The Nature, Extent and Impact of Youth Radicalization in Mombasa and Kwale Counties, Kenya

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Abstract

Academics and policy makers globally have made significant attempts to develop an understanding of processes through which individuals especially the youth align themselves to individuals with violent extremist ideologies which are a global threat. Kenya has attempted to minimize youth radicalization following a number of terror attacks in its territory. Despite many youths having been arrested, prosecuted or even eliminated, youth radicalization is still on the rise. Anchoring on the social identity theory, the criminal justice theory and the psychoanalysis theory, the study examined the nature, extent, and impact of youth radicalization in Mombasa and Kwale Counties. Descriptive survey design was adopted. The target population was 320 from which stratified simple random sampling was used to select a sample size of 96 respondents representing 30% of the target population. Both primary and secondary data were used. Validity and reliability of data were tested using Cronbach's alpha. Data was analyzed and presented using descriptive statistics; percentages, frequencies, means and standard deviations. The finding of specific objective one was that youth radicalization into violent extremism and terrorism in the two counties was as a result of historical, religious, political, economic, social, geographical and criminal justice perceived injustices. The study recommends that measures should be put in place to resolve historical injustices since the youth feel that they have been suffocated when it comes to competing for jobs as a result of the historical injustice. There is need for affirmative action in relation to the youth from the study area. Community policing is encouraged to be able to assist the law enforcement agents when investigating specific cases and that community can come up with early warning mechanisms wherever there are signs of radicalization in a specific area within the counties.

Subject Areas

Peace and Conflict Studies

1. Introduction

According to Schimid [1] radicalization has emerged as a broad concept referring to unconventional attitudes as well as to violent actions. The tendency to associate radicalization to jihadism or religious (Islamic) extremism has come under scrutiny as recent studies have suggested that radicalized individuals are less likely to have histories of deprivation, unemployment or criminality. They are in fact better educated than the general population [2]. However, it is important to note that political extremism has been a very frequent form of radicalization in Europe through labour movements and human rights campaigns since the 1870s laying the foundations of contemporary schools of thought such as feminism, environmental and democratic ideologies.

McCauley and Moskalenko [3] observed that motivation and ideologies of groups that embrace violent radicalization are often specific to political, historical, social and cultural contexts that can shape their behavior and actions. Sageman [4] and Atran [5] reported that violent terrorist acts have extreme consequences on lives, mental health and psychological injuries. They noted that the 9/11 attacks in the United States killed 3000 people, between 2003 and 2004, suicide bombers in Iraq killed 12,284 Iraqi civilians while a total of 30,644 civilians were injured.

In East Africa, the political, socio-economic and individual factors that drive radicalization are varied thus making it difficult for counter radicalization to arrive at a universally applicable approach. The Somali question continues to haunt East African countries in the sense that the future of Al-Shabaab depends on its ability to recruit new members along the East African coast and in urban centres. It has been observed that the Al-Shabaab religious and political ideology attracts the youth and provides them with a sense of identity, purpose and community [6].

Mombasa and Kwale counties have experienced some form of attacks from youth who were recruited by the Al-Shabaab in Somalia and fought within their ranks but have now returned. The problem of returnees seems to have become prominent in the region as they are not only well trained in armed combat but have positioned themselves as people who are ready to defend their well-being and survival. Anyone suspected to be in a position to forward their names to the law enforcement authorities is targeted and ultimately eliminated. Some of the victims are religious leaders and local administrators [7].

The two counties have experienced several attacks which can be attributed to act of violent extremism. Such actions can be traced to radicalized youth in the two countries. Youth radicalization in Mombasa and Kwale counties is not a re-

cent phenomenon. It can be traced over two decades back. However, recently, there have been acts of violent extremism whose effect has been to cause chaos and insecurity in the region and has negatively affected people's social and economic life. In an effort to curtail such attacks the state machinery has been put in place including the entire law enforcement agencies with the intention of eliminating radicalization. However, this approach has been criticized as they are mainly based on hard tactics based on security approaches. This has resulted to attacks and counter attacks from both sides [7].

1.1. Statement of the Problem

The judicial arm of government and other law enforcement state agencies have taken significant steps towards improving coordination between civil society and security agencies in combating all forms of human rights violations. However, violence against the youth including extrajudicial killings and forced disappearances, delayed court processes, ethnic and religious profiling remain widespread, underreported and insufficiently addressed in the context of fight against terrorism [7].

This approach has led to increased youth radicalization in Kenya but more specifically in the coastal counties of Kwale and Mombasa. The form of radicalization embraced by the youth in these two counties is highly associated with issues that are religious and socio-economic in nature [8]. Concerns raised regarding the emerging cases of radicalization among youthful communities in urban areas in Kenya cannot be underestimated.

The study's focus on the youth was deliberate. The Kenyan youth are an upcoming generation identified by a number of unique characteristics. They have experienced ethnic, religious, post-election, social and economic conflicts that shape their socio-political views and their trust or distrust with political leadership and judicial agencies [9]. These feelings of skepticism lead to frustration and, thus act as push factors into radicalization. On the other hand, religious indoctrination including radical teaching of jihad and perceived historical injustices against muslims make youth muslims want to revenge in defense of their religion and thus become a fertile ground for radicalization.

1.2. Objective of the Study

To examine the nature, extent, and impact of youth radicalization in Mombasa and Kwale Counties.

1.3. Research Question

What is the nature, extent and impact of youth radicalization in Mombasa and Kwale counties?

1.4. Justification of the Study

1.4.1. Academic Justification

In spite of the growing complexity and diversity in understanding radicalization,

there is evidence that very few empirical studies have examined the nature, extent, and impact of youth radicalization in Kenya. The study therefore, attempted to fill the gaps in the academic knowledge that are emerging as a result of the nature, extent, and impact of youth radicalization in the two counties.

1.4.2. Policy Justification

The study findings would inform various government agencies including the criminal justice system such as the police, the court system, the prisons and remand homes on formulation of strategic policies when it comes to handling youths and taming radicalization. Findings will further inform policy makers, international agencies and the government of Kenya to reinforce programs of social inclusion and cohesion with the overall recognition of the inherent dignity and equal inalienable rights of all members of the human family as the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.

1.4.3. Philosophical Justification

The present study was underpinned by the positivist philosophical approach for some salient reasons. The significant extent correlational and this aligns with the positivist approach since positivist approach correlates the findings to what is happening in the real world.

Aiyabei & Odhiambo [10] in their article titled; "The relationship between maintaining status as a socio-cultural element and conflict dynamism within Kerio Valley Delta", underscores the philosophy of localization as an emancipative effort of promoting peace and security; broadening the concept of maintenance of peace and security beyond the understanding of many States that still hold national security as being synonymous with state security and even more narrowly as regime security". This study therefore contributes to the philosophy of localization of peace, conflict and security.

2. The Nature, Extent and Impact of Youth Radicalizationin Mombasa and Kwale Counties, Kenya

This section reviewed literature on the nature, extent and impact of youth radicalization in Mombasa and Kwale Counties, Kenya

2.1. Drivers of Youth Radicalization: Push and Pull Factors

Two distinct forms of radicalisation into violent extremism are distinguished [11]. The first is behavioral radicalization that focuses on the dedication of a person to violent action and cognitive radicalization that focuses on the acceptance and internalization of violent and extremist views by an individual. The writers categorize the variables that contribute to radicalization as push, pull and personal variables. State repression, relative inequality, poverty and injustice are pushing forces. Pull factors includes the aspects that make extremist groups and lifestyle appealing to some people. This include ideology, group belonging, group mechanism and other incentives. On the other hand, personal factors in-

volve individual characteristics that make certain individuals more vulnerable to radicalization compared to their peers. This can include psychological disorders such as depression, personal traits and traumatic life experience. All the three factors are closely interrelated oftentimes combine to influence the individuals' acceptance to join terrorism.

Holt *et al. [12]* examined the role of internet-based radicalization as enculturation to violent deviant subcultures through a comparative analysis of violent radicalization across three offender types with implications for criminal justice training and education. They looked at the intersections of sub-cultural theories and radicalization theories from terrorism studies to identify how they may be improved through integration. It was reported that although terrorism shares common characteristics of deviant subcultures, there has been very little research to merge these two favourable frameworks. The two frameworks are driven by ideologies that are usually in opposition to that of their targets. Their study focused on the process of online radicalization and its linkages with enculturation into the terrorist belief system. Figure 1 shows the drivers of violent extremism.
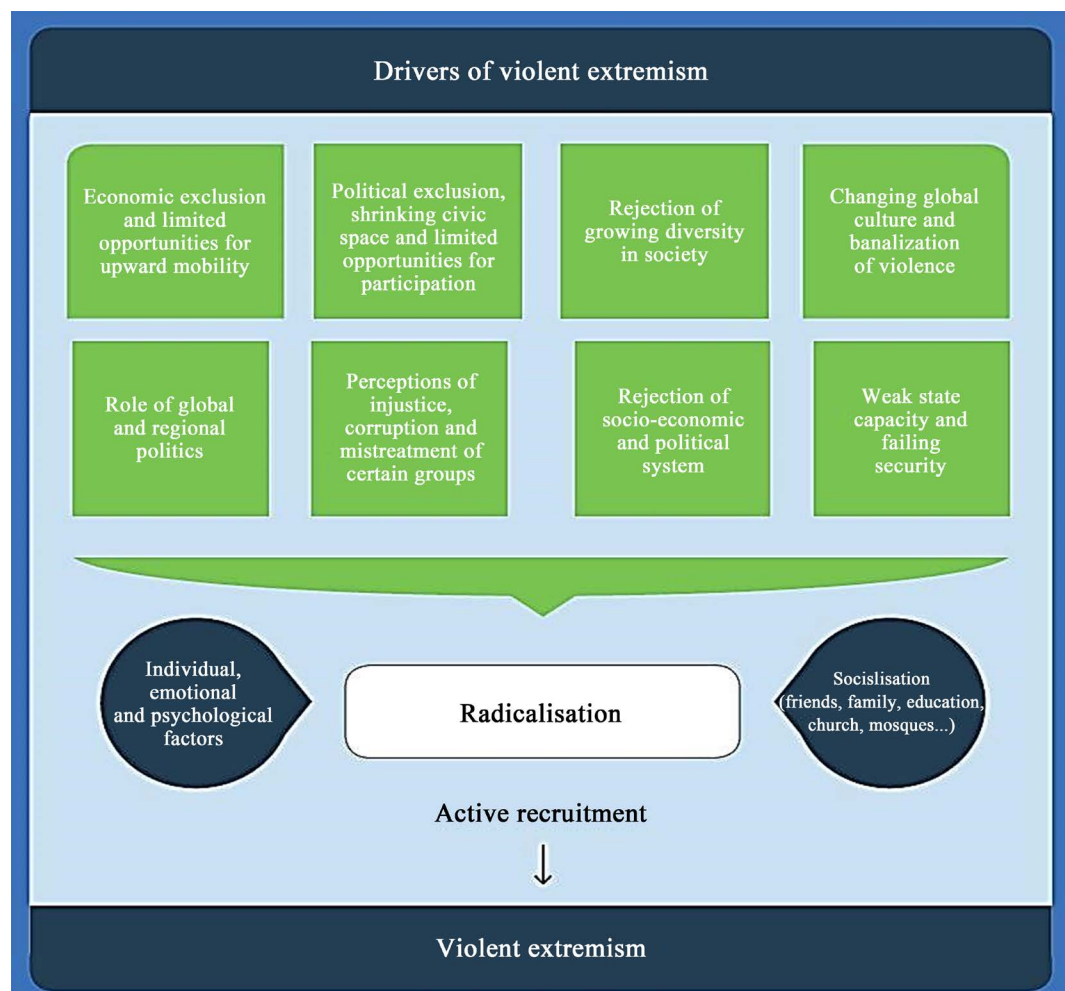
Source: UNDP, 2016.

Figure 1. Drivers of Violent extremism.

2.2. Radicalization of Youth in Mombasa and Kwale County

In the coastal region of Kenya, Kwale and Mombasa are singled out with the most radicalized youths. This can be related to changes in the 1990's during the agitation for political reforms in the country. During this time, there was the re-birth of pre-independence awareness that the region was excluded from mainstream development initiatives within the country. The communities were becoming more aware of their plight in the face of historical injustices, marginalization and conscious and sub-conscious exclusion by each incoming regime [13]. Talks became rife that indigenous communities had suffered socio-economically in the hands of foreigners, citing pre-historic and historic Arabs and Europeans, and from the independence period local Arabs and up-country people were added to the list. The areas that indigenous communities are most adversely affected are the socio-economic sectors including businesses, leadership and employment opportunities, and resource ownership, with land becoming a central thorny issue. Halimu and Wanjala [14] study focus on historical injustices and how violent extremism is related. This study is relevant to the current one however, it does not suggest how law enforcement needs to consider some of these factors on historical injustice.

Mkutu and Opondo [15] examined "The complexity of Radicalization and Recruitment in Kwale County". Their research also dealt with Mombasa County. Instead of merely sympathizing with such a cause, the two consider radicalization as the tendency to commit acts of violence in the name of a political cause. It is noted that the effects of poverty can, in a variety of ways, increase the vulnerability to radicalisation or recruitment. Relative deprivation can result in alienation and dissatisfaction that recruiters can exploit.

Kakhuta-Banda [16] observers that terrorist groups target mainly the youths due to their vulnerability to recruitment and are at that stage in life of trying to establish the political "self" and are more vulnerable to different forms and beliefs of radicalization. Young people are more idealistic as they face a lot of challenges and grievances. The author further observes that an important factor in radicalization process is availability of charismatic preachers capable of holding persuasive speeches not only in Mosques, but also in schools, Universities or even in prisons. In as much as Banda [16] study touches on religious factors that play central role in radicalization, it fails to identify religious structures that can be used to limit radicalization.

Odhiambo *et al.* [17] state that in order to spread its propaganda, Al-Shabaab uses multiple media. The internet is the most used medium of communication, aside from conventional radio, since it is the fastest and most cost-effective way to reach a wide audience. The internet is popular with the youth and its online forums and chat rooms are used by Islamic groups such as Al-Shabaab to recruit young people to their crime. From this review, it is clear that youth radicalization is a complex occurrence which needs multi-faceted approach to solve. The emergence of radicalization and subsequent terrorist attacks has socio-economic

and religious bases that need to be addressed.

2.3. Conceptual Framework

Wasike and Odhiambo [18] discuss the role of theories in guiding the thrust of academic studies. They emphasise the importance of theories in offering compelling and incisive causal explanations with calculated precision. They buttress their argument by quoting Smith [19] who asserts that theories play the role of predicting, prescribing and evaluating socio-political phenomena hence they cannot be ignored.

2.3.1. Social Identity Theory (SIT)

The theory introduces the concept of social identity as a way of explaining intergroup behavior. This theory predicts certain intergroup behavior on the basis of perceived intergroup status differences. It posits that an organization can change individual behavior if it can modify self-identity or part of their self-concept that derives from knowledge of and emotional attachment to the group.

The individual's choice of behavior is largely dictated by the perceived intergroup relationship (status) as well as the perceived stability and legitimacy of the intergroup status hierarchy. The social identity theory, therefore, provides key theoretical foundations for the possibility of youth radicalization, focusing on the recognition of existing youth groups as strategic motivators in instilling radical behavior changes. All human beings desire a sense of belonging and identity. Due to extensive marginalization and the challenge of unemployment and marginalization that most youths in Mombasa and Kwale counties go through, many find it irresistible to join radical groups. The presence of al-Shabaab group in the coast and the neighboring Somalia gives many of the youth a ready alternative for personal belonging and identity.

2.3.2. Criminal Justice Theory (CJT)

The criminal justice theory explains the official responses that the criminal justice agents have on behavior that is labelled criminal [20]. The behavior in this case includes all forms of actual behavioral phenomenon such as decisions and actions or non-behavioral phenomena including attitudes, philosophical orientation, or policies.

Within the interpretation of CJT, the justice system embeds on three broad streams of operations that entangle both individual and organizational schema. The first, encompasses the individual behavior of criminal justice agents; the police and other law enforcement officials, court-room officials, correctional officers and other personnel involved in the response to criminal behavior. The second focuses on the organizational behavior of criminal justice organizations such as police departments, courts and correctional organizations. The third concerns the characteristics of the overall justice system together with its components. Such characteristics may include actions of the police and justice systems that defy the concept of justice such as police killings, incarcerations and

"get tough" sentencing [21]. As Gottfredson and Gottfredson [22] explain, the criminal justice entails a series of critical decision making, criminal diagnosis, classification and prediction by criminal justice agents.

2.3.3. The Psychoanalysis Theory

Understanding the theory of psychoanalysis began with research into various case studies of patients with neurotic conditions, including, though not limited to, obsessive-compulsive disorders and other documented phobic conditions. Patients with hysterical symptoms have been reported to complain of shortness of breath, paralysis, and limb contractures for which no physical symptoms are known. Freud and his early co-worker and mentor, Josef Breuer, an Austrian physician, noticed in the course of interviews that many of their patients were unaware of how or when their symptoms progressed and even seemed oblivious to the immense discomfort caused by the symptoms. It was noted that the thoughts associated with the symptoms were locked from the conscious level of the minds of the individuals and thus ignored by normal curiosity [23].

Freud [23] believed that the specific drive for these neurotic symptoms lay in the desire of the patient to continually block deeply distressing events from his unconscious memory that were incompatible with the societal moral standards of the individual and therefore contrary to them. These events were considered to have been sexual or violent in nature, and further exploration convinced Freud that even earlier troubling sexual experiences had been had by his patients where the memories were dormant until a more recent sexual or violent encounter awakened them. Freud further argued that previous experiences had an impact on the behavior of people under study. Freud has therefore formulated the theory of psychoanalysis to show that personality is shaped by such experiences as are many other traumatic or frustrating instances that have already been presented during a person's childhood and have been expressed in terms of behavior [24].

Fisher & Greenberg (1996) [25] believed that his patients were inspired to suppress such dreams about them that were both thrilling and repellent. Freud defined various psychological devices as protection mechanisms, formed to protect one from oneself, by which people tried to make fantasies bearable, such as obsessive compulsive behavior where people embrace persistent unwanted ideas or repeated overwhelming impulses to perform certain actions, such as incessant hand washing, defense maneuvers are called isolation and displacemen They consist of separating a fantasy from recognized emotions (isolating) and then adding the emotion to another, previously trivial idea. Freud also pointed out that in interpersonal contacts, individuals who rely on isolation and displacement are otherwise distinguished by nonpathological personality traits such as perfectionism, indecisiveness, and formality. The illusions for Freud were the mental representations of basic motivations or drives in the unconscious mind to achieve anything like sex, hostility and self-preservation [26].

The criminal justice theory involves the actions of those tasked with the duties

of preventing, investigating, determining crimes as well as reforming those who would have been found to have committed crimes. The theory does not deal with the reasons as to why people become radicalized and engage in crime. In the researcher's view the theory is more of reactionary than pro-active. It deals with the problem after the crime has occurred. Once a crime is committed then the criminal justice system machinery comes into full force. The offender is arrested, prosecuted and imprisoned. The expectation is that all the above processes will be done within the law.

2.4. Conceptual Model

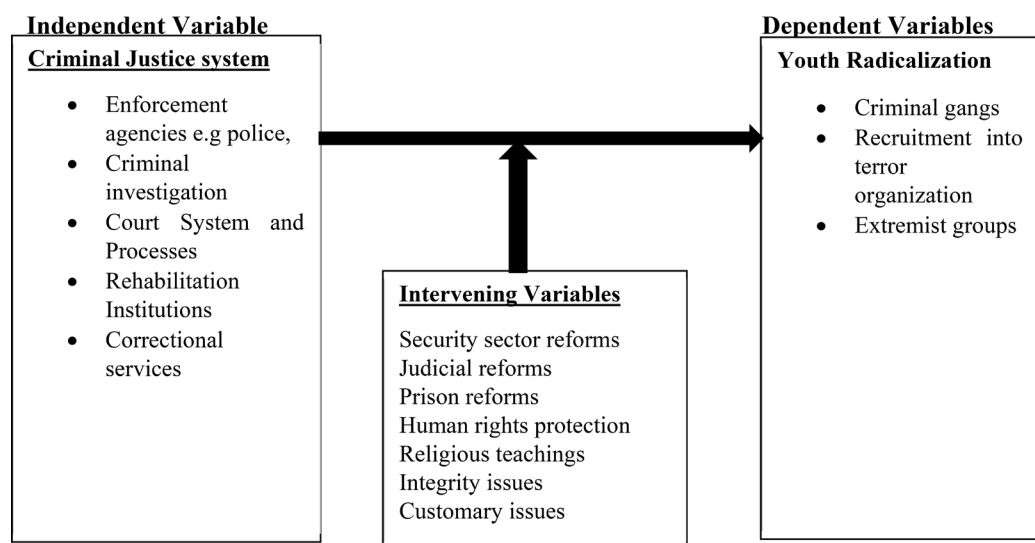Figure 2 shows the conceptual model.

3. Research Methodology

This section presents outlines the various methodological tools that were utilized in undertaking the study, including; the research design, target population, sample selection and sample size, the research instruments, measurement of variables, data collection methods and data analysis and presentation techniques.

3.1. Research Design

Descriptive research design was used to examine the nature, extent, and impact of youth radicalization in Mombasa and Kwale Counties.

3.2. Study Area

Mombasa County is located in the South Eastern part of the Coast region. It is one of the smallest counties and covers an area of 229.9 Kms^2. It borders Kilifi County to the North, Kwale County to the South and South West and the Indian Ocean to the East. The entire County basically lies within the Coastal strip and

Independent Variable

Dependent Variables

Criminal Justice system	Youth Radicalization
• Enforcement agencies e.g police, • Criminal investigation • Court System and Processes • Rehabilitation Institutions • Correctional services	• Criminal gangs • Recruitment into terror organization • Extremist groups

Intervening Variables

Security sector reforms
Judicial reforms
Prison reforms
Human rights protection
Religious teachings
Integrity issues
Customary issues

Source: Researcher, 2019

Figure 2. Conceptual Model indicating the interaction of independent, dependent and intervening variables.

experiences hot tropical climate influenced by the monsoon winds. According to the 2019 Kenya Population Census, Mombasa County's population is 1,208,333 people.

Kwale County has a very big potential in the blue economy. There are several tourist hotels and cottages in Kwale County. The impact of youth radicalization and violent extremism has badly affected the tourism industry in the County. Sandy Beaches, marine parks and Wildlife are major tourist attractions. The Shimba Hills National Reserve, Mwaluganje animal sanctuary, Kigite /Mpunguti Marine Park, Shimon caves, Kongo Mosque and the long Sandy beaches are the main tourist attracting points. The Hotels in Kwale range from normal standard ones to five-star level.

Kwale has the highest Al-Shabaab recruitment rates. There are several returnees who came back to Kenya after fighting on the side of Al-Shabaab in Somalia. It is a county that has been home to so many conflicts since 1992, 1997 election clashes, 2002 Kaya Bombo violence, the Mlungunipa 1 and Mlungunipa 2 skirmishes. Figure 3 shows the Map of the study area.
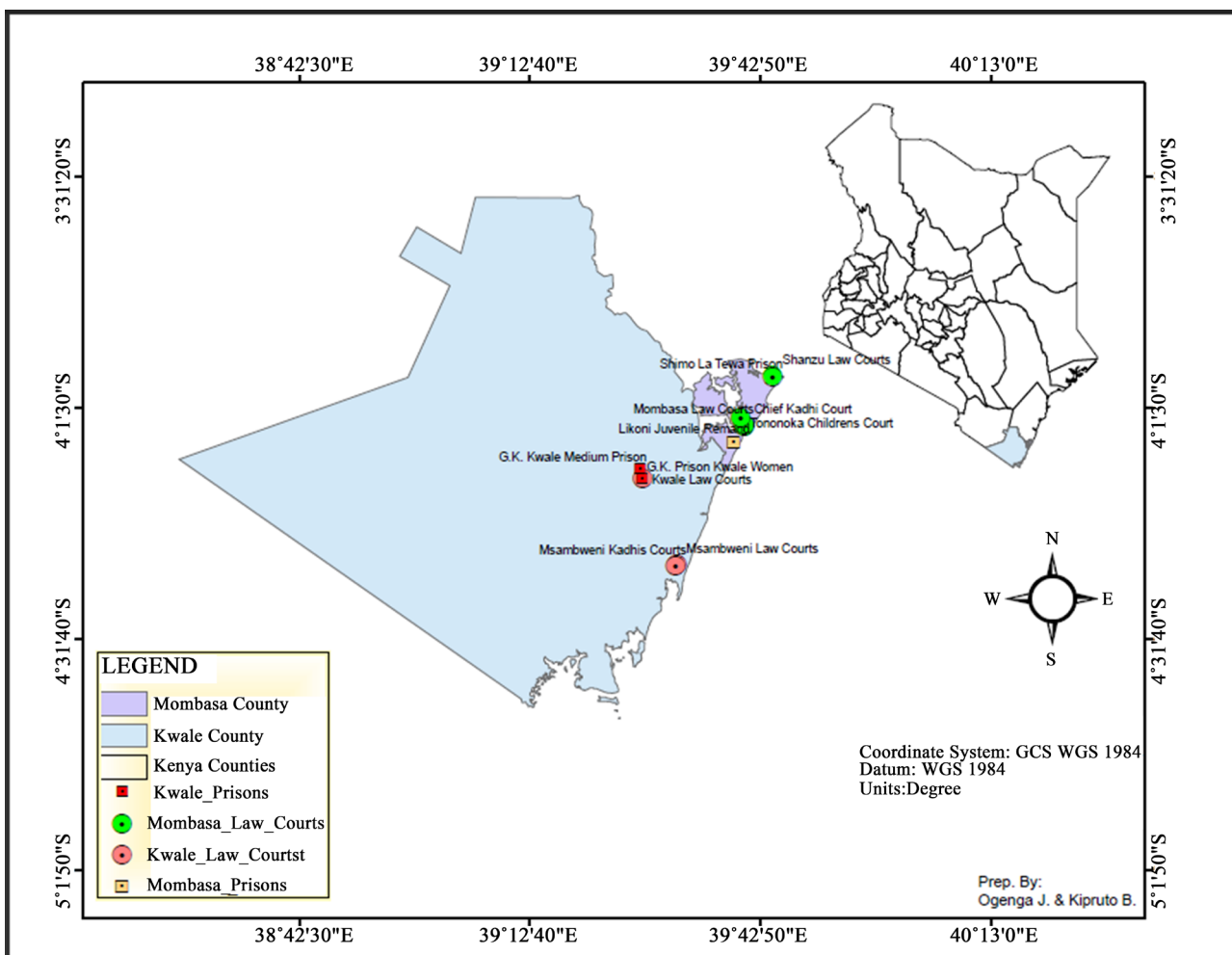
Source: Researcher, 2019.

Figure 3. Study area.

3.3. Sampling Strategy and Sample Size Determination

The first stage of sample selection involved the identification of relevant organizations and institutions in Mombasa and Kwale counties that formed a good respondent's base for the study. Purposive sampling was used, where a list of institutions and organizations whose work falls within the study's core thematic areas of criminal justice system and youth radialicalization was created. The target population was drawn from religious organizations, the judiciary, the correctional institutions, non-governmental organizations, the Independent Oversight and Policing Authority (IPOA) and the Police Service.

Stratified random sampling was used to select the actual respondents to participate in the study. The sample frame included a list of individuals particularly opinion leaders affiliated or working with selected organizations, which formed the strata.

3.4. Data Collection Methods

Primary data was collected through semi-structured questionnaires.

Typically, quantitative methods are characterized by the use of close ended questions for yes or no answers, or set of predefined answers like Likert scale (example strongly agree or strongly disagree). The Likert scale answers can be quantified, comparable and measurable to provide numeric results [27]. Questionnaires were developed to collect individuals' data and face to face interviews, document reviews and interviews, focused group discussions (FGDs) were applied, whereby a group of respondents from different stratas were invited and organized into a group to discuss various questions in the study. Focused group discussions were scheduled to target youth groups and community-based organizations which provided a platform for discussing various issues that are relevant to the research. According to Morgan [28] the minimum number of people in a focused group discussion should be four with a maximum of twelve. Participants were drawn from both male and female gender. Each FGD comprised of 6 to 8 repondents. For the duration of the study, 6 focused group discussion were conducted, 3 in each county.

Secondary data was collected from archival records, journals, articles, policy documents, Acts of Parliament, official reports, academic books, Court pleadings and judgments, the internet, and any other relevant literature.

3.5. Data Analysis and Presentation

Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, where relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable was determined. The data collected was refined, coded and entered into the computer system. The presentation of data in the form of descriptions of the mean, mode, standard deviation, frequencies, and percentages. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 27) and R were used for analysis.

4. Results

The sections present the research findings and results on the nature, extent and impact of youth radicalization in Mombasa and Kwale Counties.
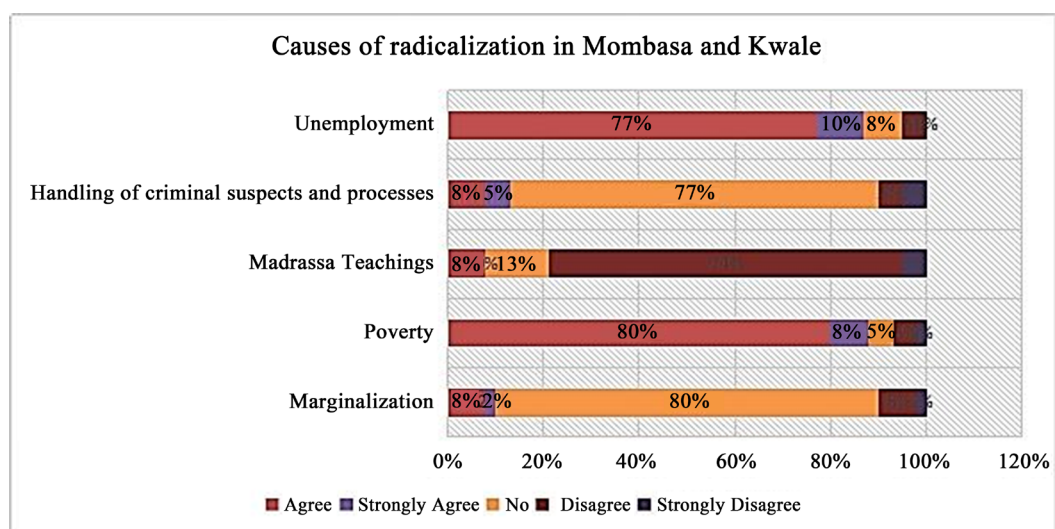
4.1. Causes of Radicalization

The major drivers of radicalization among the youth in the study area include marginalization, poverty, madrasa teachings, unemployment, and handling of criminal suspects and court processes. The summary of the findings is shown in Figure 4. Accordingly, 80% of the respondents indicated that poverty is the leading cause of youth radicalization in Mombasa and Kwale, while 77% of the respondents cited unemployment as the leading cause of radicalization in Kwale and Mombasa.

From the findings it is worth noting the following as results from the respondents Marginalization (mean = 3.95; Std dev = 0.724) Poverty (mean = 4.02; Std dev= 0.880) Madrasa teachings (mean = 3.98; Std dev= 0.843) Unemployment (mean = 4.01; Std dev = 1.128) Handling of criminal suspects and court process (mean = 4.01; Std dev = 1.128).

The African Centre for Strategic studies organized a seminar on preventing youth radicalization in East Africa in Kigali, Rwanda between 22-27 January, 2012. The participants noted the prevalence of a large and dynamic youth population is shaping East Africa's security landscape. Participants noted that East African Youth are increasingly connected to each other and the global marketplace of ideas via information and communication technology. Even very poor youth in the region are willing to sacrifice large portions of their income to purchase cell phones. Improvements in internet penetration have increased the number of youths accessing information on-line and at relatively low costs.

According to the participants, the drivers of youth radicalization in East Africa

Source: Field data, 2020.

Figure 4. Causes of radicalization in Mombasa and Kwale counties.

include individual factors. The participants noted that radicalization is fundamentally an individual process and countering it requires adopting strategies with an individual touch. It was observed that civil society organizations that engages parents, teachers, coaches, mentors and religious leaders, as well as individual young people, are critical to counter radicalization was found to be socio economic factors. The participants noted that youth in East Africa struggle to access employment, education, housing, health services and other necessities. Despite the grown in GDP in the region, youth still find it difficult to gain employment. A third deriver was held to be political factors. Participants noted that young people are motivated by a desire to combat injustice, impunity and corruption. Inequality in the application of the rule of law was also indicated as a driver to youth frustration. Impunity among politically connected elites makes the youths to lose confidence in their legal institutions especially when the youth receive harsh punishments for minor offences.

4.1.1. Poverty

A study by Shetret *et al*, [29] found out that poverty in the coastal region is generally high, with an average incidence of 62%, and 70% in Mombasa alone, and unemployment levels at the rate of 40%. Shetret *et al.* further observe, that "there was consensus that unemployment and a general lack of economic opportunity was a major source of general insecurity and can potentially contribute to opening pathways to violent extremism among individuals in vulnerable local communities" Shetret *et al.*, [29] However, the nexus between poverty and unemployment, and radicalization and recruitment into violent extremism in Mombasa and Kwale lies in the extremist recruitment process based on promises of employment and financial rewards of up to USD 1000 per month [30].

The youth in Mombasa and Kwale, further cite high poverty levels in the region and unemployment as the leading push-factors into radicalization. The youth maintain that it is the economic pressures and frustrations, which make them vulnerable to huge financial rewards by extremist groups such as Al-Shabaab. They submit:

Sisi hatuna kazi sasa tukiona kumalizwa na umaskini ilhali Al-Shabaab wanatuahidi ajira na mishahara mikubwa, tena madolla, si heri uijitoe mhanga? (We are not employed … so seeing we could be wiped out by poverty while Al-Shabaab is promising us employment and better remuneration, why not make that sacrifice?) (Interview with some youths in Likoni, Mombasa on 8th December, 2019.)

The sentiments expressed by the youth are somehow true. The high poverty levels coupled with unemployment make the youth vulnerable to recruitment into criminal gangs. The promise of employment is a tactic used by the recruitment agents to absorb the youth into their group.

4.1.2. Unemployment

Unemployment in Mombasa and Kwale is not unique to the coastal region, but a

reflection of the general youth unemployment context in Kenya. Article 260 of the 210 constitution defines youth as all individuals who have attained the age of eighteen years but have not attained the age of thirty-five years. The youth make up 55% of the labor force and 85% of Kenya's total unemployed population [31]. However, in Kwale County, as a study by Mkutu and Opondo (2019), reveals, there are low levels of development, high poverty and inequality levels, and 50% of the county's population lives on less than USD 100 per month.

Odhiambo [32] further indicate that only 51% of the population has attained primary education, implying that most of the county's population is not qualified for skilled labour, and only gets menial jobs in tourist hotels on the county's high coastline. Most of the county's skilled labour is outsourced from other parts of Kenya.

4.1.3. Handling of Criminal Suspects and Court Processes

The process of handling criminal suspects (mostly youth) in Mombasa and Kwale, is characterized by inhumane treatment, brutality and violation of human rights and indirectly fuels radicalization of the youth as a reaction to excesses of security operations. Ligawa & Odhiambo (2016) [33] observe that "the unjust manner in which the youth are treated by the police exacerbates their frustrations", adding to local grievances, which extremist groups such as Al-Shabaab exploit to further radicalize the region's youth. Moech [34] argues that "terrorist attacks are a means of revenge on a society, terrorists believe are mistreated".

A youth whose father is a Sheikh and Imam of a mosque had this to say during an interview;

Police brutality on suspected youth in the region, aggravates pre-existing grievances of discrimination among the youth by the state agencies leading to further radicalization of the youth into extremist groups such as Al-Shabaab (Interview with a youth at Mbuwani in Bongwe, Gombato ward, Kwale on 19th November, 2019).

The police have been accused of arbitrary treatment of the youth in the two counties, through extra-judicial killings, forced disappearances and arbitrary raids and arrests of the youth suspected to be involved with radical groups and ideology. Religious leaders find police brutality at the center of the ruined police community relations in Mombasa and Kwale. They further associate the strained public trust in the police, and run-away youth radicalization in the two counties. The communities do not adequately cooperate with the police in preventing and countering radicalization according to one Muslim cleric in Mombasa.

The youth cite poor investigations by the police, as a factor leading to arbitrary arrests, and discrimination of the youth, as well as ineffective handling of the patterns and trends of radicalization. Security agencies are allegedly 'colluding' with extremists according to the youth interviewed in Kwale and Mombasa. According to them, Corruption and vested interests in the war against Al-Shabaab by KDF, undermine the integrity and effectiveness of the process and the efforts of

other multi-sectoral agencies. Some KDF officers are not honest. They help Al-Shabaab with information in return for money. (Interview with some youths in Majengo, Mombasa on 10th February, 2020.)

These sentiments show how the youth do not trust the police and most of them are not willing to co-operate with the security agents. This is one of the reasons why the amnesty by the national government did not yield good results.

4.1.4. Madrassa Teachings

According to the findings of this study, 8% (10) of the respondents indicated that madrassa teachings in Kwale and Mombasa, lead to radicalization. Radical jihadist ideologies are taught to the Muslim youth in Kenya, through radical preaching and teachings in certain mosques, madrassas, community development initiatives and certain publications.

According to Odhiambo *et al.* [35] Kenyan madrassas (*Idadi*, primary level and *thanawi*, secondary level) have been infiltrated by well-endowed Wahhabi charities and foundations from as early as 1970s. The foundations operate health facilities, and feeding centers aimed at extending development aid to underdeveloped Muslim communities in north eastern and coastal regions of Kenya. Odhiambo *et al.* [35] notes that:

Many young Muslims in Kenya have been indoctrinated into the belief that the wars in Somalia, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Israel-Palestine conflict are part of a broader global campaign against Islam as a religion. By promoting the "Umma ideology" the universal Muslim brotherhood, the Hanbali school started to oppose the Shafi's school in Kenya, resulting in local youths starting to regard the situations in Somalia, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and Palestine as problems affecting all Muslims across the world and therefore, worthy of their involvement. This ideology, which preaches universal Muslim brotherhood, has led young people from Kenya and other parts of the world being recruited as mujahideen to fight in Somalia, Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan against what is mainly perceived as United States of America and her allies' interests. These factors combine to provide fertile ground for Muslim youths in Kenya to become radicalised and join extremist groups like Al-Shabaab.

These sentiments bring into focus a myriad of factors when dealing with the problem of radicalization. There is a sense of dejection and hopelessness amongst the residents of the study area and this has gone to the extent that parents have lost touch with their children. Some parents willingly allow their children to work and cater for the family without knowing who the children work for.

4.1.5. Summary of Religious Leaders' and Youths'
View on Causes of Radicalization

According to religious leaders and the youth, the Criminal Justice System greatly contributes towards radicalization in Mombasa and Kwale Counties. Police brutality in suspects, poor investigation, lack of intelligence and systematic harassment targeting Muslim youth aggravates the situation. The two respondents further stated that victimization of the Muslim youth by the police ultimately

leads to killings and enforced disappearance of suspects. This has led to poor relationship between the police and members of the public. Other causes of radicalization were given as historical land problem. A big percentage of the population does not have title deeds over fifty (50) years after independence. The locals in the two Counties are of the view that local resources such as income from the Kenya Ports Authority and tourism do not benefit the indigenous people.

On their part, judicial officers were generally of the view that youths engage in radicalization due to lack of knowledge on peace and humanity, bad understanding of religious teachings especially those relating to wholy war (Jihad): The respondents further observed that poverty mainly in Kwale County and some parts of Mombasa contribute to radicalization. Lack of youth empowerment and proper youth mentorship are also contributing factors. Poverty, illiteracy and improper parenting are also to blame. Lack of economic activities for the youth in the two Counties, marginalization and historical injustices are contributing factors. Respondents from the judiciary opined that the government should clamp down on the agencies that promote radicalization in their ideologies. Radicalization should be approached through multi-agency efforts, economic marginalization, unemployment and problems affecting the youth should be addressed. There should also be a chain of command on the part of police officers and institutions which investigate and prosecute cases relating to radicalization. Efforts and measures to reduce poverty and literacy should be introduced in Mombasa and Kwale Counties.

4.2. Impact of Youth Radicalization

According to the findings in Figure 5, 97% of the respondents agree that radicalization has led to revenge attacks on local leaders in Mombasa and Kwale, while 78% (98) agree that radicalization has led to extra-judicial killings in the two
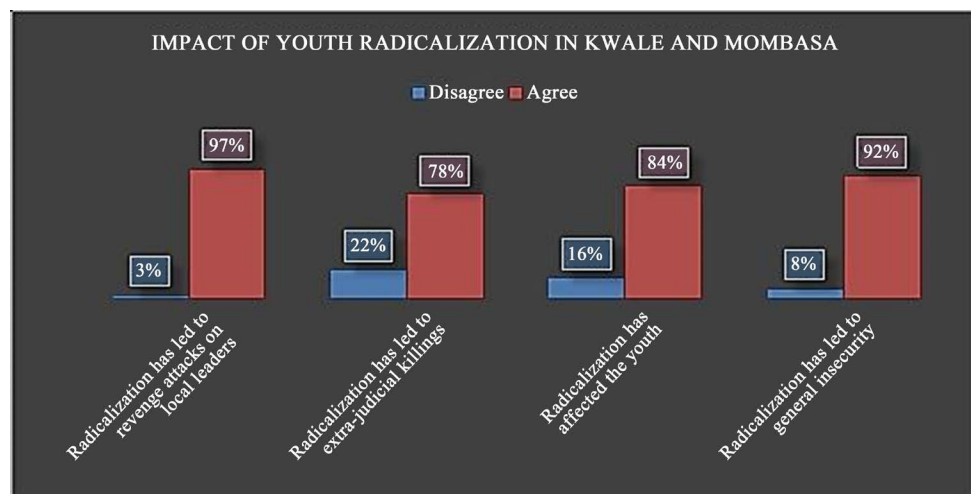
Source: Field Data, 2020

Figure 5. Impact of youth radicalization in Kwale and Mombasa.

counties. On the other hand, 84% (105) of the respondents agree that radicalization has affected the youth in Mombasa and Kwale, while 97% agree that radicalization has led to general insecurity in the two counties.

4.2.1. Increase in Insecurity

It is radicalization in the coastal counties of Lamu, Mombasa and Kwale (among others), that produced the conducive environment for cross-border terrorist attacks in the region since 2009 till now, with the most recent attack happening on January 05, 2020 at Camp Simba (Kenyan-American military base) in Lamu. Terrorist attacks as a result of local radicalization by the Somali-based terrorist group, Al-Shabaab, has in part led to the collapse of the tourism sector, since the coastal region is the country's tourism hub [36]. Tourism sector contributes about 27% of Kenya's GDP, and the spike in frequency of terrorist attacks and hostile environment of radicalization at the coast (sympathetic to violent extremism), led to a loss in the tourism earnings. For instance, Buigut and Amendah [37] find that with 1% increase in fatality of terrorist attacks, 0.082% loss of tourist arrivals was incurred, translating to 1487 visitors and KES 155.8 million annually. This reduction in tourist arrivals can be attributed to insecurity due to terrorist acts.

This is corroborated by Odhiambo *et al.* [38] in their article titled "Learning Institutions' vulnerability to Terrorism. An Overview of Issue Coverage In Nowadays' Media and Specialised Literature Study of Garissa University college, Kenya" states that Attacking learning institutions, however, is predictable because the act is the message. Terrorists who attack learning institutions intend to deplete the number of institutions disseminating philosophies ostensibly contradictory to their worldview.

However, other factors similarly contribute to insecurity in Kwale and Mombasa, such as drug trafficking, crime and criminal gangs, and human trafficking (via Lunga Lunga in Kwale) as was observed [39]. Kwale for instance, is "a hub of hard drugs" especially along the coastline with high levels of heroin use [40]. Mombasa and Kwale are reported to experience the threat of criminal gangs and drug trafficking. Kwale for instance, has criminal gangs such as *Ndzaiko*, *Wakali Kwanza*, and *Wakali Wao*, while Mombasa has criminal gangs such as 86 Batallion, Ten Down, as well *Wakali Wao* and *Wakali Kwanza*, and many more. The criminal gangs occupy a certain strategic junction for service to political extremism and political violence among regional politicians, for business wars among regional business rivals, drug trafficking, and silently, extremist groups such as Al-Shabaab and the Mombasa Republican Council.

4.2.2. Reduced Economic Activities

Mombasa and Kwale are leading tourism hubs in Kenya, with the coastal region generally being Kenya's tourism hub. The sunny sandy beaches and beautiful sceneries among other historical sites and other tourist attractions have attracted foreign and local tourists to Mombasa and Kwale for decades. The two counties

have also been the leading holiday destinations which have put Kenya on the map of global tourist and holiday destinations. However, since the surge of the wave of violent extremism and terrorist attacks targeting the coastal region especially since 2010, the tourism sector which drives the region's economy, has seen a massive slump as travel advisories, and the security situation generally deteriorated [41].

5. Summary and Conclusions

The study established that there are myriad of causes to youth radicalization in the two counties. The causes are mutually interacting to the exent that one cannot point to a single factor, the most outstanding cause to radicalization in Mombasa and Kwale counties was religious ideological influence through skewed teachings of the Wahhabbi-Salafi ideology that emphasizes jihadism recurred as a common factor among the muslims who become radicalized. Other causes include poverty, historical injustices, perennial land issues, social political factors, marginalization, breakdown of the family structure, divorce, lack of education, economic factors, religion, proximity to Somalia and hopelessness. The study also found out that in Mombasa county, radicalization is prevalent in Likoni, Kisauni, Mombasa Island and Changamwe areas. In Kwale, the Ukunda, Bongwe, Msambweni, Tiwi, Waa, Kinango, and Ng'ombeni areas are much affected.

The hard security tactics employed by the national government in fighting terrorism have not resolved the problem and need to be reviewed. The criminal justice system needs to come up with extra measures in solving the problem of radicalization in Mombasa and Kwale counties. The study concludes that if no urgent measures are put in place, now then radicalization amongst the youth in the study area will continue unabated and may reach unprecedented levels.

6. Recommendation

Measures should be put in place to resolve historical injustices. The youth feel that they have been suffocated when it comes to competing for jobs as a result of the historical injustice. There is need for affirmative action in relation to the youth from the study area, like creation of job opportunities. The communities in the study locale should be encouraged to embrace community policing that will be able to assist the law enforcement agents when investigating specific cases. The community can come up with early warning mechanisms wherever there are signs of radicalization in a specific area within the counties.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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