they push the ideology that the Muslim community is under siege and yet they frame their religious community as a nation. This variant of Islam is not unified in terms of practices and tactics and there are often divisions and ideological differences in between groups (Byman, 2013).

This variant of Salafism has become particularly appealing in the Kenyan context as it transcends Kenya’s cultural and ethnic differences (Amble & Hitchens, 2014). It is simply concerned with a Muslim identity. The Salafi ideology is nevertheless considered a key threat to the Sufi variant of Islam, which has been concerned with the Salafi’s takeover of Sufi institutions. A leading Salafi voice in the country since the late 1980s and 1990s was the late Aboud Rogo (killed by unknown gunmen in Mombasa in 2012) and who in his sermons often called for the separation of Muslims from a non-Muslim society. It is claimed in literature that Rogo in the 1990s began building networks with Al-Qaeda affiliates in Eastern Africa including links with the late Al-Qaeda leader, a Comoran national, Fazul Abdullah, Mohammed (Amble & Hitchens, 2014). Fazul was the mastermind of the 1998 twin US embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania and there are claims that Rogo could have aided Fazul to carry out his mission in Kenya (Amble & Hitchens, 2014).

By the mid-2000s, audio and video lectures on Jihad by Aboud Rogo were being distributed in the Muslim-majority slums of Nairobi and Mombasa (Amble & Hitchens, 2014). Their intent was to radicalize Kenyan Muslims to join the Al-Shabaab. Rogo was first arrested and charged with a terrorist offence following the 2002 bombings of the Israeli-owned Paradise Hotel in Kikambala, Mombasa. He was suspected of having a hand in the
attack but was shortly acquitted for lack of evidence (Amble & Hitchens, 2014). He would be listed in July 2012 by the US State Department as Specially Designated Global Terrorist, an action that was followed by the imposition of a travel ban and a freeze of assets by the UN Security Council. These interventions (US & UNSC) were claimed on his support for the Al-Shabaab ranging from technical to financial support (Amble & Hitchens, 2014). There are claims that his former student Ahmed Imani Ali, the founder of the Muslim Youth Center (MYC), greatly aided his recruitment efforts for the Al-Shabaab. Ali having trained under Rogo in the mid-2000s moved to Majengo area of Nairobi in 2007 under the instruction of Rogo to establish a funding and a recruitment network for the Al-Shabaab (Amble & Hitchens, 2014).

Al-Shabaab historically emerged from Somalia as an urban militia in support of the Islamic Court Unions (ICU) in Mogadishu but were pushed out by Ethiopian invasion in December 2006. The militia were pushed to parts of Central Somalia and to the south where by 2008 they had captured the port city of Kismayu (Anderson & McKnight, 2014; Hansen, 2016). In their rapid spread in mainly rural Somalia, they became a security threat not only to the then Transitional Federal Government (TFG) but also to the Horn of Africa region. In 2010, Al-Shabaab began to hit the region. The Kampala bombing demonstrating their reach in the region (Anderson & McKnight, 2015). This action turned the regional governments against this movement. Uganda, Ethiopia, Djibouti, and Kenya are some of the troop contributing states to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), with part of their mandate being to fight the Al-Shabaab (Anderson & McKnight, 2015).

Following Kenya’s invasion in Southern Somalia in October 2011, Al-Shabaab intervened with a series of retaliatory attacks but which some analysts contend to be a now a full-scale insurgency in the Kenyan territory (Anderson & McKnight, 2015). It has periodically hit Kenya’s borderlands and Southern Somalia. It has also sought to exploit
divisions among Christians and Muslims in the Kenya’s borderlands while engaging in radicalization of mainly the Islamic youth to join its ranks (Anderson & McKnight, 2015; Mwakimako & Willis, 2014).

Upon arrival in Majengo, Nairobi, Ali mobilized largely unemployed Kenyan youth as potential recruits to Al-Shabaab with cash and companionship incentives. Together with his new followers, Ali sought to take-over an existing Islamic institution, the Pumwani Riyadha Mosque, forming a base for funding and recruitment into Al-Shabaab (Amble & Hitchens, 2014).

The Pumwani Riyadha Mosque in Majengo was particularly attractive as it owned the largest second-hand cloth market in Kenya- Gikomba market and therefore had impressive revenue streams for his intentions (Amble & Hitchens, 2014). Ali engineered a successful coup against the Mosque committee and in 2008 set-up the Muslim Youth Center (MYC) naming himself as its leader (Amble & Hitchens, 2014).

Post 2008 onward, members of his organization began to openly recruit for Al-Shabaab to fight and plan logistics for travel to Somalia. To engage in recruitment, the members of the MYC engaged in several fronts. One was the dissemination of Ali’s and Rogo’s lectures on the criticality of Jihad. Secondly, was the projection of pro-Al-Shabaab propaganda and third but not least was the lure of the financial incentive for joining. Ali in his lectures rehearsed the well-known themes of Salafi-Jihadists that claim western and Jewish aggression against Islam. Somalia was one of the battlegrounds for the survival of Islam and hence the import of the defence of religion in their radicalizing narrative (Amble & Hitchens, 2014).

In 2009, Ali travelled to Somalia to take charge of an Al-Shabaab wing that comprised of his former recruits. While in Somalia he continued to produce videos that urged
Kenyan recruitment into the Al-Shabaab. In early 2012, he produced a lecture that was disseminated by the Al-Shabaab official media wing, *al-Kataib*, with a focus on the October 2011 military incursion in Somalia. In this video, he transposed the subject of a global jihadist narrative by framing western and African efforts against Al-Shabaab as a global conspiracy to wipe out Islam. Ali in his 2012 video argued that Kenya had become an American and Israeli proxy. In this framing therefore, Kenya had become Dar *al-harb* (literally, “land-of-war,” a land in which the enemies of Islam rule) thus obligating Muslims to take up Jihad.

A similar globalized narrative went into other MYC propagandist materials such as their now defunct weekly newsletter -*al misbah* that was printed in both English and Kiswahili. Owing to state crackdown of MYC activities, the propagandist strategy moved to an online magazine known as the *Gaidi Mtaani* (Kiswahili for terrorist on the street). According to a UN Security Council report of 2011, Ali’s MYC had been successful in recruiting at least five hundred Kenyans to either join Al-Shabaab or to launch attacks within the country (Amble & Hitchens, 2014).

### 2.16 Bottom-up versus Top-down Approaches in Counter-radicalization

Situating this research from a local perspective and in seeking empirical understanding of how communities are responding to youth radicalization is an important epistemological perspective by itself. Studying grassroots workers and ordinary residents of the study areas helps to situate radicalization from a more realistic perspective. Similarly, interviewing grassroots organizations that are supporting communities to counter-radicalizations helps to broaden the knowledge base of the communities’ responses towards counter-radicalization. Therefore, there is need to contextualize the meaning and various usages of the term community.
The notion of ‘community’ within Social Sciences assumes different meanings depending on the disciplinary perspectives. The concept remains contested and sometimes vague. In spite of the contestations, the understanding is that communities can simply be broken into four categories; spatial, administrative, social and ecological. Spatially, it refers to communities living in the same location be it a village, city, and which encompasses an administrative element too. Social and ecological communities have been applied in literature to mean humans or organisms sharing a social space and a natural habitat. These communities may not be tied to spatial and administrative boundaries. They are rather bound by interests and identity. These interests may include occupational, economic, religious, gender among others (Lesbirel, 2011; Mannarini & Fedi, 2009).

In the post 9/11 period, there has been an appreciation that individuals, families and communities can play in the broader counter-terrorism domain. Notwithstanding, the criticisms leveled on so-called community-based approaches, governments have attempted to tap into communities seeking for their cooperation and support. In the beginning of 2007, the UK government launched the Prevent Strategy. It relaunched in 2011 following a spate of criticisms. The Prevent strategy among other objectives was meant to work with communities to incorporate aspects of community policing. Whereas Prevent strategy is considered to be a key plank of the British Counter-terrorism strategy, it has been critiqued as targeting Muslim communities and, in this effect, securitizing them. Additionally, it has been critiqued to be more of intelligence gathering than genuine community engagement to deal with the threats posed by terrorism (Weine, 2012; Hardy, 2014).

In early 2010, the Barack Obama administration articulated a discourse of community-based approaches towards countering terrorism. A key plank of this discourse was contained in the US National Security Strategy of 2010. This strategy underscored roles that communities and individuals could play in countering terrorist ideologies. This discourse
was advanced as a resilience mechanism. This approach to dissuade terrorists’ recruitment on the home ground incorporated various approaches including community policing and community forums drawing in Muslim communities and law enforcement agencies. The rationale in particular of bringing on board community policing has been its past success in the US contexts in dealing with urban crime and gang violence. In the US context, there has been the lack of solid evidence to point to the effectiveness of community-based responses towards responding to countering terrorism although there exist ongoing studies on the same (White House, 2010; Weine, 2012; Weine et al. 2013).

Globally, the policy and academic literature in counter-terrorism is now pointing to the need for soft power approaches. The soft power approaches which fit within the realm of countering violent-extremism are now being touted as more sustainable solutions to deal with the challenges of individuals joining radical groups. Meanwhile, hard-power approaches focusing on military approaches, use of force, legal and economic approaches while valuable in their own respects have served to alienate individuals and often can lead them to join radical groups (RVI, 2016).

In the Kenyan context, Botha (2014) drawing from her empirical research with individuals engaged with the Al-Shabaab in Kenya observes that one of the critical push-factors driving individuals to join the group is linked to government counter-terrorism strategies. Besides, the hard-power tactics such as claims of assassinations of Muslims leaders and generally the harassment of the Muslim identity was a push factor. Kenya has a CVE policy that places communities as important stakeholders in countering violent extremism. This is part of having a social focus on CVE and by extension adopting a soft approach (GOK, 2016). It is thus critical to tap into influential roles that women, families and communities can play in countering extremism (RVI, 2016). Women and mothers are especially placed to identify behaviors and attitudes that could indicate the process of
radicalization. Women’s voices are thus needed in countering extremist ideologies (RVI, 2016).

Within counter-radicalization discourses in Kenya and hence in part why this study is important, epistemological perspectives investigating how counter-radicalization initiatives have worked, the perspectives have tended to be top-down. They have been top-down while privileging elite positions (mainly western elites) and thus marginalized the voices of civilians caught in between state and non-state violence (Finn et al. 2016).

Similar studies have further tended to privilege local development agencies, politicians, academics, and think tanks which have been critiqued on accounts that they engage in elite positions, decision making and approaches (Finn et al. 2016). The input of some of these critiques has been their reinforcing of such approaches such as ‘hearts and minds’ (asking whether western militaries or combatant forces can have a civilian developmental agenda as part of dealing with rise of insurgent groups). Additionally, there are further attempts at the validation of ‘securitization of development’ or simply whether aid can legitimize this perspective (securitization of development). Even the few available local voices seeking to explore how anti-radicalization programmes work have tended to still be situated within the western epistemological and discursive perspectives (such as the Westphalian characteristics of states, nationalism and so on). The challenge with some of discursive frameworks is their tendency to ignore the fluidity and the changing nature of identity markers in the Eastern African region (Finn et al. 2016).

Therefore, there is need to investigate the everyday perspectives of local communities to provide a fresh empirical perspective of their counter-radicalization responses. There is already an emerging literature that is examining youth perspectives around the range of CVE approaches already rolled out in Kenya. Examining community responses from two field
work locations of Mombasa and Nairobi would help to broaden local voices and thus to contribute both theoretical and policy insights (Finn et al., 2016).

Broadly, the concept of counter-radicalization denotes a preventative approach. A preventative approach in the sense that it aims to prevent members of a particular population that are non-radicalized to becoming radicalized. It departs from the use of coercive and or heavy-handed responses such as excessive use of force. The concept refers to a broad range of social, political, legal and educational programmes among other interventions as a deterrence to radicalization. Proponents of counter-radicalization have often recommended a range of capacity building initiatives especially at community levels as counter-radicalization strategies. Key counter-radicalization strategies aimed specifically at targeting Islamic ideology have often included exposing the Al-Qaeda ideology as bankrupt, including targeting extremists in the cyberspace (Schmid, 2013:50-51).

At the more generic level, counter-radicalization objectives respond to three dynamics of radicalization; grievances, ideology, and mobilization. In terms of grievances, one of the critical responses should be to address real or perceived grievances since violent extremists can exploit them. In terms of ideology, the focus has often rested on challenging extremist narratives through their exposure and additionally to capacitate community leaders to denounce violent extremists and their ideas. Third, to counter mobilization, communities have been exposed to knowledge and tools, including the development of networks to disrupt recruiters (Schmid, 2013:51).

Within the European continent (countries such as UK, Denmark) a number of counter-radicalization initiatives have been rolled out. These have included inter-faith meetings, the establishment of Muslim magazines and TVs, dialogue forums centered on disseminating information on foreign policy in the Muslim world (Schmid, 2013). Other interventions have included youth mentorship and role modeling, course on rights and duties
of citizens, and among others intervening to stop the distribution of radical materials in the form of TV and CD-ROMs (Schmid, 2013).

2.17 Identified Gaps in the Literature Reviewed

The use of non-kinetic counter-terrorism policies, or simply ideological or counter-radicalization policies remains a critical area but largely an under-researched area (Rubin, 2011:33). This study is a response to this call for further research. One, is the need for reliable data and especially information centered on state policies and procedures. Secondly, more data would enable researchers to explore the effectiveness of counter-radicalization interventions and broaden understanding about radicalization itself. Third, is the call for more research studies that would compare counter-radicalization across different cases. In this respect, paying attention to family structures, religion, state bureaucracy, including state-society relations would point to the effectiveness of certain policies across chosen cases (Rubin, 2011:33). By this study responding to the Kenyan context, it is helping to broaden the counter-radicalization knowledge about the working of community approaches in the Kenyan context. Therefore, the study questions communities-based approaches in counter-radicalization, including the potentials and challenges in the Kenyan context.

It is a contemporary reality that radicalization is occurring in Kenya. For instance, Mombasa, Nairobi and Garissa counties have been singled out as centers of youth radicalization. There is a policy appreciation now that all successful counter-radicalization and counter-violent extremism initiatives are local (Mkutu, Marani & Ruteere, 2014:51). Investigating how communities in selected sites in Nairobi and Mombasa counties are responding to these security challenges posed by youth radicalization is the focus of this study.

Furthermore, there is only anecdotal evidence of studies that have been concerned with the working of non-state interventions in the broad domain of counter-terrorism.
Therefore, there is the argument that non-state actors in counter-radicalization often do have at least two entry points that the state working on its own cannot reach. One is ideological competition to violent movements which is often more practical within domestic groups at the threat of radicalization. Both religious and non-religious communities can often challenge the narratives of violent extremists through various alternatives. This stands in contrast to states that would turn to hard power and legalistic responses for broad counter-terrorism. They do this by offering a plurality of counter-narratives to challenge violent social movements at the community level. The second entry into the community element is through ethical anchoring. Social networks and individuals within communities including religious organizations occupy a more prime position to counter narratives of recruitment. They may be in a position to disengage potential recruits through raising the ethical costs of engaging in political violence (Huq, 2016:11-17).

Individuals surrounded by positive role models that discount the mobilizing of political violence can contribute to dissuading individuals from taking violent causes (Huq, 2016:11-17). Whereas these two mechanisms discount the role of the state and now are being considered effective in a number of selected counter-radicalization interventions, there is the lack of detailed empirical studies examining how non-state interventions in counter-terrorism work.

However, there exists challenges and potentials for this approach which would require a sustained focus. While not discounting the more traditional responses of the state in counter-radicalization, there exists an empirical gap as to how communities or non-state actors are responding to this growing security threat that cannot be the preserve of any one single actor. Seeking the community perspectives is one way of contributing to knowledge and policy for counter-radicalization. Community led approaches represent an untapped
potential in counter-radicalization and hence in part the study focus (Huq, 2016). The next chapter covers the methodology adopted.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the research design adopted for this study. It draws on primary data collected between July 2015 to December 2017 in selected locations in both Nairobi and Mombasa. This primary data was complemented by secondary literature and selected archival materials.

This study adopted a qualitative research design. Denscombe (2011:99) notes that a research design achieves three things. One is that it sets out to describe the various components of the phenomenon under investigation. In doing so, it outlines the strategy to be relied upon and provides details on the methods of data collection and analysis to be adopted. Secondly, it lays out the rationale for the choice of research strategy in relation to the research questions. Third, is that a research design demonstrates how the methods of data collections and analysis correspond to the general philosophy adopted.

In a nutshell, a good research design provides a blue-print for research activity (Denscombe, 2011:99-104). In terms of the philosophy of Social Science, the qualitative approach chosen lends itself to interpretivism. Interpretivism argues broadly that our understanding of the social world is anchored on human capacities to derive ‘sense’ from reality that lacks order and structure (Denscombe, 2011:118-119). Knowledge about social reality in this sense is therefore produced rather than discovered. Hence, this research adopts a constructivist ontology in situating the nature of social reality to be studied. Here constructivists argue that social reality is constantly being produced and reproduced through everyday actions, words and beliefs. In other words, the constructivist perspective around social reality is composed of different realities, including multiple realities and therefore an objective single reality hardly exists. Furthermore, researchers adopting this approach posit that critical attention ought to be paid to how different groups construct their social reality.
Studying community perspectives around the theme of radicalization and counter-radicalization thus fits within this philosophical perspective given the multiple explanations being propounded in the existing literature on the phenomenon.

3.1 Rationale for Qualitative Design

By this research using a qualitative paradigm, it is seeking to emphasize how human activity produces meanings and generates the social order that marks the world that we live in. Therefore, qualitative research paradigm prefers data expressed in words, texts and images. However, these types of data are adopted on the premise that they are significantly suited than numbers to obtain an in-depth understanding of the ‘subtleties and complexities’ of the social world (Denscombe, 2011:133). The meanings expressed through words, texts and images give room to the researcher to probe in rich details the complicated nature of the social world.

Hence, the key goal of qualitative research remains the understanding of social phenomena. Qualitative researchers in departing from quantitative researches aim at cause and effect relationships, seeks explanations around how the social world works. Furthermore, qualitative research agendas fit with Max Weber’s notion of ‘verstehen’ and are interested in matters such as motives, construction of reality and experiences of life. In reference to motives, the question becomes how individuals’ reasoning is used to justify their decisions in particular ways. In respect to construction of reality, the question is how does social interaction and the use of language produce the everyday world in which people live? With a focus on life experiences, how do individuals experience particular events including their points of view? (Denscombe, 2011:133).

The qualitative method was chosen out of the realization that the subject of study (radicalization processes and community counter-radicalization initiatives) are most suited for the qualitative approach. Radicalization likely to lead to violent extremism is a social
issue that would require an interpretive approach and hence a justification for this approach. An interpretative approach in qualitative research explains social phenomena that corresponds to multiple realities. Therefore, qualitative approaches and methods help to illuminate the multiple social meanings that individuals and groups attach to social events. They essentially dig into subjective qualities that govern social life (Holliday, 2008:1-21).

Moreover, qualitative research is a two-way learning process where the subjectivities of the research respondents influence not only the data collection but also the process of making meaning (Shah, 2004:552). Given that radicalization is an occurrence that is subject to multiple explanations, it is imperative that it is studied from a qualitative approach. Thus, this research methodology was chosen on the account that reality is socially constructed and as such a qualitative approach would provide the rich perspectives being sought for here.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

This research used both primary and secondary methods of data collection. In terms of primary data methods, the research utilized semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs) and observation. For the semi-structured interviews, a number of guiding questions were drawn from the research objectives to frame the discussions. The questions were broad enough to elicit wide and detailed responses.

Furthermore, the semi-structured interviews and the focus group guides were designed to capture information from the participants, their perspectives about the radicalization process and community-based counter radicalization responses. This was helpful from a qualitative perspective to draw insights on how they chose to interpret their social reality.

Archival data was also obtained from several sources. These included government reports, parliamentary reports and newspaper reports. Some background data was also
sourced from the Kenya National Archives. Materials from the Kenya National Archives included press reports of terror attacks and background information on the study areas. Additionally, the study collected archival data from the Kenya National Archives provided socio-economic facts and historical backgrounds of Nairobi and Mombasa. In terms of secondary data, the study utilized academic books, scholarly journals, and relevant encyclopedias from several libraries in Nairobi. These libraries included the United States International University in Nairobi library, the British Institute in Eastern Africa library, and St. Paul’s University, Limuru, library.

3.3 Sampling Techniques

Purposive and snowballing sampling techniques were adopted for the study. Purposive sampling as a strategy is applied in particular situations where the researcher deliberately selects participants or events likely to produce the most reliable data (Denscombe, 2007:17) while snowball sampling refers to a process of seeking references from one person to the next. This process creates credibility for the researcher given it operates in a referral approach. Snowballing also makes it possible for the referees to be asked to nominate people on the basis of such characteristics as age, gender, occupation and so on (Denscombe, 2007:17-18). Attending community events/meetings centered around security also helped not only to validate the data previously collected but it was also useful to meet potential interviewees. This helped in the end to identify additional respondents such as those that worked with community organizations including security officials.

3.4 Sample Size

The research respondents included community members, opinion leaders, government security officials in the two sites (including the Kenyan Police), grassroots civil society organizations working in the areas of countering violent extremism, religious leaders, affected families, youth, and key academic experts. All interviews were conducted in either
Kiswahili or English language depending on the respondents’ preferences. Thirty-two key informant interviews were conducted.

The focus group discussions were segmented across different categories of respondents to provide rich and varied discussions on the research puzzle. Focus group respondents were categorized on the lines of age, gender, or profession to elicit varied perspectives of each sub-stratum. Six focus group discussions were held in both Mombasa and Nairobi and drew a broad representation from the constituents of youth, women, and religious leaders. Each focus group discussion had an average of 8 and a maximum of 10 participants. The total number of participants for the focus group discussions was fifty (50). Besides, focus group discussions are considered useful in Social Sciences because they elicit rich and detailed group perspectives. Furthermore, prior to the interviews, the researcher made clear the intent of the research and sought verbal consent. For confidentiality reasons, written consent forms were not applied in this study. Interviews were held between July 2015 and December 2017.

The researcher was sensitive to the ethics of confidentiality and anonymity in both processes of data collection and analysis. In all of the instances, respondents’ names are not provided as a way to safeguard anonymity in data analysis. Given the sensitive nature of the data collected, the researcher made arrangements for safe data storage. In efforts at minimizing harm to the research process, interviews were held in venues that did not expose harm to either the researcher nor the respondents.

### 3.5 Data Analysis Techniques

In terms of data analysis techniques, the textual and the interview data were analyzed through the content analysis technique alongside relevant Social Science theories such as securitization and social movements’ theory. The data was then organized through coding and thematization in order to explain the occurrence at hand. Furthermore, data analysis was
a continuous process even as the fieldwork progressed. This initial data analysis was useful in locating some of the emerging themes as well as additional gaps that fieldwork would help fill. Following the transcription of the entire data, the researcher engaged in a continuous process to re-read the data and to begin to isolate themes or the broad categories of the emerging themes. It suffices to mention that some interviews were tape recorded with respondents’ consent. Care was taken to make sense of the data collected and make links between them.

3.6 The Process of Data Analysis

On reaching the targeted sample size in total for both Nairobi and Mombasa the entire process of data analysis commenced. The field data was then analyzed through a thematic analysis. This process involved combing through the data to identify emerging themes and threads in order to write the empirical chapters. Prior to the thematic analysis, typed field notes as well as selected transcribed notes from interviews were read. Not all interviews were tape recorded owing to the sensitivity of the research topic. Partly, it was also a way of making the research participants comfortable. In order to conduct thematic analysis, tons of materials gathered from the field were relied upon to form data categories as part of the analysis. In the process of revisiting the fieldwork notes, a certain pattern emerged of similarities and differences and this helped to shape the analysis.

3.7 Validity Concerns

In terms of ensuring the research validity, this research adopted triangulation in gaining credible understanding of the occurrence at hand. This involved the use of multiple data collections methods. These included interviews, observation, and archival materials to understand the study from different angles. Transcribed interview transcripts were cross checked with a reading of other primary and secondary data. This study on the overall sought
information from multiple respondents ranging from security officials to community leaders and academic experts.

### 3.8 Research Ethical Consideration

A number of ethical concerns were put into consideration to guide the research. Prior to embarking on fieldwork, a research permit from the Kenyan National Council for Science and Technology (NACOSTI) was obtained by the researcher. The permit number was NACOSTI/P/16/82526/13299. Before the research could be conducted, the researcher was required to report to the respective County Commissioners and County Directors of Education in both Nairobi and Mombasa. The researcher received written authorization or stamp approvals before the fieldwork commenced in both Nairobi and Mombasa. In addition, the researcher applied for authorization from the Office of the Inspector General of Police to interview police officers in both Nairobi and Mombasa Counties. This request was granted and it helped to negotiate the field smoothly.

Secondly, the researcher and his team of research assistants were forthright about the purpose, methods and anticipated uses of the data that was being collected. It was made clear at the onset of the focus group discussions that the research was purely for purposes of an academic degree.

Prior to any research interview, consent was sought verbally. A disclaimer was further put that it was a voluntary process and that respondents were at liberty to opt out of the research or not to respond to some of the questions asked. Respondents were further assured of anonymity in data reporting. Owing to the sensitivity of the research, respondents were not asked to fill written consent forms. The researcher and his research assistants also assured confidentiality of the information provided. This was also applied in data analysis. Easily identifiable markers such as names were not used in the data analysis. As part of confidentiality, interview transcripts were kept in a safe storage where only the researcher
could access. As part of the research ethics, efforts were also made to ensure that the research process did not harm respondents in any way. For instance, if a question was posed and suggested a form of anxiety, the researcher tried to be calm and politely moved to the next question. If a discomfort persisted, then the research process was halted for a moment or abandoned altogether (Martin-Ortega & Herman, 2009).

3.9 Personal Safety Concerns

In efforts at minimising personal harm to the researcher and his assistants, the researcher was sensitive to the dynamics of the research locations. This involved monitoring of the security situation when fieldwork was about to be conducted in specific locations in Mombasa or Nairobi. This for instance involved reading newspapers and watching television news. The researcher also ensured as much as possible that interview locations were generally safe. The researcher did not share personal information such as physical addresses or telephone numbers with sensitive participants of the research as a safeguard mechanism.

3.10 Reflections on Positionality in Research

This section offers a reflection on the researcher’s positionality in the study. The reflection below touches on the insider-outsider categorizations that influenced the research process. These categories included: Questions of trust, entry into the research site, perceptions of the researcher and the researched including the expectations of both parties are discussed below.

3.11 Debates on Insider- Outsider Categorizations

In reflecting on positionality in research, this had its advantages as well as disadvantages in the entire research process. This debate on positionality was triggered early on in the research process in the form of a question that was ever present in the entire research process. This insider-outsider category is instrumental in physical access of a researcher into a research site but also influences the data collection. Researching in a cross-
cultural context and drawing on individual’s characteristics such as age, gender, personal characteristics can often deny access. Depending on these characteristics, broader questions can be asked by respondents about why they should be studied (Shah, 2004). It was thus important to reflect on early perceptions in the field entry.

A particular question that was posed in Mombasa while negotiating entry into this research site. This question lent itself to the positionality in research but also opened a debate on insider-outsider categorization in research. The question went as follows: “You are Kikuyu [ethnic identity] you are Christian, you are from upcountry (in Kiswahili- the researcher was assigned the category of the Wabara (collective term for people from up-country or people from the in-land)] why are you interested in Mombasa and especially on counter-radicalization….’” There was no straight response at that point, but this question triggered a reflective moment with regards to navigating the field. The simple response that was provided at the spur of the moment, was that matters of youth radicalization had constantly been highlighted in the mainstream media and as such had aroused a research puzzle. The researcher’s own positionality as a non-resident in Mombasa, as a non-Muslim carried with it several subjectivities. It is possible that the close readings of events and narratives could have coloured the judgment and analysis of the researcher. Being aware of this positionality and the implications it would carry for the research analysis, triangulation of data was adopted.

Beyond this quick response, then the researcher began to contemplate how his characterization as an ‘outsider’ was going to affect the research process in any way. This question posed by one of the gatekeepers of the research process in Mombasa would influence my interactions with community residents including Nairobi. At that point it became clear that the researcher’s religion and ethnic background including his introduction as a student would influence interactions with research participants. This question prompted
sensitivity about the kind of questions the study posed, but also an awareness of the study conclusions as an ‘outsider’ in the research context. The implication of this was to be aware of some of these differences especially at the community level and devise a navigation strategy.

As an outsider to the research contexts, several strategies were sought in order to enter the research sites. One was to rely on gatekeepers to connect with the field and the kind of respondents that was required at the community level. These gatekeepers came from previous researchers and programmers who had experience in either academic research or programming work around counter-radicalization work. These fieldwork referrals not only provided the needed trust to enter the research site but also marked an entry point into the research. The study had several expectations of the respondents. The researcher hoped that they would be frank and open to the subject at hand and that they would not speak to generalities or issues they thought he would generally like to hear on the subject. These expectations arose out of the concerns of validity. This had to do with concerns of being closer to the social reality.

As part of bridging these expectations, a reading of previous research conducted on similar kind of subjects was done in order to allow familiarity with some of the emergent themes. This helped to check the accuracy in part of narratives told in the field but also assisted in raising new set of questions as the research progressed.

From these referrals, the researcher additionally learnt to be careful with the use of certain terminologies while in the field. Some of these terminologies became clear in the course of the research and also in readings of secondary literature that they were meant to be neutral terms that would be acceptable to organizations and communities. However, respondents and more so gatekeepers observed that terms such as ‘radicalization, counter-radicalization’ were not only sensitive terms to be used at the community level but also
carried with them a form of ‘stigma’. This language was considered stigmatizing and more so to Muslims arising out of perceived linkages between radicalization and Islam. Relying on this ‘radicalization’ frame reflected to be a continuation of the securitization narrative mainly adopted by government. The radicalization concept while open to multiple interpretation has often been associated uncritically with Islam. Radicalization as a concept has been adopted in the post 9/11 period to justify a range of counter-terrorism initiatives some of which ran counter to the existing laws including interventions that infringed on human rights.

Respondents also chose by default and in departing from governmental securitizing language choose to represent their work as fitting in the domains of peace, security and development. The researcher also learnt to avoid direct questions that touched on radicalization and counter-radicalization as respondents found this to be not only emotive, stigmatizing but could raise questions as to the intentions of this research. This perspective had become clear during pilot fieldwork and was quickly adjusted in the questioning format to elicit several forms of security threats in the community. In the process, several security concerns came up including youth radicalization which were followed with additional probes. Throughout the fieldwork, the researcher positioned himself as a PhD student. Producing the government research permit also helped to ease entry into the field.

During the fieldwork, there were instances where respondents enquired on the value of this research. In other words, respondents were engaging in a conversation on the benefits they would derive from their participation in this study. Some of the respondents would even add a perspective that they had seen multiple researchers come to their neighbourhood for research, yet some of the concerns/problems remained unaddressed. Upon careful reflection, their concerns could be interpreted in at least two ways. One could have been fatigue of researchers coming to their locations. The second perspective raised a broader question on the value of conducting research. On this latter perspective, respondents had clear expectations
that the essence of the research was translated into problem solving at the societal level. In a response, the researcher acknowledged the normative question that they had raised, by making a commitment to disseminate the findings in a manner that policy makers could adopt. Having reflected on positionality in this research, the next section of the study presents the challenges experienced in the field and how they were overcome.

3.12 Field-work Challenges

Two main challenges were experienced during the course of the fieldwork of this study. This included negotiating entry into the field and an unfavourable political climate towards the tail end of the research.

3.12.1 Negotiating Entry

One of the earliest fieldwork challenges was to negotiate entry into the field. Whereas the study had strategized to have gatekeepers and local institutions to gain entry in the research sites, this did not always yield fruits at the first instance. Even after referrals, there were a few key informants that slowed down the process at the early stages of the fieldwork and which necessitated a change of strategy. This was necessitated by the realization that some respondents were proving problematic to speak to. There were instances where prior arranged interviews were declined, phone calls were not picked or rescheduled interviews that did not materialize. This then necessitated a change of strategy.

Being aware of the sample size and the profile of respondents the study was interested in, several strategies were adopted. One was to seek referrals from interviewed respondents. In that way snow-balling proved useful. Second, the researcher contacted a higher number of respondents than was required. In this way, the target was met and exceeded for both key informant interviews and other categories of study respondents. The third strategy relied on research assistants that were familiar with the research settings and who assisted with access into the research sites. These research assistants had varied professional backgrounds.
including previous research experience. Given the sensitive nature of the research, the trust bestowed on research assistants as gatekeepers in both Mombasa and Nairobi helped the researcher to earn the trust of the respondents, who would otherwise have been difficult to access. A fourth strategy that also worked well was participation in community events/workshops themed on aspects of security. Through such forums, the researcher was able to network and create rapport with potential respondents. Some eventually turned into research respondents.

For the contacted respondents who directly or indirectly chose non-cooperation, their choices were interpreted in several ways. First, some could have been reluctant to participate owing to question of trust. The lack of trust could have arisen on the basis of the research sensitivity. One reason for this non-participation was however laid bare by one potential respondent after many months of trying to set up an interview. This respondent simply indicated that they had been fatigued by the number of PhD researchers that came calling for interviews. It then had reached a point that they could no longer grant research interviews. Second, there was also a group of potential interviewees that claimed to have busy schedules even though regular contact was maintained through text messages, phone calls, and e-mails. In some cases, it was assumed that some of these instances were cases of outright refusal only that perhaps they shied away from declining directly.

Relying on gatekeepers, snowballing, research assistants including attending community events helped to negotiate field entry in both Mombasa and Nairobi. In one curious instance in Majengo, Nairobi, a respondent was careful and hesitant to speak for the first time. This hesitation was attributed to a question of trust. However, through the help of a research assistant, a second round of interview was arranged. The second interview, in contrast to the first, was rich and detailed unlike the first interview that was a bit reserved. These kinds of experiences were enlightening.
3.12.2 Hostile Political Climate

Another challenge is that a portion of the fieldwork was conducted in a hostile political climate. 2017 was a general election year in Kenya. Conducting fieldwork 6-7 months to the general elections in Kenya presented some challenges. The security environment of the study was a source of concern. In between the fieldwork, there were violent political party primaries which sometimes interfered with set schedules of the fieldwork. This challenge was overcome by reliance on the grassroot networks of my dissertation supervisors that spanned several years in the research sites that were studied. These grassroot networks helped to navigate some of the risks. These networks appreciated the local contexts better which assured that the fieldwork proceeded with minimal safety concerns.

Researching in a fragile situation posed by anxieties around electoral violence, violent nature of party primaries was thus anticipated and planned for. Between August and October 2017, minimal fieldwork was conducted owing to a polarized political environment. In anticipation of the tensions of the electoral cycle, the researcher managed to conduct the set target of key interviews prior to the August 2017 elections. Beginning in August, the study embarked on reviewing archival materials, secondary documents such as newspaper articles, including transcription of selected interviews’. The follow-up interviews were revisited in November and early December when the political climate had calmed down.

3.13 Conclusion

This chapter explored the methodology and the methods used in the study. A discussion and a rationale of qualitative design was made. The chapter examined among others key methodology aspects. One is that it explored the qualitative methods of data collection. These included interviews, observations, primary and secondary data used. In addition to the data collection, the chapter also covered aspects of sampling and choice of
study respondents. The chapter also examined how the fieldwork was negotiated through research authorization, gatekeepers and research assistants. A key aspect of the methodology captured is the data analysis process. The latter section argues that the analysis proceeded by way of thematic analysis through an examination of emerging themes. This processes the chapter also applied several Social Sciences Theories.

It also offered the researcher’s reflection of the process including the ethical issues that were considered. Key ethical issues in the chapter included research entry into the sites, confidentiality and anonymity in the data analysis process. This section on the research ethics also outlined the strategies that were put in place to minimize personal harm to the researcher, the assistants and respondents. Safe keeping of the field work data is also assured.

This chapter also explained some of the challenges that were experienced in the research process and how they were overcome. The next chapter examines the process and trends of youth radicalization in Kenya.
CHAPTER FOUR: THE PROCESSES AND TRENDS OF YOUTH RADICALIZATION IN KENYA

4.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the processes and trends of youth radicalization with the intention to commit political violence in Kenya. It is derived from fieldwork conducted in Mombasa and Nairobi Counties. The fieldwork was conducted from July 2015 to December 2017 with periodic visits and stays in both Mombasa and Nairobi. The chapter observes that radicalization likely to lead to violent extremism influenced by several processes. It further notes that there is the lack of a singular explanation for this complicated and growing security threat. This chapter also makes a disclaimer that it does not holistically blame the agency of Islam for the spread of the radicalization ideology. It argues that Islam cannot be contextualized as a singular community. It further observes the existence of various factions within Islam and which do not necessarily support terrorist goals. Instead, it draws on multiple field narratives that pointed to the growing influence of Islam-Salafism to the process. In light of this, the research findings indicate that it is the agency of a few individuals that have applied the trope of religion in influencing the radicalization process in Kenya.

The radicalization process into terrorism is itself complex to unravel not only in Kenya but also globally. In disentangling the radicalization process, the multiple motivations that may trigger an individual to take up violence need examination. These motivations have ranged from personal grievances, frustrations, revenge and seeking a sense of belonging among others. None of the mentioned motivations are singular explanations by themselves in explaining the process (Mastors & Siers, 2014). Therefore, this chapter finds that radicalization is an individualized process and as such it cannot be generalized across the board. Drawing on the findings, the process is additionally influenced by globalized events.
Furthermore, it can be argued that youth radicalization is likely to lead to violent extremism, which as a global phenomenon has been complicating the security situation in Kenya. Recruitment into terror networks and in this case the Al-Shabaab has been said to have intensified mainly after 2008. Drawing on findings, the Islamic State (IS) has also been recruiting in Kenya mostly after 2014. Hundreds of youth have crossed over to Somalia to join the Al-Shabaab but have also returned home to form sleeper cells and to mount attacks on the Kenyan soil. The Islamic State has also found a fertile ground to recruit in Kenya. This is indicative of transnational connections of radical movements.

A research report produced in 2015 by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and in partnership with Supreme Council of Muslims in Kenya (SUPKEM) and Kenya’s Ministry of Interior estimates the presence of at least 700 returnees in Kilifi, Kwale and Mombasa Counties (IOM, 2015). Newer research conducted in Kwale in 2016 indicate that the number of returnees could be in the range of more than 1500 (Mkutu et al. 2017).

In the post 2014 period, the Islamic State (Daesh or simply ISIS) has been recruiting Kenyan youth to join in their movement in addition to the Al-Shabaab. Some of the recruitees have ended up in Libya and Syria. This is the perspective that was shared by a senior government official engaged in counter-terrorism.\(^1\) Subsequent interviews with security officials experienced in counter-terrorism in both Nairobi and Mombasa corroborated this perspective. The entry of ISIS to recruit in Kenya demonstrates the local, regional and transnational security challenges posed by youth radicalization. Multi-faceted counter strategies are required by multiple actors including the state and communities to counter this security challenge. Having presented the chapter’s introduction, the next section examines the genesis of youth radicalization in Kenya.

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1 Key Informant interview with a male senior security official, in Nairobi, February 2, 2017.
4.1 The Genesis of Youth Radicalization in Kenya

The genesis of youth radicalization is traceable to the Kenyan South Coast in the early 1990s. It is pertinent to note that an early entrance to radical Islam in the Horn of Africa began in the 1950s after a small group of Muslims returned to the region from Egypt having trained at the Al-Azhar University. These students trained under Wahhabist teachers. It was only in the 1970s that Saudi Arabia influence would be felt in this religious realm. Saudi Arabia owing to its petrol dollars begun to fund a range of madrassas, Mosques, charities, including educational exchanges (Gatsiounis, 2012:74).

While historical experiences and connections with other regions are important, the process of radicalization is rather complex. Whereas the findings attribute some notable individual agency in the radicalization process, it remains a phenomenon with multiple antecedents. Ideology among other variables influences the process. Wahhabi influences however gained a foothold in the 1990s through the influence of Saudi funded charities like the Youth Muslim Association who set up Madrassas and orphanages in Northern Kenya and the Coast. Part of this influence resulted in the exodus of Madrassa teachers and students to Somalia in 2006 to fight alongside the ICU. Tied to the complexity of the radicalization phenomenon has been the unequal socio-economic marginalization and historic marginalization in parts of the country including the Coast and North-eastern region (Lind et al. 2017:11-12).

The research findings attributed among other inter-linked variables the rise of youth radicalization to the late Sheikh Abdulaziz Rimo in the early 1990s. He is said to have returned to Ukunda, Diani, presently Kwale County, in 1989 after studying in Saudi Arabia. Upon his return, he took over a Mosque and founded the Answar sect in Kenya.\(^2\) The findings also indicated the lack of consensus on the teachings of Answar ideology. Perspectives

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\(^2\) Interview with a male local administrator in Mombasa, October 26, 2016
ranged from their overarching goal of practicing a ‘pure’ form of Islam to simply being a variant of a violent Salafism. The group’s interpretation of purity was linked to teachings derived from Prophet Mohamed’s time.

A key marker of the sect was the men’s dressing style. They kept long beards and dressed in pants that respondents described as ‘don’t touch my ankles’. The length of the pants did not reach the foot ankles. Sheikh Rimo was claimed to be associated with the violent form of Salafism which sowed the seeds of youth radicalization in Kenya. He is said to have been a Wahhabi adherent having trained in Saudi Arabia. It was Rimo’s two most prominent students that came to be associated with violent extremism in Kenya; the late Sheikhs Aboud Rogo and Abubakar Sheriff Ahmed, popularly known as ‘Makaburi’. It is the teachings of Jihadi Salafism that came to influence the two including their followers. Some respondents observed that even though these aforementioned clerics were long gone, their messages on audio-tapes, videotape including YouTube videos were accessible. One of the respondents noted that:

“In my view, the story of youth radicalization in Kenya needs to be told from as early as 1989. Its history needs to be traced from 1989 through the actions of the Sheikh Abdulaziz Rimo. It is his students and their consequent followers who are spreading radicalization. He returned from Saudi Arabia with a PhD and settled in Diani, Kwale. He started his preaching at a Mosque that he took over and came with new teachings. He took on an Answar ideology. His teachings denounced a ‘Christian’ government and its neglect of the Coastal region and her Muslim population, this set the foundation for political violence.”

In contextualizing the rise of youth radicalization in Kenya, it is pertinent to appreciate the influence of Jihadi Salafism globally and its associated impacts on political violence. This also occurred in the context and more so at the Coast of an increased land

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3 Focus group discussions with male religious leaders in Likoni, Mombasa, March 17 2017.

4 Interview with a male local administrator in Mombasa, October 26, 2016.
grabbing frenzy by the elite (beach plots in particular) but also an increase in tourism. Related to tourism was the rise of relations between Kenyan Africans and Europeans (Berman, 2017). It suffices to mention that there are two strands of Salafism. The unifying view on Salafism is its focus on the purity of Islam by following the Quran, the Sunna (the traditions of Prophet Mohammed), including the consensus of the Prophet’s companion. The non-violent Salafi wing rejects violence (Wiktorowicz, 2005:75).

Jihadi Salafism, which is a variant of a violent Islam has had a substantial influence in pushing for political violence. Therefore, Jihadi Salafism relies on the trope of Jihad to achieve its vision of an Islamic state and which ought to be achieved violently. In following a Jihad discourse, it argues that regimes ruling with secular laws and their supporters are to be disrespected, rejected and force used against them (Kassim, 2015). The justification for this violence is based on their ‘interpretation’ of the Koran that ruling other than by God’s law is a major form of non-belief. Waging Jihad therefore becomes a testament of one’s faith (Kassim, 2015).

Multiple respondents in both the focus group discussions and interviews noted that the entry point for political violence at the Coast and in Kenya broadly, had been to frame an assault on a ‘Christian government’. For this discourse to take shape, the trope of living under a Christian government is equated to living in a state of non-belief for the Muslims. The literal claim of the Jihadi Salafism is that Muslims cannot live in a world with secular laws including in democracies as they depart from their interpretation that they are only supposed to live under God’s law and hence his sovereignty alone (Kassim, 2015). It is some of these claims that then sets the foundation for youth radicalization to wage war on ‘behalf’ of the enemies of Islam.

In sharing their perceptions on the genesis of youth radicalization, the respondents in both the focus group discussions and the interviews in Mombasa linked youth radicalization
to marginalization generally expressed at the Coast but also in other regions of the country. These grievances were mainly framed from the lenses of an Islamic marginalization. It is this framing that had provided a window for extremist ideology. Respondents were clear that broad narratives of socio-economic marginalization were not new and had existed prior to the entry of Sheikh Rimo in the religious space in 1989. The respondents also interpreted that it was the rise of religious ‘advocates’ who reawakened these narratives which became important in the encouragement for political violence.

Similar narratives such as those documented by Oded (1996) writing in the context of Kenya’s Coast continued to be expressed in data collection. Claims of marginalization in terms of jobs access, being treated as terror suspects, poor economic outlooks were in particular cited as the range of grievances that could lead individuals to take up political violence. Multiple respondents in both focus group discussions and in individual interviews in Likoni, Mombasa presented realities of ‘up-country people’ domination in business and jobs which had served to evoke feelings of treatment of ‘Muslims’ and generally Coastal residents as second-class citizens.

Moreover, this historical marginalization even in the advent of the devolved governments (County- governments) from April 2013 continued to be expressed through the debates of the Wabara (up-country people) who have been taking over jobs and economic opportunities from the ‘Wapwani’ (Coasterians). This kind of tensions rekindling the politics of belonging framing that has been used to categorize the so called ‘insiders’ (Wapwani) or the local indigenes of the Coast versus the outsiders (Wabara) or the non-indigenes. A recurring perspective throughout the data collection phase in Mombasa were realities of marginalization expressed through difficulties in accessing identity cards, jobs being skewed against the locals, and authorities allowing drugs business to go unchecked. These grievances
which are based on reality and while not new have similarly been documented by other researchers studying the Kenyan Coast (Kresse, 2009).

The respondents in both the focus group discussions and individual interviews observed that grievances had created opportunities for violence though the rise of groups such as Mombasa Republican Council (MRC). The MRC was identified with its secessionist slogan, ‘Pwani si Kenya’ (in Kiswahili means that the Coast is not Kenya). Furthermore, there existed occasional field work claims of links between the MRC and the Al-Shabaab. One of the respondents claimed that some members of the MRC had initially been joining the Al-Shabaab as a strategy to acquire military training. They then hoped that they could utilize it in their secessionist cause. This respondent in Likoni, Mombasa said that:

“In my view, there have been links between the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) and the Al-Shabaab. When the MRC was being revived around 2008, some members joined the Al-Shabaab to gain military training… around 2010 there was a convergence of interests and more so when they both expressed their social economic grievances in the Coast.”

Similarly, other studies have suggested linkages between the MRC and the Al-Shabaab. The linkages have been that the MRC members not only sympathize with the Al-Shabaab discourse but also shield the returnees from Somalia. The returnees are shielded on the basis of being family members, friends and members of the community (Mkutu & Marani, 2014; Kwale and Bungoma Crime and Violence Survey, 2016). Several respondents also claimed the Answar sect connection between Kwale and Tanga, Tanzania, a view also reiterated in part by Lesage (2014). Data also linked Answar network from Kwale, Mombasa to the Majengo area of Nairobi through previous connections claimed to be the work of Aboud Rogo and his former student Ahmed Ali who founded the Muslim Youth Centre in the Pumwani area of Nairobi.

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5 Interview with a male resident of Likoni, Mombasa, November 24, 2016.
These kinds of linkages were also referenced by other respondents during the fieldwork in Mombasa where the MRC has a following. However, there is lack of conclusive evidence of linkages between the MRC and the Al-Shabaab. An interview with a local administrator in Mombasa, delinked the often-associated linkages between the MRC and the Al-Shabaab. He argues that “I can tell you authoritatively that there is no link between the MRC and radicalization... You can take that to the bank… Terrorists have proper networks... there are no links. The MRC is mainly centered on historical grievances...”.

Following the above account of a local administrator in Mombasa, this reinforces the differing perspectives on the linkages between the MRC and Al-Shabaab. The only points of convergence between the MRC, the Al-Shabaab, including the Islamic State as a new entrant was their use of social grievances to mobilize for membership and consequently for political violence. Respondents in both Mombasa and Nairobi observed that radical groups such as the Al-Shabaab were relying on the marginalization narrative of the Muslim identity in Kenya which they linked to events in neighboring Somalia.

The findings from the fieldwork observed that Al-Shabaab recruiters framed the 2011 Kenyan military intervention in Somalia as requiring a form of ‘Jihad’ to redress this stance. This Jihad call as respondents noted was blamed on a subjective interpretation of religious texts. However, this subjective interpretation departs from well-established Islamic legal perspectives that Jihad was principally a struggle against one’s soul including a defensive war to safeguard the Muslim community (Wiktorowicz, 2005:79).

Furthermore, Muslims in the Coast and generally in the Kenyan polity have existed in uneasy relations with the state since and before independence. This has been so especially in instances of terror attacks (Kresse, 2009). In the post-colonial context, Muslims in Kenya

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6 Key informant Interview with a local administrator, Mombasa, Nov 24, 2016.
have existed in what Kresse (2009) has termed as ‘double periphery’. On one hand, Muslims have been marginalized in Kenya, thereby leading to feelings of being treated as second class citizens. On the other hand, periphery is at the global level where Muslims experience marginalization. Muslims interpret this global marginalization to be the work of two factors. One is their limited abilities to speak Arabic - the language of the Koran. Two they often feel economically disadvantaged thus depending on the charity of their wealthy counterparts in the Gulf and in the Middle East for scholarship opportunities (Kresse, 2009).

Drawing on the field findings in both Mombasa and Nairobi, there is lack of a singular explanation for the variables influencing the radicalization process in Kenya. Instead, the study avers the existence of multiple variables influencing the process. Respondents additionally spoke to the complexity of the radicalization process. In their collective view, it was both an individualized and contextualized process. The explanations proffered ranged from claims of marginalization to religious identity. The radicalization process cannot be generalized and would need to take into account the local and the contextual dynamics (Holmes, 2017:86).

When combined with other factors, the agency of the Answar sect in Kenya is important to situate the foundations of youth radicalization. As already explained, this was through the interventions of Sheikh Rimo. Rimo executed a strategy that had several layers. One of the layers required that his followers resign from government jobs including withdrawing their children from government run schools. The justification he offered for their resignation and withdrawal respectively was to protest that the government was led by non-Muslims. School going children he argued could be consequently educated through Islamic schools. To those resigning from their jobs, he referenced to them ‘Kula Kwa Jasho Lako’ (Kiswahili for eat from your own sweat’). This latter statement was interpreted as a strategy to impoverish his supporters in order to manipulate them. Rimo trained his followers
for about 5 years and by 1994, he considered his training mission complete. Sheikh Rimo in commissioning his students, also instructed other ‘faithful’ in diverse places to follow on his message. It was the teachings of some of his former students that his radicalizing message became manifest.\(^7\)

The respondents in both focus group discussions and individual interviews in Mombasa claimed that two of Sheikh Rimo’s more prominent students, Sheikhs Aboud Rogo and Makaburi had since the 2000s been facilitating youth radicalization in the wider Kenyan Coast and beyond. In multiple interviews, the participants spoke of early terrorist connections between Fazul Mohamed and Rogo. Rogo and Fazul are said to have made contact in 1993 when Fazul came to the Kenyan Coast. They even became in-laws when Fazul married from Rogo’s family. They both ran a small fishing business with two boats that were said to be conduits of ferrying youths for military training in Somalia.\(^8\) Whereas this study is focused on the locale of Likoni, in South Coast Mombasa, there existed several radicalization hotspots within Mombasa County that included Majengo and Kisauni, among other areas. The patterns of recruitment and the motivation remained inconclusive. These kept evolving as new issues emerged.

Although the roots of youth radicalization in Kenya are traceable to the Kenyan Coast, the fieldwork findings also made linkages with Nairobi’s Eastleigh and Majengo areas. These connections were made through the activities of the Muslim Youth Center (MYC) and its leader Ahmed Imani Ali who later founded the Al-Hijra, an affiliate of the Al-Shabaab in Kenya. The MYC was based in Pumwani, with a close proximity to the capital Nairobi. Ahmed Imani Ali is said to have been a former student of the late Sheikh Aboud Rogo who principally operated at the Kenyan Coast. As of November 2017, Ali is claimed to have fled

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7 Interview with a male local administrator in Mombasa, October 26, 2016.

8 Interview with a male local administrator in Mombasa, October 26, 2016.
the movement in Somalia owing to disagreements with the top Al-Shabaab leadership. The MYC is claimed to have facilitated hundreds of youth to join the Al-Shabaab since 2008.9

These new recruits drawn from various communities in Kenya including Nairobi and Mombasa have been fighting in Somalia and mainly against the African Union Mission to Somali (AMISOM) forces. The recruits have also been responsible for a series of home grown terrorist attacks in Kenya and Uganda in the past10. The Kenyan government has identified youth radicalization to be a critical security threat. In 2016, it produced a National Strategy to Counter Violent Extremism (NSCVE). The strategy notes that as at early 2016, the radicalization hotspots included Nairobi, the Coast region especially Mombasa, Kwale, Kilifi, and the north east including Isiolo County, Moyale sub-County and Marsabit town. This government strategy additionally observes that radicalization could occur anywhere in the republic owing to changing dynamics such as the uptake of social media.

Social media was qualified as a dynamic owing to increased internet access. Moreover, this national strategy notes that radicalization was occurring across various spheres. These included educational institutions, prisons, online platforms, religious institutions (Mosques, madrassas, Islamic charities) and among others refugees’ camps (Kakuma and Daadab) (GOK, 2016). The strategy also argues that poor urban neighbourhoods, make youth vulnerable to radicalization as a result of poor economic prospects. The presence of active and sleeper camps for terrorists in the country and beyond also increases the vulnerability (GOK, 2016).

Research on political violence has undergone transformation with the rapid uptake of theoretical approaches taking on a social movement approach. Globally, studies on violent and militant groups have applied social movement perspectives in order to contextualize

9 Key informant Interview with male a senior security official, in Nairobi, February 2, 2017.
10 Key Informant interview with a male senior security official, in Nairobi, February 2, 2017.
political violence. Researchers drawing on the social movement perspectives have argued that political violence arises in the context of wider, social and political contexts. From a social movement lens, radicalization is a process formed through ‘strategy, structure and conjuncture,’ and which adopts violence to achieve expressed goals (Bozi et al. 2014:2).

Findings from field research indicates that violence and recruitment into movements such as the Al-Shabaab has been framed around globalized struggles invoking the agency of political Islam. Enlisting individuals to join the movement at least in the post Kenya’s intervention in Somalia in 2011 has been contextualized in this light. Kenya’s intervention in Somalia is in part seen as a ‘direct assault’ on Islam. It is the expression of these range of grievances that have been relied upon for youth mobilization into violence. The radicalization process is comprised of long and short-term objectives. It additionally can take on both violent versus non-violent approaches in the pursuit of a set objective that evolves over time. Moreover, the context of the strategy is often informed by specific social and political environments and which shift over time (Bozi et al. 2014:2).

Drawing on social movement theory, it is possible to tease out the dynamics of political violence, including exploring their specific outcomes and effects. Scholars working with the social movement approach have pointed out at least four groupings of radicalization dynamics that drive and shape the process of radicalization (Bozi et al. 2014:5). One of the dynamics considered is the interactions between the oppositional movements and the state. Whereas literature on political violence has tended to study the activities of militant groups, it often ignores how states shape the rise, development and decline of violence. However, states may respond in multiple ways depending on the context. States may rely on violent repression or resist the demands laid out by some of these oppositional movements that in many instances target the state. It is possible that states could also offer tacit support to
militant groups for geo-political reasons. In summary, how states interact with these groups could be a pointer to how radicalization happens (Bozi et al. 2014:5).

The second dynamic relates to intra-movement interactions and specifically in how competition could be influencing the radicalization process. Hence, social movement theorists have argued that examining competition within groups could yield insights on the radicalization process. Examining competition at the level of ideology, tactics and struggle for resources within groups could yield some inferences on the radicalization process. The argument being that the rise of in-group competition could necessitate the rise of more militant actions as sub-groups attempt to outdo each other. Competition could therefore lead to the escalation of political violence. Studying the competition dynamics would be useful in isolating the particular patterns and the ramifications of the attendant violent actions (Bozi et al. 2014).

The other dynamic that shapes the radicalization process is the meaning of violence often classified through frame analysis. A frame analysis takes on two perspectives; frame alignment and frame resonance. Frame alignment refers to the linkages between the interests of the social movement organizations and those of their prospective supporters (Bozi et al. 2014). Frame analysis could for instance at the level of supporters consider violence to be justifiable and, in the process, losing its negative term. Frame resonance on the other hand, considers the impacts that social movements messaging has on their respective audiences. This impact of the message is however dependent on among others the strategy and the structure adopted in the messaging process. For the frames to be effective on their intended audiences, they have to be dependent on the historically constructed belief systems, values, and identities including their expectations (Bozi, et al. 2014).

Frame alignment often works on the so-called root causes of radicalization and which make individuals susceptible to alternative worldviews that justify violence. The root causes
approach argues the presence of a crisis situation for a potential terrorist to take up a radicalization process. However, crisis situations vary and can be triggered by a series of personal victimization including political grievances that could be experienced directly or indirectly. Additionally, a series of different types of marginalization (for example, economic, discrimination) coupled with relative deprivation are part of the root causes approach (de Bie, 2016:22-23). The root cause model that draws on situational and existential threats such as unemployment and discrimination has been criticized given that only a few individuals out of a large pool radicalize on similar experiences. There is the view that this receptivity to alternative world views is made possible by the Salafi-Jihadi ideology (de Bie, 2016:22-23).

The dynamics of diffusion is another variable to examine in the radicalization process (Bozi, et al. 2014). For operational clarity, diffusion relates to a complex process that involves the rapid spread of ideas, tactics, social and cultural practices, across time and cultures. Applying the diffusion approach helps to explain the changing nature of political violence globally. Therefore, the diffusion approach is considered to be a new form of violence linked to the global dimensions of politics and economic governance. In this respect, the radicalization process is no longer isolated but can find inspiration globally. There is thus the call for more case studies globally to situate how the different contexts influence the process but also in how they differ (Bozi et al. 2014:15).

Moreover, studies investigating the recruitment and radicalization patterns from a European context and drawing on the social movement theory have argued that radical ideas are spread in part through social networks and small groups. Violent radicalization is then considered to be spreading through small groups where bonding, peer pressure and indoctrination alter the individual’s world view (Nielsen, 2010). Within the European context, empiricist studies have noted that individuals taking on radicalization do so based on
different triggers. It thus renders it problematic to isolate a single frame of motivation. Notwithstanding these difficulties, it is possible to situate radicalization from a number of motivations. It could be on the account that an individual could be looking for meaning in their life and to make a new start, or they could be undertaking an intellectual process pushed by ideology, religion or political grievances (Nielsen, 2010). Having contextualized the genesis of youth radicalization in Kenya with a focus on Nairobi and Mombasa Counties, the next section of this chapter examines the variables that have influenced the radicalization process in Kenya.

4.2 The Variables Influencing the Radicalization Process

This section draws from the fieldwork data from Mombasa and Nairobi Counties to examine the variables that have influenced the radicalization process in Kenya. Preceding these variables however is the pre-radicalization phase that sets the groundwork for the process to take shape.

4.2.1 Pre-radicalization Phase

Drawing on field data gathered through the focus group discussions and individual interviews, including archival data in both Mombasa and Nairobi, respondents observed that radicalization was a gradual and a targeted process. They opined that while it was a randomized process, the profile of recruits also mattered. An individuals’ skills set also mattered and as such professionals were part of the target. This would explain for instance why individuals with medical and engineering backgrounds had previously been recruited. For the process to occur, recruiters had put in place a series of preparatory steps. These were claimed to range from individual and group conversations that centred on global grievances taking on a political Islam perspective. These grievances were skewed to present a ‘global’ Islam that was under threat which required a response.
In addition to these personalized conversations, audio-visual materials, and online media were also supplied to buttress the narrative of why joining some of these social movements was not only justifiable but necessary. Video halls in contexts such as Majengo, Nairobi were claimed to have been used in the preparatory phases. Whereas respondents had contrary opinions on the place of socio-economic exclusions in influencing the process, it nevertheless had an influence in the process.

Recruitment networks were said to always be on the lookout for economically vulnerable individuals who they could manipulate and enlist in their movements. Socially vulnerable individuals could be lured on the basis of improved economic prospects prior to joining the movement. Having elaborated briefly on the pre-radicalization phase, the next section analyses the variables that have influenced the radicalization process in Kenya. The variables influencing the radicalization process are summarized in figure 2 below.

**Figure 2: Radicalization Variables in Kenya**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Radicalization Variable</th>
<th>Agency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Religious ideology</td>
<td>Presence of ‘radical preachers’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Grievances/appropriation of historical injustices</td>
<td>Recruitment networks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Friendships/peer networks</td>
<td>Peer pressure/belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Internet/social media</td>
<td>Technology uptake</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. ‘Tough counter-terrorism responses’</td>
<td>State responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Poor parenting</td>
<td>Family, socialization processes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s Fieldwork data, Nairobi and Mombasa 2015-2017.
4.2.2 Religious Ideology

Drawing on field data in both Mombasa and Nairobi, respondents accounts argued that religious ideology had been influencing youth radicalization. This influence was highlighted in both the focus groups discussions and individual interviews across the two field sites. The ‘claim’ provided was that a ‘politicized Islam’ had been taking shape since the 1990s in Kenya. The rise of political Islam the respondents argued was adding to the complex puzzle of radicalization. This was blamed on the rise of Jihadi Salafism that had progressively penetrated the Kenyan Coast before rapidly spreading to the other parts of Kenya. Therefore, the spread of the Jihadi Salafism which came to be linked with youth radicalization in the 1990s was influenced by Sheikh Abdulaziz Rimo and his followers. His followers according to fieldwork data in both Nairobi and Mombasa included the late Sheikhs Rogo and Makaburi who met their deaths respectively in 2012 and 2013 in unclear circumstances. However, a section of respondents suggested state complicity in their killings. They both had been claimed to be teaching violent Jihad and have been characterized by Ndzovu (2017) as ‘Jihadi Clerics’. Prior to Sheikh Rogo’s death in 2012, he was deemed to be the main ideological leader responsible for Islamist radicalization and deployment of Kenyan Muslims into Somalia (Ndzovu, 2017:10). However, a section of respondents was quick to caution that Islam was a peaceful religion. The data averred however that it was the preaching of a ‘violent form of Jihad that was motivating the route into Islamist radicalization. This was attributed to the subjective interpretation of religious texts to achieve their end. It was also interpreted broadly as a question of values and positioning in one’s faith.

Since the 9/11 attacks in the United States, there has been a growing focus of studies concerned with examining the radicalization process. The process is yet to be fully unravelled (Horgan, 2008; Mastors & Siers, 2014). The point of reference has been to understand how
individuals join terrorist groups and how they disembark. Academic discourses focusing on the radicalization process that could lead to violent extremism have placed primacy on religion as a notable variable influencing the process. Violent extremists have capitalized on radical ideologies, ideas and beliefs to create intolerance and justify violence (Mirahmadi, 2016).

The mobilization of violence is not a preserve of any one religion. In fact, religiosity is not in itself a marker of vulnerability to radicalization. In the past fifty years, what has become notable is the use of Islamic discourses to justify violence (Mirahmadi, 2016). This has been attributed to a section of extremist clerics that rely on literalistic understanding of Islam and which ran counter to the correct interpretation of religious texts. The individuals adopting the use of violence being ‘recent’ converts possessing a minimal understanding of their religion. Majority of Muslims globally however reject the use of violence (Mirahmadi, 2016:134). The findings from both Mombasa and Nairobi also sought to put a disclaimer about the need to avoid a ‘condemnation’ of the entire Muslim community as responsible for the rise of terrorist related violence. In a sense, this interpretation was directed at emerging waves of ‘Islamophobia’ linked to counter-terrorism discourses and operations. Instead, respondents argued that it was only a small section of individuals that were claiming the agency of Islam to radicalize and commit political violence.

The connections between ‘Islamist radicalization’ and political violence have been attributed to the resurgence of the teachings of Jihadi Salafism globally. This variant of religious philosophy argues for the need for a puritanical form of Islam that goes back to Prophet Mohamed’s times. Therefore, this approach argues that Muslims cannot be subjected to secular authority and laws. Jihadi Salafism then calls for the mobilization of ‘Jihad’ as a way to reverse ‘secularity’ and work towards the creation of an ‘Islamic caliphate’ (Kassim,
Youth radicalization in Kenya could be situated within the broader goal of establishing an Islamic state.

The theoretical linkages between religion and radicalization is often devoid of empirical evidence (Aly & Striegler, 2012). A study conducted by Rink and Sharma (2016) in Eastleigh, Nairobi on religious radicalization has helped to bridge part of the empirical gaps existing on the links between religion and radicalization. Several explanations have been offered on empirical evidence gaps linking religion and radicalization. One explanation is that interviews with terrorists are often difficult to access, and in cases of their access, terrorists may not fully articulate the reasons for their actions (Aly & Striegler, 2012).

Within the critical terrorism studies school which in part attempts to critique the missing gaps or deliberate omissions’ in the field of terrorism studies, the links between radicalization and terrorism are said to be non-existent. Instead, the critical school argues that it is not religion that drives terrorism but rather that it is the range of political grievances and oppressive stances taken by groups such as Al-Qaeda directed at states that explains the rise of terrorism. The attribution of violence to political grievances and oppression is thus neglected as an explanation mechanism giving way to new terrorism debates that give primacy to individual processes of radicalization including violent extremism (Jackson, 2012).

Besides, the challenges of empirical data collection with present and former terrorists, it is still possible to input religion into the radicalization process (Aly & Striegler, 2012). The religious factor blamed on the radicalization process is attributed to a violent reading or interpretation of Islamic texts. This violent reading of Islamic texts is aided by a number of factors. One is a strong identification with jihad between the Islamic world and the western world. Second is the individual and group support for violent jihad which is considered
obligatory for all Muslims. Third is the focus of establishing a Pan-Islamic state through brutal conflict (Aly & Striegher, 2012).

In reading the focus group discussions and individual interviews, in both Nairobi and Mombasa, respondents interpreted religious ideology as influencing the youth radicalization process. This was a tactic relied upon by the Al-Shabaab and the Islamic State, a new entrant since 2014. This perspective was supported by a senior police officer in Nairobi with over ten years of experience in policing terrorism. Respondents explained that religious ideology as a radicalization variable was linked to a series of charismatic preachers mainly operating at the Kenyan Coast. Furthermore, these charismatic preachers had links with towns such as Nairobi including the East African region. The findings from the research in Mombasa claimed that the preaching of the late Sheikh Aboud Rogo in particular was responsible for youth recruitment into the Al-Shabaab. Many respondents in Mombasa traced Rogo’s radical sermons to the Likoni area (South-Coast) in the 1980s and 1990s as responsible for gradual youth radicalization. He is said to also have doubled up then as a bread distributor in Likoni area, a sub-county within Mombasa. Rogo relocated to the mainland areas of Mombasa where his sermons were used in the mid-2000s and beyond to lure youth to join radical groups in Somalia. The findings also point that he would often distribute audio and videos CDs urging his followers to take up jihad. This mainly happened after Friday prayers.

In the context of Kenya’s military intervention in Somalia 2011, Rogo used that frame as an opportunity to call the Muslim nation to respond to the unjustifiable acts of a foreign nation (Kenya). Kenya was then deemed to be working with the Americans and which radical Islam considered an enemy. With the rapid uptake of internet access, his sermons became accessible on You-Tube reaching a broader audience outside of his own local context. Part of his sermons framed Kenya as an enemy of Islam owing to her intervention in Somalia. His

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11 Interview with a senior police officer in Nairobi, February, 2, 2017.
sermons then made violence justifiable. Rogo and host of other clerics were using a narrative of the enemy not only to justify attacks on a supposed ‘Christian’ government, but also the non-Muslim populations. These calls for attacks on the non-Muslim populations were meant to provoke retaliation and hence the justification from a Muslim side, a fully-fledged Jihadi war (Ndzovu, 2017).

One of the respondents said that:

“...Aboud Rogo would argue that a Muslim is a brother to another Muslim and therefore a true believer should not leave their brother to be assaulted... He would use the case of Somalia since Kenya’s 2011 invasion... foreign governments including Kenya he observed did not want an Islamic state to thrive there, since the collapse of the Islamic Courts Union (ICU) in 2007... He would argue that in the context of post 2011 Kenya’s engagement in Somalia and together with her American friends had made them enemies of Islam and thus they needed to be fought... The links with violence being placed on the suffering of the Somali people out of these foreign interventions... the question being why a Christian nation should intervene ...”

Hence, the above quote reinforces how a call to violence has been framed as a response to Kenya’s military intervention in 2011. In order to persuade recruitment, Kenya’s intervention was equated to a Christian army invasion on an ‘Islamic land’. This invasion narrative was adopted as a rallying call urging Muslims in Kenya and beyond to mobilize violence against the Kenyan state (Rink & Sharma, 2016:3). In the above respondent’s perspective, it is this carefully cultivated narrative that obligated Muslims to fight the constructed enemies.

An interviewed religious leader in Mombasa experienced in counter-radicalization work expressed disappointment with the Kenyan government for its slow response when clerics such as Sheikh Aboud Rogo and others were openly radicalizing youth into violent

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12 Interview with a male grassroots community worker in Likoni, Mombasa, August 25, 2016.
extremism through religious platforms. In his view, Rogo and a host of other clerics did not only use particular Mosques to radicalize but also relied on audio and visual aid materials. Rogo is said to have mainly operated at the Masjid Musa Mosque in Mombasa and its environs even as he continued to rely on audio-visual platforms (such as compact discs- CDs) to spread his message.13

Post his death on 27 August 2012 in Mombasa, an UN Security Council (UNSC) report produced in 2013 by a monitoring group on Somalia and Eritrea identified Rogo as the ideological leader of the Al-Hijra formerly the Muslim Youth Centre (MYC) and which had become an ally of the Al-Shabaab in Kenya (UNSC, 2013). This UN report also linked Ahmed Iman Ali as the leader of the Al-Hijra in Kenya (who was Rogo’s student) and claims that the Pumwani Riyadha Mosque Committee in Majengo, Nairobi had been supportive of Al-Hijra activities in Kenya. The Mosque Committee at the Riyadha Mosque had been accused of funding and aiding recruitment of Al-Shabaab, including related logistical coordination, a claim that the Mosque has previously denied (UNSC, 2013).

A key informant interview with a religious leader in Mombasa referenced links between radical clerics and Islamist radicalization that could lead to violent extremism. He noted that:

“The late Aboud Rogo at Msikiti Musa (Msikiti in Kiswahili is a Mosque), and in tandem with Fazul a Comoran national were allowed hate speech, including the distribution of free CDs meant to recruit youth to join the Al-Shabaab. He used and broadcasted widely, the need for ‘Chukua Kisu, Kinoe, Kisu si cha Mboga’ (Metaphorically in Kiswahili, “Take a knife and sharpen it, a knife is not meant to chop vegetables.”). The question then became how did they allow him [government] to continue using his Mosque platform to continue radicalizing youth, yet the government… only arrested youths supplied with CDs claimed to have radicalization material. Maybe the government allowed him to operate for such a long time so

13 Interview with a male religious leader in, Mombasa, August 25, 2016.
that they could build the trends around the question... they (security agencies), often following up to arrest the youth and not the source of the message.\textsuperscript{14},

The above respondent account on Aboud Rogo and his associated links to religious radicalization is reinforced by a You-Tube video capturing a sermon he delivered shortly before his death in August 2012. In the video, that is accessible online, he reinforces the need for Kenyan Muslims to take up Jihad in Somalia to defend Islam that he considered to be under a threat from globalized forces. In this online video, he castigates the Kenyan invasion in Somalia in 2011 and subsequently other AMISOM troops contributing countries. In the video, he also considers AMISOM’s interventions as an assault on the Muslim nation and the need for Muslims to launch attacks both in Kenya and Somalia.

Radicalization into violent extremism and more so in Mombasa, which is Kenya’s second largest city, became more widespread in early 2014. This period witnessed the violent takeover of specific Mosque committees by the youth. The youth violent take-over of some Mosques in parts of Mombasa in early 2014 could be explained on several grounds. One is that it was meant to allow the fiery youth to teach a violent Jihadi ideology (Ndzovu, 2017:5). Secondly, the youth felt that they were not fully involved in the running of the selected Mosques. Therefore, taking over these Mosques became a form of inclusion. Some of these Mosques that the youth took over such as Masjid Musa, Sakina later became sites of youth radicalization. Their impacts would be felt through acts of violent extremism in Kenya and beyond. As this occurred, a series of violent attacks were directed at the so called anti- Jihadi clerics- that is those that stood counter to the teachings of violent Jihad perpetuated by the so called ‘Jihadi’ clerics (Ndzovu, 2017).

Security officials interviewed in both Mombasa and Nairobi explained that the use of Mosques as radicalization sites had reduced significantly owing to coordinated policing and

\textsuperscript{14} Interview with a male religious leader, Mombasa, August 25, 2016.
surveillance. Interviews with these security officials were clear however that radicalization into violence was still a significant security threat in Kenya. As a result of increased state surveillance on Mosques, recruitment networks had been altering their tactics. Among other platforms, private residences were now being used as radicalization sites. Notwithstanding the reduction of Mosques as radicalization spaces, security officials recounted that some of them had been aiding the process.\(^{15}\)

The findings from interviews in Pumwani area indicated that Iman Ali engineered in 2007 the take-over of the Pumwani Riyadha Mosque and thereafter deposed the Mosque Committee. An analysis of the focus group discussions and individual interviews with Majengo youth residents and some who were privy to the activities of Imani Ali mentioned that the takeover was possible following his persuasive appeal among the youth. The participants explained that Ali’s justification for taking over the Committee on several accounts. One was the claimed failures of the then existing Committee’s to manage revenues from its properties such as the Gikomba open air market. This was a particularly appealing narrative for the unemployed youth that stood to benefit directly or indirectly through the redistribution of the Mosque’s revenues. Following this takeover, a number of respondents noted that Ali and his Mosque Committee then instituted a network to radicalize youths and began facilitating them to travel to Somalia to join the Al-Shabaab.\(^{16}\) This process of radicalization was however gradual. An interview with a keen follower of Ali noted that youth radicalization proceeded on the basis of radical sermons and videos carefully skewed to show that global Islam was under threat. Other contexts such as Iraq, Afghanistan and

\(^{15}\) Interview with a senior male police officer in Nairobi, February 2, 2017.

\(^{16}\) Individual interviews with individuals that knew Amin Ali personally and also drawing on focus group discussions in Majengo, Nairobi. Interviews conducted on diverse dates in June and July of 2016.
Somalia were referenced. There too were promises of a monthly income upon joining the movement. Iman Ali left Pumwani in 2009 and joined the Al-Shabaab in Somalia.

The above field accounts have been validated by several studies such as those of Amble and Hitchens (2014), and Anderson and McKnight (2015). A newspaper report published in November 23, 2017, claims that Ali had fallen out of favour with key Al-Shabaab leaders in Somalia and has been on the run. According to this report, a plan had been hatched by Ahmed Diriye’s faction within Al-Shabaab to execute him. It is claimed that his troubles were linked to his ambitions to take charge of Al-Shabaab in Somalia. He has additionally been accused of receiving foreign funding and not sharing with the Al-Shabaab. Furthermore, unverified reports as at mid-December 2017 suggested that he had left the group for Kenya for his safety concerns. There are rumours that he was negotiating amnesty with the Kenyan government in December 2017.

Interviews conducted with security officials in late December 2016, in the Kamukunji area suggested that the Riyadh Mosque in Nairobi’s Pumwani area had ceased to be a site of youth recruitment owing to increased government surveillance in the area. Even though a section of residents disputed the Mosque’s agency in radicalization, a section of the interviewed security officials held the view that recruitment and support for Al-Shabaab could be ongoing in a covert manner. However, this was hard to detect. In March of 2016, a police raid on the Mosque dismantled an Al-Shabaab terror financing network that was supported by rental income of owned stalls in the adjacent Gikomba market. The recruitment

17 Interview with a young male resident of Majengo, Nairobi, 9 June 2016.
19 Informal conversation with a researcher in Nairobi, 15th December 2017. This is however unverified.
20 Individual interviews with security officials working in the Kamukunji area in Nairobi, Interviews conducted on diverse dates in December 2016.
strategies the respondents noted kept on evolving to minimize interception by state security agencies.

Meanwhile, in the Eastleigh area of Nairobi, there is a presence of recruiters that push extreme religious ideology through a section of some selected schools and Mosques (Rink & Sharma, 2016:4). A government security official with a three-year working experience in Eastleigh supported the view. He argued that a section of Mosques and Madrassas in Eastleigh had been sites of recruitment post 2007 but was quick to admit that increased government surveillance had pushed back the recruitment from these sites.21. Furthermore, Hippel (2010) posits possibility that Madaris (plural for Madrassa) can be used as training grounds for terrorists.

Likewise, in Mombasa, a respondent alleged that terror networks had managed to penetrate some of the Madaris as a strategy to cultivate future terrorists. In order to push their agenda in Madaris, the respondent mentioned that terror networks were using both material and financial resources to ensure that Madaris teachers pursued their agenda.22 For instance, a section of extremist Madaris in Pakistan have produced recruits for terrorist organizations from poor economic backgrounds. The links here being that Madaris have drawn in poor families given that some tend to be extensively subsidized or offer free religious education. In addition to tuition waiver, many also provide food, clothing and books to their students and therefore making them attractive to poor families. A local government administrator noted however that radicalization trends had been rapidly changing. While noting that madaris had waned as sites of radicalization, a local administrator explained that this was being replaced by alternative strategies such as the use of social media.23

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21 Interview with a government official in Nairobi, January 25, 2017.
22 Interview with a civil society official, male, Mombasa, August 10, 2016.
23 Interview with a local administrator in Mombasa, June 7, 2017.
It suffices to note that not all Madaris teach an extremist agenda and many in their curriculum do also incorporate secular subjects and include middle-class children. There exists however the presence of radical Madaris globally that teach children to take up a violent outlook worldview and look down upon western influences (Hippel, 2010). In contexts such as the Indian sub-continent (India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) children attending Madaris are taught that Muslims are under siege globally and as such they must be prepared to fight this constructed siege. It has been documented that a number of suicide attackers in both Afghanistan and Pakistan in the post 9/11 period have been students of some of these radical Madaris (Hippel, 2010:56).

Beyond the physical audio-visual materials, fieldwork in Mombasa and Nairobi also pointed out to the embracing of the internet as a mediator of radicalization ideology. Explanations argued that it was more ‘safer’ option given the anonymity made possible by internet platforms in certain instances. Some respondents claimed that the WhatsApp application on mobile phones is encrypted meaning that it was difficult to intercept the messaging unlike text and phone data that in certain instances can be intercepted.

Additionally, respondents mentioned that radicalization recruiters had been keen on targeting individuals with a ‘shallow’ understanding of religion. The easiest targets according to respondents in both focus group discussions and individual interviews were new converts to Islam. The new converts were isolated on the account that they did not have a fair grasp of Islam. There is now an appreciation in the literature that recent converts to Islam may increase prospects for religious radicalization and consequently mobilize violence (Rink & Sharma, 2016). At least two accounts have been offered to explain new converts vulnerability. One explanation that could push new converts to violence are failures to be accorded an embrace they would have expected from their new co-religionists as a result of joining a new faith. Out of this scenario, they may adopt extreme political positions in their
religion to signal to the public their belonging to a new religious group. Secondly, conversion was likely to create an intolerance of a previous faith and predispose an individual to take up radical views. It has also been argued that new converts to Islam both male and female have been involved in terrorist attacks in Kenya (Rink & Sharma, 2016:9-10).

Many respondents spoke of ‘radical’ religious preachers as having a hand in recruiting new convertees into radicalization. A religious leader in Mombasa narrated on the vulnerabilities of new converts to be enlisted for radicalization causes. He said that:

“Shallow religious teaching is leading to radicalization.... take the case of the teachings of the likes of the late Aboud Rogo... he used to corrupt religion in the name of Jihad in order to wage violence... those without deep knowledge such as new converts to Islam would easily be lured to join the Al-Shabaab. all in the name of fighting for Islam... they will not question the verses they are read and interpreted for.”

The above quote illustrates how ‘radical’ preachers can misinterpret religion to achieve their end. Reflecting on the above respondent, radicalization vulnerability could be influenced by the level of grounding in religion. Those new to the Islamic faith then became more vulnerable. Some of the so-called radical preachers were said to pursue narrow group interests in return for material gains, such as money and cars. As this grassroots’ community worker in Likoni, Mombasa explained:

“… In addition to the wrong interpretation used by certain Sheikhs, to favour their particular interests... the Sheikh is also interested in money... within a short time, he is driving a big car, his family is living large, he also has a business... the question being where suddenly is the source of this money... radical groups could have a hand in it in return for their radicalization agenda.”

24 Interview with a male religious leader in Mombasa, August 26, 2016.

The above quote suggests linkages between radical preachers and groups such as the Al-Shabaab. This additionally speaks to a strategy of Al-Shabaab recruitment relying on the agency of the so called ‘charismatic’ preachers. In return for material gains, they would then execute their masters’ radicalization agendas. The above respondent pointing in part the different ways that ‘religion’ could be applied as a route into radicalization with implications for future acts of violent extremism. Radical networks had thus found a loophole to exploit. They capitalized on poor remuneration of preachers to advance their agenda. As this respondent explained, “additionally, one of the other contributing factors is that we are keeping our preachers’ poor. Those radicalizing are building their Mosques and paying handsomely for their preachers. Keeping the preachers’ poor has meant that the radical groups have taken advantage of this…”

In addition, respondents also explained that a network of foreign clerics that had set up camp in the Kenyan Coast had also influenced the radicalization process. Field narratives called for enhanced state surveillance on foreign preachers to pre-empt radicalization discourses. As this respondent observed:

“Government surveillance should also be enhanced for foreign Islamic preachers coming to preach in Mombasa and in the Coast. If you dig through properly, they usually have an agenda, some are even coming here to recruit. The law should be stiff and should include registering those coming to preach. In this country we do not question as much as to what foreigners are up to in our localities. This would be very different with our neighbours in Tanzania. In Tanzania, they will know very quickly who a stranger is and what they are there for.”

One of the participants from a focus group discussion in Majengo recounted his brief radicalization path. In his narrative, the young man in his mid-20s traced his near successful

26 Interview with a male senior police officer in Likoni, Mombasa, November 23, 2016.

27 Interview with a male police officer in, Likoni, Mombasa, November 24, 2016.
recruitment into violence from prison where he served a short prison sentence. Prisons are correctional facilities where offenders serve a determined term as per the offended laws. Having served a stint in a Kenyan Prison, he explained that prisons were a fertile ground to recruit. He opined that his entry into the radical path was driven more by the need to tap onto an economic opportunity that recruiters were promising him as he was desperate for an income. He also mentioned that he only changed his mind somewhere in Mwingi as he was travelling to Garissa and then to Somalia. The following excerpt of this young man in Majengo, Nairobi is relevant on how religious ideology had influenced his radicalization path. From his account, religious ideology and prospects of a better economic outlook had been a critical push factor. He said that:

“I have been tempted once to join a radical group and I was even following a gradual process, I was in prison and previously I had been a street boy, when I came back to the base [an outdoor social hang-out space] … I began to drift to the path of radicalization. I was desperate and without job or skill after leaving prison… progressively, I began interacting with recruiters of the movement [Al-Shabaab] ... I would be shown video clips about human suffering, the brutality that happens in faraway places such as Pakistan and predominantly in Muslim inhabited places as part of the reason why it would be justifiable to redress some of these violations... by joining the movement. If we are able to address the poverty and embrace ex-convicts and street boys, then we have possibilities of a terrorist free society."

The above excerpt explains how audio-visual media are relied upon to set forth a narrative of a faith under siege and hence the justification for an individual to join a terrorist organization. The screening of brutal videos projecting the marginalization of Muslims globally is what has been termed as a cognitive opening by Quintan (2003). Historicizing is increasingly being applied as a strategy for radicalization. This particular display of Muslims suffering is meant to help newcomers to pick the ideological beliefs of extremist groups. This picked ideological beliefs serves to create a distance between the individual and the

28Interview with a young male in Majengo, Nairobi June 9, 2016.
mainstream society and to persuade them to stand up against perceived enemies of Islam (de Bie, 2016:28).

4.2.3 Grievances

In the European context, homegrown radicalization has been blamed on the ongoing feelings of marginalization of the Muslim identity and particularly in the post 9/11 period. The marginalization of the Muslim identity leading to feelings of xenophobia in Europe when combined with economic marginalization has created a deep sense of societal alienation in the community (Hafez & Mullins, 2015). When this societal alienation is framed alongside western oriented foreign policies considered discriminating to the Muslim ‘world’, the radicalization environment is created. The foreign occupations by western powers of countries, like the US interventions in Iraq in 2003 and Afghanistan in 2001 and the perceived suffering of Muslims in some of these countries have led to the rise of Muslim anger at western countries. These experiences have then become a vehicle for marginalized youth to channel their own grievances.

Grievances however do not fully explain why individuals take up violent extremism but they certainly have pushed a small minority of individuals to take up violent extremist causes (Hafez & Mullins, 2015:962). Following the social movement theory and the whole realm of contentious politics, grievances are by themselves not sufficient explanations for radicalization. This is on account that individuals at most times have a set of complaints (Beck, 2008:1567). The literature is pointing out that poverty alone is not a sufficient explanation for why young men for instance are mobilized for political violence. This is because a significant majority of poor people do not take up violence. More current analysis on why young men take up violence is thus discounting absolute poverty and arguing the role of relative deprivation (Hudson & Madfes, 2017:8).
In both Mombasa and Nairobi Counties, respondents of the focus group discussions and individual interviews interpreted perceived or actual marginalization discourses of certain communities including religious identities as influencing the radicalization process. In Mombasa County in particular, it was argued that years of neglect on the socio-economic front by successive central governments since independence had an influence in the radicalization process. It had enabled a sustained complaint of a successive exclusion from power and socio-economic resources of Muslim/Coastal identities since independence in 1963. Furthermore, it is the framing of grievances that was being justified as a radicalization entry point.

While historical grievances are not unique to the Kenyan Coast region, two competing ideologies were in place to influence the radicalization process. It is these set of ideologies that were being amplified to frame the grievances. One was the influence of Jihadi Salafism and the second was the perspective of the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC). Reflecting on Jihadi Salafism, joining radical groups not least limited to the Al-Shabaab fitted into the larger discourse of the formation of an Islamic caliphate in the region. Marginalization discourses were often tied to the ‘domination of a Christian government’ in the Kenyan context and beyond. For those inclined and persuaded by the Jihadi Salafism ideology they argued that Muslims could not be subjected to secular laws and leadership. Therefore, by relying on this discourse, marginalization could be packaged in a way that required redress and hence the entry point into radicalization. Joining the various social movements could thus be justified on this account.

At the Kenyan Coast, respondents observed that the discourses of the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) and its secessionist attempts, had at one point converged with those of groups such as the Al-Shabaab. Their point of convergence had been in the range of socio-economic grievances that they both blamed on the Kenyan state. The MRC secessionist
attempts are founded on this marginalization realities which have kept evolving as new issue areas have emerged. Fieldwork accounts indicated that some MRC members had actually joined the Al-Shabaab as a strategy to acquire military training. Furthermore, this military training in the MRC view would help to sustain their secession attempts.

The respondents in both focus group discussions and individual interviews concurred that Mombasa County in particular had continued to experience social injustices owing to years of neglect by the central government. The respondents also cited grievances such as minimal job opportunities, and neglected education sector that they claimed characterized the entire Coast region. These range of grievances were directed at the central government prior to the entry of devolved governance in 2013. A section of the respondents held the view that a Christian majority had dominated the country which had skewed economic opportunities including jobs against the Muslims and the Coastal residents.

In order to make the radicalization process more credible and appealing, respondents observed that the marginalization interpretations were crafted to adopt both regional and religious focus. The respondents in Mombasa rallied around the material evidence of the ‘up-county’ people or the ‘Wabara’ (people from up-country) who had taken on jobs and other economic opportunities from the ‘indigenous’ Coastal residents. Furthermore, a section of the respondents’ claimed that the Wabara (up-country people) were benefiting from the economic opportunities such as jobs at the expense of the Wapwani (Coastal people). The causation was attributed to poor investments historically in basic and tertiary education at the Coast. These interpretations in the section of respondents’ accounts served as an entry point for radicalizers. These marginalization realities had then increased terrorism vulnerabilities. One religious leader in Mombasa pointed out that:

“I would like to point to the broader historical questions that have contributed to radicalization. Since independence, the Coast region (Pwani) has been marginalized on a
variety of fronts. One has to do with education and how successive policies were adopted in post-independence era. It is an open secret that in our schools, that the best teachers in our region were transferred to ‘up-country’. University intake was also ‘skewed’ against the Coastal region. There have also been other discourses around the notion of belonging to the Coast...the Coastal region at least prior to the devolution process in 2013, jobs at key government entities such as the Kenya Ports Authority (KPA), Kenya Ferry Services (KFS) and other strategic places have been held by non-locals ('Wabara' in Kiswahili) and so the language of the up-country people coming to dominate the discourse.... there has been a sense of a Christian majority government dominating ... This kind of environment, then becomes an entry point for debates around marginalization, poverty, and when combined with joblessness, these become entry points for radicalization...

The above respondent quote illustrates how Al-Shabaab recruiters in Kenya have been capitalizing on real socio-economic, cultural and political exclusion experienced by the country’s Muslims to engage in radicalization. Singling out the place of economic marginalization, the lack of job opportunities and mainly for young males has been identified as a critical factor for recruitment.

A report profiling Al-Shabaab returnees in the Counties of Kwale, Kilifi and Mombasa in 2014 confirms that the majority of the former members were male. The report sampled 185 returnees out of a then estimated figure of about 700 returnees in the Coast alone (IOM, 2015) Out of the sampled returnees, 93 percent were male against 7 per cent female. The majority of the returnees were aged 18-34 and stood at 66 percent of the profiled returnees at the Coast. Moreover, 55 percent of the respondents had achieved a primary level of education, while 30 percent had secondary level education (IOM, 2015). A recent research published in 2016 citing a government amnesty program for returnees noted at least 1500 from the Coast region. Kwale County alone had estimates of 700 locals that had left to join the Al-Shabaab (CVPT, 2017).

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29 Interview with a male religious leader in Mombasa August 25, 2016.
The recruitment tactic adopted a victimization narrative directed at the Kenyan government drawing on political economy exclusion (Anderson & McKnight, 2015:543). The Kenya’s government national strategy to counter violent extremism produced in 2016 acknowledges the radicalization risks posed by poor economic prospects but is also cognisant that recruitment cuts across the economic divide (GOK, 2016). Indeed, International Organization for Migration (IOM) report profiling returnees from Al-Shabaab in Kenya’s Coastal region in late 2014 found that 33 percent of returnees were unemployed prior to their joining this radical group. The conclusion that can be drawn here is that the individuals could have joined the movement for financial reasons. The majority of the returnees were in the age-bracket of 18-34. This age bracket suggesting that individuals were joining the Al-Shabaab at their most productive years (IOM, 2015).

Analysis of interviews with security officials in Mombasa County, revealed that some of the returnees who are largely invisible have been implicated in a wave of violent robberies. In addition to their involvement in robbery, some had been responsible for planning and executing terror attacks.30 One of the enduring motivations to join the movement was based on financial calculations. Al-Shabaab for instance had been promising Kenyan recruits up to forty thousand Kenya Shillings (equivalent to US $ 402 at exchange rate of 1US $ to Ksh. 102 as at January 2018.31 This is a considerable amount monthly in a context where salaries can be as a low as ten thousand Kenyan Shillings (Amble & Hitchens, 2014). Notwithstanding the political exclusion argument that found consensus with a majority of respondents in Mombasa, the minority chose to differ with this overriding perspective on grievances. They instead observed that even individuals from privileged backgrounds were being recruited. This alternative perspective suggesting that grievances alone were sufficient

30 Interview with two senior male security officials in Mombasa, November 23, 2016.

explanations for why individuals chose to be radicalized. There were accounts of individuals that joined without any financial motivations. Ideology in this respect could have been important.

The second grievance that respondents in both focus group discussions and individual interviews linked to the individual radicalization process was the blanket condemnation of the Muslim constituency as responsible for terrorist threats in the country. Those that represented this perspective observed that radicalizers were keen to tap onto this narrative to advance their agenda.

The Kenyan state has since the 1998 US embassy bombings in Nairobi and in the post 9/11 period constructed the Muslim identity to be a source of insecurity in Kenya. Therefore, the Muslim identity has been blanketly considered to pose terrorism threats. For instance, the Moi and Kibaki regimes to a great extent securitized the Muslim identity in Kenya. This securitization would legitimize various extra-legal interventions such as arbitrary arrests, extra-ordinary renditions of terror suspects among other interventions (Prestholdt, 2011; Whitaker, 2008).

Furthermore, a section of respondents in both Nairobi and Mombasa argued that this had created anti-government feelings by a section of Muslims who consider their securitization discriminatory. They regularly spoke about it. These feelings of marginalization of the Muslim constituency in Kenya was then interpreted and packaged as a radicalization narrative. These localized claims of various forms of harassment of the Muslim constituency in the respondents’ perspective were linked to the larger discourses of human suffering of the global Islamic community or the Ummah. Multiple respondents in both Nairobi and Mombasa opined that radicalizers were connecting perceived sufferings of

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32 A recurring theme expressed by community leaders in Mombasa and Nairobi Counties in 2016 and 2017.
Muslims in far and closer places such as Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Somalia and thus a call for violence to restore the status quo.

One of the interviewee, who is a civil society official engaged in counter-radicalization in Mombasa said that, “There is also a feeling of harassment especially of those with a Muslim identity by the state, and hence sometimes the feeling of revenge within the community... this is a factor leading to youth radicalization.” In addition to expressed discrimination of a Muslim identity, the question of identity and belonging to the Kenyan nation especially at the Coast has been a source of contention and was deemed to provide links to radicalization. In Likoni, Mombasa, the presence of members of the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC) brought on board further radicalization dynamics. The MRC goal is to secede from the republic of Kenya. It advances this perspective using realities of post-independence governments socio-economic neglect. This has resulted in their rallying call for *Pwani si Kenya* (Kiswahili for the Coast is not Kenya) (Willis & Gona, 2012). This desire for self-determination was being interpreted as a response to real or perceived marginalization by the Kenyan state. A section of respondents argued that some MRC members had joined the Al-Shabaab for one compelling reason. This is because joining Al-Shabaab would be advantageous for arms training for their Coastal secessionist attempts. There are possibilities that their shared sentiments of marginalization could lead to the convergence of MRC and Islamist radicalization pursued by groups such as Al-Shabaab (Mkutu, Marani, Ruteere, 2014:45; Mkutu, Wandera & Opondo, 2017).

Drawing on field findings in Mombasa, there existed competing accounts of the links between the Al-Shabaab and the MRC. However, in some of the focus group discussions and key informant interviews, the links between the two organizations remained disputed. For

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33 Interview with a civil society official, male, in Mombasa, August 10, 2016.
example, an interviewed senior government administrator in Mombasa refuted claims of linkages between the MRC and the Al-Shabaab.

In any case, while the MRC discourses are centered on historical grievances against the state, their goals differ with those of the Al-Shabaab. The MRC’s goal is secession of the Kenyan Coast citing successive socio-economic neglect by post-independence governments. Whereas the MRC could be read as a political movement operating at the Coast region and seeking self-determination, Al-Shabaab has a regional agenda of establishing an Islamic caliphate in the East African region. Whereas security officials interviewed in Mombasa dismissed the MRC- Al-Shabaab link, some studies have linked the two groups. Research in Kwale, suggests that some members of the MRC were simultaneously members of the Al-Shabaab. Additionally, as part of this connection, some MRC members have sheltered returnees from Al-Shabaab training camps in Somalia (Mkutu, Wandera & Opondo, 2017).

4.2.4 Belonging and Citizenship Dilemmas

A section of respondents also expressed grievances that related the questions of belonging and citizenship to radicalization. In situating this grievance, respondents in focus group discussions and individual interviews in both Nairobi and Mombasa expressed difficulties in acquiring state identification documents such as identity cards and passports, which confer citizenship.

The reference to belonging and citizenship dilemmas’ can be contextualized through two processes in history. These processes relate to the legacies of colonial agency in reference to nation-state formation and the attendant globalization processes. These processes are relevant in the realm of identity politics that situate past and ongoing security discourses within and beyond states. On one hand, the colonial legacies reinforced identity politics and most notably ethnicity and belonging. The results of colonial legacy in contexts such as Kenya was to then make possible categories of who belongs (native) and the settler (migrant).
Documents such as identity cards fit into this ongoing discourse. It is through this categorization that identity, belonging and access to resources and power are constantly being shaped (Kagwanja, 2003).

The second process is that of globalization and in particular its economic aspect. The effects of economic globalization have been to weaken the state to the extent that it can no longer provide social services such as health and education. The state’s weakness has then led to the rise of localized claims of identity, resources and citizenship. The implication of this has been the rise of sub-national identities drawing on language, religion and which in turn compete for power. It is these discourses of identity, religion, belonging that are being framed to exclude others from power, resources, but also to frame violence (Kagwanja, 2003).

Frustrations and failures to access identity documents was then interpreted to be a form of discrimination. This discrimination was read from both ethnic and religious lenses. An identity card or a passport not only confers citizenship but also offers access to key services such as jobs and education enrolment. Therefore, the lack of identity documents opened up police harassment.

In government securitized neighbourhoods such as Eastleigh on the outskirts of Nairobi, the lack of an identity card creates opportunities of bribery and extortion by security agencies. For the Kenyan-Somali residents, they historically have had difficulties accessing identity cards. Even when possible they continued to be treated as ‘suspect’ communities. This is so because terrorism was being treated as an existential threat. The respondents interpreted these difficulties as part of prevalent state securitization of Somali identity as risk factors of insecurity. They have been constantly blamed for various risks ranging from terrorism to small arms proliferation. This securitization is made more visible in the age of ‘counter-terrorism’.
Notwithstanding the difficulties of accessing these identification documents, these documents even when acquired were still treated in a suspect manner as non-Kenyans could still acquire the documents through corruption (Balakian, 2016; Gluck, 2017). Even when it had become possible to acquire these documents, Kenyans of a Muslim identity had to undergo extra-ordinary vetting. Respondents argued that it was the Muslim identity mainly that was the target of this discrimination. Radicalization had found a footprint through specific actions of Muslim identity discrimination such as difficulties in accessing identification documents. Muslim human rights organizations have been vocal advocates against these claims of discrimination. A civil society official based in Mombasa recounted as follows on the same:

“The youth are finding it difficult to process their identity cards and passports which would open up economic opportunities such as jobs. There is a feeling of discrimination and the lack of a ‘Kenyan’ identity which is linked to state authorities.... What can happen in an instance where one cannot access these documents and yet in Al-Shabaab you do not need any of these documents? There are claims that one will get paid for joining Al-Shabaab... and so one could be lured to join.” 34

This is a perspective that was similarly shared by respondents in Eastleigh and Majengo areas of Nairobi. Eastleigh, located a few kilometres east of Nairobi has a significant Somali population that is predominantly Muslim (Balakian, 2016; Gluck, 2017). Similarly, Majengo area of Nairobi, which is adjacent to Eastleigh, has a significant Muslim identity too. Multiple communities reside there as well. Majengo in Nairobi is a poor urban neighbourhood and, in addition to its securitization as radicalization hotspot, has been associated with commercial sex work spanning almost a century. Furthermore, Majengo has experienced a radical police presence due to its securitization as a radicalization hotspot.

34 Interview with a male civil society official, in Mombasa, August 10, 2016.
The findings from the focus group discussions and in-depth interviews interpreted regular police patrols and operations. The effect of this was that Majengo youth became vulnerable to police arrests on suspicions of terrorism support. They also claimed enforced disappearances. In characterizing the enforced disappearances, they used a Kiswahili word ‘Kupotezwa’ to reference these disappearances. It was these kinds of ‘enforced disappearances’ that served to weaken the police-community trust.\footnote{This point was additionally reinforced by a Majengo resident in Nairobi in an informal conversation, December 15, 2017.}

A section of the respondents in the focus group discussions and individual interviews in Eastleigh and Majengo were critical of the government counter-terrorism responses. In their analysis, government counter-terrorism responses were more pronounced in terms of human rights violations than in actual pre-emption of terror threats. In addition, they considered it alienating that counter-terrorism in Kenya had assumed a narrow ethnic and religious profiling. A Majengo resident in Nairobi observed that the government was missing the point in their profiling of the Somalis and the peoples of Coastal origin as responsible for terror threats. However, this respondent noted that the threat of radicalization was not the preserve of any singular group or identity because recruiters were targeting other communities such as the Kikuyus, Merus and Luhyas among others.\footnote{Interview with a female respondent in Nairobi’s Majengo area, June, 9, 2016.}

The criminalization and the subsequent securitization of the Somali identity is not new but has been ongoing since independence. It fits in part with the localization of citizenship that is influenced by globalization discourses based on the rise of identity politics. Identity politics categories individuals and groups through exclusion from power and resources. This discourse then makes certain identities to be ‘migrants’ who do not belong and hence making possible their marginalization (Kagwanja,2003). Governmental
securitization and citizens subjectivities have rendered this possible in Kenya on the Somali question. However, it is the securitization concerns that have shifted over time.

Following the end of the *Shifta war*\(^{37}\) in late 1967, the Somali identity continued to be referenced as a security threat. In the 1980s, this identity was further associated with for poaching and illicit goods (Whittaker, 2012; Lochery, 2012). However, in the 1990s the focus shifted to small arms and light weapons proliferation. In the late 1990s to the present, the Somali identity has been framed as posing terrorist threats (Lochery, 2012, Murunga, 2005; Jaji, 2013). Opinion was mixed in the field as to the agency of individuals likely to be radical. The findings indicate that the Somalis and Muslims were being used as scape goats for the problem, arguing that no singular community was immune to this threat.

Moreover, a respondent working with an international human rights advocacy organization argued that this apparent treatment of the Somali identity as a ‘suspect community’ had entrenched a feeling of the community as second-class citizens. This further pushed up the marginalization narratives which were being relied upon to radicalize\(^{38}\). This extra-vetting activity when applying for government documents is however not unique to Kenyans of a Muslim identity. It is a routine practise along border communities. What has heightened the Muslim constituency extra vetting has been the ongoing construction by state officials of Muslims as posing security threats largely centred around terrorism. This securitization of the Muslim identity in Kenya by government officials has been more prominent post 9/11 (Prestholdt, 2011). The tensions between the Muslim Coast and the Central government have a long history since Kenya’s independence in 1963 owing to marginalization complaints (Kresse, 2009: S78; Berman, 2017).

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37 The *Shifta War* was a secessionist attempt waged by Kenyan Somalis of the then Northern Frontier District and the Kenyan state. It was fought between 1963-1967.

38 Interview with an official of an international human rights advocacy organization in Nairobi, February 2, 2017.
This feeling of successive marginalization by the central government from independence till the onset of the decentralized governments in 2013 is part of the narrative that the recruiters were using especially in luring Somali youth to join the movement.\textsuperscript{39} There is an interesting dynamic of increased involvement of Somali politicians in national politics and state jobs since the 1980s. This representation however remains at the elite level and such a growing youth bulge combined with economic marginalization continued to sustain the marginalization narrative (DDG, 2014). However, devolution has yet to upset the marginalization narratives, with occasional claims that the central government had been frustrating devolution. One of the often-cited frustrations was the delayed disbursement of funds from the national government to the devolved governments. Data from field interviews claimed that the devolution process was yet to upset the marginalization narrative given that only 15\% of the national revenues were heading to the 47 Counties. Out of these disbursements, about half of the devolved funds had been going to the recurrent expenditure and thus impacting negatively on the development expenditure. There are also fears that devolution is creating patronage at the local levels. This is reflective of previous centralized practices of patronage of national governments prior to the devolution process (Kanyinga, 2016). It was on some of these premises that the marginalization narrative had persisted.

Researchers studying other social movements as the PKK (Kurdistan Workers’ Party) that mainly operates in Turkey have arrived at similar conclusions on the place of belonging, injustices and inequalities. These themes were being used by the movement to recruit into the movement (Ozeren et al. 2014:322).

\textbf{4.2.5 Friendships and Social Networks}

Following analysis of field findings in Mombasa and Nairobi, friendship and social networks were identified as radicalization variables. Respondents in both focus group

\textsuperscript{39} Focus group discussions in Nairobi and Mombasa in June and August, 2016 respectively.
discussions and individual interviews considered friendships to be influential in joining groups such as Al-Shabaab. A senior police officer averred in Mombasa that, “Radicalization is also proceeding on account of peer pressure or association with friends. The youth could be joining because their friends have also joined the movement.”

As the above respondent stated, the linkage between friendships and radicalization was on the grounds of peer pressure. Friendships and other social networks were interpreted by respondents as important mediators in the radicalization process for several reasons. One is that they offered a group think mentality which made the process not only appealing but also justifiable. Recruitment networks were additionally helping to profile potential recruits as they understood their prevailing circumstances and backgrounds. Furthermore, friendships and social networks even in cases where misleading information had been produced as a basis of recruitment would often pass on the basis of trust. Therefore, radicalization trends as discussed elsewhere in this chapter has pointed to recruitment tactics such as fake employment offers abroad. Hence, these kinds of tactics would easily work across social networks as opposed to complete interactions with strangers. In multiple fieldwork accounts, respondents were clear that in a majority of cases that recruitment was a targeted process and, in this case, navigating through friendships was easier.

Even though this perspective remained contested, popular community hangout spaces, which in Mombasa are known as Maskanis and in Eastleigh and Majengo as ‘bases’, were deemed influential in the radicalization process. Maskanis were considered as spaces where friends sat to have social conversations in particular neighbourhoods. Besides, some respondents in both Mombasa and Nairobi observed that these spaces also became avenues where the radicalization process could be initiated. Maskanis in Kenya and Tanzania have come to be associated with a dual nature. They are social spaces on one hand where social

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40 Interview with a male senior police officer in Likoni, Mombasa, November 24, 2016.
and political issues were discussed in peer groups. On the other hand, they could also be spaces for drug use and gang interaction in selected Kenyan and Tanzanian contexts (Search for Common Ground, 2017).

In addition to Maskanis, a curious perspective was shared by a police officer in Mombasa in the course of fieldwork. His perspective went ahead to amplify the role that family members were playing in recruitment process. Family members were being coerced to send their members to the Al-Shabaab or they would face unspecified consequences. He argues further that, “Radicalization is also proceeding on the basis of intimidation. Across Likoni and Kwale, some families have been intimidated to give a member of the family to enlist in the group (Al-Shabaab). If they don’t then, they are warned that they shall face unknown consequences.”41

Youth respondents in Majengo Nairobi whose friends had enlisted in Al-Shabaab shared encounters of receiving phone calls or text messages urging them to similarly enlist. One woman recounted how phone calls from Somalia from a friend had become persistent to the point that she asked her friend never to call again. This lady respondent explained that she cut off communication to avoid landing into trouble in case her communication was being tracked by Kenyan security officials. This in her view would be interpreted as being sympathetic with the Al-Shabaab.

Moreover, friendship has been considered a key coping mechanism when individuals have joined terror networks. This friendship provides solidarity often serving to create an in-group mentality that is tapped to justify their behaviour. This social solidarity is often used to justify violence against the so-called non-believers for the sake of the friendship. There is thus a bond of solidarity created within the group and which justifies violence. This violence

41 Interview with a male senior police officer in Mombasa Island, November 24, 2016.
mobilization is used to protect the in-group and other suffering ‘brothers and sisters’ elsewhere (de Bie, 2016:32-33). Furthermore, this social solidarity is particularly appealing to individuals who have previously been in environments deficient of solidarity and attachments (de Bie, 2016:32). Therefore, several fieldwork accounts emphasized how the radicalization processes in Kenya have been mediated by friendship. These accounts spoke to a need for social solidarity that reinforced a religion (Islam) under siege and which required defence from its apparent assault. It was the power of group think that then made it possible for individuals to take a collective decision to join a specific group such as Al-Shabaab.

The findings of the multiple interviews with police officers, religious leaders, youth, civil society officials, including individuals that had relatives within Al-Shabaab pointed out to the role of peer networks in pushing individuals to join the terror network. Botha’s (2014) research on individuals who had joined the Al-Shabaab in Kenya additionally validates that friends’ involvement in the group had been a key motivating factor to join. Additionally, a quantitative study by Rink and Sharma (2016), conducted in Nairobi’s Eastleigh area on the broad theme of radicalization confirmed that exposure to radical networks and through peer networks remained a principal predictor of religious radicalization. These ideas were being pushed in particular religious institutions and cafes (Rink & Sharma, 2016:10-11).

4.2.6 The Internet/Social Media as a Radicalization Variable

Data from the focus group discussions and individual interviews in Mombasa and Nairobi observed that due to the rapid uptake of technology, the internet and by extension social networking sites are critical mediators in the radicalization process. Cited social media spaces included Facebook, WhatsApp, and Telegram. There is also an additional category of open online spaces through the worldwide web. Online platforms offer anonymity in certain instances while offering non-personalized routes to the process. This proceeded by way of displaying various materials ranging from online speeches to published materials that could
motivate an individual to join the radical groups. The use of the internet however was part of the mediating process that would then culminate with human contact.

However, terrorist networks have been using the internet for a range of purposes. These purposes have ranged from propaganda to radicalization and recruitment. For instance, during the 2013 Westgate attack in Nairobi, Kenya, Al-Shabaab in a series of live tweets sought to create both fear and control information on the attack (Mair, 2016). For example, this is the case of the late American Tweeting Shabaab member Omar Hammami who was adept at using social media and videos communicated through tweets to highlight the virtues of engaging in violent Jihad. Omar’s messaging was also intended for westerners to join in the movement (Mair 2016; Mastors & Siers, 2014).

Therefore, it can be argued that the radicalization process is further aided by the environment and support structures such as the internet and social media. In this case, the internet is considered to be a pathway to radicalization. However, the challenges with the present analysis has been scholars’ concerns with analysis of online content and messages rather than understanding how individuals use the internet as they get radicalized (Edward & Gribbon, 2013). Part of the challenge in isolating the online radicalization path for individuals is the difficulty of accessing terrorists and extremist individuals through online spaces. Therefore, connecting the dots of online radicalization is then left to a reliance of mainly secondary sources. Notwithstanding these challenges, the internet space owing in part to a degree of anonymity has shifted the activities of terrorists and extremists from public spaces. This shift to online platforms is shaped by the rapid expansion of digital platforms. The rapid expansion of the digital space often becomes a source of concern to terrorism analysts and policy makers as they seek to appreciate how the next generation of terrorists are likely to radicalize (Edward & Gribbon, 2013).
The use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and WhatsApp have created personalized and mobile platforms that are particularly appealing to isolated individuals. However, these social media platforms when combined with web technologies are intended to portray an image of Islam that is under threat globally. This framing bringing into focus why for instance individuals would take up heroic jihad (Hafez & Mullins, 2015).

An empirical study conducted in the Netherlands using police files of 209 individuals that had joined 14 different jihadist networks including additional key informant interviews such as individuals in the police and judiciary speaks to the contribution of online platforms. This study points to the shifting presence of radical materials from a physical space to a virtual space marked by radical websites, social media and You-Tube channels. These materials are targeted at new entrants into militant organizations. These platforms would be adaptable by way of translating ideological materials from Arabic to Dutch for those not familiar with Arabic. These informational exchanges would in particular instances take the form of online chats such as the use of Skype and other online audio-based channels taking on individual and group formats. The chats and the ideological material being disseminated and its accompanying interpretation follows a Salafi- Jihadist doctrine (de Bie, 2016:28). The Salafi-Jihadist doctrine calls for a purification of Islam through a return to the practices during the time and shortly after the time of Prophet Muhammed. This doctrine justifies violence to reach this goal (de Bie, 2016:26).

The following account of an interviewed senior police officer in Mombasa with experience in counter-terrorism is illustrative of the increasing role that online platforms are playing in the radicalization process in Kenya:

“There are several factors that are contributing to youth radicalization... this includes social media (Facebook, internet spaces) where radicalizing materials are placed... the social media
is therefore also responsible for youth radicalization... there is need for tighter control of social media to reduce on this threat...”

Notwithstanding, the rise of virtual arenas as contributing to the radicalization processes, they do not on the overall substitute personal meetings where radicalization is deepened (Hafez & Mullins, 2015).

The findings of both the focus group discussions and individual interviews in the two sites (Mombasa and Nairobi) held the view that while virtual areas were part of the process, subsequent human interactions were important to complete the process.

4.2.7 Tough State Counter-terrorism Responses

Findings from the field indicated how repressive state actions had influenced the radicalization process. Furthermore, the respondents considered that state counter-terrorism responses had aroused grievances that were now being utilized by radicalizing networks. Hence, working within the social movement perspectives, recruitment networks capitalized on repression as form of contention to mobilize collective action directed at the state. Therefore, social movement research has established that repression may lead to the rise of militant actions as it rallies collective action to mobilize violence (Beck, 2008).

Kenya’s government counter-terrorism responses have principally been anchored on hard-power approaches. These have involved arrests and among others policing and surveillance work for areas considered terror hotspots. In the process of policing terrorism, a section of respondents argued that security agencies and mostly the police had resulted into arbitrary arrests including the profiling of certain identities in Kenya such as the Somali and the Coastal peoples (Balakian, 2016). The state counter-terrorism actions have created ‘suspect’ communities which continue to evoke feelings of blanket victimization. It is this perceived assault on the Muslim identity that had provided a radicalizing narrative that also

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42 Interview with a male senior police officer in Mombasa, November 23, 2016.
linked the global discourses about Muslim marginalization and mistreatment. This then provided an impetus to join a radical group with the aim of ‘revenge’ but also to defend a global faith considered to be under threat.

The 2014 security operation termed as ‘Operation Usalama Watch’ which was meant to pre-empt terror threats in the earlier wake of the September 2013 Westgate attack blamed on the Al-Shabaab. This particular security swoop in 2014 provoked widespread condemnation from the Muslim community. This condemnation was largely directed at the Kenya’s Anti-Terrorism Police Unit (ATPU), the specialized police unit in charge of counter-terrorism. This swoop involved a series of raids by the ATPU in local residences and religious institutions in Eastleigh and adjacent neighbourhoods such as South C within the capital Nairobi. These counter-terrorism measures were perceived as a form of collective punishment for Somali Muslims (Balakian, 2016). The indiscriminate arrests had created feelings of political marginalization which had provided an entry point for religious radicalization (Rink & Sharma, 2016:4). Moreover, the anti-terror operations that targeted Muslim neighbourhoods (both business premises and residential areas) reinforced the view that the state was initiating a crackdown on Muslims (Howell & Lind, 2009:138; Balakian, 2016; Gluck, 2017).

There also existed claims across the two research locations of Mombasa and Nairobi of extra-judicial killings and disappearances of mainly youth and which were blamed on Kenya’s anti-terror police unit -the ATPU. These claims however cannot be verified. A section of the respondents claimed that these human rights violations had further served to create alienation between the government and communities. The claims of extra-legal interventions were termed by respondents as counter-productive to the state. Furthermore, a section of the respondents in both Mombasa and Nairobi argued that the state responses had fed into the narratives of the terrorist recruiters. Some of the respondents asserted that some
of these actions seen as directed against the Muslim identity were further opening up opportunities for radicalization and revenge. These perspectives are validated by a set of empirical work conducted in Nairobi and Mombasa (Mkutu, Marani & Ruteere, 2014; Mkutu, Wandera & Opondo, 2017).

Governmental responses in counter-terrorism in other contexts such as the Netherlands have similarly influenced the radicalization processes that may have led to violent extremism. State responses such as the arrest and profiling of terror suspects do project an increased importance by raising their status in Jihadist networks. This elevation of status can encourage them to take up violent extremism (de Bie, 2016:32-33). Counter-terrorism approaches reliant on arbitrary arrests and torture for instance can produce a sense of humiliation in individuals. This can then create an enabling environment for terrorist recruitment (Ozeren et al. 2014: 326). Additionally, governmental responses that combine torture, arbitrary arrest and imprisonment go on to hamper counter-terrorism efforts. They do so as they alienate the same communities that could avail intelligence to security agencies (Piazza, 2010:51).

### 4.2.8 The Role of Weak Governance as an Indirect Variable

A section of study respondents noted that the Kenyan state’s weak governance mechanisms had also aided the radicalization process in an indirect manner. The respondents in both the focus group discussions and individual interviews in Nairobi and Mombasa referenced a continuum of governance issues. These ranged from deficiencies in the criminal justice system, poor border controls, including corruption in the border lands and mainly in north eastern Kenya. Regarding the deficiencies in the criminal justice system, some respondents argued that the process was open to corruption allowing terror suspects to walk free. However, a section of respondents argued that even though the research could not independently verify this claim that terror networks could comprise the criminal justice
system through bribing state officials. This is a perspective documented by researchers such as Patterson (2015) writing in the context of Islamic radicalization in Kenya. Also, poor manning of Kenya’s porous borders and the perception that police could easily be bribed to allow terror suspects to move could easily aid the process. A police officer based in Nairobi and experienced in policing terrorism including in the north-east of Kenya argued that the vulnerabilities for police to take bribes was pushed largely to plug financial gaps created by what was termed as poor pay. He recounted as follows on how corruption could be aiding the radicalization process and which could lead to committing of terror acts:

“Porous borders are a challenge in the north east of Kenya and therefore difficult to police who gets in and out of the country. This is again compromised by corruption within the security agencies. Security officers, especially the police in the border/hardship areas, are easily compromised by way of bribes... I would put blame on the overall remuneration of police officers that is inadequate... The police could be tempted to take up bribes and allow suspicious fellows to cross over check points...”

The above interviewed officer additionally observed that the claimed complicity of the police to take bribes had led to the military taking over the manning of roadblocks mostly in the north-eastern part of Kenya. In his interpretation, the military was deemed more professional and patriotic and hence their co-option into internal policing.

Al-Shabaab members are said to cross the Kenya-Somalia border for bribes of less than 200 US dollars (Cannon & Pkalya, 2017:10). Bribery then becomes a strategy for Al-Shabaab members to navigate their exit and entry. This then enables the planning and execution of the terrorist attacks in the country.

While it remains problematic by all accounts to adequately police the Kenya-Somalia border, weak governance is clearly a factor in aiding the radicalization process. The above

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43 Interview with a male police officer in Nairobi, November 09, 2016.
excerpt speaks to complicity of security agencies in aggravating the web of insecurity in the country. In addition to claims of security agencies taking bribes, an additional perspective that was raised in the course of the fieldwork for this study was the illegal facilitation of identification documents such as passports and Kenyan identity cards to non-nationals. It is some of these practices that assist the radical groups to operate with ease in the Kenyan territory with their possibilities of mobilizing violence. State officials were thus contributing to weak governance, which in turn was complicating state security.

4.2.9 Poor Parenting as an Influence in the Radicalization ProcessIn particular, poor parenting in aiding the process of radicalization has been a recurring theme during the fieldwork in Nairobi and Mombasa. Some of the respondents’ pointed that a section of parents had failed to provide proper guidance for their young children/youth or were in some instances largely absent from their children’s lives. This gap they argued that it was mostly filled by friends or religious institutions. Furthermore, a study conducted in Eastleigh, Nairobi on religious radicalization has similarly argued that this parental absence attributed to working of multiple jobs could predispose young people from taking up violent extremist causes as they seek to find their purpose and stability in life (Rink & Sharma, 2016:12). In addition, fieldwork accounts also highlighted that individuals from single parents and those from broken homes were susceptible to radicalization. This was often referenced on lack of role modelling at home. As this security official in Mombasa observed: “… Youth radicalization can be attributed to the question of single parents. Some of these parents are neglecting their parental responsibilities and therefore youth are finding other ‘role models’ that could include radicalizers.”

44 Key informant Interview with a male security official, Mombasa, November 24, 2016.
The above table summarizes the perspectives that security officials hold around some of the predisposing dynamics believed to lead to youth radicalization. Factors such as poverty/socio-economic marginalization, poor parenting and the influence of radical preachers have been cited as reasons aiding the process of youth recruitment into violent extremism.

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45 Interview with a female police officer in Nairobi, November 22, 2016.

46 Interview with a male police officer in Likoni, Mombasa, November 24, 2016.

47 Interview with a male senior police officer in Likoni, November 24, 2016.
4.3 Recruitment Trends in the Kenyan Context

This section of the chapter analyzes the various trends/patterns that had accompanied the radicalization process in Kenya. Specific attention is focused on selected locations in Mombasa and Nairobi.

There exist several studies that have been concerned with an examination of Al-Shabaab recruitment patterns in the Kenyan context (Anderson & McKnight, 2015; Amble & Hitchens, 2014). However, three main arguments/patterns are easily identifiable. One was the existing perceptions among radicalized populations in Eastern Africa was that Islam was under threat. There thus existed perceptions in the Kenyan socio-political space about how state security agencies had engaged in discriminatory practices against the Somalis and Muslim in particular (Anderson & McKnight, 2015).

Second, even though contested as to their causalities, the issues of education, wealth and levels of integration have been linked to the levels of radicalization and the uptake of global Jihad. The debate often being whether it is poverty or wealth that predisposes individuals to radicalize or whether global Jihad is more appealing to uneducated individuals or the educated elite. The overarching evidence in the Kenyan context often pointing out that Muslims in particular are more likely to radicalize on account of their exclusion by host societies (Anderson & McKnight, 2015). Prestholdt (2011) indeed affirms that Kenyan authorities have continued to frame the terrorism threat as emanating from a Muslim minority in the country. However, this apparent securitization of the Muslim community has previously been reinforced by American officials who have proffered links between dissatisfied and marginalized Muslim populations in the Kenyan Coast to terrorism (Bradbury & Kleinman, 2010). This is perspective supported by Kenyan researchers on the Coast (Mkutu, Marani & Ruteere, 2014). Furthermore, Botha (2014) in her extensive study of
Islamist radicalization in Kenya has argued that state counter-terrorism responses seen as targeting a Muslim identity could also be an explanatory factor for individuals to join the Al-Shabaab in Kenya.

Third, and in amplifying the second argument, recruitment into extremist groups is also linked to socio-economic factors and which is mainly on ‘victimization narratives’ in both Somalia and Kenya. The Al-Shabaab often relying on this narrative in Somalia to make a case for the ‘foreign’ invader and hence persuasion for recruitment. In the Kenyan context, the recruiters capitalized on the socio-cultural and political exclusions of Muslims, including the Somali population. The Kenyan Somali population in particular often express their frustrations around unemployment and their near absence in Kenya’s political economy. The disenfranchised male youth can easily become a target for Al-Shabaab. For instance, in Kenyan towns close to the Somalia border, high levels of extreme deprivation make recruitment possible (Anderson & McKnight, 2015). The recruitment in these border lands of largely refugee populations is linked to provision of social goods and protection. Furthermore, individuals in these border lands could be lured to join Al-Shabaab for a pay range of between US$ 60 and US$ 200 per month. Hence, these payments come in handy in providing financial support for their relatives elsewhere (Anderson & McKnight, 2015).

4.4 The Causal Linkages Between Terrorism and Poverty

A recurring trend that was referenced by respondents in both focus group discussions and individual interviews in Mombasa and Nairobi was the place of poverty in the whole radicalization process. In other words, respondents debated whether the poverty prevalence had influenced in any way the uptake of radicalization in search for material gains.

Furthermore, there is yet to be conclusive evidence in the literature on the linkages between poverty and terrorism broadly. Notwithstanding this lack of empirical linkages,
voices from the field continued to suggest linkages between poverty and radicalization. There is yet to be consensus within terrorism studies as regards the linkages between economics (for instance, poverty and unemployment) and radicalization (Piazza, 2006; 2011). The linkages are contested on account that individuals from privileged backgrounds have been radicalized. This is however a contextual perspective that would require more empirical evidence to sustain. Analysis from countries such as Somalia, Mali, Syria, Pakistan, shows that recruitment networks have tapped on impoverished communities. This tactic of gaining support has worked through scholarships provisions and other social welfare needs to impoverished individuals. Whereas relative deprivation is often cited as a push factor for radicalization, it is not always the case that these circumstances can transform an individual into a terrorist (Mirahmadi, 2016).

While there is yet to be absolute links between poverty and radicalization, field findings show that radicalization networks have in the past recruited among individuals holding low wage jobs and the unemployed. These included private security guards, bus conductors, construction workers, casual labourers, handcart pushers among others. A local administrator based in Mombasa County remarked that:

“The process of identifying potential recruits keeps evolving. Initially, it used to be the wretched of the earth that used to be targeted by recruiters. For instance, toilet diggers, and those really at the margins of society and who were suffering from poor economic outcomes. Money provided to such individuals can be used as a bait for recruitment…”48.

The motivation to join for the aforementioned individuals being to improve on their economic prospects. The recruiters have been said to lure individuals with financial

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48 Key Informant interview with a male local administrator in Mombasa, November 24, 2016
incentives that can even range to US $ 1000 per month. Those often on the radicalization path are often sent money as a demonstration that indeed the promises can be kept.49

The following is an interview extract from a senior official of Supreme Council of Kenya Muslims (SUPKEM) conducted on the place of poverty and socio-economic marginalization in luring the individuals to join terrorist organizations. It corresponds with some of the perspectives raised by security officials interviewed in this study. As he noted:

“Radicalization is also occurring on the basis of people looking for job opportunities-desperate Kenyans are easily lured into the trap of the extremists. They are given some money during their entry only to realize that was the last money they received, they believe that the money could be flowing, but then it is too late.”50

The above perspective notwithstanding, radicalization does not only proceed on the basis of economics. Being income insecure is insufficient to explain the whole process. Fieldwork discussions indicated that even financially stable individuals were also being recruited. The inferences to be drawn from this perspective meaning that the economic logic of recruitment was not constant in the radicalization process. A survey conducted by the IOM and the Ministry of Interior in 2015 using a sample of 190 returnees at the Coast established that thirty three percent had been unemployed at the time of joining the Al-Shabaab. This finding was indicative that unemployment could have been an influencing factor (IOM/GOK, 2015). One of the respondents noted, “There is also a puzzle to this whole thing…. While poverty is sometimes considered to be a key radicalization factor, there are also youth from well off families that are joining the radical groups…” 51

49 Key Informant interview with a male local administrator, in Mombasa, November 24, 2016.
50 Interview with a senior SUPKEM official in Nairobi, December 16, 2016
51 Interview with a male senior police officer in Likoni, Mombasa, November 24, 2016.
Therefore, opinion on the linkages between poverty and radicalization continue to be mixed and contested in similar contexts. Research in Nigeria touching on the Boko Haram has shown that poverty and marginalization thesis to be insufficiently linked. Instead, it is the Salafi Jihadist ideology with its aspiration for a puritanical Islamic state that has been more influential (Kassim, 2015:191). This does not however discount the nexus between poverty and radicalization (Piazza, 2006).

4.5 The Gendered Patterns of the Radicalization Process

While fieldwork accounts indicate that the majority of the youth getting radicalized are male, there are also cases of young females joining radical social movements in Kenya. The recent case of September 11 2016 where three young women attacked Mombasa Central Police Station is illustrative. Interviews conducted with security officials in Mombasa in November 2016 pointed out that the three women who were all killed in the raid had shortly arrived in Mombasa from Somalia to execute this attack. Interviews with police in Nairobi additionally confirmed that female recruits were joining to undertake a variety of functions within the movement. Some were ready to become ‘jihad brides’ (wives of combatants) but also to take up roles in execution of terror attacks. Young women, especially those that chose to be Jihad brides, were doing it on the basis of solidarity and wanting to be supportive of the larger cause of the movement.52

In Mombasa, the findings pointed to gendered dynamics in the radicalization process. Respondents accounts claimed the existence of a trafficking ring luring women into the Al-Shabaab mainly in the Kenyan Coast. This trafficking ring was additionally claimed to be aided by corrupt security officials. They aided through allowing cross-border migrations between Kenya and Somalia.

52 Interview with a senior police officer in Nairobi, February 2, 2017.
The recruitment dynamics had been at two levels. A respondent mentioned that women were joining the movement alongside their spouses voluntarily. This aforementioned perspective speaks to the value of social networks in the radicalization dynamics. Data from interviews claimed that women had also been joining their husbands on the basis of solidarity and wanting to associate with the goals of the movement.

Relationships thus had significant influences in radicalization uptake. Once in the movement, women took on multiple roles. One was in the logistics of the movement such as facilitating arms shipment and movements. Two, they serviced weapons, three among other roles recruited new members. They had occasional roles of carrying out intelligence due to their invisibility, including performing domestic roles such as cooking and nursing wounded fighters.53

Secondly, field data indicated that women too were being trafficked against their will. This tactic was premised on the lure of job opportunities mainly in the Middle East. This was more pronounced in Mombasa. Once the women had accepted the job offers aided by prospects of better income, they were then drugged only to find themselves in Somalia. Once in Somalia, the trafficked women took on several roles such as sex slaves54 or domestic servants for the combatants. There are claims as of June 2017, at least 200 women mainly from Mombasa have sneaked back from Somalia. Their intentions are not fully known. Some are said to have deserted the movement after becoming disillusioned. The deserters had to be extra cautious for fear of reprisals from active terror cells. Some are thought to have come back to recruit fellow women.

53 Interview with a female project officer of an NGO working in Eastern and Southern Africa, Nairobi, June 23, 2017.

54 This has been the Subject of a BBC Documentary released in May 2017 and available on You Tube: Our World: Sex Slaves of Al-Shabaab. The documentary profiles several women returnees. A section of security officials in Mombasa have claimed that the story was a fabrication.
A sketchy account was raised of the links between juvenile gangs currently operating in parts of Mombasa and some of the women that had crossed over to Somalia and back. Government officials were complicit in their movements through corruption. Some of the women that have left for Somalia are said to be the mothers of the boys joining juvenile gangs in Mombasa. A security official in Mombasa observed that if the juvenile gangs menace was not addressed, it would likely form a potential pool of future recruits. Similarly, in Nairobi, women had been targeted for recruitment in both Majengo and Eastleigh in Nairobi. While some were being falsely recruited to work in the Middle East, the destinations had been altering owing to the emergence of Islamic State (IS) recruiters. These women were not only being shipped to Somalia but also to the Middle East. Syria has since 2016 being cited as a recruitment destination according to field findings (Azmiya, 2018:153-154).

4.6 The Recruitment of ‘Professionals’

Whereas the literature and the fieldwork has pointed to the dynamics of poverty and economic marginalization as one of the multiple entry points of radicalization into violent extremism (Piazza, 2006; Botha, 2014), privileged individuals have also been joining groups such as the Al-Shabaab and ISIS. These have included professionals such as doctors and lawyers. Thus, poverty and the attendant economic marginalization often presented as a pull factors to radicalization are not sufficient explanations for the uptake of political violence. The findings from the fieldwork observed that one of executers of the Garissa University College attack in 2015 was a Law graduate with bright career prospects. One senior government official in Mombasa noted that, “The individual profiles of individuals targeted for recruitment has also been changing. There is also an appreciation for learned fellows in

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55 Interview with a female project officer of an NGO working in Eastern and Southern Africa, Nairobi, June 23, 2017.
the Al-Shabaab. Recall the 2015 Garissa University College attack, one of the attackers was a lawyer...\textsuperscript{56}

The above quote speaks to not only a change in tactic in terms of recruitment into the movement, but it also broadens the causal factors that contribute to the multiple accounts that feed into the radicalization process. Groups such as the Al-Shabaab fall in the realm of social movements. Debates in social movements frame such groups as being bound by common aspirations and solidarities. They become movements too as they are laden with political claims and often use violence to reach their goal (Beck, 2008). Grievances are key to social movements yet they do not fully explain framing and involvement in political violence. Radicalization and recruitment are part of this puzzle (Beck, 2008). The lack of direct linkages between poverty and terrorism has been debated by scholars such as Piazza (2011). Furthermore, Piazza (2011) argues that while poverty has no direct causal linkages to terrorism, an environment characterized by high levels of economic marginalization can push individuals to radicalization with the intent to commit political violence.

Moreover, Bloom (2016) in a study examining the recruitment patterns in three terrorist organizations; Provisional Irish Republican Army (PIRA), The Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS), and Al-Qaeda provides a compelling case of their recruitment dynamics. This study also accounts as to how they can be translated to the studies of other terrorist organizations. Furthermore, Bloom (2016:2) looking at these three organizations life cycles finds that at the early stages of recruitment, they are overly concerned with the ‘manpower’ as opposed to ‘talents’. Those groups considered to be successful terrorist organizations usually go for ‘talent spotting’, that is recruiting individuals with specific expertise. Therefore, they bring on board educated and professional individuals owing in part to advances in the security environment (Bloom, 2016). PIRA had been known since the early

\textsuperscript{56} Interview with a male senior government official, in Mombasa, November 24, 2016.
1970s to recruit individual Irish Republican youth that had advanced degrees in Maths, Chemistry and Engineering. These disciplines supported the improvement and development of explosives. In contrast to groups such as the Taliban in Afghanistan where educational levels remain low, they have had difficulties recruiting specialists to their movement. Therefore, the Taliban have had to contend with a pool of unskilled and unspecialized individuals to join their ranks (Bloom, 2016).

To a limited level, Al-Qaeda affiliates have recruited from technical and engineering schools. ISIS since July 2014 has recruited specialists such as doctors, nurses, and computer scientists. This strategy of ISIS recruiting specialized manpower being to facilitate some ‘state like’ functions where they have taken on territory and where the ‘official’ state no longer controls that territory (Bloom, 2016). This phenomenon of adapting to change with an expert focus approach on recruitment as opposed to manpower focus and which is reliant on mainly disenfranchised individuals is part of responding to changes in their operating environment (Bloom, 2016). Therefore, there remains a section of terrorist organizations that have tended in Bloom’s (2016:2) words to recruit ‘under-achievers’ and who additionally have been termed as religious novices for their lack of proper grasp of religion including failures in observing religious practices. In a nutshell, terrorist organizations rely on propaganda for recruitment and they do shift their messaging based on staffing needs (Bloom, 2016).

In the Kenyan context, a section of respondents observed the involvement of professionals such as doctors, lawyers, university students joining terrorist organizations such as the Al-Shabaab and ISIS. Data on precise numbers was difficult to locate and such the study made only a reference from field anecdotes. This clearly supports the argument advanced by Bloom (2016) that terrorist organizations are also deliberate on who they recruit. Thus, skills and expertise are influential in the process.
4.7 Changing Trends/Tactics in the Recruitment Process

Data gathered from interviews in Mombasa and Nairobi, generated several trends in radicalization process. One of the trends identified was that of forced recruitment. This perspective was raised from a civil society official based in Nairobi who had interacted with a few rehabilitated former Al-Shabaab members. He came to this conclusion by way of recounting some of the experiences that were shared by former returning foreign fighters (returnees). Recruiters had in certain instances forced individuals to join the Al-Shabaab with reprisals if they did not heed into this forceful measure. In Mombasa, a grassroots community worker confirmed the interviewed civil society perspective by noting that family members could be threatened with undisclosed consequences including death, if they failed to volunteer their sons or daughters to join social movement groups such as the Al-Shabaab.

The other trend identified in the recruitment process was use of fake jobs as a disguise for the recruitment process. Respondents in both the focus group discussions and individual interviews observed that recruiters of groups such as the Al-Shabaab had been changing tactics. They had been enlisting recruits through the lure of job vacancies mainly in the Middle East. The respondents interpreted the appeal of these jobs to diminished job opportunities in the country. Terrorist groups used fake job opportunities to lure the youth in a context where formal jobs were hard to come by. Field work accounts claimed that some of the job recruitment companies facilitating the recruitment process were duly registered. This apparently was a trick to take up new recruits. Those recruited in this manner ended up either in Somalia, Libya or Syria. In addition to Al-Shabaab, the Islamic State (ISIS) has also been keen to recruit. One grassroots community-based organization official in Mombasa reported that:

“The youth are joining the movement unknowingly on the premise that they are to be offered a job, this proceeds mainly from an advertised position, where an interview is conducted and
a job is offered. A returnee mentioned this to me... he was lured into this path and it was by sheer luck that he escaped. He was to take up a job in Saudi Arabia...”57

The above account was corroborated by a senior security official interviewed in Mombasa. He said that, “There are also individuals who are recruited under the guise of jobs in say Saudi Arabia, only for one to find themselves in Somalia.”58

However, a respondent claimed the complicity of government officials especially in facilitating the movement of some of these recruits heading into places such as Somalia. Their complicity was identified at two levels. One of the accounts was the ineptitude of government officials in their work. Second, corruption had been facilitating the process. This respondent observed that:

“There is a network that is facilitating the crossing over to Somalia of individuals from Mombasa and back. There must be a group or a chain of individuals connected with the state and which is aiding the movement. How for instance are people recruited to go to work in Saudi Arabia, then they find themselves in Somalia. They are said to be crossing over to Somalia, how do they cross over without security officials detecting their movements… corruption has a hand in this. …. We have border control yes, but then one can deduce otherwise that there are serious gaps with our security.”59

A young woman resident of Majengo in Nairobi recounted her story of how she was briefly lured to join what she believed was an Al-Shabaab terror network about three years ago (2015). She was recruited on the basis of a job opening. It took her a month to realize what her real job was all about. She had been recruited as an import agent shuttling between Nairobi and a neighbouring country within the East African region. She narrated that:

57 Interview with a male civil society official in Mombasa, August 13, 2016.
58 Interview with a senior security official in Mombasa, November 24, 2016.
59 Interview with a female project officer of an NGO working in Eastern and Southern Africa, in Nairobi, June 23, 2017.
“I was doing casual jobs in my neighbourhood, when a male client I had once washed his car at a car wash where I worked stopped me in the estate and asked if I could make an appointment to see him for a job opening. We then exchanged phone numbers... I spoke to my mum about it and used her line to call. The man did not pick my call. When I eventually used my line, he picked up and we arranged to meet. He gave me some money to travel to a neighbouring country with scanty details of my responsibilities and was received in a lavish gated community... I stayed in this lavish neighbourhood where my movements were regularly monitored.... then after about a month, I was told that I needed to accompany a container to Nairobi as part of my new job. It was out of curiosity, that I wanted to know what was in the container, I found it full of explosives... I immediately hatched a plan to escape and left the compound and came back to Nairobi... I have never seen the man again...”

A third trend identified in the recruitment process was the use of ‘fake ‘football matches to enrol new recruits. This pattern was more predominant in Eastleigh and Majengo areas of Nairobi. Respondents noted that this tactic passed off easily as a sporting activity and thus did not attract state scrutiny. This tactic proceeded with careful targeting of potential recruits. Once on the designated pitch, recruiters openly communicated their intentions before a match commenced. Another recruitment tactic involved the actual organization of football tournaments to places such as Garissa and Somalia but with intentions to forcibly recruit into the Al-Shabaab. An interviewed police officer recounted an incident in mid-2016 where youth drawn from Majengo and Shauri Moyo areas of Nairobi were recruited to attend a football tournament in Garissa. The youth ended up in Somalia where they joined Al-Shabaab against their will. The following excerpts are relevant:

1. “There is a particular organization about five months ago that came to a ground near Shauri Moyo and was signing up youth for a football match in Garissa. We would later get information that the youth had crossed over to Somalia...”

60 Interview with a young woman resident in Majengo, Nairobi. July 03, 2016.

61 Interview with a male senior police officer in Nairobi, November 11, 2016.
2. “There also football teams being used in this area (Eastleigh) and with their main mission being to recruit. These football teams are not easily noticed by security officials. The tactic has been before the football game, there is some briefing on the radicalizing agenda and then the football match proceeds. If security agencies are there, then it will be just a football match as usual...”

The above excerpts from police officers illustrate the changing dynamics of recruitment into radical groups. Key informant interviews with security officials in the counter-terrorism domain in both Nairobi and Mombasa made the overarching observation that terrorist recruitment patterns kept evolving to pre-empt disruption by state security agencies. They additionally reinforced an ongoing perspective of using social spaces for recruitment. In addition to football matches, weddings and other social functions were being used for recruitment as well.

Another identified trend in the field was the rise of mushrooming gangs operating in the selected neighbourhoods of Mombasa and Nairobi. These gangs presented potentials links to violent extremism. In Eastleigh, Nairobi, a gang identified as the ‘Milawa’ army and mostly composed of new converts to Islam was deemed as a radicalization entry point. This ‘Milawa’ group drew its membership from the adjacent Mathare area of Nairobi. It had been linked at least since November 2016 to some radicalizing groups in Eastleigh. An interviewed security official observed that part of the membership had been receiving small allowances to attend meetings at a specific Mosque in Eastleigh. This Mosque had in turn been securitized by the state as a radicalizing and a recruitment site. No verifiable links were however provided in the course of fieldwork between the ‘Milawa’ group and the Al-Shabaab.

Similarly, in Mombasa emerging juvenile gangs such as Wakali Kwanza, Kapenguria Six, were considered as a potential pool for the Al-Shabaab to recruit from. Some of these

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62 Interview with a male police officer in Nairobi, November 11, 2016.
Mombasa based juvenile gangs had members as young as ten years old. In both the focus group discussions and individual interviews, respondents argued that if the juvenile gangs were not contained, they would likely form a ready pool of recruitment in future.  

Another trend identified was the rise of a recruitment network that worked within the Dadaab’s refugee complex in Kenya’s north eastern region. This is a perspective that was widely shared by security officials. The overarching explanation they provided for this emerging trend was weak governance mechanisms that persisted in that region. This they argued was also possible by the infiltration of ‘recruiters’ posing as refugees. In addition to the claimed presence of a recruitment ring at the camp, the camp is said to provide two other critical nodes in the mobilization of violence. The recruitment network at the camp was claimed to be organizing transport logistics for new recruits mainly from Nairobi. Second, it was also claimed to provide a hub to plan and launch terror attacks. The apparent securitization of the camp as a security risk as a section of respondents mentioned had informed a government decision to close the Dadaab camp as of May 2017. This had not happened as of August 2018.

This earlier stance by the Kenyan government was met with criticisms including from human rights and humanitarian organizations working in Dadaab. Human rights practitioners in critiquing this position argued that it stood counter to various human rights instruments that Kenya had ratified. Key among the convention was the 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees. This convention speaks to among others against non-refoulement of refugees. The planned refoulement by the Kenyan government was therefore going to impact negatively on the Somali refugees’ rights (Jaji, 2013). Security officials with a wealth of experience in policing reported that while in the 1990s and the early 2000s, refugee camps such as the

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63 Focus group discussion in Ziwa la Ngomb’e, Likoni, June 09, 2017. This point was also reiterated in a key informant interview with a religious leader in Mombasa June 06, 2017.
Dadaab camp were notorious for small arms trafficking, however, beginning the mid-2000s, the focus had changed to threats posed by terrorism. These connections were made in light of the collapse of the Somali state and the consequent security threats this had posed. One security official in Nairobi argued that:

“Somalia has been without a stable government since 1991. This has meant that there has been refugees’ influx in the country… This has come with a number of security threats such as arms smuggling including the supply of illicit goods. Some terrorists may also pose as refugees and you know that terrorists are not good guys.”

Furthermore, these perceived threats of terrorism posed by the refugee camp has continued to inform government policies periodically such as the closing of borders especially after 2006 when Al-Shabaab emerged in Somalia. It is the fear of infiltration by terrorist networks that camps became subject of extended state surveillance (Burns, 2010). Corruption of state officials manning the border points has however worsened the security threats in the north-east region bordering Somalia. It is this complicity of state officials that could then be aiding radicalization networks in terms of easy movement across the Kenya-Somalia border in the north east.

Therefore, the discussion on the radicalization trends has demonstrated the complexity and the difficulty of keeping up to speed with the evolving new tactics. What is clear from the above analysis is that a myriad of actors and tactics were at play and more so in the recruitment process. The tactics and trends were evolving particularly to pre-empt government surveillance.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has addressed the process and trends of youth radicalization in Kenya. The process is influenced by multiple variables even though individual agency in Kenya’s

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64 Interview with a male police officer in Nairobi, February 2, 2017.
South Coast is referenced. It further observes the agency of Salafi Jihadism as responsible for entrenching the radicalization discourse in Kenya. This chapter observes that the radicalization process is complex and non-linear. It finds that contextual circumstances are important in the whole radicalization process. The findings show the interlinkages of radical groups between Mombasa, Nairobi and neighbouring Tanzania.

The findings of the chapter are that there existed various variables that influenced the radicalization process. These included poverty, long standing history of marginalization realities, presence of online media, dissemination of religious ideology, including tough counter-terrorism responses. There also existed indirect variables that were influencing the process. These included weak governance mechanism, and corruption by state officials.

The chapter also finds multiple recruitment tactics were in place. These included fake job opportunities mostly in the Middle East, drugging, forcible recruitment among others. In addition to these tactics, recruitment had also been targeting specialists/professionals to the various social movements.

This chapter principally finds that the radicalization process had remained non-linear. It is comprised of multiple processes that lead individuals to join terror networks and notwithstanding the lack of consensus on the process. Multiple perspectives exist on the process; the root causes approach that speaks to among others poverty, relative deprivation; the place of social networks (family and friends); the environment, social media and so on. The study also find that the radicalization recruitment trends have kept on evolving as circumstances altered. Notable trends in the radicalization process includes forced recruitment, fake jobs, to voluntary participation in the two main movements (ISIS and Al-Shabaab) that sought to recruit in Kenya. The field findings demonstrate the complexity of the radicalization process which makes it a little more difficult to unravel.
On the overall, the chapter argues that there is yet to be a distinct profile of who is likely to be recruited. Recruitment as the study suggests transcends the links of poverty, marginalization, education and so on. In other words, recruitment could target the poor, the educated, the less educated, including overcoming the gender divide. However, the chapter points out that the recruitment trends keep on evolving in response to increased state surveillance on extremist groups such as the Al-Shabaab. Besides, a new radicalization trend which is yet to be fully explored in this research context is gender dynamics in recruitment. This is so because, the available evidence indicates that women are taking up distinctive roles within violent groups such as the Al-Shabaab. Therefore, young women are already taking up such roles as being ‘Jihadi brides’. They are not only marrying the combatants but they are also taking roles such as recruitment and launching of terror attacks.

The question of poverty as aiding the process, and which was a constant narrative from the field opened broader questions that are yet to be settled. While the extant literature has placed emphasis on poverty, identity, and socialization as explanations to why youth take up political violence, however, there is no consensus on the same. Current analysis is suggesting that it is not absolute poverty that is luring youth to take up political violence. In the Kenyan context, it was the broad complaints of real marginalization that were more influential for radicalization and recruitment.

This chapter also finds that the state had continued to ‘securitize’ the youth as security threats that need to be governed. The chapter further notes that youth have then been subjected to various human rights violations even as the state continues to perceive them as a threat. This had an implication on their cooperation and perception of the state.
CHAPTER FIVE: COMMUNITY-BASED APPROACHES TO COUNTERING YOUTH RADICALISATION IN MOMBASA AND NAIROBI, KENYA

5.0 Introduction

This chapter explores the community-based approaches that have been adopted in counter-radicalization work with a focus on three selected locations in Kenya’s Mombasa and Nairobi Counties. The previous chapter examined the process and trends of youth radicalization in Kenya. However, this chapter analyses community-based counter-radicalization initiatives in Likoni, Mombasa, Majengo and Eastleigh in Nairobi. These three locations have at varied points been securitized by government officials as ‘radicalization hotspots’ (Botha, 2014; Balakian, 2016; Mogire, Mkutu & Alusa, 2018).

While these locations are not merely the only ‘hotspots’ of radicalization, they provide useful case studies to unravel the working of community-based initiatives engaged in preventive counter-radicalization. The two chosen study locations offer comparative perspectives on the working of these initiatives. Therefore, the chapter cautions against universal generalization of the approaches discussed here. This is because context matters. These approaches are examined from the lenses of several non-state and state actors engaged in counter-radicalization initiatives. The state actors engaged are mainly drawn from the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government. Some of the state actors probed in this chapter include the National Counter-Terrorism Centre (NCTC), a government body that coordinates counter-terrorism initiatives. The state actors include the police, and the local government administrators. It can be argued further that how the state interacts with community actors has important ramifications in terms of preventing youth radicalization and the existence of community-based initiatives.
Therefore, the non-state actors probed for their interventions here include grassroots community-based organizations, individuals, and religious actors. These interventions are also examined in light of how they intersect with the state agencies including the value they bring to the counter-radicalization domain. Naturally, while the state in a normative sense, exercises its monopoly of violence, it is operating within an environment marked by a plurality of security actors and providers (Mkutu et al. 2018). Hence, this has been linked to the concept of ‘ungovernedness’ which implies low penetration of state services such as policing of the masses. However, notwithstanding this ‘ungovernedness’, the entry of select local governance models could bridge existing gaps in the provision of law and order. It can be argued that this has been more manifest in Kenya’s peripheral areas including border areas such as Turkana that are grappling with natural resource management (Mkutu, 2018:31-32). Moreover, some of these peripheral areas have become prone to terrorism threats whereas state security provision has been insufficient. This chapter broadens the debates on the changing forms of security governance from below (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2017; Solomon, 2017; Mkutu et al. 2018). Furthermore, this is relevant given the marginal penetration of state policing in Africa and more so in peripheral areas. Therefore, this is the reason why the Kenyan state has opened up partnership with non-state actors in managing terrorism threats. This is a perspective reinforced by Kenya’s National Counter-Terrorism Strategy of 2016.

Moreover, this chapter presents the soft strategies used to counter the complex phenomena of globalized terrorism. It is additionally complicated by the rise of home grown terrorism. Home grown terrorism generally refers to a series of plots directed at the country for which the actor is either a national, a resident or they have been brought up there (Irwin, 2015). In the Kenyan context, the presence of returning foreign fighters (returnees) is feeding directly to the rise of home grown terrorism. Since 2009, returnees have been trooping back
into the country, mainly from Somalia. One of the local administrators interviewed in Kamukunji, Nairobi reported that:

“We already have returnees from Al-Shabaab in Somalia. I may not have the precise numbers yet, but yes, they are some around [Majengo]. Some have opened up, some have fled, some have owned up and said there are colleagues that they left in Somalia. There are those that would not want to identify themselves, because they fear... this is complicated further because the community is not accepting them. However, the government has provided an amnesty programme to reintegrate them into the society. The government has also given room to these returnees and has been keen on rehabilitating them. Those that are not already integrated into the amnesty programme are a security threat. Some of the returnees have resorted to walking around with hijabs to disguise themselves.”

The above information was validated by multiple research participants that ranged from security officials to community members and leaders in Majengo and Eastleigh areas of Nairobi. These participants argued that returnees posed significant security threats, yet their intentions were difficult to unravel. They further categorized these returnees in at least two categories. The first category comprised of those that had returned to form ‘sleeper or dormant’ cells. This category is considered ready to launch attacks. The second category identified was that of ‘deserters’ that had left the movement. However, both categories of returnees have adopted a level of invisibility to escape state scrutiny. Additionally, for those in the amnesty programme, they live in constant fear of the terror networks revenging for their desertion from the movement. This desertion from the radical movements is not unique to Kenya but is a global phenomenon that has predominantly affected Europe through the return of former Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) fighters.

Hence, this chapter examines the local approaches that are being touted as either alternatives or as complementing state centric approaches in countering radicalization. While,

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65 Interview with a male local administrator, in Kamukunji, Nairobi, November 9, 2016.

66 Key informant interviews and focus group discussions in Majengo, Nairobi in 2016 and 2017.
the State centric approaches are important, they have served to alienate the same communities they intend to secure. Therefore, this chapter focuses on community-based interventions in Mombasa and Nairobi Counties. The applicability of these initiatives globally remains dependent on such dynamics as trust between the communities and the state structures (Huq, 2016). However, currently, there is mistrust of the Kenyan police by communities in particular localities because of the negative experiences with them (Balakian, 2016). This is manifested through heavy handedness and lack of accountability by the police (Prestholdt, 2011; Mwakimako & Willis, 2014). The state however retains a key role in counter-terrorism broadly (Huq, 2016).

Starting on the premise that the notion of ‘community’ is fluid and contested, this chapter takes the concept of community from a spatial and geographical space but also drawing in on particular interests (Huq, 2016). There is an appreciation in counter-terrorism discourses that the actions of non-state actors can be beneficial and can complement state interventions in multiple ways (Spalek, 2010; Huq, 2016). This is because non-state actors are sometimes better placed to counter the ideologies of the radicalizers for example through counter-narratives. They are also better placed in certain instances to recognize individuals on the route to violent extremism and dissuade them. Furthermore, they can also be involved in such crime prevention models such as community policing.

Community policing is a public safety model increasingly adopted in the policing of crime. It entails partnership between the police, the citizens, and governmental agencies in solving crime issues (Nitsch & Ronert, 2017:68). It proffers solutions for local crime issues by setting action plans. There is however the lack of a one-size fit all understanding of community policing owing to variances in contexts and issues. Community policing as a philosophy of policing arose as a result of the failures of traditional policing to tackle complex and emerging crimes. This is so because, traditional policing focused on law
enforcement is considered inadequate in dealing with the complexities of crime. Hence, there is need to involve non-state actors including the public in crime prevention. Cooperation and problem solving then becomes important. Therefore, it requires communities ‘cooperation with statutory authorities and yet, its operation differs across social contexts.

By drawing on social contexts, the model cannot be universalized as it is dependent on, among others, economic, social, cultural, and political environments in a particular context. While fraught with challenges and complexities, depending on a social context, its effectiveness is dependent on trust between the two entities. This trust is however not given and cannot be generalized across the board. The complexity of the model is such that it cannot be assumed that communities will fully trust and have confidence with the police to enable meaningful collaboration. In contrast, it cannot not also be assumed that authorities would also want to collaborate on safety matters with certain segments of the society (Giessen et al. 2017).

Consequently, community policing that is community-led holds the potential for preventative action in the counter-radicalization domain. However, community policing that is underpinned on trust between specific communities (geographic or religious based for instances) and state agencies is considered to be a key component in counter radicalization. For instance, Huq (2016) notes that the model holds potential for counter-radicalization through initiatives such as information sharing on potential recruits but also for their input in collective problem solving.

Community engagement models such as community policing are anchored on an old practice that effective crime control is dependent on the support and partnership of the general public and more so with information sharing (Cherney & Hartley, 2015:3). For example, the concept of community policing largely practiced in the United States and the United Kingdom in the post 1980s is anchored on the need for coordination and consultation
between the police and the policed in crime prevention. The links between the police and the policed helps to frame the security needs with the goal of dealing with crime (Ruteere & Pommerolle, 2003). While its practice and application differ across contexts, it has arisen from dissatisfaction with traditional policing.

Therefore, the community policing model is open to extensive theorization that draws on a variety of practices ranging from neighbourhood watches to team patrolling (Ruteere & Pommerolle, 2003). In the Kenyan context, community policing was introduced in the early 2000s in an environment, that was devoid of accountable policing. There existed mutual mistrust between the police and the policed owing to the conduct of the policing agencies. The police in Kenya have retained their coercive powers in the post-independence period and have been chiefly concerned with regime policing as opposed to citizen policing (Hills, 2006). This practice in the Kenyan context raises questions as how the police and the community can cooperate in crime prevention (Ruteere & Pommerolle, 2003; Omeje & Githigaro, 2012).

Furthermore, community policing is considered to be a superior approach for crime prevention, including in counter-radicalization (Dunn et al. 2016). As a practice, it departs from strategies such as militaristic approaches that tend to create antagonistic relationships between the police and the public. Its underlying philosophy is a preventative approach to various forms of crime through community partnerships. As a philosophy of crime prevention while cognisant of its effectiveness, it lends itself to a mode of policing that engages the public through consultations and partnerships (Dunn et al. 2016). Although community policing holds the potentials for crime reduction, a process evaluation of a community policing project to counter violent extremism in the United States finds no conclusive evidence that it can prevent violent extremism. Nevertheless, previous studies on community
policing reach the conclusion that it helps to increase communities’ satisfaction and trust with the police but does not necessary lead to crime reduction (Weine et al. 2017).

Moreover, community policing is considered as one of the most progressive philosophies in policing. It is termed so, because it is a significant improvement to the traditional policing approach that is essentially reactive. The uptake of community policing is a departure from traditional policing strategies with its emphasis on proactive responses. The reliance on paramilitary approaches has been alienating the police from the community that it serves. Community policing when functioning at its optimum and drawing in on community engagement does not only reduce the occurrence of crimes but also apprehensions around crime (Murray, 2005: 327-348). There is academic and policy appreciation that the police alone and relying on their traditional paramilitary approaches cannot effectively deal with crime control including terrorist threats and as such community engagement is key (Murray, 2005).

Besides, community policing provides partnership between the police and the community in crime prevention as it highlights the problem at hand and proffers solutions collectively (Murray, 2005:349-350). Therefore, the value of community policing in counter-terrorism can be translated to among others information sharing. The prevention and disruption of terrorism is dependent on information. However, information sharing is dependent on the trust levels between the community and the police. In situations of mutual trust between the police and the community, then information critical for disruptive and a preventative approach is made possible (Murray, 2005:358).

From a conceptual view, both government and the community have similar goals in the broad counter-terrorism field. Both the community and the government in this domain possess a universal appreciation for security but with differing perspectives of how to achieve it. Governments do possess hard power approaches, such as arrest powers. Community level
interventions geared towards safety possess soft power approaches where they among others define what is acceptable and not acceptable in their locale. A similarity that cuts across both government and community level interventions is that they both define what is unacceptable behaviour and therefore a social ordering of the ‘other’. Both government and the community are therefore engaged in validating the social order. Another similarity of both government and community interventions is that they both seek to reduce spaces where individuals meet to plan and execute terrorist acts. While this is a similar goal, it is the tactics that are changing. The government on the one hand will seek to securitize these threats. The community including faith-based actors, and activists mainly working in the realm of social justice will seek to minimize these threats (Spalek & Weeks, 2016).

Community engagement in counter terrorism is imperative as it also serves to minimize existing tensions owing to alienating counter-terrorism interventions and laws. Reducing this backlash is important as there is now an appreciation that communities constitute key roles in counter-terrorism. Communities constitute the first lines of defence against terrorist propaganda and violent extremism (Cherney & Hartley, 2015:3).

Drawing on a global context, a number of governments in their counter-terrorism efforts have incorporated community engagement in their strategies. In the United Kingdom, there is the Prevent Strategy, which engages with the Muslim communities to counter the threats of terrorism. In other contexts, such as the US, Canada, Australia, counter-terrorism strategies are beginning to appreciate communities’ input in countering terrorism (Cherney & Hartley, 2015:3).

Having laid a broad context for the context and philosophy of the model, the next section of the study discusses the field findings from the two study locations, that is Nairobi (Eastleigh and Majengo) and Mombasa.
5.1 Community Based Approaches in Countering Radicalization: The Case of Eastleigh and Majengo in Nairobi, Kenya

Using the field findings, this section, examines the operation of community-based approaches being applied in countering radicalization with a focus on Nairobi’s Majengo and Eastleigh areas. These two areas are adjacent to each other and project similar risk factors for radicalization. Besides state officials’ securitization of the Eastleigh area as a terrorist hub, non-residents of Eastleigh recounted their reluctance to venture out to Eastleigh, a popular shopping area for pre-conceived fears about their own security. Similarly, Majengo in popular everyday conversations has been linked to commercial sex work, drug abuse, gun crimes. In addition, the area has also been associated with youth radicalization likely to turn into violent extremism.67

Prior to the 2014 Operation Usalama Watch, Eastleigh had experienced a series of grenade attacks on public transport (The Star, 2013). Therefore, these attacks were framed as terrorist attacks by state officials. This only served to support the perspectives of security officials of not only the existence of youth recruiters but also the presence of terror cells. Some of the recruiters took on a marginalization trope where they claimed that Islam was under assault and as such a call for the so called ‘faithful’ to protect their faith. However, the dynamics and the contextual tropes used to radicalize are varied.68 Whereas hard power approaches are relevant in certain contexts, community-based approaches hold the potential for counter-radicalization as examined in this chapter.

There are a number of community-based approaches that are being applied in preventive work for counter-radicalization in Majengo and Eastleigh areas of Nairobi. Some

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67 A popular theme expressed by a youth focus group discussion on June 9, 2016 in, Majengo, Nairobi. This point was referenced again by a religious leader in Majengo, Nairobi in a key informant interview, March, 3, 2017.

68 Interview with a male senior police officer, in Nairobi, February 2, 2017.
of these interventions include peace-building oriented approaches, such as community conversations spaces and counter-narratives, among other interventions.

Majengo also regularly witnesses petty forms of crime such as snatching and house break-ins. Moreover, the area has since the mid-2000s been associated with youth radicalization. Recruiters have often capitalized on the poor economic prospects to lure youth into radical groups. The area has also witnessed a range of radical preachers’ intent on brainwashing new faith converts to pursue Jihad. Before exploring some of the local level interventions, the next section outlines briefly the patterns and trends of youth radicalization and recruitment in Nairobi’s Majengo and Eastleigh areas.

5.2 The Pattern and Trends of Youth Radicalization and Recruitment in Majengo and Eastleigh Areas in Nairobi, Kenya

The respondents in Majengo and Eastleigh mapped out several recruitment patterns and trends of youth radicalization. A common narrative shared by multiple respondents of the focus group discussions and key informant interviews was that youth radicalization in these localities began around 2007. This was initially attributed to the activities of the Muslim Youth Centre (MYC) claimed to have been coordinated at the Pumwani Riyadha Mosque. The MYC leader Ahmed Imani Ali is claimed to have left Somalia in November 2017, owing to a fall out with the Al-Shabaab leadership. He is claimed to be in Kenya with possibilities of negotiating for amnesty with the Kenyan government (Standard, 2017). The MYC targets at the early stages were vulnerable young men that were gradually indoctrinated to the movement through a series of tactics. Some of the youth were brainwashed and recruited to

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69 Interview with a male senior police officer in Kamukunji, November 11, 2016.

70 Interview with a religious leader, in Majengo, Nairobi, February 27, 2017.

wage ‘Jihadi’ violence in Somalia and other countries in the Horn of Africa. Participants observed that two peak periods were important in situating the recruitment patterns.

In 2009, the exit of Ahmed Imani Ali to Somalia was influential in this regard. As a result of his teachings and brainwashing, he left with hundreds of youth to Somalia. He is reputed to have left an active recruitment network on the ground. While in Somalia he relied on video messaging to bring in more recruits. One of the senior security officials interviewed in Nairobi, said that:

“A key propagandist of the so-called Jihad narrative is Sheikh Imani Ali - a Meru fellow and he operated in Majengo, Nairobi for a bit of time. He is a graduate of Jomo Kenyatta University of Agriculture and Technology (JCUAT). He is the official spokesman of the Al-Shabaab. When Al-Shabaab attacks, they will do a video recording of the attacks, for instance, when they attacked the KDF (Kenya Defence Forces) camp in El-Adde in 2016, they developed a propagandist version of the attack. Iman Ali in a video would talk about Jihad, why they are in Somalia (to fight on behalf of their Muslim brothers) and are ready to die. In his videos, he will be seen with a group of youth carrying AK-47s and boosting the morale of the Al-Shabaab, while urging others to join the movement”.

The recruitment network was claimed to be sustained by the revenues collected by the MYC. These included market stalls and rent incomes MYC controlled in Majengo and in the neighbouring Gikomba market. The other peak factor was in the post 2011 Kenyan military incursion in Somalia. This security intervention created a recruitment narrative for recruitment into the Al-Shabaab. The narrative relied upon a ‘frame’ of defending Islam’ in response to military interventions of ‘Christian’ nations in Somalia.

Over time, other tactics of recruitment had become prominent in both Eastleigh and Majengo. These tactics which kept evolving and sometimes invisible ranged from false job

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72 Interview with a religious leader in Majengo, Nairobi, February 27, 2017. This view is supported by interviews with multiple security officials in Nairobi in 2016 and 2017.

73 Key informant Interview with a male senior police officer, in Nairobi, February 2, 2017.
offers in the Middle East, to sponsorship of football tournaments in North Eastern Kenya and Somalia. Both genders (male and female) had also become targets for recruitment with distinct roles in the movement. Women were taking on such roles as Jihadi brides, intelligence gathering, domestic chores in the camps and so on. The men were said to assume combatant roles. The lure for money amidst tough economic times had also been a risk factor for recruitment. Additionally, video halls were used to brainwash potential recruits through violent themed videos.\textsuperscript{74} One senior police officer interviewed in Kamukunji, Nairobi remarked that:

“Video halls which are well spread out mainly in Majengo are being used as conduits, the videos being used speaking to such themes as who was Osama Bin Laden, and why he was killed. The recruiters having an objective to drive anti-western agenda and to call for violence”\textsuperscript{75}.

Relying on the field data, a cross section of residents considered recruitment to have significantly reduced in comparison to previous years. The comparison was in the 2009-2012 period where there had been an exodus of youth mainly heading to Somalia. The dynamics of recruitment had kept changing. Since the mid of 2014, Daesh (ISIS) had also been keen to recruit.

Participants noted that the recruitment had waned on several accounts. The explanations ranged from increased state surveillance to community-police partnerships, including the preventative work of religious leaders and community-based organizations. Additionally, it was also difficult to unravel the recruitment patterns owing to recruitment networks going underground and becoming discreet. This stance having been driven by

\textsuperscript{74} Mixed focus group discussions (men, women, youth), November 10, 2016; Key informant interview with a male senior police officer, in Kamukunji, Nairobi, November 9, 2016.

\textsuperscript{75} Interview with a male senior police officer, in Kamukunji, Nairobi November 11. 2016.
increased state surveillance.\footnote{Focus group discussion, in Majengo, Nairobi, June 9, 2016.} It remains empirically challenging to measure the impacts of some of these aforementioned risk reduction initiatives. The next section of the study addresses the dilemma of the returning foreign fighters (returnees) who were complicating the mounted preventative interventions.

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5.2.1 The Returnees and The Dilemmas of Preventative Initiatives
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Complicating the preventative intervention, in both of these communities, were returnees whose intentions had been difficult to unravel. The term “returnees” is used in this context to refer to the phenomenon of returning foreign fighters from Somalia, Libya and even Syria (Mkutu, 2017; 2018). In the Kenyan context, interviews indicated that they were mainly returning from Al-Shabaab in Somalia. It had been difficult to understand their intentions for several competing reasons. A section of returnees had become disillusioned with the movement and had denounced it. A second category had included those returning to form ‘sleeper cells’ (Mkutu, 2018). This latter category was claimed to be not only ready for attacks but also conducted surveillance for potential targets. A third category of returnees were ‘genuine’ returnees who escaped out of fear for their lives in the camps in Somalia (Mkutu \textit{et al}. 2018).

Since 2015, returning foreign fighters (returnees) have become subjects of security considerations both at the community and the government levels. Governmental discourses considered the returnees security threats given in part their invisibility and their intentions to launch terror attacks.\footnote{Interview with a local administrator in Nairobi, May 12, 2017.} Both Majengo and Eastleigh areas of Nairobi were claimed to have returnees. These claims were reported by both community residents and security officials engaged in counter terrorism.
Field accounts did not come across returnees taking on the amnesty programme unlike in parts of the Coast, such as Kwale County (IOM, 2015). In the case of Kwale, a number of returnees signed up for the amnesty programme in return for pardon and consequent rehabilitation and re-integration into the society. Not all returnees that were said to number over 700 in Kwale alone volunteered to take up the amnesty programme. The failures to take up the government amnesty programme could be attributed in part to mistrust of government but also the fear of being eliminated by terror networks (IOM, 2015).

Additionally, the amnesty programme launched in 2015 was said to have been rushed, and poorly conceived (IOM, 2015). One of the cited criticisms is that it was an ad-hoc program that lacked a legislative backup and safety measures for the returnees. Communities by themselves were also confused on how to cope with the returnees. More often than not, their last resort would be to tip the government on the presence of these returnees owing to competing ties of community, friendship and family. Individual interviews and focus group discussions with Majengo and Eastleigh residents spoke of the agony and the pain that this phenomenon had caused. Residents spoke of friends, relatives, and husbands who had joined Al-Shabaab and the attendant anxieties it had created. Parents were also particularly pained by the actions of their sons and daughters joining groups such as Al-Shabaab, and in the recent past Daesh, owing to high chances of fatalities in their respective missions. The pain and agony especially of grandparents now being left to take care of their grandsons and widowed women had taken a toll on these communities. This is a perspective that was gleaned in fieldwork conversations.

78 Interview with a civil society official in Nairobi, February 2, 2017.
5.3 The Genesis and Forms of Community Based Countering-Radicalization Approaches in Majengo and Eastleigh areas of Nairobi, Kenya

The genesis of community-based approaches to counter youth radicalization in both Majengo and Eastleigh areas of Nairobi was informed by youth recruitment into the Al-Shabaab. These responses were geared towards pre-empting this threat. Hundreds of youth had been joining Al-Shabaab since 2007, thus necessitating preventive measures. These initiatives were meant to cure a ‘collective shame’ of youth radicalization that had come to dominate negative discourses around Eastleigh and Majengo in Nairobi. Therefore, a number of preventive interventions have been put in place to counter the threats faced by youth radicalization. The figure below summarizes the prevention interventions adopted in these two areas in Nairobi:

Figure 4: Community Based Counter-Radicalization Initiatives in Majengo and Eastleigh, Nairobi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intervention(s)</th>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Community conversation spaces</td>
<td>Local grassroots actors such as community-based organizations, government officials, religious leaders, and development partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Counter-narratives</td>
<td>Religious leaders, grassroots community actors, and media partnership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Community policing</td>
<td>Police, community, and government departments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Youth economic empowerment</td>
<td>Religious actors, Community based organizations, and development partners.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Revision of Madaris Curriculum</td>
<td>Religious leaders, teachers, and community organizations.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s fieldwork in Majengo, and Eastleigh Nairobi, Kenya, 2015-17.
5.3.1 Community Conversation Spaces

As part of the preventative counter radicalization stances, respondents in both the individual and focus group discussions’ spoke to the working of community conversation spaces as a preventative approach. Grassroot organizations and individual actors had been convening these spaces mostly after 2009 when radicalization had intensified in both Eastleigh and Majengo areas of Nairobi. Furthermore, many\textsuperscript{79} noted that the trend had become more prevalent in Majengo, Nairobi. These spaces were operating in the format of dialogue formats. It entailed holding regular forums for various groups in the community such as youth, parents and in some instances security officials. These spaces usually engaged with pertinent matters such as various forms of insecurity.

In terms of their organization, they were principally organized by grassroot community groups, religious actors and individuals. These were usually two to three hours meetings held at community halls, grounds, and religious spaces. These meetings worked with facilitators that would steer the conversation towards its stated objectives. These convened spaces provided opportunities for candid discussions on some of the vulnerabilities that could lead to radicalization.

Additionally, these spaces had been used as platforms to generate community owned solutions on a range of security related issues. Among other explanations, the activities of the then Majengo based Muslim Youth Centre (MYC) was said to have influenced youth recruitment to Al-Shabaab. The MYC was claimed to have used the Pumwani Riyadha Mosque to pursue its intention even though the agency of the Mosque as an aid to radicalization remained in dispute.

\textsuperscript{79} Mixed focus group discussions (youth, men, and women representation) in Majengo, Nairobi June 9, 2016 & March 4, 2017.
The community conversation spaces would be prompted as a response to the hundreds of youth who had left for Al-Shabaab in Somalia. These community spaces proceeded as dialogue forums with several intentions. These included creating awareness of this growing security challenge but also to proffer solutions for the challenge. These spaces had essentially focused on the youth owing to their vulnerabilities but also incorporated parents and community opinion leaders. These conversation spaces while generated by community agency had been in part facilitated by external support. This had been aided by donor support. This facilitation covered expenses such as hall rent and refreshments for the meetings. There were also instances where such spaces were convened at free community spaces complete with community facilitators.

By taking on a preventative approach, these community spaces had acted as advocacy platforms where counter-radicalization messaging was provided. Some of the messaging included debunking religious associations with violence. For instance, some of the messaging in these forums included a contextualization of the concept of Jihad as it had been used at the foundations of Islam. This messaging was due to the misrepresentation of religious concepts, such as Jihad, to mobilize political violence. One of the respondents in Majengo, Nairobi, noted that:

“I am aware of mainly the Imams in nearby Mosques who are helping to counter the narratives that Islam is not a violent religion. Pastors and Imams have also been joining hands together with other civil society organizations to talk about the need for peace in our community. Every Saturday we attend a community dialogue forum where we address matters of concern, such as dealing with radicalization.”

These spaces also discussed strategies of responsible parenting in order to mould well rounded citizens. Emphasis on responsible parenting responded to the blame placed on poor parenting. Poor parenting as the previous chapter has argued is considered a variable

80 Interview with a male resident in Majengo, Nairobi, June 09, 2016.
influencing the complex and the multi-layered radicalization process. Many respondents noted that the lack of proper parental guidance had created an avenue for which radical networks could exploit.\textsuperscript{81} Therefore, creating conversation spaces around parenting reflected a critical socialization role that parents ought to play in moulding responsible citizens. This role respondents noted would only come with a re-education and a call for parents to be proactively involved in their children’ lives. These conversation spaces were offering practical reflections for parents and the community at large on preventative responsibilities they needed to adopt.

The desired outcome among others for conversation spaces was more parental involvement in their children’ lives. This involved among others monitoring their mannerisms and behaviour. The intent of this awareness was to close the gaps that radicalizers were keen on exploiting. Raising this awareness would help to prevent the sense of belonging for instance that radical networks were keen on utilizing. Radical networks were keen on exploiting vulnerable individuals that seemed to be devoid of parental love and belonging at home.\textsuperscript{82}

Whereas the community conversation spaces created a platform for raising awareness about the challenges of Islamist radicalization, they also afforded an opportunity for collective problem solving. In other words, this became a platform for which community members would brainstorm and generate appropriate strategies in dealing with the radicalization threats. The collective problem-solving strategies would be adopted upon the appreciation of several dynamics said to influence the radicalization process. It is pertinent to note that throughout the course of the fieldwork, the narratives offered departed from a linear

\textsuperscript{81} Multiple Interviews with community members, local administrators in Mombasa, June 8, 2017.

\textsuperscript{82} Interview with a project officer of a non-governmental organization working on countering violent extremism at the Kenyan Coast. Interview conducted in Nairobi, June 23, 2017.
process in situating the radicalization process. These spaces thus offered the community a chance at unravelling the multiple variables influencing the radicalization process.

In these community spaces, the youth and parents were oriented to the recruitment narratives and tactics used by radicalization networks. Holding discussions on some of the mediating variables leading to radicalization helped to situate the range of counter-responses to mitigate youth radicalization. For instance, debates around being sensitive to the teaching of the so-called radical preachers were held. This had arisen out of the associated linkages between a section of radical preachers and radicalization. Some of the radical preachers had been misinterpreting the teachings of Jihad to justify political violence in the name of Islam. Opening discussion on some of the variables involved in the radicalization process was part of this pre-emptive strategy.

An interview with an official of a peace-building organization in Eastleigh and Majengo considered these forums as ‘safe spaces’ for conversations. They were termed as ‘safe spaces’ in the sense that they allowed a non-judgemental forum where youth could express their everyday struggles that would predispose them to join radical groups. Some of the vulnerabilities raised included the securitization of the youth identity and the attendant hard power responses. Other vulnerabilities raised included inadequate economic opportunities for the youth. Having open discussions on some of these vulnerabilities then opened up opportunities for brainstorming on some of the appropriate strategies to counter this threat. These ‘safe spaces’ occasionally took an action-oriented research methodology that focused on brainstorming solutions to counter-violent extremism.

Convening discussions around radicalization vulnerabilities and the proffering of solutions on the same was geared towards building the capacity of communities in countering

83 Interview with a female grassroot worker in Majengo, Nairobi May 6, 2017.
the narratives and ideological standpoints of the radicalisers. The adoption of an action-oriented approach in the discussions was not only diagnostic but was also relevant for generating context specific solutions. One of the respondents noted that:

“We provide spaces for the community and mainly targeting the youth…. we create platforms to discuss complex issues such as radicalization… the concerns of these complexities are laid bare, questions of poverty, brainwashing are laid bare and so on… … the whole essence being to strengthen communities to be more resilient to the radicalization narrative…”

The purpose of introducing such thematic topics within these community spaces was not focused on identifying radical groups and their recruitment networks. Far from it, it was meant to create deep conversations on the threats that the community faced. It was a space to trigger conversations at the community level on options that could be applied to pre-empt this potential security threat.

In creating a conducive space for these community conversations, these spaces were occasionally segmented by age and gender concerns. Segmenting these spaces had created a ‘free’ environment where different groups would speak to their concerns and map out contextual strategies. A grassroot community worker with experience in holding these conversations in Eastleigh and Majengo particularly found holding conversations with the youth as instrumental in generating peer solidarity and support.

Youth participation in some of these conversation spaces was hoped by participants would serve as a multiplier effect in terms of reaching out to fellow youth who may not have been privy to these spaces. Regular youth participants were then said to be using the popular hangouts spaces that they called ‘Maskani’ (Kiswahili for a hangout base) in Majengo to deconstruct the radicalization narratives that often found themselves in such spaces. These

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84 Interview with a peace practitioner, in Nairobi, May 12, 2017.

85 Interview with a female grassroot worker, in Majengo, Nairobi, May 6, 2017.
spaces also transformed into social spaces and where youth regularly engaged in chewing *Miraa*\(^\text{86}\) (Khat). A differing perspective across the use of ‘*Maskani*’ is that they were termed as purely socialization spaces where youth hanged out. This distinct discourse argued that these spaces were devoid of the criminality often attributed to the ‘*Maskani*’.

Although community spaces were being relied upon for preventative initiatives, they nevertheless faced several challenges. One of the challenges they faced was reduced legitimacy for government officials and in particular the police. Whenever the police were participating in some of these forums, their legitimacy was questioned. Their input in these forums could then not be trusted owing to various human rights abuses that had been blamed on them. Community discourses on the police included claims of arbitrary arrests, enforced disappearances, including extra-judicial killings. These abuses occurred in the context of counter-terrorism.\(^\text{87}\) There was an additional challenge of personal safety for the participants. Some respondents in Majengo and Eastleigh were fearful of infiltration by terror networks and sometimes choose to be passive or chose non-attendance. In spite of these challenges, these community conversation spaces had provided opportunities to debate and proffer solutions for counter-radicalization.

### 5.3.2 Community Policing as a Preventative Strategy: Community - Government Engagement

Community policing was identified as a preventative strategy that relied on community partnership for crime prevention including radicalization threats. Community policing is a crime prevention model that draws on partnership between the community and the security agencies. The working of community policing is often dependent on the nature

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\(^{86}\) Fieldwork observation where youth converge in small groups and then chew Miraa. This could often be a way to kill boredom in the absence of other forms of recreation. Security officials often misconstrued these spaces as criminal and regularly raided them.

\(^{87}\) Youth only focus group discussion in Majengo, Nairobi, June 09, 2016.
of community-police relations. Therefore, the effectiveness of community policing as a preventative strategy for youth radicalization however remained mixed in the two locations. This is so because the respondents argued that it faced a set of challenges. On one hand, it was negatively impacted by low trust levels that had persisted between the police and the community. Secondly, some respondents expressed their fears of reprisals from terror networks. Despite some of the aforementioned challenges, some community members had chosen to cooperate with the police. The motivation to cooperate had been necessitated by their individual resolve for community safety. Thirdly, operational structures of community policing had been facing structural challenges, especially the introduction of Nyumba Kumi.

The Nyumba Kumi (ten households) initiative is a community safety structure for every ten households that was initially developed in Tanzania during the Ujamaa system (Mkutu, 2018). A leadership is appointed to take care of security concerns in a particular locality, while maintaining linkages with the government. It is a strategy of embedding community policing at the household level and has been in place since 2013 (Kioko, 2017:5). Its security effectiveness has however been questioned on the basis of transplanting a model that has been declining in use in Tanzania since the 1980s. The critique being a question of applying a model that has faded in use to deal with a changing security landscape in Kenya (Kioko, 2017:17; Mkutu et al. 2018:93).

The Nyumba Kumi is fronted by the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government while the older structure of community policing in place since 2003 is run by the national police service. This ten-household structure while working to prevent-radicalization had suffered legitimacy challenges since its introduction. It suffered legitimacy challenges as its leadership structure was considered to have been imposed from the national government structures unlike community policing that had elective representation for various stakeholders
such as business people, and other interest groups in the community. Interviews with members of a community policing team in Likoni in a focus group discussion indicated a further legitimacy challenge as emanating from a fierce competition between the two safety structures (Nyumba Kumi and community policing).

This form of competition had involved the members of the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government (local administrators such as County Commissioners) who had introduced the Nyumba Kumi and the members of the national police service who coordinated the community policing structures. It was a competition to ‘demonstrate’ who was better placed to coordinate security. Other challenges included its lack of an elaborate civic education prior to its launch, and the lack of resources to run the initiative (Mkutu et al. 2018:93).

Whereas these challenges existed, community policing was still engaged in counter-radicalization initiatives. In both Mombasa and Nairobi Counties, local administrators within the Ministry of Interior and National Government Coordination in the eyes of the public enjoyed more trust and legitimacy than the police. Unlike a section of the national police service, they strived for professionalism in their security provision. Interviews with community policing team in Likoni noted that local administrators could be trusted more with sensitive information unlike the police who were held in negative light for a range of human rights violations. The police had among other violations been accused of arbitrary arrests and extortion of bribes.

The respondents in Majengo and Eastleigh areas of Nairobi interpreted that their optimum participation in community policing was dependent on trust levels between security

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88 Focus group discussion with some members of the Likoni community policing team, Mombasa, March 16, 2017.

89 Varied focus group discussions in Nairobi and Mombasa Counties, in March and June 2017.
agencies and the community. Security agencies-community relations were characterized by residents as poor in certain periods such as during counter-terrorism swoops in Eastleigh and Majengo (Balakian, 2016). The respondents in both the individual and focus group discussions referenced in particular the April 2014 counter-terrorism swoop codenamed ‘Usalama Watch’ conducted in Nairobi neighbourhoods. Eastleigh and Majengo did fit into the securitization of government as ‘hot-spots’ to be raided. This security swoop came a few months after the September 2013 Westgate attack. Human rights violations ranging from arbitrary arrests and detentions, among others, characterized this security operation. This security operation weakened the trust levels between the community and security personnel which is a key ingredient in this cooperation.

The figure below summarizes the respondents’ views of the input that community policing had played in counter-radicalization initiatives:

**Figure 5: Community Policing Input in Counter- Radicalization**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Information sharing</td>
<td>Community.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Collective problem solving</td>
<td>Police, Community, and various government departments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Early warning mechanisms</td>
<td>Police, community, and various government departments.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Author’s fieldwork in Nairobi (2016-2017).
The respondents in both the focus group discussions and individual interviews argued that on varied occasions, that community policing had been supporting counter-radicalization in several ways.\textsuperscript{90}

5.3.2.1 Information Sharing

One of the inputs of community policing was in information sharing which was useful in pre-empting youth recruitment and the eventual path to radicalization. The respondents in both Eastleigh and Majengo noted that they regularly engaged in information sharing during monthly community policing including on a situation by situation basis. Cooperation levels with the police and the community were however dependent on trust levels between the two. In Eastleigh and Majengo, a number of police officers mentioned that they engaged in a series of trust-building exercises with the residents. These had ranged from dialogue forums to football tournaments as strategies to regain lost community trust. From the data gathered in interviews, football tournaments had been used previously as recruitment spaces. It was thus symbolic to use football tournaments and sports generally as avenues to build on community trust. The respondents were clear that this cooperation was not always forthcoming. While on certain occasions, information sharing had worked, there existed a number of hurdles in the process. The youth for instance hardly trusted the police in the two areas. In their view, the youth were broadly condemned as suspects who needed to be ‘disciplined by the state’. One of the youth respondents in Majengo, Nairobi stated that:

“The threat is that the police are coming to our neighbourhoods to target youth ‘hanging’ around under the excuse that the youth are joining some of these groups [terrorist groups] ... It is only a few youths in our community joining to take up radical causes… this has served to condemn the youth in their entirety. The police

\textsuperscript{90} Fieldnotes of various focus group discussions and individual interviews in Majengo and Eastleigh, June 09, 2016 & March 3, 2017.
have thus been rounding up youth as they try to stem the tide, but this ends up hurting the innocent.”"91

As the above respondent suggests, the state ‘disciplining’ of the youth was being manifested by regular raids in both neighbourhoods. Therefore, the state’s action of regulating the youth had emerged from their securitization of the youth identity as responsible for terror threats. The immediate implication of this was a widening distance between the police, the youth and the community at large.

Furthermore, trust levels had also been complicated by community claims of youth disappearances and extra-judicial killings in the hands of security agencies (Mkutu & Opondo, 2018 upcoming; Mkutu et al. 2018). This had in turn eroded community trust with the police. This claim was directed at the Kenya’s Anti-Terrorism Police Unit (ATPU), a specialized police unit in charge of counter-terrorism. Some of the ‘notorious’ ATPU officials were known by name in these areas and were regularly mentioned during fieldwork. The residents often expressed displeasure at this heavy handedness of the police in their communities in the name of counter-terrorism. The community in Majengo characterized alleged police disappearances in their local parlance and termed this as ‘Kupotezwa’ (Kiswahili in a literal sense as ‘disappearances’). This had further created distances between the community and the police. One of the respondents argued that:

“...Youth in my locality are prone to being picked up by people suspected to be members of the security agencies and their whereabouts are never known after that...this on the suspicion that they are the members of a terrorist organization... ‘Vijana wanapotezwa’ (loosely translated as youth disappearances) in unclear circumstances.”92

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91 Interview with a male youth in Majengo, Nairobi, June 09, 2016.
92 Interview with a male resident in Majengo, Nairobi, June 09, 2016.
While interviewed security officials were cognisant that their individual or collective actions had contributed to this mistrust at the community levels, they nevertheless had instituted a series of confidence building measures. These among others had included football tournaments, peace marches, and dialogue forums. These activities in their view were serving to close the gaps between the public and themselves. Even with some of these community confidences building measures, some community members remained apprehensive of their cooperation with the police.

Between August and October 2017, Kenya experienced rising political tensions owing to a high stakes presidential election. This particular period further eroded police-community relations owing to claims of human rights violations in dealing with electoral related violence. The claimed violations included police brutality, maiming and extra-judicial killings. This predominantly occurred in opposition strongholds of Nairobi, Western and Nyanza. It is these negative police actions that have further served to diminish trust with the police. In instances of cordial police-community relations, information sharing was occurring rapidly. The nature of information shared had ranged from suspicious individuals spotted in a neighbourhood and or unusual private gatherings patronized mainly by the youth. In as much as there were private gatherings, respondents were apt to note that these gatherings were not always indicative of criminality. This framing of private gatherings as facilitating radicalization had been informed by the youth categorization as a security threat. This apparent response was driven more by the unknowns of the terrorism threats broadly. In the presence of cordial community-police relations, information sharing could assist the police to take preventative actions. These could range from pre-emptive arrests to investigations.

93 Joint Research Report of Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International on Police Brutality between August and October 2017. The report documents incidences of police brutality in protests centered around presidential election contests following the Supreme Court of Kenya annulment of the August 8, 2017 presidential election. This police brutality has further served to worsen police-community relations in the country and as such raising doubts on the involvement of the public in policing.
5.3.2.2 Collective Problem-Solving

Drawing on field data, a second opportunity offered by the platform was collective problem solving. Collective problem-solving involved members of the community policing groups sharing with the police, strategies and approaches they thought should be implemented to pre-empt radicalization threats. This mainly occurred at the regular monthly meetings held at the police station level. The respondents noted that this had afforded community members an input in crime prevention.

Besides, community members could suggest preventative strategies to the police and other relevant government agencies in community policing meetings. These included mapping out radicalization trends and related links in their localities. This platform was allowing community representatives the opportunity to suggest both practical and operational strategies for counter-radicalization that government agencies and community members could pursue. Some of the practical interventions discussed included awareness raising on active and responsible parenting. At the operational level, the places and spaces to target, individuals to watch out would be raised in such meetings. Interviewed community policing members noted that this problem-solving approach had assisted the police to initiate strategies that would be acceptable to the community.

Securing the community in counter-radicalization initiatives such as community policing required genuine consultations and partnerships. These were inferred from meetings and interviews held in the course of the fieldwork. The value of the partnership was thus dependent on inclusion of the community in policing. The genuine partnership is critical as it leads to policing by consent while promoting the legitimacy of policing (Dunn et al. 2016:200).
5.3.2.3 Early Warning Responses

A third opportunity offered by the platform was the development of an early warning response mechanism. An early warning response mechanism was tied to regular flow of information between the community and police, including local administrators in Nairobi but also experienced in Mombasa.\(^4\) This platform worked through information flow from the members of the public to the security agencies. The shared information related to potential suspects or activities that could be potentially linked to radicalization and recruitment. This approach was emphasized through the community safety structures such as *Nyumba Kumi* and community policing. The platforms relied upon were text messages, phone calls, *WhatsApp* messaging, including visiting security facilities. The value of this mechanism as mentioned by the respondents was anchored on the need for quick responses to the information shared. If this kind of information collected at the local level was not acted upon then it would likely only lead to hard-power reactive responses.

It is argued that communities are better placed to isolate the patterns of crime in their localities. Given that community policing drew it members from community settings, it served as a warning in two principal ways. One was in detecting individuals at the risk of radicalization. Second, it helped in mapping out the dynamics that surrounded the radicalization process in particular neighbourhoods. Therefore, information sharing at community policing forums and even outside of the forums had been helpful as a preventative strategy. Furthermore, the respondents considered it a preventative strategy if it relayed the information promptly to the security agencies for preventative action.

An account shared by a senior police officer in Majengo area in Nairobi in early November 2016 and additionally supported by a local administrator is illustrative of the value

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\(^4\) Various findings from interviews with local administrators and police officers working in Majengo and Eastleigh. November 9, 2016. Concurs with various administrators interviewed in Mombasa.
that early warning mechanisms could bring to the counter-radicalization domain. He mentioned that:

“Just yesterday night, there was a house raid in the Majengo area. The lead was the presence of about 20 youth being housed in a couple’s flat. Upon the raid, security officials managed to arrest 2 youth and the couple. The others escaped as the police raided the flat. The couple and the detained youth are being held for investigations. The raid discovered some bus tickets that were destined for Dabaab refugee camp in the North-Eastern Kenya. This occurred through a tip-off from members of community policing… they got curious about the number of youths staying in a small two bedroomed flat.”

The above raid, this security official recounted, was made possible by increased police-community engagement. This pre-emptive intervention in a follow-up interview would reveal that about 20 youth, all high school students had been confined to a house in the Majengo area as they awaited repatriation to Somalia. The preliminary evidence as recounted by a senior police officer above, were bus-tickets to Dadaab refugee camp. The camp was considered to be a transit point to Somalia for Al-Shabaab recruits. This perspective was validated by a security official with experience in counter-terrorism operations.

Interviews with government security officials continued to securitize the Dadaab refugee camp not only as a recruitment site for Al-Shabaab but also as a transit point to Somalia. What the above account demonstrates is that confidence building measures with the police while laden with tensions and challenges constituted a viable entry point for crime prevention including counter-radicalization. For instance, some of the respondents were aware that desired collective safety was not shared across all residents. Cultural realities as remarked by this security official working in Eastleigh, Nairobi is illustrative. In his account, he indicts the Somali community in Eastleigh as being non-committal to police cooperation in the context of community policing. He said that: “I don’t see the model as working at all

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95 Interview with a male senior police officer, in Majengo, Nairobi, November 9, 2016.

96 Informal conversation with a male police officer experienced in counter-terrorism operations, in Nairobi, February 2, 2017.
especially if we were to only consider the Somalis (the respondent called them ‘Wariah’ - a common term referred to Somalis by Kenyans) cannot open up information on their fellow community members.”\textsuperscript{97}

Whereas the police and by extension, the state desired public cooperation in broad crime prevention, it was not always forthcoming. This was additionally attributed to trust levels, but also the absence of a collective community culture. An interviewed Eastleigh resident noted that: “The community is not so sure if that it can trust police officers as the police have sometime been seen as enemies of the public…. not everyone in the community is concerned about engaging in security matters…”\textsuperscript{98}

However, a wider implication of the above cited scenario was the need for continuous trust building exercises between the police and the community for cooperation in security provision. While, information sharing is a critical input into the early warning mechanism, it is dependent on the level of trust between the police and the communities.

5.3.3 Communities Together Initiative’

Within the confines of community policing, this study came across an initiative that sought to strengthen community-police relations in Eastleigh, Nairobi. The intention was meant to co-opt citizens in security provision. This project had operated in Eastleigh for several years and it was funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). This project dubbed ‘Communities Together Initiative’ had as its overarching goal to bring the community and policing agencies together.\textsuperscript{99} In Eastleigh, Nairobi, the police and the predominantly Somali residents have had frosty relations with the police over the years. This is because the state has over time securitized the area as crime laden (Murunga, 2005).

\textsuperscript{97} Interview with a male junior police officer in Nairobi, November 22, 2016.

\textsuperscript{98} Interview with a female resident of Eastleigh, in Nairobi, November 22, 2016.

\textsuperscript{99} Interview with a male police officer in Kamukunji Sub-county in Nairobi, November 9, 2016.
The crimes associated with the area had ranged from the proliferation of small arms to present discourses of the area as a terror hotspot owing to a number of attacks that have either been planned or launched in the area.100

This securitizing discourse was found in everyday conversations with a number of non-Somali Nairobi residents. Interviewed Eastleigh and Majengo non-Somali Nairobi residents attributed terrorism threats to Somalis and to the agency of Islam. Whereas Nairobi’s non-Somali population were keen on rehearsing this narrative, it was often based on assumptions largely drawn from the rhetoric of state officials. These narratives could be interpreted as simplistic and subjective given overarching debates that have delinked Islam from political violence. To attempt to link Islam with political violence is to render certain subjects (Islam) and to make possible ‘collective discipline and punishment’ a practice that was prevalent of colonial encounters (Mamdani, 2002:767) This ‘culture talk’ argument has in the post 9/11 period led to interventions in such countries as Afghanistan in 2001 (Mamdani, 2002: 767).

It is however the state’s securitization and its attendant responses, such as regular security swoops, that had impacted negatively the state-society relations in both Eastleigh and Majengo. This could also hold true for other parts of the country where the police have held negative images. In fact, a section of interviewed residents of Eastleigh mentioned that the area had become an ‘ATM’ (automated teller machine) for security officers. The use of ATM here was literally taken from the analogy of cash dispensing automatic teller machine to refer to instant extortion by police to evade arrests.101 This was claimed to be the case with the infamous ‘Operation Usalama Watch’, a security swoop that was conducted in 2014 in Eastleigh and neighbouring environs as a counter-terrorism response (Balakian, 2016).

100 Interview with a male senior police officer in Nairobi, February 2, 2017.

101 Focus group discussion, Eastleigh in Nairobi, January 29, 2017.
A senior police officer who had been actively involved in the ‘Communities Together Initiative’ for about a year (since 2016) in the Eastleigh Area of Nairobi cited several confidence-building measures instituted. These had included such interventions as public forums and sport activities. Public forums had involved dialogue forums and peace marches. These forums had allowed police and community to interact and bridge their trust deficits. According to the officer this project had realized several benefits. One of the cited benefits was an improved confidence on the policing agencies. This increased public confidence which in turn improved partnerships was critical for counter-radicalization.

In terms of community co-provision of security, the community had taken a more active role in crime mapping and proffering viable solutions. According to this officer, this initiative had reawakened the need for the community to be active co-providers of security. While the field findings have demonstrated that the working of community policing as a successful counter-radicalization strategy, care would need to be taken as to the overall effectiveness of the model. It suffices to note that the working of the model was dependent on the trust levels between the communities and the police. These trust levels could not be generalized. These trust levels were however attached to individual officers and not to the entire police service. Trust levels that would allow police-community cooperation in community policing have for the most part been lukewarm and therefore bringing into question the overall effectiveness of the model.

5.3.4 Counter Radicalization Narratives

Study respondents noted that counter-radicalization narratives were being pursued in the two neighbourhoods of Eastleigh and Majengo. Their singular purpose in the respondents’ views had been to deconstruct the discourses of ‘Jihad’ that were being used to

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102 Interview with a male senior police officer, Kamukunji Sub- County November 9, 2016.
recruit youth into political violence. The counter-narratives thus proceeded on account of delegitimizing ‘misleading’ narratives of a ‘politicized Islam’ (Solomon, 2017).

Historically, counter-narratives have risen in prominence in the post 9/11 period. Relying on a western centric perspective, the focus had been on disrupting or repelling the justification for ‘Islamic extremist’ narrative(s). In the early years of counter-narratives formulation, attention had been paid to the religious and historical underpinnings of radical Salafi Islam, with less emphasis paid on neo-jihadist narratives. Neo-jihadist narratives correspond to the domestic social, and political grievances that call for religious take of arms against perceived adversaries (Grossman, 2013:323). There is however a progressive argument that counter-narratives cannot only focus on countering Salafi Islam and the neo-jihadist narratives. Besides, the debates in the field have been shifting from a single macro counter-narrative to pluralized micro-counter narratives owing to the various trajectories of narratives in use (Grossman, 2013:328).

In pursuing a counter-narrative, there is the need to appreciate the Global Jihad meta-narratives. These meta-narratives are placed in four distinct narratives. The first is the political narrative which examines the so-called evils of the West. The second is the moral narrative. This narrative isolates the contradictions of liberal democracies and how they claim values such as freedom, equality and justice and yet these values remain idealistic and unrealizable. The third is the religious narrative which justifies a violent struggle in the name of protecting Islam from a crusader West. The fourth narrative is the social psychological narrative which relies on the practice of providing labels to those that subscribe to the Jihad and those who do not. The social psychological narrative has created the distinction between the infidel- those not subscribing to the Jihad and the ‘true believer’ for those that take it up in their struggles against social exclusion (Leuprecht et al. 2010:43). Narratives applied by some of the radical groups should be read more as enablers of radicalization. Nonetheless,
narratives or ideologies are in most cases learnt after an individual has joined a radical group. Therefore, it can be argued that narratives from a rational choice point of view promote group cohesion for action (Leuprecht et al. 2010).

Furthermore, it remains extremely difficult to produce an effective counter narrative strategy owing to the multiple and complex mechanisms involved in the global jihad narrative. The challenge being that at the individual level, it is extremely difficult to isolate the jihad narrative that appeals to that personal level. It is on this account, that it is challenging to produce an overarching counter-narrative strategy (Leuprecht et al. 2010:46).

Scholarship from the emerging field of narrative criminology however, suggests that insufficient attention has been paid to the resilience of community-initiated counter-narratives directed against youth recruitment into political violence. In others words, how are the narratives of crime delegitimized at the community levels and in this case relating to radicalization (Joosse et al. 2015). There is thus a criticism that policy makers should not only rely on executing counter-narratives on the basis of the often-criticized theories/models of radicalization.

Instead, the focus should be on tapping community knowledge on existing counter-narratives already in use at individual and communal levels. Tapping onto this counter-narrative would require that both public policy makers and researchers stop the characterization of ‘risk’ communities. However, they should learn from already existing counter-narratives. This is an approach that has worked among the Somali Canadians who are already delegitimizing the narratives of Al-Shabaab recruiters. They are delegitimizing recruitment narratives by unpacking the notions of ‘coolness’, ‘trickery’ and ‘religious perversions’ that recruiters have been applying. In doing so, the counter-narratives have among others positioned recruits as weak minded while critiquing the often-linked theological standpoints to violence (Joosse et al. 2015).
Focus group discussions and individual interviews in Eastleigh and Majengo, Nairobi indicated the existence of several counter-radicalization initiatives. These initiatives were chiefly driven by community groups and religious structures. Two counter-radicalization strands were identified. Counter-narratives run both at the community and religious levels. Taking on a religious level, there had been an establishment of counter-radicalization programs through the platform of the Pumwani Riyadha Mosque in the Majengo area. It suffices to mention that this particular Mosque has been securitized in the past as a conduit for radicalization especially when the Mosque Committee had been headed by the Ahmed Imani Ali (around 2006-2009). He is the current leader of the Al-Hijra wing of the Al-Shabaab in Kenya. He also previously headed the Muslim Youth Centre (MYC) then based in Majengo but with an influence in the entire Pumwani area including Eastleigh. However, there was mixed perspectives in respondents’ accounts of whether the Mosque had indeed ever been a conduit of radicalization.

The counter-narratives interventions discussed in this section were primarily from non-state perspectives. The expected outcome as respondents noted was to delegitimize the radicalization narratives. Counter-narratives platforms relied on both public and religious spaces. At the religious spaces, this included sermons and lectures focused on counter-radicalization. In the public spaces, the messaging had been reliant on community radio, popular theatre, play and dramas as dissemination channels.

Counter-narratives need to be context specific and should respond to the particular radicalization mechanisms. This is because there is no single profile or pathway to radicalization. Rather it is a complex process that departs from linear perspectives. What is required is a bottom-up approach that responds to individuals considered vulnerable to radicalization while paying attention to the multiple logics of radicalization (Leuprecht et al. 2010). This is in concurrence with previous research that has considered radicalization as a
mechanism that can be influenced at the individual, group, and mass levels. At the individual level, individuals are often radicalized out of personal grievances. At the group level, individuals through group think find a convergence of interests and goals. The mass level of radicalization is influenced by a state’s discriminatory practices against groups, including in group characterizations of the enemy. The mass level of radicalization constructs within the group the enemy to be attacked collectively (McCauley & Moskalenko, 2008).

Field findings in Majengo and Eastleigh demonstrated both individual and group mechanisms of radicalization. These mechanisms are non-linear because they are dependent on the context. Relying on field findings and in line with previous research, youth radicalization with possibilities of violent extremism proceeded mainly out of personal grievances directed at the Kenyan state (Botha, 2013). These personal grievances are framed on the argument that Islam was under threat in Kenya. The basis for this reasoning was inferred from the securitizing acts and speeches of government officials. Governmental narratives claimed that a section of the Muslim community in Kenya was blame for youth radicalization and which could lead to acts of violent extremism. Governmental narratives pointed to the agency of particular religious spaces and individuals claimed to be responsible for youth indoctrination into violence.

In response to radicalization threats, the Kenyan state has mounted varied counter-terrorism measures. These measures have ranged from increased security surveillance to presence in Eastleigh and Majengo areas. In addition to state surveillance, periodic security raids in the two neighbourhoods have been a regular norm. Kenya’s intervention in Somalia in late 2011 has been used as a recruitment narrative. Respondents observed that the 2011 intervention was now being framed as Kenya’s assault on Islam. To increase the persuasion of the argument, Kenya’s intervention was constructed as a Christian nation attacking an

103 Various interviews with police officers in Nairobi in February and March 2017.
Islamic nation. Interviews with security officials experienced in counter-terrorism would challenge this perspective by noting that the intervention was meant to neutralize a non-state actor operating in the state of Somalia and who had become an existential threat to the state.

Taking the tropes of Christianity versus Islam, the Al-Shabaab recruits were waging war against the Kenyan troops and other African Union troops on claims of defending Islam. This narrative would be justified on Jihad teachings. For Al-Shabaab recruits, the religious dimension in the pursuit of waging a global Jihad is emphasized.

Therefore, analysis of interviews in the two locations in Nairobi (Majengo and Eastleigh), showed that counter narratives had proceeded at two levels. These had been at the civil and the religious levels. These are discussed in the next section.

5.3.4.1 Counter Narratives at the Civil Sphere

Data gathered through group and individual interviews including participant observations pointed to the mounting of counter-narratives at the civic sphere. These interventions had been organized by community-based organizations, including individual actors. Some of the community actors had the support of external partners. Community level forums were regularly conducted in public and social spaces (community halls, social halls, including schools) with a focus on preventive interventions. Counter-narratives at this level were being used to challenge radicalization narratives. The counter-narratives had been largely focused on deconstructing concepts such as Jihad. Interviews indicated that a proper interpretation of Jihad would reduce the incentives to mobilize political violence in the name of religion. This form of counter-narrative was especially pertinent for new convertees of Islamic faith and who were yet to gain a proper mastery of their faith. As this religious leader interviewed in Eastleigh noted that:

“Radicalizers are targeting new convertees...Kusilimishwa (conversion from other faiths to Islam) is a process. They then are progressively radicalized and eventually they are ready for
violence. These individuals are being targeted for lack of proper religious knowledge. Gradually, a Salafi ideology is used and which calls for the violence so that the ‘Koran’ can become the law of the land.\textsuperscript{104}

Interviews also indicated that counter-narratives were adaptable to change owing to the dynamism of the recruitment networks. Recruitment networks were known to change tactics every so often to escape state surveillance for instance. Whereas recruitment networks were claimed to use religious platforms such as Mosques, other spaces were equally adopted. One of the respondents argued that:

“The challenge remains how to identify recruitment tactics, you only get to know the tactics of the recruiters once these guys are arrested. Al-Shabaab uses individuals to recruit for a short while and move on to other individuals quite fast. There is also the view that all recruitment to radicalization happens in Mosques- there are as section of Kadhis, who strongly believe in Jihad, and who interpret the Koran wrongly to justify violence. The tactics keep changing. Some are using charitable organizations and fake employment.”\textsuperscript{105}

For counter-narratives to be effective, the recruitment tactics needed to be understood. One of the relied upon narrative has been a claim of Muslims oppression by the Kenyan government and hence the necessity for violence (Hansen, 2016). Counter-narratives experiences from the field had in the meanwhile been focused on what it means to be a citizen. In addition, they were focused on practising a peaceful form of religion. Some of the channels adopted included community dialogue forums, role plays and short skits each geared to countering the radicalizing narratives.

5.3.4.2 Counter-narratives at the Religious Sphere

At the religious sphere, counter-narratives had proceeded on a number of levels. One of the levels was the interpretation of the religious texts concerning violence. In specific

\textsuperscript{104} Interview with a male Christian religious leader in Eastleigh, Nairobi, October 14, 2015.

\textsuperscript{105} Interview with a male police officer in Kamukunji, Nairobi, November 09, 2016.
terms, the true meaning of Jihad was emphasized. Multiple respondents experienced in counter-radicalization initiatives argued that a key entry point for radicalizers had been their one-sided interpretation of Jihad. The focus of the radicalizers being to push their interpretation of Jihad as a holy war against the so-called infidels (can be read as non-believers outside of Islam). This was a narrative that the radicalizers had been keen to globalize with the argument that Islam needed to defend its itself against a perceived western assault and which Kenya had become part of.

It was in this context, that justification for violence would be made. Kenya’s unilateral intervention to Somalia in 2011 to wage war against Al-Shabaab would be carefully narrated as an assault on Muslim brothers and sisters in this regard. Focus group discussions and interviews in Nairobi observed that radicalizers were reliant on portions of religious texts and the posting of videos on You-Tube advancing the justification for war against the so called ‘enemies of Islam’. This interpretation required Muslims and more so the youth to defend Islam. Violence would be part of this strategy.

The counter-narratives at the religious sphere were discounting this interpretation of the violence termed as ‘holy war’. The entry point for the counter-messaging being first to discount the arguments of the ‘holy war.’ Multiple respondents with experience in counter radicalization initiatives such as with conversation spaces and dialogue forums noted several engagements in this process. The first engagement was an emphasis on the place of non-violence in Islam.

In emphasizing the place of non-violence in Islam, the sanctity of human life was reiterated as key faith principle. Interviews with religious leaders and peace workers working within Eastleigh and Majengo indicated that countering the Jihad narratives had been

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106 Various individual and focus group discussions in Majengo and Eastleigh Nairobi, March 2017.
problematic owing to the different schools of thought within Islam. Multiple interviews pointed to the influence of Salafi-Wahhabism and how it has been said to pursue the return to ‘puritanical Islam’. However, there was lack of consensus on whether Salafi-Wahhabism could be blamed at all for claims of promoting violence. In calling for a ‘puritanical version of Islam’, this variant of Islam called for the traditional interpretation of Islamic practices as during Prophet Mohamed’s time.

A key thread for the counter-narrative had been the proper interpretation of the concept of Jihad. It would be extremely reductionist to argue on the overall that the Wahhabist movement ideas are fully responsible for radicalization across different global contexts. Wahhabism is a movement traceable to Saudi Arabia and has in certain instances through its Madrassa schools (religious schools) been linked to radicalization (Woodward et al. 2010). A section of Madrassas influenced by Wahhabism had indoctrinated youth to take up violence.

In Indonesia, Madrassas are established as formal schools along western lines where both secular and religious education is taught. This formal organization of Madrassas in Indonesia including parts of South East Asia is different from contexts such as Kenya (Woodward et al. 2010). Madrassas in Kenya, the field findings note, have mostly been informal with a focus on religious education. Claims of their previous linkages with radicalization and terrorism has meant that they have come under tight government control.

However, Madrassas have in the Kenyan context existed in providing religious education while formal schools have provided secular education. They are informal and do not directly come into the regulation of the state. A reading of fieldwork notes indicated that they ought to be regulated by the state for instance in their curriculum development and application. A respondent in Eastleigh went ahead to compare and contrast the outcome of the secular versus ‘madrassa’ schooling. The respondent observed that:
“Muslims have one side of education- which is religious and taught through Madrassas, in my view this secular education is better placed. It allows for critical questioning. Religious education does not. It thus creates individuals that are one sided and do not like to appreciate other perspectives.”

Key informant interviews in Majengo, Nairobi found the existence of counter-radicalization programs at the religious sphere as early as 2009. A local Imam in Majengo recounted that counter-radicalization initiatives at the community and at the Mosque level were mounted in response to the exodus of hundreds of youth that had left to join Al-Shabaab in Somalia. He remarked that:

“There has been controversy in the public domain and in the security circles about how some Mosques around here such as Pumwani Riyadha Mosque had been a site for youth radicalization in 2009… Some individuals in the past that were associated with the Mosque had actually been linked with radicalization and had even recruited youth from Majengo environs.”

It was on this basis that religious leaders and in partnership with other community organizations that counter-narratives began to be mounted. Indeed, Hansen (2016) gives a considerate estimate of the exit of between 200-500 youth. Youth radicalization in Majengo, Nairobi while having been prominent in the 2009-2013 period, is traceable to around 2006. One of the dynamics and which has been referred to in the previous chapter related to the activities of the Muslim Youth Centre (MYC). The MYC would later transition to form al-Hijra and become the wing of the Al-Shabaab in Kenya (Amble & Hitchens, 2014; Anderson & McKnight, 2014; Mkutu, 2018). The activities of the MYC in Majengo were further linked to the Answar sect based in Kwale.

Individual interviews and focus group discussions with Majengo residents indicated among others factors such as the role of religious indoctrination in influencing youth to join

107 Interview with a male Christian leader, in Eastleigh, Nairobi, October 14, 2015.

the Al-Shabaab. Religious indoctrination has however been disputed as a pathway to radicalization (Jackson, 2012). Data from the focus group discussions and individuals interviews in Majengo and Eastleigh, reiterated the input of wrong religious interpretations as an entry point for youth radicalization. This is an opinion that was expressed by multiple respondents. Jackson (2012) discounts the links between religion and radicalization. He further observes instead that it is political grievances that push individuals to join groups such as the Al-Shabaab and Al-Qaeda (Jackson, 2012).

Consequently, the recruiters were claimed to be relying on the frame of religion to weave in grievances directed at the Muslim nation by contextualizing it to neighbouring Somalia. The call for mainly the youth to join the Somali based Islamist group being premised on defending fellow Muslims from external aggression claims. This would be contextualized through interventions such as the African Union Mission in Somalia since 2007.\(^\text{109}\)

The findings from the focus group discussions and individual interviews in light of Kenya’s military intervention in 2011 indicates that the theme of Jihad had become more prominent as a pathway to radicalization. Both focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with long term residents of Majengo recounting that youth disappearances to Somalia were more widespread in the 2009-2013 period. They argued that while radicalization was ongoing, the recruitment patterns had changed. Multiple respondents’ accounts indicate that vulnerable youth were fed with the wrong interpretation of Jihad. True Jihad involved leading a pious life by purposing to be moral in pursuit of their everyday

\(^{109}\) Focus group discussions in Majengo and Eastleigh, in Nairobi, June 2017.
activities. True Jihad a respondent observed meant striving to be the best in one’s vocation and not the simplistic misinterpretation of waging a war in pursuit of religious goals.\textsuperscript{110}

Counter-radicalization initiatives at the religious sphere was part of a collective social responsibility to pre-empt youth radicalization. Focus group data and individual interviews with religious leaders in both Eastleigh and Majengo had mentioned that they had been necessitated to adopt preventative mechanisms to counter the radicalizers. However, the preventative mechanisms that the respondents mentioned had to be launched as early as 2009 when hundreds of youth had left for Somalia. Furthermore, counter-narratives have on the overall focused on correct interpretation of the texts to deny the radicalizers opportunities to misinterpret them.

An overarching theme for the counter-narratives had been to seek the proper interpretation of the concept of Jihad. A religious leader in Eastleigh, Nairobi argued that the challenge lay with what section of religious leaders placed emphasis on in their teaching of Jihad. Two dominants versions of Jihad needed to be explained. One version emphasized leading a pious life. This was termed as peaceful. The second version was a defensive Jihad. This was the offensive version and had come to be associated with newer social movements such as the ‘Islamic State’. The challenge for counter-narratives remained the presence of different schools of thought in Islam and their interpretations. Notwithstanding these varied perspectives, religious leaders keen on counter-radicalization sought to delegitimize misleading interpretations of Jihad using religious spaces.\textsuperscript{111} The point of taking ‘offensive’ positions against the so-called enemies of Islam through targeted strikes, bombings and the like is in itself contradicts the sanctity of human life as espoused in Islam. Nonetheless, there is no consensus on the interpretation of Jihad within the Islamic faith (Saikal, 2016).

\textsuperscript{110} Interview with a male resident of Majengo, in Nairobi, March 3, 2017.

\textsuperscript{111} Interview with a religious leader in Eastleigh, Nairobi, March 3, 2017.
As part of a longer-term strategy to counter radicalization narratives, there was a review of the Madrassa curriculum post 2009 in the Majengo area.\textsuperscript{112} The findings of the focus group discussions observed that the review was to ensure that pupils enrolled in Madrassas got the right message. Furthermore, interviews pointed out in Eastleigh and Majengo areas that madrassas were claimed to be indoctrinating spaces for radicalization in the future.\textsuperscript{113} An Imam in Majengo, Nairobi noted that a review of the Madrassa curriculum was a response to youth on the radicalization path or had already been radicalized.\textsuperscript{114}

Revisiting the madrassa curriculum was in part meant to reawaken the value of religious education as a strategy to build long term peace in Majengo. In emphasizing religious education and taking a keen interest in its delivery, this approach it was hoped would pacify violent extremism threats in the future. A respondent argued that an individual that was properly grounded in religion would hardly engage in violent extremism. Even though there exists multiple pathways that influence the radicalization process, a section of religious leaders considered their neighbourhoods to be vulnerable.

### 5.3.5 Citizenship Debates

As part of the counter-narrative initiatives, there had been engagement in citizenship debates. These debates centred broadly on the responsibilities of citizenship. These conversations argued that a citizen needed to be patriotic and law abiding if the country was to enjoy peace and tranquillity. These debates were meant to dissuade individuals from taking up political violence even in instances where they held grievances against the state. The importance of these debates was that they offered opportunities to address raised grievances through non-violent ways. Moreover, these citizenship debates laid emphasis on among

\textsuperscript{112} Interview with a female community peace worker, in Majengo, Nairobi, March 4, 2017.

\textsuperscript{113} Mixed focus group discussion, in Eastleigh, Nairobi March 3, 2017.

\textsuperscript{114} Interview with an Imam, in Majengo, Nairobi, March 3, 2017.
others on identity, belonging, and associated responsibilities. Therefore, these debates were considered important given the primacy that radicalizers have paid to the realities of Muslim marginalization. These claims had also included difficulties in accessing vital identification documents such as identity cards and passports from the Kenyan state.

Radical groups had been keen to use these aforementioned marginalization narratives to try and drive a wedge between the citizens and the state. When tied together with the long-held claims of Muslim marginality in Kenya, the feelings of exclusion were applied to rationalize the joining of a radical groups such as the Al-Shabaab. In recent times (2014 forward), the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq (ISIS) has also been recruiting. Countering the negative citizenship debates had been relied upon as a pre-emptive strategy. In stimulating these kinds of conversations, it was principally hoped that the vulnerable youth would come to appreciate some of the radicalization entry points.

Moving forward, the strategy according to a religious leader based in Nairobi was centred on practical interventions to navigate negative debates about exclusion for instance. Some of the felt and perceived forms of exclusion had included difficulties in accessing vital identification documents such as passports and national identity cards. These experiences were predominantly experienced in Muslim majority areas of the country. These documents were important as they conferred citizenship. Therefore, the radicalizers, had relied on these forms of exclusion attributed to the Kenyan state to justify political violence.

One of the practical steps taken by religious leaders was supporting chiefly the youth with the extra-vetting processes placed on Muslim identities in acquiring identification documents. Extra vetting by the state had been practiced as part of the counter terrorism responses post 9/11. A section of religious leaders would act as guarantors in the vetting

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115 Interview with a male religious leader in Nairobi, December 16, 2016.
process when called upon. Vetting especially of the Somali identity for state identification documents had predated the 9/11 era and began in the *Shifta* war period (1963-1967) (Lochery, 2012). The *Shifta* war had been a secessionist attempt by the then Northern Frontier District to be part of Somalia (Lochery, 2012).

A second part of the strategy focused on using the religious platforms to speak to the procedures and the constitutional documents required to access these vital identification documents as a case in point. This strategy was considered particularly outstanding as it did not seek to counter religious narratives directly but rather provided practical steps in accessing vital identification documents. A senior official of Supreme Council of Muslims in Kenya (SUPKEM) noted that responding directly to the narratives of the radicalizers was counter-productive and would create further opportunities for radicalizing narratives. The SUPKEM official remarked that:

> We are behind the scenes to encourage the Imams to counter the narratives but in an intelligent way… we are not confronting the extremist guys head on …We are not saying that this narrative is wrong in a straight forward manner, we are encouraging Imams in our networks to immunize the situation before it occurs. If for instance the extremists are talking about Muslims being denied national identification cards and that they are unwanted in this country… This then being used to claim a global Islam under assault and hence joining groups such as ISIS for example. If an Imam, gets this narrative, one should provide facts on how to access vital documents such as the ID, the procedures and the relevant explanations on the process and any form of support that they can offer… In this way, they are countering part of the radicalization narrative, but without the direct confrontation, where one would be labelled a coward or not a true Muslim…”

The interviewed SUPKEM official averred instead that these practical interventions were in essence pre-emptive and meant to weaken the marginalization narrative as relied upon by the radicalizers. What the above excerpt demonstrates is the value of having a robust

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strategy that goes beyond challenging the wrong interpretation of religious texts. This also offered opportunity to pre-empt grievances that could be tapped by radicalization networks. In addressing some of the grievances, they were also silencing schools of thought that are claimed to be radical in their interpretations of Islam. A section of respondents claimed the agency of Salafism as pushing a radical version of Islam. This perspective however remained disputed across respondents. The alternative observation was that not all Salafism subscribers were radical in their interpretation of Islam. A section of respondents however argued that radicalizers principally relying on Salafism had been promoting the mobilization of political violence as a way to defend Islam.\textsuperscript{117}

The marginalization card and its causal linkages to radicalization remained difficult to prove. The marginalization narrative card when tied alongside other historical marginalization faced by select groups and identities could create potential routes to radicalization. Respondents at the Kenyan Coast for instance tied ‘land injustices’ as an additional factor to the marginalization card. The foregoing complaint being that land access was tipped in favour of non-locals. This material reality often bringing into sharp focus the debates on indigeneity and who belonged to the land (Goldsmith, 2011; Parkin, 1989).

The land question and the injustices can be traced to the pre-independence period. It was the Land Title Ordinance (LTO) of 1908 that would confer all Coastal land not under cultivation to be a property of the crown. This status would be confirmed by the Land Ordinance of 1915 which vested land in the crown. This has been claimed to be the genesis of the land question at the Coast. In the post-independence Kenya, access to land at the Coast was influenced by ethnic patronage and skewed settlement schemes that favoured up-country residents. The fact that a number of agricultural settlement schemes privileged highland communities exacerbated the marginalization of the local residents (Goldsmith, 2011; Parkin, 1989).

\textsuperscript{117} Interview with a Sheikh (religious leader), in Majengo, Nairobi, February 17, 2017.
Berman, 2017). Whereas Coastal residents lacked land tenure rights, their upcountry residents got more proportional access to land titles in the region (Goldsmith, 2011).

State policy since the colonial era which continued in the post-independence period placed land as a primary factor of production while restricting expansion of indigenous cultivation (Goldsmith, 2011). Notably too, there has been a systematic displacement of land in private hands to government and by extension leading to elite capture (Goldsmith, 2011). This would contribute to the indigenous Coastal residents’ feelings of marginalization with regards to land access. This is a legitimate grievance that has been picked by the Mombasa Republican Council (MRC). The MRC while founded on the land grievances ultimately desire to secede from the Kenyan Coast (Goldsmith, 2011; Willis & Gona, 2012). MRC among other concerns also claims the take-over of the former Ramisi Sugar Estate and the Rea Vipingo Sisal Estate as evidence of marginalization and elite capture of their land. In addition, the Lake Kenyatta settlement scheme in Mpeketoni, Lamu, ended up settling displaced Kikuyu households from Kiambu (Goldsmith, 2011).

In Kwale, the Kamba community from Kitui are said to have benefited disproportionately at the expense of the locals. In the Kwale settlement scheme, 12 ha plot allocations, 57 percent went to the Kamba community with the Mijikenda receiving only thirty three percent (Goldsmith, 2011). Communities tensions around land access have in part been spilled into political violence. For instance, in Lamu County, the Mpeketoni attack of July 2014 was justified on need to clear ‘Christians’ from ‘Muslim lands’ (Butime, 2014). It is some of these narratives that counter-narratives were directed at. While the more widely spoken narrative was a revenge on Kenya’s invasion in Somalia in 2011, wider social tensions owing to inequalities in Lamu County stretching from colonial to post-independence were referenced. In addition, debates on coastal secession could be the explanations too (Human Rights Watch, 2015; Butime, 2014).
Other aspects of marginalization have originated mainly from skewed socio-economic development in certain parts of the country (Cannon & Pkalya, 2017:10). Counter-narratives whether at the religious or the civil sphere are however dependent on the credibility of the source. Whereas religious leaders and community leaders possess credibility to mediate in counter-narratives, they are instances where their credibility can be diminished.

Religious leaders while involved in counter narratives have faced a host of challenges. These have included being out of touch with youth grievances and frustrations or being labelled as sell-outs when they have cooperated with government (Cherney, 2016). The latter perspective relates to the trust deficiencies between communities and government. These trust deficiencies had resulted from the heavy-handed responses of the government in counter-terrorism (Botha, 2014). Furthermore, interviews noted that government agencies engaged in arbitrary arrests and detentions, raiding Mosques and so in the name of counter-terrorism had served to weaken community trust levels. The resultant was minimal cooperation with government agencies.\textsuperscript{118}

5.3.6 Youth Economic Empowerment

Respondents in both Majengo and Eastleigh reported adopting youth empowerment initiatives as a part of counter-radicalization. In their view, empowering the youth to become self-reliant economically was a long-term strategy to reduce radicalization vulnerabilities. Notwithstanding the disputed links between youth radicalization and poverty (Piazza, 2006), the various components of youth empowerment pursued had been premised on this perspective. Respondents across the field work sites of Mombasa and Nairobi often claimed that the radicalization process was significantly influenced by poverty levels. It was on this premise that pre-empting radicalization threats required this practical intervention.

\textsuperscript{118} Interview with a female grassroots community worker, in Majengo, Nairobi, May 6, 2017
Interviews indicated that economic empowerment ranged from soft skills training to assets acquisitions for income generating activities. Some of the training ranged from business training, driving courses among others. In terms of asset support, an Imam in Majengo, Nairobi recount how a partnership with an international development agency led to the acquisition and distribution of at least 100 motor cycles popularly known in Kiswahili as *Boda Bodas* in late 2009 to the youth in Majengo. This initiative while launched by religious leadership, was part of a local response when hundreds of youth from Majengo had joined the Al-Shabaab terror network.

This intervention from the perspective of an interviewed Imam was considered to be a preventative mechanism for youth at risk of radicalization. The *Boda Boda* then provided a regular form of livelihood. This mode of transport is preferred by Nairobi residents as they easily navigate typical Nairobi traffic gridlocks. It was clear in respondents account that one could not easily measure whether being economically empowered could be linked with reduction in recruitment. The motor bike taxis are also relatively affordable in comparison to normal saloon type taxis. They however have also earned the double negative images for aiding crime and accidents some of which have been fatal (CVPT, 2017). What is remarkable about these kinds of economic empowerment is their potential to reduce individuals’ vulnerabilities to radicalization likely to lead to violent extremism. The potential for this intervention is that a section of the youth at risk would have a supply of income thereby reducing their risk vulnerabilities.

Relying on observation in both Majengo and Eastleigh spanning over twelve months, a constant notable feature has been the presence of youth hangouts joints popularly known as ‘bases’. Bases are applied throughout this study as social spaces where peers met for

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119 Mixed focus group discussion, in Majengo, Nairobi, March 4, 2017.

120 Interview with an Imam in Majengo, Nairobi, March 3, 2017.
socialization (Search for Common Ground, 2017). Largely out of peer pressure, youth have been ‘hanging out’ with their peers as they engage in chewing *Miraa* (Khat) a popular stimulant, or the relatively affordable ‘*Muguka*’ (a leafy stimulant in the Khat family). It is these kinds of ‘bases’ that create opportunities for petty crime which can graduate to hardcore crime, and in the process, provide a potential recruitment pool.

Additionally, a Majengo respondent highlighted that radicalizers had their targets and often studied the vulnerabilities of individuals they wanted to recruit. Vulnerable individuals without a reliable income became potential targets. While field findings indicated that the radicalization process was influenced by a range of experiences and motivations, this economic empowerment became a key pillar of their preventative initiatives. Therefore, economic empowerment in this respect was a direct counter to minimize the lure of radicalizers that often-promised financial compensation in return for recruitment. Driving this particular initiative was the agency of a section of Muslim leaders in Majengo area of Nairobi keen on reducing youth vulnerabilities to radicalization.

Furthermore, the respondents observed the place of multiple partnerships in the youth-empowerment approach. Hence, the respondents working with various community-based organizations in the area noted that they did not only seek external partnerships for their economic empowerment programs but also sought to link youth with existing government economic empowerment funds. This strategy worked through youth sensitization on available Kenyan government funding and business opportunities. These funds included the youth enterprise fund and the women fund. Government business tender reservations for business tenders for youth, women and persons with disabilities which were currently pegged at 30 percent would be spoken about. This sensitization respondents mentioned was important for

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121 Regular fieldwork observation in Majengo, Nairobi in 2016-17

122 Interview with a Majengo resident, in Nairobi, May 5, 2017.
the youth. Even though, the youth had an idea of the existence of these funds, they needed to be oriented on their application procedures.

Beyond the lack of awareness, other factors had also weakened the successful uptake of the program. These included corruption, low levels of education and the inability of the youth to write proposals. The respondents also noted that economic empowerment programmes would help to minimize youth vulnerabilities as they created economic opportunities. Furthermore, field findings have indicated that one of the vulnerabilities relied upon by radicalizers is poor socio-economic profiles of potential recruits. It is a pool that could be potentially lured with financial promises and prospects for a better life in return for joining the movement. Financial motivations have also influenced youth to join the radical groups as previous research has established (Botha, 2014).

5.4 Community Based Initiatives in Likoni, Mombasa County, Kenya

Using a case study of Likoni, Mombasa a number of community-based interventions to counter youth radicalization were identified. These included the use of counter-narratives, neighbourhood watches/community policing, harmonizing Madaris curriculum among others.

5.4.1 Counter-Narratives Strategies

In Likoni, participants interviewed noted the use of alternative messaging by locals to counter the messaging of the radical groups. They had relied first on a process of capacity building for identified change agents. The identified change agents included religious leaders, community workers, and opinion leaders. The capacity building was focused on identifying the religious narratives used by ‘radical’ preachers in the past. As observed in the previous chapter on the process and trends of youth radicalization, religious ideology had been framed as justification for the uptake of political violence. This had involved seeking the proper

123 Fieldnotes of mixed focus group discussion(men, women, youth) in Likoni, Mombasa, June 7, 2017.
interpretation of the often-misquoted texts justifying violence. The change agents have used the religious and social spaces to seek to counter the varied narratives of the radicalizers. These ranged from debates on identity, belonging, citizenship, and so on as a way to cement the ethos of nationalism that radicalizers had utilized.  

Countering ideological narratives could also predispose individuals to harm. Interviews in Mombasa linked the death of some prominent Sheikhs there to some of the radical networks that were displeased on their counter-radicalization initiatives. These included Sheikh Mohamed Idris, then Chairman of the Council of Imams and Preachers of Kenya (CIPK), Coast chapter. Interviews in Mombasa also mentioned an intervention that had ran across varied channels known as the Building Resilience Against Violent Extremism campaign (BRAVE).

Respondents in both focus group discussions and in-depth interviews noted counter-narrative work took the form of trainings and targeted messaging in audio-visual adverts. Some of the training modules that the respondents interviewed during the focus group discussions had taken included early warning signs on the radicalization process. Some of the discussed signs during the training included sudden change in behaviour, such as arriving home late, secluding oneself, becoming critical all over sudden with aspects of poor governance which were attributed to the state. Being critical of western ideals such as television, education all over sudden were considered to be potential signs. Trained respondents in their reflections argued that they had been equipped with a clear grasp of the dynamics that surrounded the radicalization process in their localities. Thus, they felt they were in a better position to counter the recruitment narratives.  

124 Interview with a religious leader in Likoni, Mombasa, August 24, 2016.

125 A mixed focus group discussion with youth (men, women) in Likoni, Mombasa, June 7, 2017.
The key focus of the BRAVE campaign was to counter recruitment narratives that justified violence using the concept of Jihad. Both the individual and focus group discussions indicated that the program was useful in debating the varied usage of the Jihad concept. This then had allowed respondents additional knowledge to convene community debates on the same as part of demystifying the misinterpretations. Debating the concept had become particularly useful for the new convertees of the Islamic faith who were yet to properly grasp their new faith.

In Mombasa County and in the wider Coastal region, the Coast Interfaith Council of Clerics-Trust (CICC), a grouping that brought together various faiths in the Coast working on peaceful co-existence have also engaged in counter-radicalization. It has also partnered with like-minded organizations with similar goals across and beyond Mombasa County. In addition to inter-faith dialogues, the trust worked on counter-narratives by seeking a proper interpretation of verses that were being misused. While the organization had been working by convening conversations with religious leaders to contextualize verses that were being misinterpreted, they also developed print materials that would advance the counter-narrative work. These print materials sought to contextualize both Christian verses and narratives from the Holy Quran that had been used to encourage violence. For instance, the training materials references the Holy Quran as below to show how particular Hadiths were being misused:


“To those against whom war is made, permission is given to (fight) because they are wronged-and verily, Allah is most powerful.’’

Additionally, as narrated by Prophet Mohamad (PBUH), “I have been commanded by Allah to fight with them until they submit that there is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his Messenger.’’ The above Hadith was said to be misused by those who intended to mobilize and use violence on non-Muslims until they embraced Islam. In contextualizing the above,
the conversations discussed the meaning of Jihad. The reinforced view was that Jihad was not to kill or fight but rather to struggle for one’s rights or to escape from prosecution. It is mostly referenced as a struggle for the betterment of the individual (CICC, n.d.). For CICC, there was thus value in engaging with religious scriptures as a way to promote peaceful co-existence. They not only discussed and contextualized verses that were being misinterpreted but also those that spoke to peaceful co-existence.

5.4.2 Harmonizing Madaris Curriculum in Likoni, Mombasa: A Religious Response

Interviews in Likoni, Mombasa with Islamic religious leaders pointed to a reviewing of the Madaris (religious schools) curriculum as a preventative strategy. Reviewing the curricula had also been necessitated by the view that some of the content being taught in Madaris was being used for violent extremist purposes. This preventative action had been occasioned by the rise of youth radicalization in the area and in the wider Coast region. In the view of interviewed religious leaders, having a unified and a hence a centralized curriculum would ensure control and direction of the syllabus covered in religious schools.

Some respondents argued that Madaris have been used as entry point for youth radicalization in the Coastal region and beyond.126 This is because the Kenyan state has previously securitized a section of Madaris or simply religious schools as being part of the radicalization process (Mogire & Mkutu, 2011). Similarly, in neighbouring Zanzibar, the government and influential individuals within the Islamic movements there have been calling for the introduction of a common curriculum for Madaris including their centralized control. Tanzania has previously expressed fears that Madaris may be breeding grounds for radical Islamist movements (Turner, 2009:255).

126 Focus group discussions with male religious leaders in Likoni, Mombasa, March 16, 2017.
Religious leaders interviewed in Likoni argued that this initiative to harmonize the Madaris curriculum was meant to reduce the threats of violent extremism in the County in the longer term. The rationale for the curriculum harmonization was centred on the larger goal of providing a proper interpretation of the religion. This intervention which begun in 2009 in Kenya’s South Coast was a response to the presence of radical religious leaders within the larger Coast region.

Furthermore, radical religious leaders had been misinterpreting the religion to lure individuals to join radical groups such as the Al-Shabaab. The presence of some of these radical religious leaders at the Coast became an overarching motivation for religious leaders at the South Coast to craft a unifying curriculum. Five religious leaders were interviewed through key informant interviews in addition to nine religious leaders that were interviewed in a focus group discussion. These religious leaders associated with non-radical religious spaces. They hoped it would be used across the religious schools. In addition to the curricula being used for grounding students with the proper interpretation of religion broadly, it emphasized a counter-radicalization theme as noted by a respondent:

“Within our religious network, and in developing a unified madaris curriculum, we found it prudent to bring on board a counter-radicalization theme… bringing on board this theme would provide a proper interpretation of Islam. We want to build the attitude of a Muslim from an early age so that they are not susceptible to violence… We want our children to be fed with the correct religious interpretation.”

The above quote of an interviewed religious leader speaks principally to the claimed agency between the misinterpretation of religious texts and radicalization. By seeking a proper interpretation of Islam, the effect this respondent hoped would reduce the vulnerabilities of being lured into radicalization. By placing an emphasis on the proper religious interpretation and by grounding children and youth at their formative stages, the end

127 Interview with a religious leader in Likoni, Mombasa, March 16, 2017.
results the religious leaders hoped would be more pious and tolerant Muslims. In deepening a counter-radicalization theme, the curricula also sought to specifically locate some of the most commonly misused scriptures justifying religious violence.

As part of rolling out the unified Madaris curriculum, this religious network worked with local Imams in Likoni, thus broadening their religious network. This network has over time sought to work with like-minded Mosques for wider community outreach about their teaching content, and their intentions. The overall intention as has been reiterated is focused on broadening their message on the correct interpretation of Islam. However, not all religious leaders had agreed to participate owing to doctrinal differences.

A respondent mentioned that a plan for similar intervention running across Mombasa County and in partnership with the County government had been strategized. The expressed government intervention could be read as a way of the state’s intervention in the religious sphere. This could be read as the state ‘s apprehension that failures to exercise control of the religious schools could create radicalization avenues. Interviews indicated that this curriculum had been rolled out in a section of madaris. This is a perspective that was supported by in-depth interviews with government officials experienced in counter-terrorism.

Interviewed officials gave accounts of Mosques spread across Mombasa, Nairobi among other Counties as sites where youth were not only being prepared for indoctrination but also for recruitment. For example, the Masjid Musa Mosque in Majengo, Mombasa was claimed to have been a radicalization hub in late 2013 and early 2014. This recruitment being not only for Al-Shabaab but also for Daesh (Islamic State). An interviewed security official gave an account of a group of youth that had been intercepted by security agencies as they attempted to cross over to Uganda, then to Sudan and onward to Libya where they were to
join Daesh. The youth were intercepted in Eldoret town, in the North Rift of Kenya on their way to Libya.\(^{128}\)

Having a harmonized curriculum was an attempt to standardize religious teaching to ensure that it did not corrupt the minds of young children to take up violent extremism. While Madaris and Mosques have been sites of youth radicalization, they constituted the ever-evolving pathways to youth radicalization. Radical Madaris have been considered outside of the current context as pushing an extremist agenda. In the Indian sub-continent, for instance, there has been the presence of Madaris encouraging the uptake of political violence. The persuasion to take up violence would be framed on the basis that Islam was under threat globally and therefore a call for violent response. For example, some Madaris in Pakistani are claimed to have provided short-term violence training such as bombings to foreigners including European Muslims that had expressed interests in participating in jihad (Hippel, 2010). It has been alleged for instance that the July 2005 London bombers had spent their time in a Pakistan Madrassa (Hippel, 2010:56-57).

5.4.3 Neighbourhood Watches and Community policing in Likoni, Mombasa

An analysis of field findings from Likoni, Mombasa, revealed two forms of collective community security models that had been working in varied ways for counter-radicalization initiatives. These two models discussed are community policing and neighbourhood watches. Community policing is considered formal as it is government initiated. It works by way of community and government agencies cooperating to provide security. On the other hand, the neighbourhood watch model is largely informal. It is a home-grown solution even though it had found nodes of cooperation with the government.

\(^{128}\) Interview with a senior Police Officer, in Nairobi, February 2, 2017.
The neighbourhood watch even though now linked to the community policing forum, is a self-help model that had been working since 2010. It was a model adapted from neighbouring Tanzania. It has clustered each of the locations in Likoni with sub-sections and where credible individuals are identified to take charge of security in their neighbourhood. It then has linkages to the police and other local administrators.\(^{129}\)

Community policing strategies that have been applied in ordinary crime prevention are now considered valuable in the broad counter-terrorism domains. Notwithstanding their contestations around their applicability for crime prevention, they create opportunities for collective problem-solving strategies. This collective crime prevention strategy is dependent on the levels of trusts between the community and the police and particularly with regards to information sharing (Huq, 2016:7).

Respondents appraised the use of neighbourhood watches and community policing initiatives as preventive strategies that they had applied to counter-radicalization. These crime prevention strategies were also influenced by the nature of community police relations at particular moments. Therefore, the respondents noted that these models had not only been working in counter radicalization but also in preventing other crimes in the locality such as drug trafficking.

Using a case study of Likoni, a local community-based organization (CBO), the Likoni Community Development Program (LICODEP) had been utilizing the community policing as a preventative strategy. This group had sought linkages with the local government structures and has joined with the government initiative of community policing. The local community-based organization group has however maintained its form of neighbourhood watch. This has worked through a clustering of Likoni across various areas and each with

\(^{129}\) Key informant interview with an official of LICODEP, in Likoni, Mombasa, August 23, 2016.
elected officials mapping various forms of crime in their respective areas including youth radicalization. Whereas community policing has been in existence since 2003, around 2013, the government introduced a new security structure known as the Nyumba Kumi as mentioned before. The local CBO (LICODEP) group had maintained its neighbourhood watch model by clustering Likoni into sub-sections and each with nominated officials mapping various forms of crime in their respective areas including youth radicalization.

Respondents spoke to a number of preventative interventions that had been made possible by the use of community policing. One was to help the police in mapping the challenges of security including preventative work to counter radicalization. A key contribution of the community policing initiative was information sharing on a number of fronts. Interviews noted that this ranged from information sharing on suspicious characters in their respective neighbourhoods and who the police could open further investigations. Information sharing by the public is considered a disruptive strategy. This shared information usually opening up a basis to open up investigations into further leads (Bjørø, 2016:33).

Suspected individuals with the intent to radicalize could also be identified for police to further investigate them. Community policing additionally was termed by respondents as an input of joint problem solving in partnership with police. One security official in Majengo, Nairobi noted the whole shift in public participation that also additionally spoke to the Mombasa context. He noted that:

“There is the whole shift of public participation in the security issues such as through the Nyumba Kumi/community policing platform. The national police service act acknowledges this public participation in security. The government has been encouraging citizens to be vigilant and report suspicious individuals or groups to them. Seeking this public participation is helpful in that it allows the public to share with their security agencies their security
concerns. Criminals stays in our courts, flats, if they become suspicious, they ought to share their concerns with the police or with the administrators.”  

Moreover, the members of the community policing had the option of suggesting a number of interventions that could be adopted by the police. Drawing on participant observation on one of the community policing sessions attended during research for this dissertation in Likoni, Mombasa in August 2016, this perspective was clear. The community representatives raised names of suspicious individuals with probable links to radical groups that the police needed to investigate. In this particular meeting, names of suspects, including their locales were shared for police to investigate. These names are not recorded in the dissertation for confidentiality reasons. This was followed up with additional interviews with a section of community policing members in their various localities within Likoni sub-county in Mombasa County. Through focus group discussions and key informant interviews, respondents spoke at length of how they regularly mapped potential crime issues including radicalization which they transmitted to the police for action.

Community policing members relied on tip-offs from community members on such threats. Information sharing of this type meant that the police work became easier and in the long term would contribute to community safety. Crime mapping as respondents noted worked by way of community elders compiling incidences of crime in their localities. This had been working through a clustering of the Likoni area into sections under the leadership of designated community policing members. In each assigned locality, a community policing member identified crime patterns and incidences. The collected information formed part of the community policing discussions and which required police or other government agencies actions.

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130 Interview with a Police officer, in Majengo, Nairobi July 21, 2017.
This shift in policing from state-led policing to more community-oriented policing despite presenting challenges of confidentiality and personal safety concerns indicates a slow shift in the uptake of police reforms. Police reforms have been in place post 2003 with the support of the donor community (Omeje & Githigaro, 2012). Respondents argued that there was yet to be meaningful police reforms which would promote wider police accountability. This lack of accountability had yet to provide overall confidence for the public to cooperate optimally with the police. Personal safety concerns have arisen in instances when confidential information shared with the police by the public had leaked.

This was expressed in the fieldwork in Likoni by respondents who had suffered reprisals from criminals they had reported to the police.\textsuperscript{131} Notwithstanding some of these challenges, some level of success in crime prevention was being achieved. Whereas government officials emphasized a policing shift towards citizen-led policing through initiatives such as Nyumba Kumi and community policing, more confidence-building measures were required. Citizen-led policing was being adopted incrementally in spite of some of the confidence hurdles it had been facing.

In Likoni, there existed competition between Nyumba Kumi, local peace committees run by local administrators versus the community policing run by the national police service. In spite of some of these challenges, a section of the community and the police continued to cooperate in information sharing. The cooperation between the police and the community in counter-radicalization demonstrates in part also the changing philosophy of policing on the section of the Kenyan police.

The gradual uptake of the public in contributing to their community safety through such platforms was laudable on the overall. It demonstrated that the public had begun to

\textsuperscript{131} Findings of a focus group discussion in Likoni, Mombasa, March 16, 2017.
appreciate the value of co-delivering security with the government. This approach was complimenting various state counter-terrorism responses. These have included hard power and legislative responses. Interviews reiterated that community policing forums were encouraging members to raise awareness at the community level of some radicalization concerns through the open and accessible *barazas* (Kiswahili for meeting) held by chiefs in their respective locations. Chiefs as government administrators at the local level are required to convene regular *barazas*, where among other responsibilities they disseminate government policies.

Community policing meetings usually held at the local police station draw only a small segment of community representatives but they nevertheless represent opportunity for counter-radicalization initiatives. These remained difficult to access. For their optimum working in counter-radicalization, trust levels and accountability of the police would be essential as confidence building measures.

### 5.4.4 Community Partnerships with Government Agencies

Two community-government initiatives were found to be working in Mombasa including Likoni. One was the Mombasa County Action Plan for Prevention and Countering Violent Extremism (MCAP-PCVE) (Haki Africa/GOK, 2017). It draws its mandate from the National Strategy for Countering Violent Extremism (NSCVE) and its accompanying Guide to Developing County Action Plans (CDCAP). Second was the Mombasa County’s Strong Citizenship Framework for Public Participation.\(^{132}\) This initiative according to an interview with the County Commissioner in Mombasa was launched in early May 2017. This strategy was a localization of the Kenya’s National Counter-Terrorism Strategy launched by the

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national government in 2016. The strategy is coordinated by the Kenya’s National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC).

The national strategy advocates for community engagement as part of counter-terrorism responses. In Mombasa, a local non-governmental organization-Haki Africa has steered this process in partnership with the national government. This was through the Mombasa County Commissioner’s office. Furthermore, this strategy was developed alongside other actors engaged in counter-radicalization work. This community-state partnership had afforded an opportunity for joint problem solving. Providing opportunity for collective problem solving is itself a form of paradigm shift with regards to previous counter-terrorism responses.

The National Strategy has nine pillars and call for multi-stakeholder engagement in both reactive and preventative actions (GOK, 2016). The civil society, community-based organizations, the private sector, organs of government including members of the research community are called upon to collectively engage in counter-violent extremism work. Furthermore, the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC) is charged with the coordination of CVE interventions in the country (GOK, 2016) The other emerging intervention has been focused on building community-police relations. This has been through convening meetings especially between the youth and police in selected neighbourhoods in Mombasa as part of confidence building measures. By building confidence among the youth, it was hoped that it will create allies in them which would provide additional potentials for counter-radicalization initiatives.

In other contexts, such as the US, post 2011, there has been a focus on state-society relations where joint efforts have been mounted in light of growing violent extremism threats.

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133 Interview with Mombasa County Commissioner, in Mombasa, June 07, 2017.

As mentioned before, in the Barak Obama’s administration, a new CVE strategy was developed in 2011 which called for local engagement in countering violent extremism. The CVE approach is traceable to 2011 during the Barack Obama administration which initiated it as new security initiative. It was documented in the 2011 White House Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP) (Weine et al. 2016).

The SIP draws from the 2011 US government CVE strategy titled *Empowering Local Partners to Prevent Violent Extremism in the United States*. This strategy among other concerns underscores the value of community engagement to deal with the challenges of violent extremism. It argues that community level institutions are better placed to proffer unique solutions to their security threats.

A respondent engaged in programming work for counter-radicalization lauded the effort of the civil society actors in Mombasa most principally led by Haki Africa, but warned that care needed to be taken on two fronts. It is pertinent to note that Haki Africa had a negative experience with the state in 2016 as her accounts were frozen on claims of supporting terrorism. They were able to surmount this operational challenge and went on to work with the government on the County CVE strategy.

One was the need for a clear implementation plan of the CVE strategy. In the absence of a clear implementation plan, the respondent noted: “It would just be a beautiful document on paper.” Care too was needed to ensure that the document too was not ‘possessed’ by the national government structure. In other words, while the process had been developed through a consultative process that involved multiple actors, the credit and the implementation plan required collaboration and continuous engagement.

135 Interview with a project officer of an NGO in Mombasa in Nairobi, June 23, 2017.
5.4.5 The Use of Drama as a Strategy for Counter-Radicalization in Likoni, Mombasa

In Likoni, a community-based organization reflected on the use of drama as a strategy it had adopted for counter-radicalization. This organization, Hatua Likoni, had partnered with a local organization to use film as a method to open up community discussions around the topic of radicalization and counter-radicalization. Prior to the community discussions, a drama would be shown to a particular audience. Post the drama screening, an action-oriented research methodology would be adopted. This involved role playing the characters shown in the drama in order to generate a conversation on this particular threat. Community led discussions would soon follow. The goal for these discussions was to collectively brainstorm on the probable solutions/strategies that both community and government actors needed to adopt.

The rationale for this approach had been the rapid realization that Likoni Sub-County and indeed the rest of Mombasa County had become radicalization hotspots. This intervention that run for 8 months in Likoni, Mombasa in 2016 had been informed by the rising threats of youth radicalization in Likoni and in the broader Coastal region. There was the realization that this was a security threat in waiting which required community intervention. This intervention had proceeded on the production of a short drama profiling a hypothetical case of a young man planning to take a journey to Somalia to join a radical group. This hypothetical scenario which drew in local actors to dramatize the situation had formed the basis for which to open up an action-oriented discussion at the community level.

This drama screening had been organized as part of a 3-day activity across public and private primary and secondary schools and youth groups within Likoni Sub-County. For the primary schools, the focus of the program was on upper-primary school pupils as they were of age to comprehend radicalization debates.
The activity had proceeded as follows. On the first day, the movie would be screened and a discussion initiated on what the community ought to have done to stop the individual from joining a radical organization. This activity was completed with facilitators guiding the discussion. On the second day of the activity, the levels of radicalization were engaged through a facilitated discussion. The rationale behind this activity was to create awareness on the radicalization trends. The third day of the activity required that participants to develop an array of materials to counter radicalization messaging. Participants were thus required to prepare creative materials for countering violent extremism. These could range from a message on a board or use of theatre approaches (to include skits and plays) with a focus on countering violent extremism. This intervention was only rolled out after pre-testing the program curricula as well as seeking and incorporating the views of the stakeholders that were critical for the intervention’s success. These stakeholders included school representatives and leaders of selected youth groups within Likoni.

An official at Hatua Likoni that was responsible for the roll-out of this intervention reported that the pre-testing of the drama and the related action-oriented research was meant to ensure a smooth buy in for the program. It was anticipated that it would open doors not only across the schools but also within the youth groups that were targeted for this pilot project. Before the intervention was rolled out, a ten-day training was conducted for the project facilitators. The overall goal of this intervention was to shed more light on the radicalization processes in the county but also to be part of the preventative interventions. Recounting the success and the potential of the project for counter-radicalization, the interviewed official of Hatua Likoni responsible for co-delivering the program put forward that:
The success of this project in my view was the involvement of the community. It was a plus for the community to be involved. It is important to create ownership of the project at the community level…. There were local actors, plus the community having the opportunity to provide solutions collectively to social problems.”

The above quote speaks to a lesson that would be useful in counter-radicalization work. One of the lessons would be the need for program/project interveners to seek partnerships with communities on the kind of solutions that would be required. This kind of partnership would help in terms of local context sensitivity. Being context specific in terms of generating solutions would not only help with generating a buy-in component for counter-radicalization work, but also in creating replicability options elsewhere. The use of drama and creative arts could be tapped in other contexts for counter-radicalization interventions.

5.5 Conclusion

This chapter examined the various community-based approaches used to counter youth radicalization in selected locations in both Nairobi and Mombasa Counties. The approaches discussed have included community conversation spaces, community policing, counternarratives among others. The study finds that these approaches have been working at varying degrees across the two field locations. The chapter notes the need for community level interventions to be tailored around specific contexts. Context was important given the multiple radicalization variables involved.

A number of similarities and commonalities can be drawn from the working of community-based approaches in counter-radicalization initiatives. In both locations, these models have worked to varying levels. They have opened opportunities for conversations,

136 Interview with a project officer of a NGO in Likoni, Mombasa, June 9, 2017.
collective brainstorming and information sharing that had been useful for counter-radicalization. They nevertheless had encountered challenges in their working.

One of the significant similarities in the study locations is related to trust deficits between the community and the police. Trust deficits in both study locations was attributed principally to two explanations. Police officers could not be fully trusted with confidential crime information. There had been cases of leakages that predisposed informants to harm. Second was the lack of accountability by police in counter-terrorism operations. The police were blamed for a range of human rights violations such as arbitrary arrests, detentions which had then minimized trust levels across the study areas. The resultant then was to minimize community-police cooperation that is critical in counter-radicalization.

Fieldwork findings in both locations have reinforced the value of trust as an enabler of community-policing relations. In moving the counter-radicalization domain from below, it would be important to cultivate trust levels between the community and the police. This points significantly to the philosophy of policing and how it has been evolving over time. Community policing as a preventative option is being aided in part by this shift in policing that is placing the community as partners in security provision. This new shift is likely to be gradual and also to be faced with resistance as it rolls out. In the two locations, it has been marked with varying levels of suspicion on the model. One of the areas of suspicion has been fears of information leaks when sensitive information had been shared with the police. In spite of the suspicions and the mistrust that communities have held, community policing has a value for prevention work.

Data from the field indicated several inputs for community policing in counter-radicalization work. In the cases of optimum police-community relations, several benefits could be realized. This platform had principally allowed for information sharing, collective problem solving and which had assisted in preventative work. The findings with regards to
community policing work is that more value can be reached through continuous trust-building and partnerships between the police and the community.

The study findings also speak to how all of the counter-radicalization initiatives elaborated here also advance the securitization debates on the Muslim identity in Kenya. By drawing on the field findings, a number of imminent implications can be raised which could impact the counter-terrorism domain. Taking on the securitizing language, ‘Islam’ has been collectively blamed for youth radicalization. The effect of this has been that the counter-radicalization interventions have focused excessively on the Muslim constituency in Kenya. This then has tended to reinforce the subjective view that Islam was to be blamed for the rapid rise of radicalization. This chapter finds that while these community interventions are opening opportunities for counter-radicalization, they had also served to limit the effectiveness of the interventions.

The chapter finds that securitizing the Muslim identity in Kenya would be counter-productive for preventative interventions. One is that the Muslim community could refuse cooperation with the security agencies which would impact on the effectiveness of the program. Secondly, this raised the complexity of trust building and which is a key pillar of community engagement in counter-radicalization

The economic empowerment interventions discussed do not provide tangible benefits that could dissuade a significant mass of youth from being vulnerable to recruitment. Most of the community empowerment programs were isolated and lacked sustainability. While sensitizing on government empowerment funds such as Uwezo and youth enterprise fund, a number of associated challenges had limited the potential impacts that these models would have in economic empowerment. Some cited challenges included capacity gaps in grant writing, corruption in accessing the fund among others reasons. A useful point raised by respondents to overcome some of these challenges was skills transfer. That community actors
needed to continue linking with multiple stakeholders to capacitate youth with technical skills and not merely asking them to apply for business funding.

This chapter raises a critical viewpoint on the role that communities can play by themselves in the counter-narratives. It speaks to a literature that is now underscoring the often-neglected resilience and practices of counter-narratives from the communities. This emerging literature calls for public policy makers and researchers alike to seek to learn the working of these counter-narratives that are delegitimizing that frames used by recruiters.
CHAPTER SIX: THE POTENTIALS, CHALLENGES, AND TENSIONS OF COMMUNITY BASED APPROACHES TO COUNTER YOUTH RADICALIZATION IN KENYA

6.0 Introduction

This chapter examines the potentials, challenges and tensions of community-based approaches in countering youth radicalization. It argues that community-based approaches engaged in counter-radicalization work present potentials that can be tapped beyond the Kenyan context. These potentials are analysed on the basis of the identified community-based approaches such as community policing, community conversation spaces among others that are explored in a previous chapter. This chapter while assessing the potentials of community-based approaches in counter-radicalization, it further argues the need for contextual appreciation and not wider generalization about their application. This chapter argues in sum that that working of community-based approaches are context specific. A key mediating variable would be the nature of state-society relations at a point in time.

This chapter argues that while community engagement is complementing broad state centric counter-terrorism responses, there are also challenges and tensions. The challenges and tensions identified tended to reflect on the nature of police-community relations in Kenya post-independence. The findings across the two study locations suggest that police-community relations have not always been cordial. The findings further suggest that lukewarm relations existed on the basis of diminished trust levels between the two. Respondents findings indicate that the police and government agencies broadly have not always inspired confidence on the part of the citizens. Moreover, citizens often accused the police of high-handedness and in particular through actions such as arbitrary arrests and the securitization of the Muslim identity. Therefore, this chapter argues that it is these negative images of the police that have presented challenges for counter-radicalization in the two counties studied. The first section of the chapter examines the potentials for community-
based approaches in counter-radicalization. The second section of the chapter analyses the challenges and tensions of this approach.

### 6.1 The Potentials for Community Based Counter-Radicalization Initiatives

This section using fieldwork data interviews analyses the various potentials of applying community-based approaches in counter-radicalization work. They are analysed in light of the value they were bringing to the counter-radicalization domain.

#### 6.1.1 Information Sharing

The field findings from the two study locations indicated one of the potentials opened up through community engagement had been information sharing. Information sharing by various community actors and largely directed at security agencies had been useful in pre-empting the threats of radicalization. Respondents across the two study locations noted that this involved tipping the police or local administrators about suspicious individuals or activities they had witnessed that would require their attention.

Furthermore, the respondents mentioned that information sharing could occur in at least two levels. This could be at the level of community policing where there was the representation of community representatives. This information could also be passed by way of telephone or text messages to select security actors. Information sharing as respondents mentioned would be dependent on the levels of trust between the community actors and the police. However, the respondents remained sensitive of reprisals that could arise if such sensitive information leaked.

Notwithstanding some of the challenges that were associated with information sharing, interviewed officials working in the security sector noted that continuous confidence building measures had been yielding results. For instance, an interviewed senior official working with the Supreme Council of Kenyan Muslims (SUPKEM) and experienced in
counter-radicalization reiterated the value of trust as a key ingredient to enable information flow from communities. Any cooperation would thus be dependent on trust. He remarked as follows:

“Violent extremism is a social phenomenon, before you grow and become a terrorist the community has a role to play, there is need for cooperation between the police and community… communities can be involved, if the community is capacitated and are supportive and can trust the police, then they can share information with security.”\textsuperscript{137}

The above interviewed SUPKEM official reiterated that while the community had begun to embrace cooperation with the police as manifested in information sharing, however the police conduct had been minimizing on this option. This cooperation was minimized by possibilities of information leaks. He noted that:

“The community has a weak link with the police. it is caused by corruption linked to the police… police are people are like us, they want money, they can leak information to the extremists… they can pass the shared information to the terrorists… there lies the danger of cooperation.”\textsuperscript{138}

Drawing on the fieldwork data in both Nairobi and Mombasa, a section of police officers acknowledged similarly that some of their actions had also served to reduce trust levels with the public. A convergent theme they applied to explain their poor community relations was their entrenched culture of bribe taking. They were also conscious that if they stopped some of their negative cultures such as corruption, then they could regain the diminished public trust. This officer noted that:

“The perception of the police is largely negative. There is a perception already out there that the police are corrupt... it is a perception out there but there are also real scenarios where

\textsuperscript{137} Interview with a senior male SUPKEM official, in Nairobi, December 16, 2016.

\textsuperscript{138} Interview with a senior male SUPKEM official, in Nairobi, December 16, 2016.
police are participating in bribe taking…. a section of the public would lose trust with the police and therefore hamper information sharing.”

Literature examining the potentials for community-based approaches in counter-radicalization has examined several potentials for this approach (Cherney & Hartley, 2015; Aziz, 2016). One is that if the community has built trust with the governmental authorities, then they can use this trust to pass on terror related information. Therefore, the value of information sharing being to institute police action or to pin-point individuals likely to be on the radicalization path. Passing on terror related information is in itself preventative. Governments can use this information to disrupt terror networks (Cherney & Hartley, 2015:3). Information sharing is considered to be a key disruptive strategy and can often be used to counter the radicalization process.

The particular aspect of information sharing and linkages with security agencies is a pre-emptive strategy that can be relied on to dissuade youth contemplating to join radical groups. The policing agencies may warn susceptible individuals about the consequences of their actions should they cross over into militant actions. This disruption strategy may also include pre-emptive arrests if there is credible information that a concerned individual is likely to cross over to terrorist acts. The public can also be useful in feeding this information to security agencies (Bjørø, 2016:33).

While the sharing of information can be utilized in counter-radicalization initiatives that for instance work through community policing, their effectiveness remains dependent on at least two levels. One relates to the trust levels and secondly, the two way communication between the police and the community. For instance, in Likoni, Mombasa, the community policing platform was found to be working to a sufficient degree in terms of disrupting terror networks. Therefore, information sharing in the context of counter-radicalization had

139 Interview with a male senior police officer in Likoni, Mombasa, November 24, 2016.
worked sufficiently well for several reasons. One is that the community and the local police
had cooperated over many years in other facets of crime in Likoni. Furthermore, the existence
of a neighbourhood watch model that had run independently of community policing since
2010 had also provided opportunities to build trust and confidence over time. Within
Majengo and Eastleigh areas of Nairobi, practical information to disrupt radicalization
networks continued to be shared. This had been made possible by enhanced levels of
cooperation between the security agencies and the communities. Interviewed security
officials observed that this cooperation was being enhanced through available platforms such
as community policing as well as community level activities such as peace walks, and sports
tournaments among the two entities.

6.1.2 Collective Problem Solving

Community-based preventative work in other contexts such as the United Kingdom in
the post 9/11 period has the potential to produce new knowledge on counter terrorism.
Analysis of grassroots experiences of individuals and groups engaged in preventive activities
is also in itself an opportunity to critique existing state centric counter-terrorism policies.
Community engagement for preventive work remains critical too in providing deep insights
into the complexity of terrorism threats that states are grappling with. It is important to
appreciate however that the community and individuals working on these threats possess
local credibility (Spalek, 2011).

The findings of the fieldwork in Nairobi and Mombasa points to credibility of
grassroots actors engaged with counter-radicalization work. Therefore, the rationale for this is
that community actors can in most instances be trusted. They would have had positive
impacts in the community. They usually would have engaged in similar or different programs
in such areas as economic empowerment. The respondents noted that grassroots actors with
multiple experiences and engagement in a particular community would be in a better position
to engage in collective problem solving. They would be considered for instance to be change leaders. The respondents further reported that some organizations, individuals such as religious leaders, civil society leaders possessed credibility at the grassroot level and therefore their various interventions were welcomed. This potential particularly complements the work of state agencies and also helps to overcome the credibility challenges often attributed to government.

Credibility challenges associated with government have often arisen out of government hard power responses that can be alienating to communities. Moreover, numerous accounts were raised in the field about how counter-terrorism had been alienating to especially the Muslim constituency and more so in the post 9/11 period. Drawing on respondent accounts, the practice of arbitrary arrests and detentions, regular police raids that have included Mosques as happened in early 2014 in Majengo, Mombasa had served to entrench this perception. This existing perception would be reinforced by the ‘Operation Usalama Watch’ which was the security raid that was undertaken in April 2014 in Eastleigh area, Nairobi. The raid was to pre-empt terror threats following the Westgate attacks in September 2013 in Nairobi. It is instructive to note that this security swoop largely targeted the Somalis and by extension, the Muslims. This 2014 security operation would leave in its wake various human rights violations that included wrongful detention (Balakian, 2016). The respondents claimed that these kinds of stances in the long term served to erode the gains that were already made by these grassroot actors.

Drawing on the field findings, the communities in the two study locations had been engaging in collective problem solving in several ways. Furthermore, respondents noted that this had been working through the community policing platforms including other community engagement platforms. One of the ways in which this approach worked was in mapping the trends and the contours of the phenomena at their locality. With the support of community
representatives, the police and broadly the security agencies were tapping onto the views/perceptions of the community on the nature of this threat. Community members noted that this tapping provided strategies that could be implemented.

In addition to the appreciation of the ever-evolving patterns and trends, the community representatives’ active in platforms such as community policing also had opportunities to suggest strategies that could be used to pre-empt this threat. This aspect would become clear at a community policing meeting where the author of this research sat as a participant observer in Likoni in August of 2016. In this particular meeting, the researcher witnessed first-hand, community representatives suggesting strategies that the police could use to counter the threat. Measuring the effectiveness of this remained difficult. It would not always be possible to measure the output that the community voices were playing on preventive strategies mounted by the police. This particular forum also impressed upon police to pay attention to two areas if counter-radicalization activities were to succeed. One was the need for prompt response when they were alerted by the community. This point had been raised out of previous poor responses by police to broad crime issues. The second point raised in this meeting in Likoni, had been the value of confidentiality as a key enabler of community-police relations.140

6.1.3 Awareness Raising on the Radicalization ‘Process’

Field findings indicated that one of the potentials for community-based approaches for counter-radicalization had been the value of awareness raising and more specifically on the youth agency. While a previous chapter has looked at the ‘process’ of youth radicalization, and as such on the non-linearity of the phenomena, respondents in both study locations noted the value of awareness raising on the same. Community actors in both locations (Mombasa and Nairobi) argue that awareness raising on the ‘process’ had turned

140 Findings of a Community Policing Meeting in Likoni, Mombasa, August, 2016.
out to be valuable in several ways. Awareness raising on one hand was helping to discount the narratives that the radicalization networks were relying on. What awareness raising was doing though previous discussed platforms such as community conversation spaces was to deconstruct some of the narratives that were in use.

The radicalization narratives as previous sections of the study have demonstrated have centred around the debates on marginalization, identity, and belonging. With community actors creating a broad awareness on the so-called radicalization process, a desired outcome was the discrediting of the radicalization narratives. This would reduce the likelihood that individuals would take up violence. The other outcome as raised by multiple respondents was the multiplier effect that this would create principally for the youth. This was raised on the account that such platforms as community conversation spaces also sought to influence peer support in counter-radicalization.

By raising awareness on a select youth who possessed credibility in their communities, these youths were in turn stimulating conversations in their various social spaces to discredit the radicalization narratives. As part of community agency, the awareness raising and the strategies to undertake had been left entirely at the hand of the group being targeted. While in certain instances, the awareness raising had been segmented along gender, age, and religious identity characteristics, there had been a complete leeway on how each of the segments would proceed. Across the two locations, the value of these deliberations needed to be context specific including the localized responses that would be adopted. One respondent noted that:

“In these spaces, we want each of the stakeholders to identify what they want to change or address with respect to peace and security issues. We want them to prioritize both short and long terms goals and then work towards that goal.”

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141 Interview with a project officer of a civil society organization working in the Horn of Africa, in Nairobi, June 23, 2017.
6.1.4 The ‘Perceptions’ of Justice for the ‘Muslims’ Suspects

Field findings across the two study locations reiterated the view that if justice was taken to be a significant pillar in state counter-terrorism responses, then communities would significantly cooperate with the state. In the course of the study fieldwork, a recurring theme that existed was the claim of human rights violations. Study respondents in Nairobi and Mombasa observed that an untapped potential existed in counter-radicalization if justice was seen to be delivered by government agencies in instances where they had Muslim suspects charged in court. Multiple respondents perceived that some mechanisms in the justice system were discriminatory and did not reflect the principles of justice. Instead, the claims advanced principally by some state officials and non-Muslims was that the Islamic identity was responsible for terrorism locally and globally.

This narrative had arisen out of everyday ordinary conversations of mainly those of a non-Muslim identity. It would consequently be reinforced by the securitizing acts and speeches of government officials. A section of respondents singled out claims of extended detentions of Muslim suspects sometimes outside of extra-legal procedures, unexplained disappearances in the hand of security agencies as some of the ‘perceptions’ they held about the justice process. For instance, a respondent reported that the Prevention of Terrorism Act (POTA) of 2012 specifically provided procedures of handling terror suspect(s). For instance, the Act provided that in the case of extension request to hold a terror suspect for more than 24 hours without producing them in court, the police officer required a court extension. The police officer was required to produce an affidavit in court detailing the circumstances for the extension, with a copy extended to the suspect. The respondent further noted that this legal provision as a case in point was not always followed (Prevention of Terrorism Act 2012, Article 33, clause 1,2,3).
The potential according to a section of respondents lay in the Kenyan justice overcoming perceptions that it was biased in the delivery of justice within the Muslim constituency. Moreover, the respondents across the two locations observed that when justice processes were adhered to in the counter-terrorism domain, it opened potentials for cooperation. Thus, for cooperation to work, the justice processes needed to demonstrate objectivity and non-partisanship. Indeed, this expressed field perspective had come in a period when the counter-terrorism domain had been shifting. This shift at least since 2016 following the launch of the National Counter-Violent Extremist Strategy was the recognition of non-state actors in countering violent extremism. Prior to the launch of the strategy in 2016, the counter-terrorism responses had mainly been state-led. As discussed in previous chapters, platforms such as community policing and community conversation spaces were assisting in overcoming some of the aforementioned perspectives and opening up points of cooperation across the religious sphere too.

6.2 The Challenges of Community Based Approaches in Counter-Radicalization

This section using data from interviews examines several challenges in the application of community-based approaches in counter-radicalization work.

6.2.1 Low Trust Levels between Security Agencies and Community Actors

One of the salient challenges identified in the course of the fieldwork with implications for counter-radicalization work was low trust levels between the community and the police. This was a recurrent theme across Mombasa and Nairobi during the focus group discussions and individual interviews.

For community-based counter-radicalization initiatives to work, trust between government officials and the community is critical. While community collaboration was lauded by respondents as complementing state centric counter-radicalization perspectives,
trust deficits has impacted this new approach. Besides, respondents across the two study locations observed that in the absence of trust, working collaboratively to pre-empt the threats of youth radicalization was an exercise in futility.\textsuperscript{142} It would be an exercise in futility as it hampered necessary interventions such as information sharing and collective problem solving.

One of the challenges identified by multiple respondents in the two fieldwork locations was the low levels of trust between the police and the community. An environment marked by low trust levels between the police and the policed had negative implications for counter-radicalization initiatives. Hence, one of the implications was that the community was hesitant to share crime related information that included radicalization matters. The crisis of confidence between the police and the community would be best understood historically. The colonial and post-independence policing philosophy was centred on regime policing and not citizen policing (Hills, 2006; Omeje & Githigaro, 2012). That is why a regime policing model exclusively paid attention to regime sustenance as opposed to guaranteeing citizens security. It can be argued that policing philosophy had been shifting over time especially post the enactment of a new constitution in 2010. Whereas, the policing philosophy has been shifting over time to become people centred, there remained trust deficits that needed to be addressed by on-going police reforms. The field findings showed that poor community-police relations was linked to lack of accountability by the police. These accountability questions persisted for the police even as they embraced community policing. Reflecting on this question, a religious leader in Mombasa noted as follows:

“Police-community relations remain poor… it has been so because of the lack of confidentiality with information sharing… in the context of community policing, there have

\textsuperscript{142} Focus Group Discussion, in Likoni, Mombasa, March 16, 2017
been past incidences where information shared in confidence with the police had been exposed putting in danger the bearer of the information...”

Consequently, the presence of trust between the community and law enforcement in counter-terrorism initiatives remains critical even as there is growing appreciation for bottom up approaches in counter-radicalization. That is why the absence of trust between these two entities has had negative impacts on community-based interventions such as community policing. Therefore, community policing is one of the approaches used across the globe in counter-terrorism work. Community-based approaches have in the post 9/11 period been adopted in contexts such as North America, United Kingdom, Canada among others. What constitutes trust between the police and the community in different communities and contexts remains significantly under-researched areas (Spalek, 2010).

Counter-terrorism discourses in the post 9/11 period have focused on the construction of ‘Islamist terrorism’ and how it constitutes a key global threat. Hence, state security narratives especially around Muslim communities categorizing them as ‘suspects’ is alienating in itself (Spalek, 2010:795). The attendant responses by states such as counter-terrorism surveillance and the passage of anti-terror legislations serving to reinforce the notion of Muslims as suspect communities. This criminalization of the Muslim identity in totality is problematic. It is problematic as its pays little attention in contextualizing the differences between terrorist threats and the Muslims in general. Additionally, when communities sense that they are overly policed, there is erosion of trust between them and the police. Consequently, this would minimize community intelligence that remains vital for counter-terrorism (Spalek, 2010). Therefore, it is the absence of trust between the communities and the police that leads the latter to adopt heavy handed policing tactics. The use of heavy handed tactics of policing such as house raids on Muslim communities in

143 Interview with a male religious leader in Mombasa, June 06, 2017.
contexts such as the UK often occurring on the basis of minimal or no consent at all in policing (Spalek, 2010:798).

An analysis of fieldwork findings in Nairobi and Mombasa, offered several explanations that had contributed to low-trust levels between the police and the community. This minimal level of trust had implications on cooperation for counter-radicalization initiatives. One of the recurring arguments in the field was the fear of reprisals by the terror networks in instances where confidential and highly sensitive information shared by the public was leaked by the police. Residents interviewed in Mombasa claimed that in parts of Mombasa County, the police could not be trusted with confidential information relating to terrorism. The claim was that police could in certain instances be compromised by terror networks. This alleged compromise resulting from the lures of corruption.

The claim that a section of the police could be working directly or indirectly with terror networks raising questions on how trust could be sustained to aid in counter-radicalization work within the community. A male resident of Mombasa recounted the case of a community member that went to the police to report the activities of a terror suspect in line with the tenets of a responsible citizen. This community member in his assessment was responding to the call of community policing by volunteering information to the police. Shortly after this community member had left the police station, he received a threatening text message on his phone from an anonymous number detailing unspecified consequences for reporting on a terrorist network. The text message recounted that the member had visited a specific police station and was advised not to bother reporting to the police station the next time.\textsuperscript{144} The inference to be drawn from this account then is that a section of the police could not be trusted with confidential crime information. The interviewed community member argued that this experience had served to erode trust between the police and a section of the

\textsuperscript{144} Interview with a Mombasa resident, August 13, 2016.
community. This lure of corruption has further undermined the potentials that community policing and Nyumba Kumi could have on overall crime prevention.

Furthermore, claims of police collusion with an Al-Shabaab sympathiser tipped by members of Nyumba Kumi has been reported in the Naivasha area in the past. Apparently, the suspect bribed his way out of police cells. It is some of the individual acts of police officers that further erode trust levels with the police. The larger implication of these kind of acts have been to reduce the members of community policing structures to engage in surveillance work (Kioko, 2017:20). An interviewed police officer spoke additionally to the view that a section of the police could also be complicit on the same. He noted that:

“The community will not trust officers sometimes. Some police officers have joined the Shabaab or have become sympathetic to it. Remember the recent incident in Kapenguria where a police officer shot his colleagues. The community would not be sure about sharing information as they may not know who is on that end.”

During the course of the Operation Usalama Watch, a number of human rights organizations documented claims of human rights violations. Some of the violations included arbitrary arrests, inhumane treatment while under detention, and gender-based violence in the hands of the police. Human Rights Watch, a human rights advocacy organization has in the past claimed that Kenya’s Anti-Terrorism Police Unit (ATPU), established in 2003 within the Criminal Investigation Department has been involved in variety of human rights violations. Some of its reports claim that members of the ATPU have been responsible for torture, enforced disappearances and extra judicial killings of terror suspects in mainly Nairobi and Mombasa (Human Right Watch, 2014). The veracity of these accusations remains difficult to prove.

145 Interview with a female police officer in Nairobi, November 22, 2016.
A report released by Amnesty International in 2017 also speaks to similar human rights violations in the context of Kenya’s counter-terrorism operations. The Amnesty report blames the security agencies on instances of extra-judicial killings, enforced disappearances, and torture. This report also cites the findings of a Coastal based human rights organization Haki Africa that documented at least 78 cases of extra-judicial killings and disappearances in the first eight months of 2016 (Amnesty International, 2017:216-217). Notwithstanding the difficulties of verifiability of the claims produced, field accounts in Majengo, Nairobi mentioned nicknames of police officers that they claimed had been responsible for not only the execution of terror suspects but also robbery suspects. A section of the respondents in both the focus group discussions and individual interviews mentioned that the police for instance could not be trusted given the negative perceptions about them.

Complicating the trust levels, for a section of Eastleigh residents was the regular harassment of police under the guise of identification cards. A respondent argued that police extortion had become a common practice especially for those of Somali identity. Even when a section of the residents had valid identification documents, they were routinely required to pay bribes for their freedoms. This in the word of one resident of Eastleigh had ‘transformed the Somali community into an ATM (meaning an Automated Teller Machine). Those falling into the ‘claimed’ rings of extortion by the police would hardly cooperate with the police.

Across the two study locations, the lack of accountability on the part of the police and related security agencies had not inspired public confidence. The associated claims of extortion, harassment, extra judicial killings had resulted in low-trust levels with the police. The resultant was that the community would not for instance fully cooperate with the police with crime information given the low-trust levels. Furthermore, previous studies in contexts such as the Netherlands, the State of Minnesota, in the United States of America (USA) that have examined the potential of community-based interventions to counter radicalization and
violent extremism reach similar conclusions. The security agencies cooperation with local communities are characterized by trust deficits (Dalgaard-Nielsen & Schack, 2016).

Trust deficits while drawing on the Netherlands context have been prevailed by distances between the citizens and the governmental system. This is contributed by prevailing national security discourses that touch on terrorism, crime, Islam and which are alienating chiefly to individuals of Islamic identity. It is also not clear as to whether the local authorities can cooperate with the communities in countering violent extremism interventions as they remain focused to more law-oriented approaches as opposed to preventive approaches. The communities concerned here (religious actors, civil society actors) often perceiving from the Netherland’s case study that some governmental initiatives to counter violent extremism are not purely preventive approaches and could be focused on keeping a ‘tab’ on the communities. In other words, they were perceived to be surveillance initiatives on the communities. This is similarly a critique that has been raised in the context of community engagement in countering violent extremism in the United States (Dalgaard-Nielsen & Schack, 2016:391; Weine et al. 2016).

Using examples of police-community engagement in Australia, it has been argued that this partnership in the context of counter-terrorism works well when the two parties trust each other. This community engagement is efficient in situations where the police conduct themselves in a neutral manner. This is evidenced by treating Muslims equally and among others making collective decisions on issues of public safety. This in the long run has built trust that is necessary for meaningful community engagement to take place in broad counter-terrorism efforts (Cherny & Murphy, 2016).

In the two field work locations, longer term relationship building between the police and the community would be required for community engagement to work optimally. Information sharing for instance would be dependent on sufficient levels of trust which are
currently in deficit. A section of respondents in Mombasa noted that when they had sensitive information touching on terrorism, they would rather approach national government structures such as the regional coordinator’s office or the County Commissioner’s office as opposed to the police. These national government administrative structures had higher trust levels than the police. Several field explanations were offered. One was that they could be trusted with confidential information unlike sections of the police that were claimed to be easily compromised. Two, these national government structures also received extensive scrutiny from the national government and as such they strived to maintain acceptable levels of integrity and professional delivery of their mandate. For the community to place more emphasis on the national administrative structures as opposed to agencies such as the police speaks to the trust deficits that would require attention if community engagement is to work efficiently and effectively.

6.2.2 Labelling of Co-operators as Sell-outs

Across the two study locations (Nairobi and Mombasa) a recurring theme taken from the field findings had been the negative stereotypes that accompanied those who chose to cooperate with governmental agencies in counter-radicalization. These stereotypes relied on a dehumanizing language and served to deny the human dignity of the individuals. Beyond the dehumanizing language, the courageous individuals that were engaged in counter-radicalization were also predisposing themselves to death threats.

A reading of field findings from Majengo, Nairobi, a section of respondents in both the focus group discussions and individual interviews expressed reservations of cooperating with law enforcement agencies. They argued so because of the negative labelling that had gone into their work. A recurring word for the community co-operators was the narrative of ‘Mtiaji’ (loosely to mean an informer or more literally a ‘spoiler’ in Kiswahili Sheng) which

146 Field notes of a focus group discussion in Likoni, Mombasa, March 17, 2017.
some respondents seemed less bothered about. A section of the respondents did not mind the negative connotation that it produced. By being labelled a ‘Mtiaji’, an individual was in essence considered a ‘traitor’ who was standing in the ‘business of others’. They were directly confronting the recruiters in their neighbourhoods. A section of respondents that did not mind or were less bothered by this term, as they had only one singular motivation. They were engaged to ensure that they ‘sanitized’ their neighbourhood by contributing to crime prevention. A cross section of Majengo residents were privy to the negative stereotypes of their neighbourhood. They were alive to the discourses whether marginal or significant, that youth in their locality had joined radical movements in the past such as the Al-Shabaab. This was a bother for those that chose to engage and be part of the change that they had desired. The anticipated change is to have a positive narrative in what one respondent said that it was ‘a Majengo ‘rising’ moment. This narrative the respondent noted meant a community conversation about how the community negative stereotypes would be overcome.\(^{147}\)

The implication of the ‘mtiaji labelling’ would see the respondents engaged in risk calculations as part of safeguarding their lives. This risk calculation involved several strategies to avoid victimization including threats on one’s own life. One of the strategies to overcome the stereotype of ‘mtiaji’ involved only sharing information with senior police officers and not their juniors. There was a perceived assumption that senior police officers could be trusted with confidential information. In contrast, there was an apprehension that junior police officers could be easily compromised by radicalizing networks. It is imperative to note that radicalizers were well known in places such as Mombasa and Isiolo by security and government officials. It was corruption that enabled their activities (Mkutu et al. 2017). A second strategy which was recounted by one respondent in Mombasa County was to work

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\(^{147}\) Interview with a female resident, Majengo, in Nairobi, August 18, 2017.
through respected community elders who could utilize the existing community-based approaches such as *Nyumba Kumi* (ten households’ security structure).

*Nyumba Kumi* as envisaged post 2013 involved clustering ten households to form a security unit complete with a Chair. It was meant to monitor the security situation at the households’ level while complementing the already existing community policing arrangements. A section of the respondents remained cautious about direct engagement with the police and hence preferred to work with community elders. It suffices to mention that fieldwork account point to the varied utility of the concept of Nyumba Kumi. Nyumba Kumi was yet to however reach its potential owing to the view that its leadership seemed imposed.

Notwithstanding this legitimacy challenge, it had constituted a key channel for information sharing. Sharing information meant that members of Nyumba Kumi could be direct targets of radicalization networks who would obviously be displeased with this form of ‘whistle blowing’. The fear of being labelled as a sell-out meant that discussions centred broadly on speaking against vices such as radicalization would remain muted in certain instances in order for individuals to ‘secure’ their own lives. A section of the respondents observed that this fear of reprisals by radicalization networks and their sympathizers would impact negatively on the preventative agenda if community members chose non-disclosure of ‘suspects’ activities within their neighbourhood. In Majengo, Nairobi, a very frank respondent argued that a good chunk of radicalized individuals were known, including returnees but yet for the fear of reprisals, only a few individuals would dare speak out. Instead these instances were spoken about in low tones in ordinary conversations amidst other communal conversations.  

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148 Interview with a male resident of Majengo, Nairobi, March 3, 2017.
6.2.3 The Tensions of Treating of ‘Muslim Communities’ as Suspects

The field findings indicate that the treatment of Muslims as ‘suspect communities’ had been hampering the cooperation of Muslims in the counter-radicalization domains. This had created tensions between the community and the police. In both the fieldwork locations, there was the overarching feeling of blanket condemnation of the Muslim community as responsible for terror threats. This perception had resulted from governmental discourses that situated radicalization as Muslim problem. The effect of this securitization was the targeting of the Muslim identity in counter-terrorism operations.

Referencing a previous chapter that has focused on the processes and trends of radicalization, a Muslim identity on its own could not be blamed on the radicalization process. Notwithstanding that a section of the Muslim identity in the past had been associated with the phenomenon of radicalization, the process itself had been influenced by multiple risk factors. These multiple risk factors as applied to the radicalization process had ranged from misinterpretation of religious ideology, to claims of political and economic marginalization among others explanations. A cross section of respondents across the two locations observed that an isolation of the Muslim identity as terror suspects and state engagement in excessive policing and surveillance had not only been alienating to the Muslim constituency in Kenya, but much more importantly, it had reduced the prospects for cooperation with security agents in the country. A respondent noted that it was few ‘proponents’ of the faith that had been putting the religion into disrepute and hence allowing for the securitization narrative to take root. This respondent noted that:

“Islam is a peaceful religion…. It does not advocate for violence, it is the misinterpretation of religion by a section of those that claim to follow Islam by calling for violence… it is these kinds of teachings by a section of the religious community that gives Islam a bad name…."

149 Interview with a male religious leader in Mombasa, August 26, 2016.
The above quote is largely representative of a section of interviewed Muslims in both the individual interviews and focus group discussions. The data from these interviews had an overarching perspective that a section of the Muslim community was misusing religion to achieve narrow and sectarian interests such as the mobilization of political violence. On the other hand, the securitizing discourses of state officials interviewed had reinforced this perspective. A significant majority of security officials interviewed observed that radicalization with the intent to mobilize political violence touched on the agency of Islam in particular ways. A senior police officer working with the Kenya’s anti-terrorism police unit (ATPU) argued that majority of the radicalization cases that they had dealt with touched on an Islamic identity.

The predominant category of recruits were new convertees. In supporting this perspective, this officer highlighted that various radicalization dynamics and trends had linked in multiple ways in the some of the so-called radical Mosques. He cited the particular incident of the Masjid Musa Mosque in Majengo, Mombasa in 2014, where the state had to intervene to disrupt youth radicalization at the Kenyan Coast. This radicalization from a state securitization narrative being linked to a multiplicity of recruiting agents including religious leaders.150 This respondent would further add that the dynamics of recent convertees to Islam being recruited to join radical groups such as the Al-Shabaab since the mid 2000s and 2016, the recruitment into the Islamic State in the Levant (ISIL) respectively.

Kenya’s state counter-terrorism practices have principally been alienating to the Muslim communities in addition to the securitization of the Somali identity in Kenya. The state has continued to imagine and represent the Somali identity in particular as responsible for a range of security threats including terrorism. This securitization of the Somali identity as a security threat needs to be examined from the historicity of state-society relations

between the state and its Somali citizens since Kenya’s independence in 1963. Post Kenya’s independence, the Somalis in the former North-Eastern Province waged the *Shifta* war (1963-1967), in an attempt to secede from Kenya. As part of the uneasy relations between the state and its Somali citizens, in 1989 the government launched a major screening exercise of Somalis. This was an attempt to flush out alien Somali who had acquired Kenyan identity cards albeit illegally in order to set them apart from the ‘indigenous’ Somalis. Profiling of the Somali identity and the Muslim identity has continued even as Al-Shabaab has sought to recruit Kenyans of other non-Somalis identity such as those from central and western parts of Kenya. This perception that the Muslim community is mistreated in Kenya being used as a bait to lure Kenyan youth into the movement (Lind *et al.* 2017).

Similarly, in the western states post 9/11, security discourses have tended to link Islam and Muslims with terrorist violence. Additionally, in their preventive policies, these western states have sought to target Muslim migrants and converts. This particular targeting has served to reinforce the governments perspective that Muslims in one way or the other are responsible for the terrorism. In situating these threats, governments have then sought to securitize these two identities while proffering the range of required responses. Securitization theory and drawing on the works of Barry Buzan and Ole Waever (2009) considers speech acts of government officials as placing a problem and the solution in response to an existential threat usually with reference to the state. In the context of western states and where comparisons can be drawn from Kenya, the securitization theory enables a discourse of in (security) and where governmental actions can be justified. The state then applies a discourse of threat directed at the Muslim and the migrants in the European context. This securitization which is a socially constructed process is then used to justify certain acts in relation to the identified existential threat(s). If securitization is to be taken as a narrative,
then state officials pick on a particular existential threat and which is followed by the justifications for the interventions to be taken (Gad, 2012).

In the Kenyan context, the April 2014 Operation *Usalama* (security) Watch targeting part of Nairobi such as Eastleigh suburb including South C could be said to have been framed on a securitizing narrative. This operation from the state officials accounts was meant to pre-empt terror threats, especially in wake of September 2013 Westgate attack. To residents of Eastleigh and South C suburbs, this operation was characterized more by its human rights abuses than its intended intentions of pre-empting terror threats. It led to among others arbitrary arrests and detention at the Kasarani Stadium, extortion including the blanket securitization of the Somali identity as constituting terror threats.

The operation termed as ‘Operation Sanitize Eastleigh’ mainly targeted urban refugees of Somali origin and in the process too affected Kenyan Somalis. The Kenyan identity card becoming a marker of who was Kenyan and who was not (Balakian, 2016:96). The refugee identity card also known as the ‘alien card’ was not recognized, despite it being issued by the state. For the ethnic Somalis, there was still the mistrust by security agencies given claim of corruption that allowed Somalis to acquire Kenyan identity cards and by extension becoming citizens without due process of the law. This uneasy relationship between the state and its Somali citizens being manifested in such operations as *Usalama* Watch (Balakian, 2016).

Alongside the Kenyan Somalis, the Somali refugees have existed in an uneasy relationship with the state since the 1990s. They have been perceived as risk communities for their implicated agency in such crimes as poaching, illegal arms and in the post 9/11 their securitization as terror threats (Murunga, 2005; Gluck, 2017). Securitizing the refugees as prone to radicalization made the community then a risk to national security and hence a justification for increased surveillance and pre-emptive actions of the state.
For the Kenyan Somalis in Eastleigh, they continued to express feelings of ‘collective punishment’ from the state. They expressed views of the uneasy relationship that has existed between them and the state. In addition to the Kenyan Somalis being treated as ‘suspects’ by the state in an age of counter-terrorism, their community cohesion could also be said to have been significantly weakened with the rest of the Kenyan communities. A section of the non-Somali communities has in part accepted the securitization of Somalis as security risks and as such have reduced their levels of community engagement. One respondent working on peace issues in the wider Kamukunji area of Nairobi remarked that:

“Radicalization debates are turning communities against each other… this is coming as a result of the association of the Somalis to terror activities… the implication of this has been to make non-Somali communities more inward looking and hence reducing their levels of cooperation with Somalis… in this way mistrust is then developed….”

The above field account generally demonstrates the impacts that community and governmental discourses on insecurity had been having on community relations. This kind of environment served to create ‘social distances’ between communities. In the absence of confidence building measures to build inter-community trust, then community security initiatives would continue to remain in jeopardy.

An environment marked by mistrust between security agencies and the members of the public does make it problematic for collective crime prevention strategies including dealing with the threats posed by youth radicalization. The continued securitization in the Kenyan context of Muslim communities had created gaps between communities and the state and in the process, had reduced community collaboration with the police. Similar experiences in the United Kingdom in the post 9/11 period had also served to create a distance between the police and the Muslim identity. This then initiated a process of ‘risky

\[151\] Interview with a civil society official in Nairobi, May 12, 2017.
subjectivation’ where the Muslim identity had been classified as posing terrorist threats (Mythen, Walklate & Khan, 2012). This process of constructing risks in particular for young Muslims as responsible for terror threats in the UK had created feelings of victimization and the persecution of their identity. These feelings of discrimination and alienation that had also arisen out of the state pre-emptive securitization in response to terrorism serving to alienate communities from the policing agencies. The state interventions in the UK such as stop and search, including pre- emotive counter-terrorism legislations targeted at Muslim communities had in the process been eroding on trust between communities and the police (Mythen, Walklate, & Khan, 2012).

In Mombasa in select neighbourhoods such as Majengo, Kisauni, Changamwe, Likoni, a section of the youth have resorted to using a dehumanizing language on the junior police officers that constantly conducted raids in the neighbourhoods. Some of the security raids have been on the premise of counter-terrorism. Owing to this harassment, the youth have adopted a dehumanizing language towards the police and which further diminishes police-community trust levels. One of the respondents explained the kind of the dehumanizing language directed at the police:

“The police in parts of this town [Mombasa] are referred to as ‘Umbwa’ (Kiswahili for dogs) … whenever the police are sighted in some of the neighbourhoods, the language becomes, ‘Umbwa ndio hao’ (Kiswahili for here goes the dogs). … there is even a song that has been produced and is doing the rounds on WhatsApp focusing on the atrocities linked to police harassment in Mombasa….”

The above quote highlights some of the negative perceptions of the police held by a section of the local residents. The implication of this and more so among the youth is that they have to run for safety whenever they sight the police. As part of navigating the risks of being arrested, some of the residents including the youth had resorted to paying bribes to

152 Interview with a project officer of a civil society organization in Mombasa, Nairobi, June 23, 2017.
avoid arrests. This has then served to create frosty relations for the two parties which has limited security cooperation, that would be a key plank of community policing.

The findings in both Nairobi and Mombasa also unravelled that in addition to the state securitization of the Somali identity, there had been the everyday criminalization of the Somali and Muslim identities by non-Somalis including those of a Christian orientation. A respondent in Eastleigh in Nairobi recounted how after a series of grenade attacks in Nairobi in 2014, that a section of Nairobi residents began to discriminate the Somali identity. A Kenyan Somali lady recounted how she got into a city bound public service vehicle heading to Eastleigh and then many passengers alighted from the vehicle. Recounting this incident that had occurred in 2014, she argued that her fellow passengers’ reaction was ‘pre-emptive’ but also in a non-verbal manner she had been constructed as a risky individual. Reflecting on this particular incident, she observed that her religious identity and belonging had come to be questioned by her fellow co-citizens.

6.3 Challenges in Proffering Counter-Narratives

As the previous chapter has argued, counter-narratives were being relied upon as part of community-based approaches in counter-radicalization. The findings in both Nairobi and Mombasa Counties while cognizant of their potentials for counter-radicalization, they had faced a host of challenges in their implementation. One of the challenges lay in which strategy to adopt in the counter-narratives initiatives. This being informed by multiple global jihad narratives that are applied in luring individuals to the radicalization path (Leuprecht et al. 2010:46). Notwithstanding the existence of other forms of terrorist narratives such as those of religious liberation movements including right wing extremism, counter-narratives have tended to be one-sided (Grossman, 2014).

Globally, counter-narratives have tended to be focused on Salafi jihadism. This was arguably the focus in the Kenyan context. By focusing only on countering Salafi Jihadism,
this perspective ignored other narratives that had been influencing the radicalization process. This perspective in itself is a form of critique on how counter narratives have proceeded (Grossman, 2014: 322). The critique has called for the appreciation of Islamic history and scholarship, including the various forms of jihadism and how they each influence violence (Grossman, 2014). What is to be avoided in counter-narratives are also the rigid binaries of ‘Islamic’ versus ‘Western’ debates. These binaries had the potential to create cultural intolerance and, in the process, raise feelings of political and social alienation that could lead to extremism (Grossman, 2014: 323).

A second challenge in the counter-narrative lay in there being an inconclusive empirical evidence on why an individual would be more receptive to one element of the radicalization narrative and not to the other. It is these kinds of dilemmas that were then making it difficult to produce holistic counter-radicalization narratives (Leuprecht et al. 2010:46). As a previous chapter on the process and trends of youth radicalization in Kenya has discussed, multiple risk factors existed.

Furthermore, there was unanimity of the radicalization process as being individualized. The implication of this then even for those community counter-narratives was the dilemma of choosing what to focus on and what to neglect. Drawing on the field findings, the counter-narratives tended to overly be situated on deconstructing the religious misinterpretations around Jihad. Having a predominant focus on one particular aspect meant that some other debates crucial for counter-narratives had remained unaddressed. For instance, important debates centred around citizenship and belonging could be undermined.

A third challenge with producing counter-narratives also lay with the so-called debates between the ‘radical’ Muslims and the ‘moderates’ Muslims. The ‘radicals’ on one account, mostly subscribed to the Wahhabis’ Salafist ideology considered in certain instances to advocate for violence. The ‘radicals’ relying on the global narrative of Muslims under
assault to justify violence quoting the religious texts. Those subscribing to the ‘moderate’
school denounced the use of violence while attempting to provide the correct interpretation of
scripture (Leuprecht et al. 2010:46). Speaking to the above theme, a section of religious
leaders in Likoni denounced the debates between moderates and radicals Islam. They noted
instead, that these distinctions were not as neat as their categorizations and as such it was less
helpful when it came to proffer narratives. The argument remained that these were just
doctrinal differences and therefore categorizing and viewing them as distinct was not
helpful.153

6.3.1 Source Credibility as a Challenge

The findings in both Mombasa and Nairobi Counties, pointed to an additional
challenge of the reliability of the source relied upon for counter-narratives. Source credibility
constituted a key challenge and often influenced how counter-narratives worked. It was
critical because of the credibility of the messenger mattered in counter-radicalization.
Whereas the religious leaders and community leaders had continued to engage in counter-
radicalization their credibility had been questioned. Singling out the contribution of religious
leaders, they had not always been credible in the eyes of mainly the youth that they sought to
change their attitudes and behaviours. Notwithstanding that religious leaders such as Imams
possessed religious authority, they have nevertheless faced credibility challenges. These
religious leaders had in certain instances been considered to be out of touch with the
frustrations and grievances that the youth faced. In other words, their credibility has been
waning for them being out of reach with the frustrations of youth that would be at risk of
radicalization (Cherney, 2016).

Religious leaders could also be labelled as ‘sell-outs’ more so when they cooperated
with government. In Majengo area of Nairobi, a particular term in Kiswahili came up-
‘Mtiaji’. The contextual meaning of the concept being applied to mean an ‘informer or a spoiler’ and which would be undesirable in local contexts. In a subjective way, it had reduced the legitimacy of the religious leaders for instance when they cooperated with ‘Christian’ leaders. A section of the radicalizing narratives had forbidden for instance cooperation with ‘Christian leaders’ who would be considered ‘non-believers’. Arising out of this subjectivity, therefore meant the lack of a deep reflection on the values that had been informing religious leaders cooperating with non-Muslim leaders. Earning the ‘Mtiaji’ title in the Kenyan context had impacted negatively on the counter-narratives in a context where engaging with government in certain aspects would be a negative experience.

In efforts at addressing source credibility, suggestions had been raised on the need to incorporate former extremists in the counter-narratives. This was out of consideration that they would discuss their own experiences with youth at risk of joining radical groups (Cherney, 2016:85). Reflecting on the Kenyan experiences, this remained problematic in spite of an amnesty programme for former foreign fighters returning from mainly the Al-Shabaab in Somalia. While the government announced the amnesty program in mid-2015, a respondent argued that it lacked proper implementation strategies especially around the re-integration of the so-called returnees. This respondent added that the amnesty programme post the surrender had been poorly planned and faced several challenges. The programme did not offer viable strategies such as rehabilitation, education and economic empowerment.

The overarching challenge with returnees in Kenya had been their personal safety concerns making it extremely difficult for their involvement in counter-narratives. There are estimates of at least 700 returnees at the Kenyan Coast as mid of 2015 (IOM, 2015). These figures may be higher as not all returnees had taken advantage of the government led amnesty

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154 The term returnees here is used to refer to returning foreign fighters. This is a phenomenon that has been documented in places such as Turkey, Germany and so. In Kenya, there are two types of returnees. We have the deserters and those returning to join active sleeper cells.
program with more accurate assessments by mid-2016 to have been in the range of 1500 (Mogire et al. 2018).

Three explanations drawing from the field are relevant. One, is that the returnees feared reprisals from terror cells as they were deemed to have denounced radical movements. For their safety, they could not take up the offer. While the government amnesty programme in place since mid of 2015 had a rehabilitation component, they feared that they could be tracked by sleeper cells and killed for their denouncing the movement.

Second, field accounts noted that prior to joining groups such as the Al-Shabaab or increasingly the Islamic state, the members had taken an oath binding them to their respective movements. Third is that parents and guardians alike would not like to expose their kin to harm as some of the individuals that had enrolled for the amnesty programme had either disappeared without trace or had been killed mysteriously. These returnees would therefore not want to expose themselves in the public domain. Additionally, they would also have to contend with increased state scrutiny which in multiple ways reduced on their public engagements. There were fieldwork claims that the alleged disappearances of some of the returnees could be the actions of the security officials. The difficulties of the latter claim making, however, was that sleeper cells could also be responsible for some of the executions that have been reported in mainly the South Coast areas of Mombasa and parts of neighbouring Kwale County. It remained difficult in the course of the fieldwork to establish the veracity of some of the aforementioned claims.

6.3.2 The ‘Community’ as a Challenge

During the course of the fieldwork in both Mombasa and Nairobi Counties, respondents in both the focus group discussions and individual interviews noted that the

155 Interview with a project officer of a civil society organization based in Mombasa, Nairobi, June 23, 2017.
156 Interview with a project officer of a civil society organization based in Mombasa, Nairobi, June 23, 2017.
community itself posed a challenge to counter-radicalization initiatives. Several challenges were identified by respondents. One of the challenges with a section of the community was their non-disclosure of pertinent information that could pre-empt radicalization. Some of the respondents claimed knowledge of recruitment networks, including returnees yet they could not report to government officials. These respondents offered two explanations. Firstly, they were fearful of repercussions in the event of information leaks. A respondent observed that this non-cooperation while justifiable from a personal safety perspective, had been hampering counter-radicalization initiatives. One respondent noted that:

“The community knows the already radical individuals, but they shy away from disclosing to authorities for fear of reprisals. If the radical groups were to discover that one has reported to the authorities, then one will be killed. This fear is impacting on information flow necessary for fighting terror.”157

Secondly, the community was also entangled in this mess by way of social connections. These social connections had ranged from family and friendship connections. Choosing social connections over wider security concerns was thus inducting the community in being part of the problem.

A third challenge related to the composition of community safety structures such as community policing and *Nyumba Kumi*. A section of respondents argued that some of the community representatives could not be trusted with community safety. This was attributed to some members of these community safety structures having sons and daughters that had joined the Al-Shabaab. It remained unclear whether they were sympathizers of this movement. What was not in doubt in the respondents’ perspective was that useful counter-radicalization information would be concealed from security officials. As this respondent in Majengo, Nairobi noted:

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157 Interview with a male senior police officer in Likoni, Mombasa, November 24, 2016.
“The community does know who is a threat to their peace and security. The only challenge I think why Nyumba Kumi and community policing initiatives will not work is because a cross section of the members /including leaders of these initiatives have their sons or even daughters in some of these radical groups. A parent or a guardian would not want to expose their children negatively in such circumstances. They therefore will not share this information with government forces.”

In Likoni, Mombasa, some respondents spoke additionally to the character of representatives in community safety structures such as the Nyumba Kumi and community policing. Some of the nominated members were said to have criminal backgrounds. It was on this premise that they could not be trusted with community safety. As part of rectifying some of these shortcomings, there had been calls for security vetting of community representation in some of the community safety structures. One respondent observed:

“You could find that a drug trafficker is a member of community policing having been nominated by his or her village. The question then is, how can such an individual be entrusted with sharing information and participating in policing when they are ‘criminals’ by themselves... if you have a criminal being your eye, then you can clearly expect that you will lack adequate information. I would suggest that there is vetting for the community policing members to ensure that only upright people get to sit in these forums.”

An additional challenge that community members posed as they engaged with these community safety structures was lack of accountability on their part. A section of respondents referenced in particular that community representatives in these structures had taken on roles that they did not possess. Some for instance had taken on police-like functions which had

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158 Interview with a male resident of Majengo, in Nairobi, June 9, 2016.

159 Interview with a male senior police officer in Likoni, Mombasa, November 24, 2016.
further served to alienate the very same public that they had been nominated to serve. One of the police officers in Nairobi noted that:

“Community policing (CP) has not been very effective in this area. The members of the committees such as the village elders have been abusing their roles, they are not police officers, they are informers. We believe criminals are in villages and residential areas; they are not in police stations. They are supposed to be making weekly reports to the police. We have a particular incident in the past where two members of a CP fought over who had powers of a certain section in Eastleigh, the two kept occurrence books in their area, had even begun extorting money as protection money. These kinds of experiences make it difficult for CP to work effectively.”160

The aforementioned lack of accountability was similarly shared by a religious leader in Mombasa. He noted that:

“Some members of community policing have been taking bribes and behaving as though they were police…. In the process they have been eroding their credibility. In some places, community policing was said to operate like vigilantes such as Sangu- Sangu.” 161

### 6.3.3 Legitimacy Challenges with the Acceptance of Nyumba Kumi

The *Nyumba Kumi* model of clustering ten households and appointing a leader to be responsible for community safety had presented several challenges in its operations. *Nyumba Kumi* is a model introduced in the Uhuru Kenyatta’s administration post April 2013. It was meant to be a building block of the component of the well-known community policing model. Fieldwork accounts in both Mombasa and Nairobi Counties noted that one of the key challenges lay with how the model was introduced as a community-based initiative to fight varied forms of insecurity including countering violent extremism. Multiple respondents

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160 Interview with a male police officer in Nairobi, November 9, 2016.

161 Interview with a religious leader in Mombasa, June 6, 2017.
noted that the model appeared rather imposed as community participation had not been invoked in the appointment of officials.162

Drawing on the focus group discussions and individual interviews in both Nairobi and Mombasa, the Nyumba Kumi model was interpreted as a top-down imposed model. One of the criticisms is that it lacked community input before it was rolled out. Second, some of the leadership imposed into the community had questionable integrity and yet they had been put in charge of community safety. Individuals of questionable integrity including criminal backgrounds meant that they could not be fully trusted with guaranteeing the security and safety of the residents. It was highly likely that they could be partisan in their reduction of security threats including radicalization related risks. A third challenge as raised by respondents was the lack of clear instructions on the working of the model.

Part of the ambiguities of the model as raised by respondents was that it was imported into the country from Tanzania without fully appreciating how it would work in the Kenyan context. Additionally, there had been an ongoing turf of war between the members of Nyumba Kumi and members of community policing. Members of community policing considered it their legitimate right to engage in security provision as they had both community and government mandate. This stood in contrast with Nyumba Kumi that had yet to gain legitimacy on the ground. A section of interviewed local administrators in Mombasa argued that Nyumba Kumi had failed to take off properly and therefore could not be relied upon to deal with crime issues including the prevention of counter-radicalization.

In other words, Nyumba Kumi drawing from fieldwork in both Nairobi and Mombasa seems close to ‘collapsing’ owing in part to how it had been introduced in the community. The following quote of an interviewed member of community policing speaks broadly to the

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162 Mixed focus group discussion (men, women) with members of Likoni, Peace and Cohesion Committee in Likoni, Mombasa, June 8, 2017
legitimacy challenge that came with the introduction of *Nyumba Kumi* to the community. The respondent questions the manner in which the model was introduced and how a section of his colleagues in community policing took it:

“\[I\text{ recall that when }\textit{Nyumba Kumi} \text{ was introduced, it bypassed the locals who had already been in community policing …. What then happened is that community policing members took a back seat in security matters. The model has also not been participatory and inclusive of various sectors such as people living with disabilities, youth, businessmen and who have been included in the original community policing…}\]”\(^{163}\)

The above quote additionally speaks to the perception held by a cross section of community members about how government initiatives geared towards security sometimes lack meaningful community participation. This lack of meaningful community participation meant that a buy in component necessary for the adoption of the *Nyumba Kumi* model had been missing. The implication of this on security would be to reduce the overall effectiveness of the model in dealing with security threats including those posed by youth radicalization.

A section of respondents in both Mombasa and Nairobi interpreted an additional challenge of coordination between the national police service and the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government. This related to the lack of coordination between the police who had the mandate of community policing and *Nyumba Kumi* introduced under the Interior Ministry. Some respondents saw this as a form of ‘rivalry’ on which structure could better provide security. To the public, this image of non-cooperation within security structures themselves had created credibility gaps with these structures and in the end had promoted non-engagement.

A further legitimacy challenge of this model was its lack of nuance especially in appreciating that the communities it sought to offer security for were not uniform. A section of police officers were critical of the ten- household structure for its failures to anticipate that the model would work differently according to class dynamics in society. For instance, in

\(^{163}\) Male respondent in a focus group discussion, in Likoni, Mombasa, June 7, 2017.
rich, affluent residential areas, it would hardly work well owing to a privatised life for residents. The quote below is representative of a section of interviewed police officers that were critical of this model. One police officer reported that:

Here at the Coast, the different social classes have impacted on the how the Nyumba Kumi initiative would work. In affluent places such as Nyali, the residents would hardly know each other and therefore this initiative would not work very well. Deep in villages, the concept would work very well as people living within a particular area would know each other well. This concept thus gets to work better in rural areas and is less efficient in urban areas.  

The interpretation to be drawn from the above perspective was the need to be reflective of how various community-based security initiatives would impact on varied social classes for prudent planning. Another lingering challenge was an alleged presence of Al-Shabaab sympathizers within the police. Previous research in Kwale indicates that information sharing with the police on a radical group had come back to haunt one of the informers. One of the informer received a WhatsApp message with their photo and an intimidating message warning them of unspecified consequences. This account clearly diminished the trust levels between the police and the community and which negatively impacted on the success of Nyumba Kumi (Mkutu et al. 2018:95).

6.3.4 Failure to Recognise Women’s Holistic Agency in Counter-radicalization Initiatives

One of the challenges that became imminent in the course of the fieldwork was the failure to appreciate that women often occupied multiple roles in society and therefore there was need for a holistic agency to make their contributions count. There was the tendency to situate women’s role in counter-radicalization simply by relying on their so called natural and traditional roles. Situating women’s role in counter-radicalization initiatives from the standpoint of their traditional roles as wives and mothers is simply considered as missing the

164 Interview with a male police officer, in Mombasa, November 24, 2016.
point. It was simply assumed that women would be in a position to spot the radicalization signs in their sons, daughters, or husbands and thus dissuade them.

The challenge with this one-sided perspective had been failure to include women in public spaces that mattered for holistic counter-radicalization. The challenges that needed to be overcome is multifaceted but in significant ways it could change the landscape in favour of their meaningful involvement. Women would need to be involved in multiple ways such as participating in decision making and making their input in counter-radicalization strategies. Their perspectives needed to be incorporated in prevention strategies. While acknowledging women agency in counter-radicalization, they have also been implicated albeit minimally in radicalization networks in contexts such as Isiolo, Kenya. Appreciating this perspective would have relevance for counter-radicalization (Mkutu et al. 2017).

Women have traditionally been under-represented in security circles and hence their input has been lacking in some of the preventative initiatives. Incorporating women in preventative initiatives helps then to challenge the gender inequality that is perpetuated by some of these initiatives and which also in part have tended to privilege male power. Overcoming the simplistic frame of women as mothers helps to situate the holistic narrative of how good governance should be entrenched as part of broader preventative initiatives. Thinking about the contribution of various segments of the society such as women, men, religious leaders, including youth provides an opportunity for collective problem solving. The challenge therefore remains that side-lining women in the periphery ensures that their potential cannot be fully tapped yet they remain a critical constituency that is yet to be fully appreciated (d’Estaing, 2017).

Notwithstanding that women involvement in the counter-radicalization domain has been minimal, women could also be playing a much more negative role through their silence. The findings also indicated that women agency could also be counter-productive if they
chose to be silent. The following quote of a female civil society official in Nairobi is illustrative of this dilemma:

“Women can at times be protective… In a community, they could know a lot about who is radicalizing, but then they can choose to be silent about what is happening… They may not raise questions…”\textsuperscript{165}

The above quote speaks to how the silences can be detrimental to community security. This could be interpreted on one account as a result of protecting one’s family member or community member from the consequences of law owing to multiple social connections.

\textbf{6.3.5 Sustainability of Counter-radicalization Programmes}

Relying on field findings, an additional challenge raised related to the sustainability of counter-radicalization initiatives at the community level. Community-based initiatives to counter radicalization were mainly dependent on donor funding. This made it difficult to sustain some of the gains once the funding had lapsed. This in addition became complex as funding priorities kept on evolving. The kind of grants they sought for their work was in part tied to specific outcomes and which raised concerns about the viability of interventions post the funding phase. While respondents mentioned that this was not a unique challenge to counter-radicalization work, and cut across the development arena, this nevertheless remained a significant challenge to their work. A female resident of Majengo, Nairobi recounted how a counter-narrative program that ran on popular local radio station had to be cut short on account of donor funding freeze. She recounted as follows:

“I recall this program on a local radio station, it was useful as the host brought on board mentors that spoke against social ills in society including violent extremism… It was an extremely useful program as it resonated with some of the challenges that our society was going through. When the NGO funding ran out… we were left hanging…”\textsuperscript{166}

\textsuperscript{165} Interview with a female civil society official, in Nairobi, July 12, 2017.

\textsuperscript{166} Interview with a female resident of Majengo, in Nairobi, February 17, 2017.
The above excerpts elaborate the challenges that are associated with donor funding. Similar viewpoints were raised in Mombasa County, over sustainability of counter-radicalization initiatives. Community based initiatives that run counter-radicalization programmes are often dependent on the cycles of donor funding. Officials of community-based organizations had to constantly be on the lookout for funding channels in a bit to keep their programs running. The added challenge of soliciting for donor funding as multiple respondents noted in both Mombasa and Nairobi Counties is that they would have to align their programs to donor interests.

Complicating this further is that donor interests and priorities kept shifting thus putting into jeopardy how the gains in the field of counter-radicalization would be sustained. A respondent observed that while community safety models worked efficiently in a locality such as Likoni in the South Coast, their reliance on donor funding could negatively impact the gains already being made.167 While community-based initiatives such as community policing were considered important for counter-radicalization, their lack of budgetary support meant that they operated on a volunteer-ship model. Donor funding had occasionally come in handy to aid in some motivational elements that helped to improve the commitment of the members. Donor funding for instance made it possible to offset transport and lunch costs for scheduled community meetings.

In the absence of funding, members of community policing would have to be extra dedicated to use their own resources to participate in all of the activities A respondent in Mombasa discussed that counter-radicalization needed to be long-term intervention as the trends and processes of radicalization kept on evolving.168 Engaging in long term interventions was also useful for purposes of lessons learning given that political violence

167 Interview with a religious leader, in Mombasa, June 7, 2017.

168 Interview with a community peace worker, in Mombasa, March 16, 2017.
was likely to endure much more in the African continent and beyond. Political violence was likely to endure given a myriad of factors that had been at play in Kenya and in the global space. Among other factors, religious intolerance, the rise of global networks such as Daesh, the presence of marginalization narratives to tap all created prospects that politically motivated violence was likely to endure much more.

6.3.6 Cost-Benefit Analysis of Counter-radicalization Resources: Where is the Money Going?

While it would remain absolutely difficult to measure the impact of community-level initiatives towards preventing radicalization and violent extremism, the question of value for money came up for scrutiny. While respondents noted in both locations that community-based approaches required partnership for the work to proceed, questions were also raised as to whether the resources were being used for their intended purposes. A key theme that emerged within the cost-benefit analysis was the increased tendency of ‘elite capture’ of resources being earmarked for counter-radicalization initiatives. Respondents cited polished and well-connected individuals who tapped onto resources but who were dependent on grassroot actors to implement their projects. There was a general feeling that Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) had become broadly an opportunity attract donor funding for self-interest while the real work was left unattended or left to individuals without access to funding. The negative implication of this was the lack of grassroot participation in the design of the programmes. The lack of local sensitivities and contexts had resulted into unsustainable initiatives that hardly worked but which needed to be implemented as part of fulfilling the project activities.

A respondent in Likoni in Mombasa would question the real practicality of taking a short course on the signs of radicalization as case in point.\(^\text{169}\) While he had taken the course,\(^\text{169}\) Interview with a male youth in Likoni, Mombasa, June 7, 2017.
he kept wondering then how he would apply the training. Instead, he called for more practical long-term interventions. This respondent cited that youth empowerment in the form of business training and seed money would be more prudent as opposed to continuous capacity building.

An additional challenge that was raised in the fieldwork in both Nairobi and Mombasa Counties was the replication of counter-radicalization initiatives across the board. Multiple community-based initiatives were already at play which in some instances would benefit from merging of efforts. There thus existed myriad of interventions that lacked synergy and collaboration further putting into jeopardy the value for money from a donor perspective.

In sum, there was nothing much to show on the ground in the two locations especially on economic empowerment. What was more available were capacity building interventions that then sought to delegitimize the uptake of political violence. Measuring these capacity building/meetings in relation to counter-radicalization remained difficult to quantify in the course of fieldwork.

6.3.7 Lack of Motivation in Community Security Provision

One of the challenges that was mentioned in the course of fieldwork in both Nairobi and Mombasa Counties was the community level interventions such as community policing, peace and cohesion committees lacked motivation elements. Respondents engaged in some of these community level initiatives highlighted that their engagement was a form of ‘free labour’ and which sometimes was demotivating. In the absence of donor funding, which sometimes provided occasional support such as transport reimbursement, respondents noted that they had to use their own monies to engage in community security. The costs they incurred ranged from transport, lunch, including phone credit to communicate with security agencies. Respondents urged the national government to examine the applicable forms of
motivation that could be provided to community security volunteers. A member of the community policing in Likoni, Mombasa noted that:

“One of the concerns we have as members of community policing, including those that have previously served on the former District Peace Committees (now renamed Peace and Cohesion Committees) is the lack of facilitation. There is no transport or even a bottle of water provided when we come for meetings… this can only be termed volunteer work… imagine spending all your day in a meeting and yet you have a family that requires that you provide…” 170

The above account other community engagements while balancing and taking care of their family needs. They also had to contend with the overall value for spending their time and resources to contribute to community safety. While members of these forums remained committed to ensuring that security threats in their neighbourhood were proactively addressed, it had remained a voluntary thing. This meant that in certain instances, members felt demotivated and could not fully dedicate their energies in ensuring the safety of their communities. Motivation as respondents in both Mombasa and Nairobi Counties noted would help to boost their morale levels. Interviewed respondents were however clear that they were not in essence looking for a monthly salary, but only for a reasonable compensation that would motivate them to engage in community security.

6.3.8 Minimal Youth Involvement in Counter-Radicalization Initiatives

A challenge that was raised across the two fieldwork locations of Nairobi and Mombasa was the minimal involvement of youth in counter-radicalization initiatives. Youth-only focus group discussions in the two field work locations pointed to the fact that youth had in some notable instances been deprived of their involvement in counter-radicalization. Yet their involvement would most certainly increase the receptivity of their strategies. This turn of events could be explained on basis of social rifts that had been growing between the youth and the adults in the society.

170 Interview with a male member of community policing in Likoni, Mombasa, June 7, 2017.
One related to the ‘securitization’ of youth as the problem and hence in some instances they had not been directly involved in community interventions such as security meetings. A related perspective recounted in the field was an apparent ‘social distance’ between the youth and the adults and which had minimized points of cooperation in counter-radicalization. A section of youth across the two locations felt on one account, that the adults remained insensitive to their everyday struggles and as such felt that their voices were hardly appreciated. This had resulted in the lack of youth involvement in community forums where community security matters were discussed. This was in part blamed on the earlier securitization of the youth as ‘potential’ risks not worthy of involvement in counter-radicalization initiatives.

Beyond the community level, the securitization of the youth identity in Kenya notably the security agents meant that the youth hardly found opportunities or were willing to cooperate with government. A section of the youth interviewed mentioned that they had been subjected to regular police harassment which had significantly eroded their trust levels.\footnote{Youth only focus group discussion, in Likoni, Mombasa, June 7, 2017. This perspective was supported in a youth only focus group discussion in Changamwe, Mombasa, June 10, 2017.} Trust as other sections of the study have shown remains a key ingredient to mediate state-society relations and which would be important for counter-radicalization initiatives to take root.

6.4 Towards an Improvement of the Potential of Community Based Approaches in Counter-radicalization

Drawing on field findings in both Nairobi and Mombasa Counties, a number of interventions were suggested to strengthen preventative work around youth radicalization. One of the recurring theme had been the varying levels of trust between the community and the police. These low trust levels that were prevalent across the two study locations (Mombasa and Nairobi) had been necessitated by several factors that have been discussed
elsewhere in this study. Among other factors trust deficits were attributed to information and delayed response rates when called upon to act.

Moving forward and if community-based approaches are to work effectively, there is the need to continuously cultivate trust levels between the police and the community. One of the suggested routes was to have regular community engagements such as dialogue forums and sporting activities to continuously build on trust that would be required between the police and the community. The national government including the civil society have a role to play in the conscientization of citizens to be co-partners in security. That is the community ought to consider security to be a collective responsibility to be co-shared with the state. This would be a departure from the traditional understanding of security that is considered a preserve of the state.

6.5 Conclusion

While this chapter has demonstrated the potentials for community engagement in counter-radicalization, the findings principally indicate that it is a work in progress. While, the chapter has shown that the potentials for counter-radicalization exist in such domains as information sharing, collective problem solving among others, it is the challenges that would require more scrutiny, if this complementary approach was to work optimally.

One of the key challenges discussed in this chapter is the minimal levels of trust that have existed between the police and the community in the post 9/11 period. The minimal level of trust and which constitutes a key ingredient in police-community relations which would be necessary for counter-radicalization has been significantly eroded in the post 9/11 period. The field findings have argued that this tension lay with the lack of accountability by security agencies and chiefly the police in the so termed ‘Global War of Terror (GWOT)’.
The police and related security agencies were perceived to engage in forms of ‘collective punishment’ such as through arbitrary arrests, raids, including the blanket securitization of the Muslim identity as responsible for terrorism. The implication of some of these stances has been the deterioration of community-police relations thereby eroding trust that would require for cooperation and collaboration for counter-radicalization work. Kenya’s designation as a frontline state in the GWOT in the post 9/11 period and the attendant counter-terrorism support it has received from partners has overtime strengthened its coercive capacities. In such an environment, attempts at seeking the support of such a community are bound to fraught with challenges.

In overcoming some of these challenges, a change of stance in counter-terrorism approaches would be required. This would require the need to balance hard power approaches and soft power approaches in the counter-radicalization domains. Soft power approaches correspond to non-coercive approaches such as community policing. The potential of these community level initiatives as part of counter-radicalization initiatives would however be dependent on sufficient trust levels between the police and the community. In the absence of trust, community cooperation in counter-radicalization would be minimized. In addition to the low-trust levels between the community and the police is the need to deconstruct the narratives of Muslim communities as ‘suspect communities’ in the counter-terrorism domain. This narrative of ‘suspect communities’ not only constructs the Muslim identity as a threat but also additionally serves to delegitimize a religious or a political belief.

This chapter also raises a challenge that would require further scrutiny. One of the challenges raised was the failure of some community members to cooperate with government officials with regards to information sharing. Whereas multiple respondents in both interview locations noted that they knew some of the returnees and members of recruitment rings, they nevertheless expressed non-commitment to cooperate with security officials. This point
underscores the need for continuous community engagement to appreciate the role that they can play in guaranteeing their own security. Appreciating community engagement would however not be assumed as a given noting the existence of sympathizers of some of the violent social movements.

In terms of the potentials for counter-radicalization work, this chapter observes a significant difference across the two study locations. In particular, examining the potential for collective problem solving, the field findings indicated that in Likoni, Mombasa, this potential had been more pronounced than in Eastleigh and Majengo areas of Nairobi. The differences across the two sites could be explained on the basis that in Likoni, community level actors there such as community-based organizations (CBOs) had a longer experience of cooperation with the local police. Local level actors had a much more sustained level of cooperation with the police on broad security matters and which had allowed more cooperation. In Eastleigh and Majengo areas of Nairobi, there had been growing mistrust of security agencies owing to various security swoops there and thus had significantly impacted on such facets of cooperation. What the above perspective demonstrates is that the potentials for counter-radicalization work can also be influenced by the nature of police-community relations at a given moment. When the relations were sour owing to for instance numerous counter-terrorism raids by the police, the levels of cooperation would be significantly diminished.

A puzzling finding across the two study locations and perhaps one that could be investigated further in future research is the differences in trust levels that existed between local government administrators in comparison with the Kenya Police. Field accounts pointed to a greater level of trust attached to such offices such as County Commissioners while minimal trust was attached to the Kenyan Police. The explanation offered was that these local administration officials were more professional in executing their work, as they listened
more, and could be trusted with sensitive information unlike a section of the Kenyan Police. The local administration too was more responsive to the needs and concerns of the local residents in comparison to the police. The Kenyan Police would need to invest more in trust levels given their overarching mandate of maintaining law and order in the country. The rebuilding of trust levels would involve a change in their operations to become more people centred while remaining accountable to the law and their codes of conduct. Furthermore, it would only be on the basis of the police demonstrating accountability that trust levels could begin to be rebuilt.
CHAPTER SEVEN: GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

7.0 Conclusion

The central thesis of the study was to investigate the contributions of community-based approaches in counter-radicalization with a focus on selected locations in Kenya’s Nairobi and Mombasa counties. The study was set in Eastleigh and Majengo in Nairobi and Likoni in Mombasa. The study explored the potentials and efficacy of these approaches in dealing with the threats posed by youth radicalization. Youth radicalization to commit violent extremism has become part of a globalized security threat and which has necessitated multiple interventions including community-based approaches.

Chapters four to six set out the key arguments of the study. Chapter four examined the process and trends of youth radicalization. Chapter five analyzed the community-based approaches engaged in counter-radicalization work. Chapter six investigated the potentials and challenges of using community-based approaches in counter-radicalization interventions. The aim of this chapter is to summarize the key findings of the study, point to wider implications of the study and areas of further research.

Since the 9/11 attacks, there has been a growing literature base that has been focused on counter-terrorism from a statist approach. This growing scholarship stock has been concerned with how to pre-empt the threats of terrorism by adopting hard power approaches. These hard power approaches have relied on the use of military force, tough legislations and so on in pursuit of the so-called terrorists. While not discounting the contributions that hard power approaches can make in the broad domain of counter-terrorism, there has been a growing genre of scholarship that has been focused on soft power approaches and their potentials for counter-radicalization. This was the study’s entry point.
This research was prompted by the need to pursue the working of the community-based approaches to counter the threats of youth radicalization in Kenya’s counties of Mombasa and Nairobi. The central thread that runs through the work was an investigation of the potential and challenges of community-based approaches to counter youth radicalization. Youth radicalization is a contemporary security threat not only in Kenya but also globally. In doing so, the focus was to contribute to a new knowledge area that has hitherto been under appreciated in the Kenyan context. The entry point for the study was while previous studies in the Kenyan context had examined the debates on counter-terrorism from a state perspective, fewer studies had examined it from local soft power perspectives. It was on the basis of this empirical gap that this study was founded.

The Global War on Terror (GWOT) discourse in the post 9/11 era, has focused on a series of hard power approaches. Emphasis was laid globally on a series of interventions that ranged from military combat to tough counter-terrorism legislations. Soft power initiatives such as through counter-narratives and community engagement only began to be appreciated after some of the hard power initiatives had failed to fully mitigate the security threats centered around terrorism.

Over a decade since 9/11, there has been a scholarly appreciation that states counter radicalization initiatives can often be complemented by non-state actors. This paradigm shift in focusing upon local non-state actors has been informed by the appreciation that communities can be key allies in counter-terrorism. They often do understand their local spaces well and can be useful in addressing some of the narratives that terrorists seek to use to gain grounding in their communities. These local actors often would have better opportunities to address individuals, intra and inter-community dynamics. In was on this empirical gap that this study was founded on. In other words, how were local non-state actors
engaging in preventative work to counter youth radicalization taking on these responsibilities. What potentials, and challenges did their interventions produce for preventative work?

## 7.1 Key Findings

Broadly, this study was centrally guided by the potentials that community-based approaches could offer in counter radicalization work. This study was guided by three objectives. First, the study investigated the process and the trends of youth radicalization. The second objective examined the workings of community-based approaches in counter-radicalization. The third objective explored the potentials and challenges imminent in use of community-based counter-radicalization approaches.

### 7.1.1 The Process and Trends of Youth Radicalization

This study observed that the radicalization process had remained non-linear and was influenced by multiple variables across Nairobi and Mombasa. These variables ranged from religious ideology to claims of marginalization and poor economic indicators. These variables were said to constitute a myriad of pathways that could influence individuals to take up violent extremism causes. The study also found that the radicalization process needed to be understood at the level of the individual. A number of externalities were said to be influencing the process. Narratives of societal marginalization, while drawing on historical lenses had been influencing the process. This study while working within the social-movement theory linked the range of grievances in the form of contentious politics that required redress. One of the radicalization narratives that was shared in the field to claim marginality and hence a possible uptake of violence had been a claim on an assault on ‘global Islam’. This narrative as respondents averred in the field in addition to literature on the same spoke to the influence of Jihadi Salafism a (variant of Islam) that justified violence to redress some of the grievances that were meted on the ‘Islamic ‘community. This variant of Islam
was interpreted to be influential in the radicalization process as it mediated the end goal of achieving a just Islamic state.

The study also worked within the securitization framework to situate statist perspectives on the radicalization process. Following on a securitization logic, the state through its officials placed the agency of Islam as influential in the process. In other words, the state interpreted the rise of the so termed ‘Jihadi’ preachers and their sermons as laying the foundation for youth recruitment into violent extremism.

The study also working within the political socialization framework also noted that the dynamics of poor parenting had influenced the process. This was attributed to failures by parents and guardians to be positive role models to their children. The abdication of parental responsibilities had provided opportunities for recruiters to exploit those gaps by indoctrinating the children and youth with their targeted messaging.

The study also explored various trends in the radicalization process. One of the trends explored in the study was the changing gender norms in the radicalizing process. The study found that while it was principally the boy child that was the target of recruitment, young women had also become targets of recruitment. This could be on account of female partners joining with their spouses; out of own volition, but increasingly also out of deception.

Another notable trend in the radicalization process is that an individual socio-economic profile no longer mattered for recruitment. While a previous trend had been to target individuals of a low socio-economic status, including minimal education, the target had shifted towards highly skilled individuals including those that had privileged economic backgrounds. Recruitment networks were additionally looking for specialized skills such as
doctors, engineers and so on. This trend had significantly weakened the poverty-economic inclusion nexus previously linked to radicalization.

Another observable trend in the radicalization process had been to recruit new converts to religion. These converts drawing on fieldwork were considered malleable owing to minimal grasp of religion. Recruiters it was interpreted in the fieldwork took advantage of this to misinterpret religion for their own selfish agendas. This was made possible through the agency of the so-called Jihadi clerics that sought to radicalize using their religious sermons. Religious indoctrination had thus been a significant mediating factor in the radicalization process in Kenya.

7.1.2 Community-Based Approaches for Counter-Radicalization

This study elaborated on a variety of community-based approaches that were in use in selected sites in Nairobi and Mombasa Counties for counter-radicalization work. The identified approaches ranged from community policing and Nyumba Kumi, community conversations, counter-narratives among others. Some of these identified approaches ran in collaboration with government agencies notably community policing and Nyumba Kumi. The approaches were in essence, complimenting the state centric approaches but also had been departing from them.

The study noted that community policing and Nyumba Kumi and whose essence was to bring on board the public in their own security governance had been working at varying levels in both Nairobi and Mombasa. At their optimum level (where there existed considerable trust-levels between the public and security agencies), they had added value to counter-radicalization work. They were cited as being useful in areas of information sharing but also helping to brainstorm on context specific interventions that could be adopted in a particular locale.
Community conversation spaces and counter-narratives were considered useful for delegitimizing the narratives of the recruitment networks. In a nutshell, they aimed to pre-empt the recruitment by deconstructing the strategies and the tactics that recruiters applied. For these spaces to be effective, the study argued that their approach and strategy needed to constantly evolve to keep up with the shifting recruitment patterns and trends.

The study also found approaches that focused on redesigning and reviewing the curricula taught in religious schools. This revision of curricula taught at Madaris (religious schools) was adopted as a pre-emptive strategy. This initiative that had been in place in selected locations in both Mombasa and Nairobi was meant to harmonize and eventually standardize the curricula. This action had been necessitated by claims that religious schools in the past had been used as indoctrination spaces for young minds and who would be used for future recruitment purposes. The study found that this approach was not holistically adopted owing to various doctrinal divisions within the Islamic faith.

### 7.1.3 Potentials of Community Based Approaches to Counter-radicalization

The study findings indicated several potentials that had arisen out of the community-based approaches in counter-radicalization. Some of the potentials existed in such platforms as community policing, community conversation spaces and counter-narrative work. One of the potentials raised was their input in information sharing which would be applied for prevention purposes. Information sharing for instance on potential recruits, recruiters among other sources of information could only work in situations of optimal trust between the public and the security agencies.

Trust levels between the public and the security agencies were not always optimum yet trust was an important mediator for community to collaborate in community safety. Trust deficits arose in instances where security agencies had used excessive force in counter-
terrorism operations or confidential information shared with the police or other security agencies had leaked.

The other potential created by these community-based approaches—had been that of collective problem solving. This collective problem solving had entailed the community input in their own security in lights of threats such as radicalization. This approach had worked through community involvement in crafting counter-radicalization strategies. Collective problem solving had proceeded on the basis of community and security agencies working together to develop practical strategies. This mutual dependence was critical in the sense that it helped to map out the pre-radicalization and recruitment patterns which formed the basis of prevention.

Whereas trust levels were not always optimum, continuous trust building between the community and the police/security agencies created immense potentials of cooperation in the future. One of the platforms that had applied this collective problem solving had been community policing. While community policing and the attendant Nyumba Kumi model had been providing these channels of engagement, it was not a given that these approaches worked to their optimum. These levels of engagement had been marked by high levels of mistrust and suspicion towards security agencies. Part of the mistrust had arisen out of expressed heavy handedness of the police. Regular police raids in such areas as Majengo and Eastleigh in Nairobi had resulted in various human rights violations including arbitrary arrests, detention. This had served to diminish trust levels between the public and the security agencies.

Another potential that had been created by these community level initiatives had been opportunities to dialogue and proffer community owned solutions. This had worked through mounted community conversation spaces. These spaces offered a platform to discuss sensitive matters such as youth vulnerabilities to terrorism. Discussing youth vulnerabilities
to violence created awareness on the tactics/strategies that radicalizers were keen on using. By creating this awareness, these spaces were also action oriented as they also provided a collective space to brainstorm for preventative measures to adopt.

Furthermore, the study finds that counter-narratives had considerably reduced individual appeals for recruitment into political violence. Counter-narratives in this context included religious teachings and audio-visual materials packaged with specific issues of concern to counter recruitment and uptake of political violence. These included accurate contents and debates on matters such as ‘Jihad’. Counter-narratives such as those countering ‘Jihad’ were geared at a narrow section of individuals that were misinterpreting religion to achieve their selfish ends. These community-based counter-narratives and dialogue forums as the study avers were aimed at deconstructing the appeal of terrorist organizations. These terrorist organizations as the study finds have previously relied on the tropes of marginalization and wider global debates as a recruitment narrative. Counter-narratives had also been deconstructing some of supplied grievances.

7.1.4 Challenges and Tensions of using Community-based Approaches for Counter-radicalization

Moreover, this study also identified several challenges in the use of community-based approaches in counter-radicalization work. A key challenge and by implication a source of tension referenced was the low-trust levels that existed between the police and the community. This has in turn translated into poor relations. The implication of this was then the community did not easily trust security agencies and government bureaucrats to relay information that would be relied upon for pre-emptive work.

From a community perspective, security agencies and more so the police were yet to win the trust of the citizens that they are mandated constitutionally to protect. The police and other security agencies were yet to demonstrate democratic policing. The study finds that
police-community trust has continued to be weakened by acts of corruption, a culture of arbitrary arrests and detention, including claims of extra-judicial killings more pronounced in counter-terrorism operations. In addition to this unaccountable policing, the police, the study observes could not be easily trusted with confidential information to prevent crime. In some instances, confidential information to pre-empt threats shared by the public/community had ended up being leaked thereby putting at risk the ‘whistle-blowers’ of the information.

The minimal trust levels between the community and the police had also affected the engagement potential of initiatives such as community policing and the *Nyumba Kumi* to deliver community safety. As observed in chapter six, these security initiatives were dependent on the existence of optimum trust levels in order to address general crime including pre-empting youth radicalization. Within these two community safety structures (community policing and *Nyumba Kumi*) there existed claims of competing influences between the national police service (responsible for community policing) and the Ministry of Interior and the Coordination of National Government (responsible for *Nyumba Kumi*). A major bone of contention had remained how *Nyumba Kumi* had been introduced at the community level. *Nyumba Kumi* as the study finds was introduced without any meaningful community engagement. It was deemed to be imposed from top-down and as such it lacked the legitimacy it required at the ground for it to be effective. Respondents also averred the lack of coordination and duplication of roles within the two structures.

### 7.1.5 Evaluation of Community Based Approaches in Counter-radicalization Work

The study on the overall finds mixed perspectives on the working of these community models. From the previous discussions in chapter six, they held both potentials and challenges. Potentials were identified through instances such as information sharing and collective problem solving. Challenges revolved principally around the nature of state-society
relations in particular contexts. In certain instances, the approaches had borne fruit with pre-empting youth radicalization. This had principally worked through information sharing. This involved tipping information for instance on the presence of recruiters or potential recruits in a specific neighbourhood. This information sharing was however context specific and was dependent on existing trust levels with the security agencies and principally the police. In the cases of cordial relations between the police/security agencies, then this engagement had also opened other useful potentials in counter-radicalization work. This additionally allowed the community to suggest practical interventions that the security sector could take to avert a potential threat.

Community conversation spaces and counter-narratives which both aimed at delegitimizing the recruitment narratives were also considered to have minimized the uptake of recruitment. This reduction was attributed to increased knowledge and awareness on some of the recruitment messaging. In other instances, the potential of these community-based approaches in counter-radicalization work had been limited owing to several challenges. One of the significant challenges related to poor community-police relations. This had principally affected trust levels, a key ingredient for police-community partnerships to work. Even in instances where police-community relations were cordial; some community members chose non-cooperation. Some chose non-cooperation even in instances where they had prior information that could pre-empt the threats of radicalization.

On the overall the study finds that there existed potentials in the use of community-based approaches in counter-radicalization work. These potentials could however be strengthened with improving the accountability of security agencies while building confidence with the public. In evaluating community-based approaches in counter-radicalization, an imminent dilemma is how to measure such interventions. How for instance is one to measure the effectiveness/potentials of such community-based approaches so and
attach it fully to a reduction of radicalization to particular activities? These measurement challenges could be unraveled in a future study.

7.2 The Study Implications

This study has been concerned with the potentials and challenges for community-based approaches to counter youth radicalization in Kenya. Whereas the study only covered selected locations in Mombasa and Nairobi Counties, it raises a number of implications that could be applied in other contexts.

One of the recurring themes throughout the fieldwork was low trust levels between the police and the community. This has weakened opportunities for such approaches as community policing. A key policy implication which is being recommended elsewhere in contexts such as the UK is to engage in extended periods of long term trust building between counter-terrorism agencies through the platform of community policing. This would entail longer periods of interaction as a way to foster this trust. The policing agencies would then need to avoid tactics that undermine these trust levels. Some of the tactics that would undermine trust building would include public searches on the basis of faith and or ethnicity (Huq, 2016:7-8).

Drawing on fieldwork in the Kenyan context, the state security apparatus in the guise of counter-terrorism have been said to be overly suspicious of the Muslim identity in Kenya. The resultant has been low trust levels between communities and the police and hence minimized levels of cooperation. Low trust levels have resulted from ethnic/religious profiling, including the arbitrary arrests and detentions. This then would have an implication on how some of these communities would cooperate with such initiatives as community policing. These findings resonate with similar studies conducted in Europe. Relying on works covering Finland, Netherlands, and Great Britain, trust levels with the police on the poor and minority communities have been low. They have similarly been low on the perception of
victimization, including racial profiling thereby diminishing the level of trust that would be required for joint problem solving (Giessen et al. 2017).

It is important therefore that a mutual collaboration is sought between the state and a range of community actors genuinely concerned with counter-radicalization and finding areas of cooperation. These kinds of interventions shall require confidence building measures on both parts for effective preventive work. Hence, there is the potential for the state and communities to collaborate in several ways.

Several suggestions have been raised however on how to pre-empt terrorist threats in Kenya. One is that the state must deal with the broad range of grievances that provide an entry point for Al-Shabaab. Two is the need to invest more on counter-terrorism stances. Three is to address the runaway corruption especially in the security sector that has previously enabled the group to operate with ease. Fourth but not least is the need to professionalize the police and the security sector so that trust can be regained and, in the process, stop some draconian acts that may well be risk factors for radicalization (Cannon & Pkalya, 2017).

Previous chapters have pointed to the collaborative efforts that can be tapped into for preventive work. This has involved such initiatives as community policing, including community conversations that are geared towards preventative work. Some of these practices have been experimented in such contexts such as the United Kingdom through the Prevent Programme in particular. The Prevent Programme has brought on board community partnerships for preventive counter-radicalization initiatives (Weine et al. 2016). Some of the initiatives under the Prevent Programme have been to forge closer police-community engagements. This police-community engagement eased the tensions that have previously existed between the two groups. These collaborations have then offered opportunities for collective problem-solving strategies through brainstorming. The implication of this has been
a citizen led form of policing where the community becomes a key partner in preventative work. In this respect, there would be need for the community to develop their own platforms and then invite policing agencies to come to their platform. In other words, there are interventions that would require only community engagement such as countering religious ideologies (Weine et al. 2016). Government engagement in such initiatives as counter-narratives would be for instance be faced with legitimacy challenges.

In a nutshell, there would be value for the community to engage in some of the areas where they enjoyed greater legitimacy. Having community platforms and then inviting governmental stakeholders would likely in the long-term bridge the required state-society relations that would help in pre-empting a wide variety of security threats including youth radicalization. Improving on state-society relations would make possible collaborations and partnerships that would help to pre-empt security threats. Therefore, trust building is a key ingredient.

An implication also raised is the need for more academic and policy perspectives, to appreciate and accommodate the input of various non-state actors in counter-radicalization work. As the findings have demonstrated, the state on its own cannot deal with the myriad of insecurity challenges that it faces. There is therefore the need for synergies across a range of non-state actors such as communities, non-governmental organizations, youth among others. As Solomon (2017) remarks, there is need for a shift in the security governance realm, a process he characterizes as ‘security from below’. In moving this security governance debate, there would the need to account for the multiplicity of various actors whether local or global and how this reconfigures wider thinking about security provision.

Perhaps, it is time to reflect on a new argument in security studies that calls itself the ‘global security assemblage’. This framework calls for a new theorization of how security is to be governed. It proceeds ontologically from the need to reflect beyond the state as the unit
of analysis in provision of security. Taking a shift from the Weberian conception of the state, it critiques the assumptions that the state is uniform across the board. Instead, this perspective argues that the state and the security sector should open itself to different possibilities. The global security assemblage thus calls for a critical interrogation of how multiple security actors, discourses, values and so on engage in security provision. This analysis offers an opportunity to connect the global, the local, including their various dynamics, and interactions in security governance. This assemblage framework in a nutshell calls for a re-theorization of security provision in more so in the so called ‘fragile’ or ‘failed’ states beyond the singular conceptualization of a state as a neat category that should govern political and social order (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2017).

7.3 Future Research Areas

It would be important for future researchers within terrorism studies including peace studies scholars to revisit the ‘epistemological crisis’ of counter-terrorism that has been considered by critical terrorism studies scholars such as Jackson (2015) and which has had varied implications in this respect. The ‘epistemological’ crisis as debated by scholars such as Jackson (2015) in summary argues that in the post 9/11, policy interventions on counter-terrorism have been informed by ‘probabilities’ and not actual evidence on the threats that are posed by terrorism.

The epistemological crisis has thus been made manifest in using the Rumsfeldian language of ‘the unknowns’ of the terrorism. The crisis beginning in the post 9/11 has been characterized more by the ‘imaginations’ of what terrorists are capable of doing and hence on the overall the need for preventative stances to often pre-empt unknown threats.

For Jackson (2015) and others working on assumptions, and probabilities of imminent terrorist threats has minimized the place of evidence such as interrogating the subjectivities of terrorist motivations and the root causes of their motivations. Instead as Jackson (2015)
observes there is the need for analysts’, scholars and government officials to spend more time understanding the root causes of this security policy instead of simply proffering solutions to pre-empt the ‘threats’ which largely remains unknown. In calling for a deeper investigation into the Kenyan case, or even in other contexts, it would be important to situate basically how counter-terrorism policies are arrived at, including the types of knowing that are employed for counter-terrorism pre-emptive operations. This remains a useful suggestion in going beyond the range of counter-terrorism assumptions that treats ‘terrorism’ as an unknown phenomenon requiring particular pre-emptive responses (Jackson, 2015). It creates an imaginary of what terrorists are capable of and the legitimization of particular actions and which could in themselves intensify the risks involved. For instance, hard headed responses such as drone attacks, foreign military interventions in the post 9/11 period have served to intensify terror threats rather than reduce the threats.

Some of these interventions being driven by the imagining ‘potential’ risks and sometimes devoid of tangible evidence (Jackson, 2015). The call then is for future researchers to investigate present counter-terrorism paradigms including counter-radicalization programmes and specifically in seeking to isolate what kind of knowledge is used to arrive at specific actions. Taking a case study of Kenya would be useful for comparative work but also for differences in the global security literature. This perhaps might unravel more cost-effective and more rational ideas to deal with this threat. An additional area of research would be investigating the singular contribution of community policing in counter-terrorism in Kenya including other comparative case studies.

What this study has offered are community level initiatives applied in the Kenyan context with a focus on selected sites in Mombasa and Nairobi Counties. The study does not claim generality of the working of explored initiatives and such as they cannot be entirely replicated in other contexts. Some of the initiatives would be problematic to replicate across
the board owing to certain variables that may vary from case to case. For instance, community-police relations remain a key variable as how this cooperation might be work.

In Kenya, while community-police relations have been improving gradually over time, the influence of a long-held philosophy of policing has had a negative influence on the uptake of such policing models as community policing. In the Kenyan context since independence and prior to the passage of a new constitution in 2010, the policing philosophy had been anchored on regime policing as opposed to citizen policing (Hills, 2006; Omeje & Githigaro, 2012). The slow nature of policing reforms post 2010 has impacted on the efficiencies of models such as community policing and such the replicability of the model outside of the current context would be in doubt.

This study also advances the debates on the security governance literature. The concept of security governance remains laden with multiple meanings. One understanding of the concept is that the state no longer holds exclusivity on security production. In a rapidly changing security environment, the state has to co-provide security with multiple stakeholders. The study advances the view that the state is no longer, simplistically speaking, the only security provider, but has to co-exist with other multiple security providers in what has been broadly termed as multi-choice policing (Biaumet, 2016).

As the study has demonstrated, informal security actors such as the community, organized community-based organizations bring contextual and practical nuances to the security sector and such their input is be required. Therefore, it would be important for future researchers to explore in much more details, the rise of multi-security providers that operate sometimes without the collaboration of the state. Could one of the motivations in the Kenyan context be state weaknesses for instance? This study calls for a deeper interrogation of the global security assemblage and the rise of non-state actors in security provision in Kenya. Attention could be paid to singular frameworks such as community policing or Nyumba
Kumi with linkages on how this would impact on how we understand the changing notions of security governance. Adopting single case studies such as community policing could help deepen and orient new ways of theorizing security provision from below. This would proceed in an open manner where the state would no longer be seen as a normative category in the provision of security. Instead, the configuration of the state, would help situate the multiple security actors, the connections, the dynamics at play and how security is eventually provided (Abrahamsen & Williams, 2017).

It is imperative also that future studies should examine more nuanced values that community-based actors can bring to the whole counter-radicalization. While the various non-state actors such as community workers, religious leaders and youth are involved in engaging in preventative work, the value that they could additionally bring to state intelligence could be investigated.
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: Interview Guide for both In-depth Interviews and Focus Group Discussions

Fieldwork Guiding Questions to Civil Society/ Grassroot Community Organizations

1. What do you consider to be the driving factors to youth radicalization and recruitment?
2. What narratives do the youth give for their engagement in radicalization?
3. Do you think that the current government responses can address this problem?
4. What do you think would be appropriate counter-radicalization strategies for the Kenyan case?
5. How would you rate such interventions as the Nyumba Kumi initiatives and other forms of community policing approaches in dealing with radicalization threats?
6. Is your organization involved in any such interventions in counter-radicalization? If so please share some of these key initiatives?
7. Do you have any partner organizations in your counter-radicalization initiatives?
8. Please if you have partners, could you share some of your joint interventions?
9. What are the key challenges, if any, is your organizations experiencing in the partnership?
10. How would you rate the nature of community-police relations with regards to dealing collectively with youth radicalization?
11. What counter-radicalization policies would you recommend for
   a). Government?
   b). Communities?
   c). Donors?

Questions to Religious Leaders

1. What are your perceptions on youth radicalization and recruitment?
2. What do you think are the factors responsible for the rise of youth radicalization in Kenya?
3. Is your institution involved in any interventions to address youth radicalization? If yes please share some of these interventions? If no what would you recommend?
4. Are there partner organizations you are working with to counter-radicalization in your locality?

5. What are some of the areas in which you have sought this cooperation?

6. What are some of the challenges you are facing in your counter-radicalization interventions?

7. Do you have any counter-radicalization initiatives involving members of the community in your locality? Please could you tell me more about this?

8. How would you rate the effectiveness of the Kenyan government responses in dealing with youth radicalization and recruitment?

9. Do you have any recommendations of initiatives that you consider appropriate in dealing with the problem of youth radicalization?

Members of the Public/Youth/Women

1. What are your perceptions around youth and terrorism, do you consider this to be a threat to you?

2. What in your opinion is leading youth to join terror groups such as the Al-Shabaab?

3. In your opinion, how would rate the government responses to dealing with youth radicalization and recruitment?

4. If you were to be given a chance to meet senior government officials to discuss how to deal with youth radicalization, what would be your suggestions?

5. As a member of the community, are you aware of the Nyumba Kumi (community policing) initiative? If yes, please share some of the activities that the community members are involved in?

6. Are there activities within Nyumba Kumi that are addressing security issues in your locality?

7. In your opinion, what challenges are community members experiencing in this government initiative of Nyumba Kumi?

8. If you had information about a terror suspect in the community, would you feel comfortable to share this with the police? Please tell me more about this?

Members of the Police/State Agencies/Academic Community

1. In your opinion, what are the factors contributing to youth radicalization and recruitment in Kenya?
2. What challenges are you facing in dealing with issues of youth radicalization?
3. If you are given an opportunity to draw policies to counter youth radicalization, what key areas would you highlight?
4. What security threats is Kenya experiencing as a result of conflicts in neighbouring countries?
5. In your opinion, how is Kenya prepared to deal with new forms of crimes such as terrorism?
6. How would you rate the criminal justice system in addressing the emerging challenges of youth radicalization in Kenya?
7. What measures would you recommend to address emerging security challenges posed by youth radicalization?
8. How would you rate the Nyumba Kumi initiatives in government efforts to counter youth radicalization?
9. What challenges is your department facing in the implementation of the Nyumba Kumi initiative (community policing) in addressing youth radicalization?
10. As an officer, are there activities that would you recommend to be incorporated in the Nyumba Kumi initiative to address youth radicalization?
11. In your opinion, what is the perception of the public towards police officers in your locale?
12. What initiatives can be adopted to enhance healthy police-community relations in Kenya?
13. How would you rate the counter–radicalization initiatives by the government such as the rehabilitation of ‘radicalized’ youth from Somalia post 2015 this year 2016?
APPENDIX II: RESEARCH PERMITS AND LETTERS OF AUTHORISATION

A. NACOSTI Research Authorization

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE,
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,
2241349, 3310571, 2219426
Fax: +254-20-318245, 318249
Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke
Website: www.nacosti.go.ke
When replying Please quote

Ref: No. NACOSTI/P/16/82526/13299

7th September, 2016

John Mwangi Githigaro
United States International University
P.O. Box 14634- 00800
NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on “Countering international terrorism: A community based approach to countering youth radicalization in Kenya,” I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in Mombasa and Nairobi Counties for the period ending 6th September, 2017.

You are advised to report to the Clerk, National Assembly, the Principal Secretaries of selected Ministries, the Chief Executive Officers of selected government agencies, the County Commissioners and the County Directors of Education, Mombasa and Nairobi Counties before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf of the research report/thesis to our office.

BONIFACE WANYAMA
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:
The Clerk
National Assembly.
The Principal Secretaries
Selected Ministries
B. Research Permit

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MR. JOHN MWANGI GITHIGARO
of UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY- AFRICA, 0-217 LIMURU, has
been permitted to conduct research in
Mombasa, Nairobi Counties

on the topic: COUNTERING
INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM: A
COMMUNITY BASED APPROACH TO
COUNTERING YOUTH RADICALIZATION
IN KENYA.

for the period ending:
6th September, 2017

Applicant's
Signature

Permit No: NACOSTI/P/16/82526/13299
Date of Issue: 7th September, 2016
Fee Received: Ksh 2000

Director General
National Commission for Science,
Technology & Innovation
KENYA POLICE SERVICE

17TH NOVEMBER, 2016

Ref: No.

SEC.POL.2/1/35/VOL.XII / (117)

John Mwangi Githigaro
United States International University
P.o Box 14834-00800
NAIROBI.

RE: REQUEST FOR AUTHORIZATION TO INTERVIEW POLICE OFFICERS FOR PHD RESEARCH IN NAIROBI AND MOMBASA COUNTIES.

Reference is hereby made to your letter dated 9th November, 2016 addressed to the Inspector General-National Police Service on the above subject.

The Deputy Inspector General-KPS has approved the request.

(JAMES K.MUTAI)
FOR: DEPUTY INSPECTOR GENERAL - KPS
THE PRESIDENCY
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND CO-ORDINATION OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Telegram: ..............................................
Telephone: Nairobi 333551/ 313836
When replying please quote

Ref No: ED 10/6 Vol.XXI(81)

REGONAL COORDINATOR
NAIROBI
P.O. Box 30124-00100 NAIROBI

18th November, 2016

Director General
National Commission for Science,
Technology and Innovation,
P.O. Box 30623-00100,
NAIROBI

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Reference is made to letter NACOSTI/P/16/82526/13299, dated 7th September, 2016 from Director General National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation addressed to Mr. John M. Githigaro and copied to this office regarding the above subject.

Authority is hereby granted to Mr. John M. Githigaro to undertake research on “Countering International Terrorism: A community based approach to countering youth radicalization in Kenya” in Nairobi County.

Upon completion of your research please submit to this office one hard copy and one soft copy in PDF of the study on for retention.

MUNDE S. MUTISYA
FOR: REGIONAL COORDINATOR

C.C. John Mwangi Githigaro
United States International University
P.O. Box 14634 – 00800
NAIROBI

All Deputy County Commissioners
Nairobi County
NAIROBI
OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND COORDINATION OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Telegrams: “PROVINCER”, COAST
Telephone: Mombasa 2311201
Fax No.041-2013846
Email: msacountycommissioner@yahoo.com
when Replying please quote

COUNTY COMMISSIONER’S OFFICE
P.O. BOX 90424-80100
MOMBASA
Tel.0715040444

REF. NO.MCC/ADM.25/256 24th November, 2016

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION
JOHN MWANGI GITHIGARO - ID/NO.23652825

This is to authorize John Mwangi Githigaro Permit No. NACOSTI/P/16/82526/13299 of United States International University, Nairobi to carry out research on “Countering international terrorism: A community based approach to countering youth radicalization in Kenya” for the period ending 6th September, 2017.

Any assistance given to him will be highly appreciated.

EVANS M. ACHOKI
COUNTY COMMISSIONER
MOMBASA COUNTY

C.C: Deputy County Commissioners
MOMBASA COUNTY
County Director of Education
MOMBASA